Children's Voices

to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
by Children of Republic of Korea
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I. Introduction

The report you are reading now is children’s report that contains vivid voices of the children of the Republic of Korea (ROK). This report was prepared to be submitted to the UN Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Committee), and it is mainly composed of children’s first-hand stories about their own rights. This chapter will explain the purpose and process of this report, and then introduce children who participated in various activities of this report.

Purpose of ROK Children’s Report

ROK ratified UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991, and went through the Committee’s review of the state reports twice. And, ROK is awaiting the review of its 3rd and 4th combined report to the Committee to be conducted in 2011. Over the last 20 years since the ratification and among three submissions of ROK state reports to the Committee during this time, there was not even one report in which children themselves talk about their own rights.

Therefore, the primary goal of this report is to present the voices of the children living in ROK to the Committee. We could not meet all children living in ROK, but wanted to shed light on the reality of the rights of child in ROK through the voices of the children living under various circumstances on the ground. Through this, this report aims at contributing to promoting the rights of the child and participation of the children, and also to raising the public awareness on the rights of the child in broader ROK society.

Structure and Process of ROK Children’s Report

This report is comprised of three sections: Internet survey, child rights education program, and interview. Children participated in these activities in various forms, and throughout all processes, their voluntary participation was strongly encouraged. There was a procedure to get children’s consent to the usage of their statements, art works, voices, pictures, and video recorded images before they participated in the activity, and those that did not get such approval were not used in this report. More details on the process of each method (Internet survey, child rights education program, and interviews) are as follows:

1) Learning the Rights of the Child: Internet Survey

As the first approach, Internet survey was carried out in order to get opinions of ROK children comprehensively. Internet portal site for children (www.jr.naver.com) was used for the survey, and the responses from 566 children out of total 3,071 respondents were used for this report.

2) Hey Rights, Let’s Play!: Child Rights Education Program
The second approach to get children’s voices was a child rights education program offered to five separate groups of children. Five groups were formed among children who have been less exposed to rights-friendly environments, which also reflect key social issues affecting children in ROK society: poverty, family dissolution and foster child rearing, isolation of children due to aging in rural areas, multicultural society, and the increase of the families of North Korean defectors.

![Figure 1 Dear Mrs. Rights: Children's letters addressed to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](image)

**Children Who Participated in the Activities of this Report**

Total 669 children participated in the activities mentioned above: 566 children in the Internet survey, 103 children in the human rights education program and the interview. All children except those who participated in the Internet survey had direct contacts with the report team and these 103 children were 48 male children and 55 female children.

The age distribution of the children who participated in the activities of this report is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under 4 years old</th>
<th>5 years old</th>
<th>6 years old</th>
<th>7 years old</th>
<th>8 years old</th>
<th>9 years old</th>
<th>10 years old</th>
<th>11 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>124</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 years old</td>
<td>13 years old</td>
<td>14 years old</td>
<td>15 years old</td>
<td>16 years old</td>
<td>17 years old</td>
<td>18 years old</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1 Children who participated in this report**

**II. Voices of Children 1: Internet Survey**

Internet survey was carried out in order to get a comprehensive understanding on how much the children of ROK are familiar with the rights of the child, and what are the rights that are being respected and not respected. ROK has the highest Internet penetration rate among the OECD countries, which is 94.3%(as of 2008). It is said that 85% of 3–9 year-old children and 99.9% of teenagers in ROK use the Internet frequently, which makes the Internet survey to assess children’s awareness on

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1 Source: Homepage of the Korea National Statistical Office (Web searched on February 25, 2010)
the rights of the child particularly useful.

Survey questions are about children’s prior knowledge on the rights of the child including the age range of the child, which rights are being respected and which are not, what kinds of help children can get when their rights are violated, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. After a child answers each question, related information about the rights of the child is provided. Selection of the responses that were used in the final analysis was made in the following procedures.

- Subjects of analysis: Children who are 18 years old or under as of the final day of the survey (May 31, 2010)
- Data selection process:
  1. Total number of respondents across all ages: 3,071
  2. Number of selected respondents who are 18 years old or under: 598
  3. Number of deleted respondents due to the overlapping responses by the same person: 32 (Only first response was taken among the overlapping ones – minimizing the bias)
- Number of respondents whose responses were used for final analysis: 566

The age range of the 566 child respondents who participated in the Internet survey is shown in [Table 2] below. The age group with the largest number of respondents is 10-year-old group with 110 respondents (19.3%), followed by 11-year-old group (93 respondents, 16.7%), 12-year-old group (59 respondents, 10.4%), and 9-year-old group (57 respondents, 10.0%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>4 or under</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of respondents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 Age distribution of the respondents in the Internet survey**

The results of the Internet survey ‘Learning the Rights of the Child’ participated by the children of ROK are as follows:

1. **Have you ever heard of the rights?**

Before going into other questions in the survey, children were asked about their prior experience with rights. 68.2% (386 children) of the entire respondents said that they have heard of the rights, while 31.8% (180 children) responded negatively.

![Figure 2 Have you heard of the rights?](image)
Children living in ROK heard of the rights mainly through their schools (243 children, 63%) and the media (82 children, 21.2%). 11.1% and 4.7% of the respondents said that they heard of the rights at homes and welfare facilities respectively.

Figure 3 Where did you hear of the rights?

2. What is the age range of a child?

The second question was about the definition of a child in terms of the age. 289 children, which is more than a half of the entire respondents, thought someone who is between 0-12 years old is a child. Only 121 children (21.4%) chose the answer ‘0-18 years old’, which is what the CRC defines the child as.

Figure 4 What is the age range of a child?

3. Do you think children have rights as human beings?

To the question whether they think children have rights as human beings, 96.6% of the entire respondents (547 children) responded with yes. The reasons given by those who said no included “because children are too young” (9 children) and “because children need help from adults” (2 children).

4. What rights do we have as children?

Regarding which rights of the children living ROK are being respected and which are not, there were 18 questions touching on the issues like food/clothing/shelter, education, play and leisure, health care, information, harmful media, participation, and protection from violence and abuse. Children could choose more than one to these questions. The rights of the children living in ROK that are being most well respected were “I can drink clean water” (544 children), “I go to school” (541 children), “There is a house I live in” (539 children). The rights that are being least respected were “I have enough time to play” (266 children), “I do not watch strange videos on TV or Internet” (173 children), and “I do not have to show my personal diary to anyone else” (148 children).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rights being respected</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Rights not respected</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>544</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>I can drink clean water.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have enough time to play.</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>541</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>I go to school.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I do not watch strange videos on TV or Internet.</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>539</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>There is a house I live in.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I do not have to show my personal diary to anyone else.</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>537</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>I am a citizen of ROK.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I can run and play freely outside.</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>535</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>There are adults who take care of me.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mom and Dad listen to me well.</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>530</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>I can go to hospital when I am sick.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>I can freely express my opinions.</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>517</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>I can get information from radio, newspaper, TV, Internet, books, etc.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am protected from dangerous people.</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Rights that are respected and that are not

5. When my rights are not respected, with whom do I speak?

On the question about what types of external resources are available for children to ask for help when their rights are not respected, children could choose from parents, siblings, friends, other family members, school teachers, teachers at religious/private educational institute, emergency calls, and community welfare center/child organization (multiple answers possible).

The results show that the greatest number of respondents said they “talk to parents” (464 children), followed by friends (234 children), school teachers (175 children), siblings (137 children), emergency calls (75 children), teachers at religious or private educational institute (47 children), and other family members (18 children), with no one choosing community welfare centers or child organizations.

![Figure 5 When my rights are not respected, with whom do I speak?](image-url)
6. Can a child get legal protection when her/his right was violated?

To the question whether a child can get legal protection when her/his right was violated, 533 children (94.2%) answered “Yes”, while 33 children (5.8%) answered “No”.

7. Have you heard about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?

To the question whether they have heard about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 303 children (53.5%) answered that they have not heard of the Convention, while 263 children (46.5%) said they have.

Conclusion

This survey was carried out with the participation of 566 children who are 18 years old or under. The responses of the children who participated in the survey can be summarized as follows.

1. 68.2% (386 children) of the entire respondents said they have heard of the rights. But, 53.5% of the entire respondents said that they have not heard of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These results show that still more than 30% of the children of ROK do not know what rights are, and more than a half have never heard of the CRC.

2. Among the children who have heard of the rights, approximately 85% of them heard of the rights through schools and the media. This means that the methods of delivering education on rights and related information are limited, with concentration in only a few channels.

3. As for the rights of ROK children that are being well respected, issues that are related with the right to survival such as food/clothing/shelter, school education, nationality and identity, health care facilities have been identified as the rights that are relatively well guaranteed. On the other hand, other rights related with play and leisure, privacy, harmful media, and free expression have been identified as the rights that are not well respected. Such results show that the rights of children related with survival are relatively well protected in ROK, while other sets of rights need improvements. Also, it has been revealed that the children living in ROK are highly exposed to the harmful media through TV and Internet.

4. Children said they would seek help mainly from parents, friends, and school teachers when their rights are not respected. Number of children who said they would seek help from other adults, emergency calls, community welfare centers or child organizations was rather small.
III. Voices of Children 2: Child Rights Education Program

“My mom forced me to study at home every day. I realized from this camp that my rights had not been respected, and felt upset about my mom. I thought that I should enjoy my rights from now on.”
Kim, Yong Jun (Age 14, boy)

“Now I am learning about rights. Frankly speaking, I have ignored the rights of others. From now on, I should be more careful about it.”
Park, Sang Min (Age 14, boy)

This chapter contains the voices of the children we met through Rights Education Program, "Hey~Rights, Let's Play!" which took various forms such as a workshop and a camp. The children talked about their rights which have not been respected in their own lives, and discussed what they could do themselves to have these rights respected. The rights of the child which are not respected have been identified, and they are related with respect for child’s opinion, play and leisure, discrimination, violence and abuse, privacy, and safety, in the order of the severity of the problem.

1. Respect for Child’s Opinion

[Article 12] 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Respect for opinion of the child and child’s participation comes the first among the rights that are not respected for the children of ROK. They spoke about many cases when they were forced to do things that they did not like, not knowing why they have to do them or without being given necessary explanations. In many times, children could not take part in the decision-making processes even in matters that were directly related with them. A considerable number of adults showed the attitude of 'Just do it and no questions asked', not listening to the child. Moreover, they treated the child who expressed his/her opinion as rude, which makes it more difficult for the child
to express their own views. Various situations in which child’s opinions are not respected can be categorized into the following: in school and at home.

1-1. Respect for Child’s Opinion in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights not respected in school as expressed by children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Interactions with school teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When raising my hand to ask a math problem, he passes me by” Cho, Yeon Ju(Age 10, girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ignoring what I said” Jeong, Jae Yeon(Age 11, girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Punishing me with no good reason” Park, Tae Jeong(Age 11, girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When a teacher not listening to me” anonym(Age 11, girl)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Teacher not listening to me, and telling me off” Joo, Woo Jin(Age 10, boy)

“In my school, teachers ask for our ideas, but in the end, lead us into their opinions, never considering what we have said. Teachers tell us that we have to clarify our opinions. But, when I express my opinion that I don’t want to do a certain thing, they think I am defying them. I feel irritated and annoyed even though they are my teachers.” Lee, Ah Ram(Age 12, girl)
2) Forcing evening study time
“I do not want after-school classes, but have to attend it.” (Anonym)
“Changing day time or evening study time and break time without any respect for our opinions” (Anonym)
“In the survey about after-school classes of playing recorder and traditional percussion music, we can express our likes and dislikes as marking circles or x, but teachers change our markings all into circles.” Lee, Ji Hyeon(Age11, girl)
“Changing evening study time and break time without asking us” Kim, Yong Jun(Age14, boy)

3) Children’s participation in a decision-making process on matters such as picnic
“When going on a picnic to a place different from our opinion” Kim, Yong Jun(Age14, boy)
“Deciding on a picnic as teachers like” Park, Sang Min(Age14, boy)

1-2. Respect for Child’s Opinion at Home
Rights not respected at home as expressed by children

1) Cases of not being able to participate in decision-making process
“When adults think and decide as they like”
“When telling me we have to move as I do not want to part with my friends” Lee, Ji Hyeon(Age 11, girl)
“Forcing me to keep doing home-study materials” Lee, Ji Hyeon(Age 11, girl)
“My parents force me to attend after-school classes” Kim, Se Jeong(Age 13, girl)
“Breaking promises with no good reason” Kim, Seung Hwan(Age 11, boy)

2) Disregard for children’s desire
“When my grandmother makes me have my hair cut although I want to grow my hair” Lee, Ji Hyeon(Age 11, girl)
“I can't watch TV when I want” Kim, Se Jeong (Age 13, girl)
“No right I can't watch TV more than 3 hours” Lee, Mac Chan Mi(Age 12, girl)
“No right I can't watch TV enough” Kim, Seon Mi(Age 11, girl)
“I can't do my computer as I like” Lee, Yong Hyun(Age 10, boy)
“My mom shouts at me to study right now when I don't want. So I am forced to study...everyday...but can't I study when I am willing to do?.. When I am forced to study, I cannot concentrate on what I am supposed to learn and also when I have to solve problems. I can't solve problems well because my brain becomes stuck.” Min, Ji Young(Age 10, girl)

Figure 10 A picture describing a mother forcing home-study materials

“Mom, please let me stop oo(home-study materials).”
“No way! You have to do it hard!!!”

Figure 11 A picture describing an adult who ignores the request of a child in the decision making process related with the child

“No!”
“Why!”
2. Play and Leisure, and the Purpose of Education

[Article 31] 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

![Figure 12](image-url) Play and leisure ranked No.1 as the right children like the most

“What is the right that I need the most right now?”

Children expressed that they could not enjoy play and leisure in various aspects. As you can see in the above pictures, those who participated in the program, strongly claimed the need and the importance of play and leisure by selecting the article related with play and leisure(article 13) as ‘the right that I need the most”.

Time for sleep and rest for children were not guaranteed in the overriding atmosphere of forcing them to study, and a leisure time was also very rare for most children. Regarding a timetable, minor subjects such as arts were being replaced by major subjects for university entrance exams. This trend seems to be more evident as the child moves up to a higher grade.

Also, the children appealed that they lacked space for leisure and things to play with. Playground is originally for children, but in many cases it has been degenerated as a harmful environment, which turned into a smoking place for older children or adults. Occasionally, the children expressed that they fear the playground due to the violence or threat by older children. Also, in some districts, doing a computer game in PC room is the only thing for many children to do for play, due to little space and rare cultural benefits available.

2-1. Lack of Time for Play and Leisure
Play and leisure not respected as expressed by children

1) Lack of time from the excessive study

“I have no time to run on the playground.” Anonym

“Force me to study during free time” Anonym

“My peer, younger or older friends are preoccupied with study, and have not enjoyed pastime.” Kim, Yong Im(Age12, girl)

“I have to study in school from Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday through Saturday, and it is so hard to study until Sunday although it is a day off.” Joo, Jae Hee(Age11, boy)

“Dear Mrs. Lee, Yanghee, As I became an upper grader, time to play has reduced, while I have to study so much. Please let me have more time for play!”

Figure 13 A message appealing for more leisure time

“Extend break time... please!!!” anonymous

“seem to have no enough time for play because of study.” Seo, Min Jung(Age11, girl)

“I should stay in school until 9 p.m.” Park, Kyeong Rak(Age13, boy)

“I need to get some sleep. I kind of get first in class, and so my mom makes me study too much. I need to get some sleep because I go to bed at midnight.” Lim, Ho Jeong(Age11, girl)

“Enforcing me to study without a sleep” Park, Sang Min(Age14, boy)

“I had three hours of sleep. I sleep from 2 a.m. until 5 a.m. I had two hours of study on my own, cleaned up myself, and go to school for classes from 9 a.m until 5 p.m. Coming back home from school, I clean up myself, have a meal, study by myself from 6 p.m to 9 p.m, get a private lesson from 9 p.m to 11 p.m, and study on my own again from 11 p.m to 2 p.m, and get some sleep for nearly 3 hours...” Kim, Yong Jun(Age15, boy)

“Parents enforcing me to keep studying when I want some rest being tired” Kim, Yong Jun(Age15, boy)

“Right to play, right to rest(not to study excessively), right to be respected”

Figure 14 Children's work expressing their inability to play due to excessive study

“My parents compel me to keep studying when I want to rest because I am too tired” Kim, Yong Joon (Age 15, boy)

“I wake up at 7:40 am, study at school, get afterschool sessions, have evening self-study, and then, back home, get personal tutoring. When these are all finished, it’s about 11:10pm. (I can go to bed) around midnight?” Woo, Ho Shik(Age 14, boy)
Play and leisure not respected as expressed by children

2) Disappearing break time
“Break time is not well kept in elementary school, and has to study even during a break time, and it is so hard for me.” Huh, Soon Young(Age10, boy)
“Please make efforts on guaranteeing enough break time. Our classmates living in Hap-cheon complain about starting a class before a regular break time ends.” Cho, Yeon Joo(Age10, girl)
“We take a 40-minute class and we have a break time of the first class with 10 minutes more, but teachers just cut it. ” Rural area, Lim, Ho Jeong(grade 5, girl)
“We have only 50 minutes of lunch time. So we have a meal, brush our teeth, and the lunch time ends even before finishing clean-up…lunch time is so short that we can't do our hobby or enjoy our play enough. It is so boring to spend day by day like this as we have no spare time put aside” Seo, Min Jeong(Age11, girl)
“Shouting that it’s not yet break time, but it is.” Min, Ji Young(Age11, girl)
“It is break time, but they say no” Lee, Ji Hyun (Age11, girl)
“when taking down a lecture during the break” Rural area Cho, Soo Min(Age12, girl)
“Teacher lecturing math during the break, but I want to rest.” Cho, Min Hee(Age11, girl)
“Forced to study in the middle of playing... have no spare time for break... and unwillingly attend after-school class…” Anonym
“Break time is too short to play in a school yard. In China, students even play soccer during break time.” Anonym

Figure 15 A picture describing a teacher who continues lecturing after a session ends (Anonym)

“Who says it’s break time? Break time is only when I say so! – Teacher yelling at us that it is not break time when it is”

Figure 16 A poster appealing to keep break time  Park, Jin Bum(Age10, boy)

“A new right of the child: Let’s keep the break time”
Play and leisure not respected as expressed by children

3) Continuously changing timetable

“..teach us math mainly... arts and PE are replaced by math..
Actually, we have classes of (arts and PE), but only after an exam period or after skipping too many of them. Korean, math, sociology, science, and English are more important than arts and PE” Lee, Ah Ram(Age12, girl)
“Arts and PE are taken away.” Park, Sang Min(Age14, boy)
“Break time is not observed, and place for PE keeps changing. Also timetable changes as teachers like.” Bae, So Yoon(Age11, girl)

“What is the right not respected? Place for PE class is often changed and timetable is changed at teachers’ will. So, please tell people in the Switzerland for me.”

Figure 17 A letter making an objection about other subjects being changed to math class Bae, So Yoon(Age 11, girl)

“Please listen to us? PE vs. Study”

Figure 18 A poster appealing that PE not be changed to self-study Joo, Jae Hee(Age11, boy)

2-2. Play and leisure environment
Need for Play and leisure environment as expressed by children

“No places to play with...other than school. No playgrounds.” Kim, Seung Hwan(Age11, boy)
“(Any playground for us?) No. (There are) shelters for elderly people though.” Lee, Ji Hyeon(Age11, girl)
“Cultural facilities for children’s rights seem to be in short supply. Please build some parks where we can rest. And one more change I want to see. The schoolyard is dirty because high school students play soccer in our schoolyard and eat take-out chickens and threw the waste away.” Cho, Yeong Joo(Age10, girl)
“In Chang-Nyeong, there are so many delinquents that most of older folks smoke in the playground. I can't play in the playground because of tobacco odor.” Kim, Han Beom(Age11, boy)
“No good facilities for the child like us. Bad smell in the toilet, sharp-edged steps, and worn-out goalmouth, and no good facilities. Please keep an eye on this.” Huh, Soon Young(Age10, boy)

Figure 19 Play and leisure environment the child wishes to have “Youth Cultural Center” “Hap-Cheon Cultural Center for Children”

“No good facilities for the child like us. Bad smell in the toilet, sharp-edged steps, and worn-out goalmouth, and no good facilities. Please keep an eye on this.” Huh, Soon Young(Age10, boy)

“I just stay at home all day weekend unless I do a computer. No friends to play with. Villages are all away.” Lim, Ho Jung(Age11, girl)

“I moved to Seoul when I started the first grade.... Seoul is more convenient. Friends live nearby... many places to play in...it is nice and more comfortable.” Lee, Ah Ram(Age12, girl)
3. Discrimination

[Article 2] It is clearly stated that children should be protected against any kind of discrimination. However, children living in ROK are suffering from discrimination based on gender, physical characteristics, race and social origin and so on.

“We should not be discriminated in any case. Regardless of who our parents are, what race we belong to, which religion we have, what language we speak, whether we are rich or poor, and whether we have disabilities or not, we should be able to enjoy equal rights.”

Figure 20 A picture describing the right not to be discriminated which is the article 2 of CRC

3-1. Gender Discrimination

Girls talked about gender discrimination in cases like they are wholly responsible for housework or other male siblings take priority in the communication or selection of the things. This kind of attitudes is also shown in a group like schools or living facilities for the child. It appears that teachers let girls do the meal serving related things in school. The child, who has participated in this reports, have expressed complaints about the guidance of following stereotype sexual role, which follows as below.
Gender Discrimination as expressed by children

“I do the dishes, and charge domestic chores, but my older brother is excused.” Jeong, Eun Young(Age16, girl)

“It is my older brother's fault, but only I am scolded for it.” Anonym

"Only girls are on duty for school meals... teachers make girls do it on duty because they think girls serve more cleanly.” Kim, Jae Soo(Age12, boy)

“Grandpa, please love me also. I love you.”

Figure 21 A message from a granddaughter to her grandfather who discriminates her because she is a girl.

“Male and female: Let’s not discriminate.”

Figure 22 A poster saying no gender discrimination

3-2. Discrimination by Academic Grade

The discrimination which the children experience most is the one by academic grade. The children expressed that they get discriminative treatments from their teachers in the forms of favoritism, ignorance, comparison according to their grades. It is reported that teachers make distinctions on the number of presentations during the class and attention level, based on children’s different learning abilities represented by the test results and grades.
Discrimination by academic grade as expressed by children

“Teachers play favorites and make distinctions between the poor and good students. Teacher only likes students who got good grade at school.” Anonym
“discriminate me as I have a poor grade” Anonym
“assign space based on grades.” Hong, Ji Hye(Age15, girl)
“I want to make a presentation, but ignores me and not let me do it because I am a poor student” Jeong, Eun Young(Age15, girl)

Discrimination by academic grade

3-3. Discrimination by Social Origin

It is also reported that the child from multicultural family, the ones living in the case setting are not able to live with their parents, and also children with disabilities experience discrimination in their daily lives.

Discrimination by social origin as expressed by children

"Why call me New Settler(Sae-teo-min)?” Jeong, Jae Yeon(Age11, girl)
“They told me that I am different from them...at that time, when I was very small, my accent was so different that other kids always made fun of me telling me to go away as I am a different person from them...(In school) they too often ask us to raise hand if one is from a multi-cultural family. Then, I am the only one to raise my hand. And the classmates whisper among themselves about my family...blur..blur....” Kim, Yoo Jin(Age11, girl)
“I'm ‘multicultural.’ That's why I got teased.” Park, Se Young(Age11, girl)

“Don’t discriminate people from other countries: You are different from us! Go away! No, I am like you.”

Figure 23 A poster saying no discrimination against those who have different skin colors and speak different languages Anonym

“Right not to be discriminated: In the English camp, people treated students from other elementary schools kindly, while they discriminated us.”

Figure 24 Discrimination experienced by a child who lives in a facility when the child was participating in the camp Anonym
3-4. Discrimination by Physical Characteristics

Among the children, there are those who have experienced discrimination on the ground of or been teased about physical characteristics, appearances, or different physical development condition. This kind of discrimination is mainly from the children of the same age, rather than from the adults, and the details are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discrimination by physical characteristics as expressed by children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I don't like getting teased about my dark complexion.” Lee, Ye Sol(Age11, girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Getting teased about my different development condition” Jeong, Jae Yeon(Age11, girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Getting teased as I am left-handed” Kim, Yoo Jung(Age13, girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon, Ye Som(Age11, girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(When I am compared with my friends about my body!”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 25 A poster saying no discrimination for the disabled – Anonym

3-5. Discrimination by Age

The children in ROK have reported that they were ignored by adults just because they are young. Adults make decisions in school or at home as they like, and they take it for granted that the children follow the decision with an attitude, 'you are too young to do'.
Discrimination by age as expressed by children

(“When they ignore me by saying that I should stay out of it because it’s adults’ talk”)
“Adults can do, but I can't do” Anonym
“Parents ignoring me that I am too young” Jeong, Jae Yeon(Age11, girl)
“Ignoring me that I am too young when I do something” Anonym
“Treating me without sincerity when buying some products in a store because I am a little boy.”
Bae, Byung Woo(Age15, boy)

“It will be nice if we students can also use the elevator. Teachers going to the 2nd floor use the elevator, while students going to high floors can’t. If not, it will be nice if teachers also use the stairs so that they can be more friendly with students.”

Figure 26 A picture expressing that it is discrimination that only schoolteachers can use in-school elevator  Kim, Se Jung(Age13, girl)
4. Violence and Abuse

[Article 19] Nobody shall injure us. Adults should protect the child from all forms of physical or negligent treatment. Even parents have no rights to injure their own child.

The violence to the child living in ROK can be categorized as the ones inflicted by adults (school teacher, parents) and the ones by other children (classmates, older students).

4-1. Violence by the Adults

It appears that adults use violence in the cases when the child receives poor test results, show low ability for assignment, miss their homework, and do not follow regulations or teaching methods. Forms of violence are classified as physical violence using tools or body, verbal violence such as swearing or insulting words, punishments such as hand lifting or push-ups, and compulsory execution of regulations.

Violence by the adults as expressed by children

1) Violence by other adults
   “There are many friends or parents to speak directly about drawbacks, and even to make fun of them....and please adults need to stop calling us with annoying words such as Ya, Neo.” Kim, Young In(Age12, girl)
   “I think children like us need to be protected because there are some children who get hit or assaulted by their own parents. Those children particularly need protection.” Park, Tae Jung(Age11, girl)
   “No one should touch my body.” Lee, Bong Jeon(Age10, girl)

   “Even the parents should take responsibilities: Parents cannot hurt the child (Article 19).”

Figure 27 A picture expressing that parents should not use violence even to their own children Jeon, Min Jung(Age11, girl)
Violence by adults as expressed by children

2) Violence by teachers

- Degrading language and punishment

“After-school teachers speak ill of students and punish them severely. So I don't want them to swear, and to punish ruthlessly. Please shrink my head.” Seo, Min Jung(Age11, girl)

“There are some teachers who swear.” Kim, Young In(Age12, girl)

“would be nice to stop putting it crudely if possible, please.... quit school...speaking bluntly as if I were dregs of society” Hong, Ji Hye(Age16, girl)

“Dear Teacher, Even if we are not good with our homework and are not good at studying, please bear with us. Please show respect for us.”

Figure 28 Letters appealing to stop punishment  Park, Se Young(Age11, girl)

- Physical punishment

“I don't want adults to hit us. The reason is that I am a bit poor at music. So a teacher from a musical concert group hit me with a baton, which hurt me so much” Cho, Soo In(Age10, boy)

“I don't want to be hit in the palms at school if I make a mistake.” Cho, Min Hee(Age11, girl)

“In a fourth grade, I was often hit for not doing my homework. In a fifth grade, my teacher is not at all easy to manage, so she or he told me to go back home throwing my schoolbag away because I often didn't do my homework too often..” Kim, Seung Hwan(Age12, boy)

“Punishment is prohibited, but teaches hit us. Hitting us on the palms or hitting us in the butt with this large iron rod.” Kim, Yoo Jung(Age13, girl)

- Application of strict rules

“As my hair is long, my teacher himself cuts my hair.” Kim, Yong Jun(Age14, boy)

“My teacher gets angry, when making sound. We should walk regularly in the corridor. We are scolded for running or arm-in-arm with a friend in the corridor..” Kim, Jae Soo(Age12, boy)

“Come on, it's summer...Isn't this too much?”

p.s. This is my uniform which was bought by me

Figure 29 A picture expressing a wish for no restrictions on skirt length  Hong, Ji Hye(Age16, girl)
4-2. Violence by the Child

It was revealed that the violence by the peer, not by adults, experienced by some children who participated in this report is also serious. The violence by other children occurs mainly inside school, and the child who causes violence can be classified into the peer group children and superior students. Outcast and violence by the peer were reported by the most of the children who participated in this report, and the violence from the superior students is manifested remarkably in rural areas or child-care facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violence by the peer as expressed by children</th>
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</table>

1) Violence by the peer children

“Recently, friends hit one another, and speak ill of others. I hurt myself in hitting others for no reason... poor players in soccer or other events also should take part in, but they can't as they are harassed for their poor game results.” Choi, Ji Young(Age11, girl)

“There are some friends left out as outcasts. I hope there won't be any friends left out.” Kim, Do Young(Age11, boy)

“I am alienated from some classmates in the class. They say to me “Don’t do it” when I want to do something. I was treated as an outcast before as well in another school where I was alienated almost everyday. Here, it happens only once in a while.” Lee, Ji Hyeon(Age11, girl)

“In the middle school, and in the elementary school... I was hit... They took pictures of me after stripping my trousers off... They took pictures of even my penis and all...Sometimes, they made other friends who have disabilities make strange sounds in the closed toilet.” Oh, Sang Hoon(Age15, boy)

“(In the toilet) they gathered together and took pictures with a camera under the penis.” Han, Ki Jong(Age14, boy)

2) Violence by older children

“Sometimes, older delinquents hit us for no reason. Please stop them from hitting us just because they are annoyed! Strong older students take the money from weak younger students.” Kim, Han Beom(Age11, boy)

“Sometimes, older students hit us in school. I don't know how to do in that case. They would hit us again if I tell them not to do because they are too strong.” Anonym(Age10, boy)

“In Hapcheon, I don't like young people under age 15 to smoke. I cannot stand the sight of their smoking, and seem to be harmed.” Sim, Doo Hyun(Age11, boy)
5. Privacy protection

Figure 31 A picture saying that all parents in ROK should listen to what children have to say (group work)

“Parents, do listen!”

[Article 16] 1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

The children living in Korea express that they are not respected mainly by parents at home and teachers in school. The privacy of the children which is not respected categorizes mainly as three.

5-1. Confidentiality of the Contents Containing Children's Daily Life

Like adults, children also have their own personal life. It is natural that children do not want to open this private area even to parents or it is manifested that many parents check mobile phone or diary concerning children's privacy, and in many cases, schoolteachers check the diary of children, and at home, parents do the same checking either secretly or by force. And the children living in Korea expressed that it was hard for parents and schoolteachers to show too much attention to their privacy.
Unprotected privacy as expressed by children

1) Confidentiality of the contents on the children's daily life

- Diary
  “Reading my diary when I am asleep, and let me my privacy... my mom.” Park, Kyung Seon(Age15, girl)
  “Without my permission, my diary is read openly.” Kim, Young In(Age12, girl)

  “Dairy of Young In: Hush! I also have some secrets that I want to keep to myself.”

Figure 32 Poster expressing the need for protection of privacy – Kim, Young In(Age11, girl)

- Mobile Phone
  “I can't talk on the phone as I like.” Hong, Ji Hye(Age16, girl)
  “My mobile phone being taken away as I am being addicted to using it” Kim, Yong Jun(Age14, boy)
  “My mobile phone being taken away” Pak, Sang Min(Age14, boy)
  “I have to submit my mobile phone in school, but I don't want to do....” Anonym
  “I got hit if I delete my messages.” Kim, Yoo Jung(Age13, girl)
  “Everyday, my mom checks my messages, and it's totally unprotected.” Kim, Yong Jun(Age14, boy)

- Excessive attention
  “There are many parents and teachers who intervene our privacies.... when they show me excessive attention and make me to tell what I do not want...” Kim, Young In(Age11, girl)
  “I feel irritated for excessive intervention at home.” Moon, Ye Som(Age11, girl)
  “My parents keep asking me what happened to me in school when I come back home.” Kim, Sang Hoo (Age14, boy)

Figure 33 Appeal from a child, “No excessive attention”

“No excessive attention please: when they show too much attention and ask me to speak about my private life”
5-2. The Guarantee of Individual Spaces of the Child

Another case of some children of ROK saying that their privacy is not protected is that they have no guaranteed individual space for themselves. The children living in welfare facilities have no individual space as they lead communal living. Therefore, they have constraints in changing the clothes, keeping the diary, or having private communications (including being scolding) with facility teachers. Moreover, it was found out that some parents force the child to let the door of child’s room open or remove it in order to control the lives of the child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unprotected privacy as expressed by children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I have a room.. which is open.. I can see my sister changing her clothes.” Kim, Yong Jun(Age14, boy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“keep opening a door when I am cleaning myself up....” Kim, Yoo Jung(Age13, girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I do not have my own room. My mom got rid of it. My room was connected to mom's room, which has been removed by mom for now.... My computer is in my mom's room, and school supplies are also in there.” Park, Sang Min(Age14, boy)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 34 Picture appealing for child’s privacy protection (group work)](image)

**Adults' Story**
(Head of child-care facility, Jeong Young Sook, Nun)

“Living in a studio(one-room), scolding is done in public. So, everybody gets to know who is being scolded. It's invasion of privacy. After changing rooms in the form of an apartment, I advised nuns to take a child to a separate space and speak one-to-one, in order not to share an individual child's problem with all."
5-3. Difficulties of Individual Ownership

It was not easy for the child living in public facilities to own personal belongings compared to the children in other groups. Some children say that they could not wear what they want because they have to share the clothes together, and also could not spend as they like although they received some pocket money.

Unprotected privacy as expressed by children

3) Difficulties of individual ownership
“"I hate not spending our pocket money as we like." Joo, Jae Hee(Age11, boy)
“No right I can do as I like(baseball I got as a present being kept in guidance teacher's locker).” Kim, Do Young(Age11, boy)

“Right not to go out? Right only to study? Right not to wear?"

Figure 35 Expression of the wish for free going out and clothes selection – Anonym
IV. Wishes of the Children

The children themselves came up with solutions to the rights that are not well respected in ROK, which are presented below.

1. Efforts to raise awareness on the rights of the child

![Image](site_for_child_rights) "Site for Child Rights: Menu, Site Intro, What Are the Rights of the Child? I Have a Say! Rights Quiz"

**Figure 36 Children’s proposal to run a child rights homepage for child rights advocacy**

The survey results show that 32.8% of the children have not heard of the rights, and 53.5% have never heard of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 42 of the CRC stipulates that the state party has an obligation to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike. Therefore, the government of ROK has responsibility and obligation to act on it, by making more efforts to widely disseminate the CRC through media, child organizations, and schools. The children suggested following alternatives to this end.

1) Creating and running a child rights homepage

Children proposed an idea of creating and running a child rights homepage in order to widely disseminate information about child rights and encourage their implementation. Children hope that such a homepage will be used as a space not only to get information about child rights, but also to facilitate better understanding on these rights and advocacy from child’s perspectives.

2) Rights education

“Before, friends gave me a hard time because I am from a multicultural family. Now, I feel good to get this kind of education. But, this is not enough. Other children also need to be educated and learn this. Even if we get this education, if others don’t know, it doesn’t help much.” – Kim, Yoo-jin (Age 11, girl)

This child talked about her own experience of going through difficulties due to prejudice of her friends, and then suggested the necessity of rights education for all children. She emphasized that change in the awareness of the children at large is necessary, and a faster and more effective way to promote respect for multiculturalism and diversity overcoming discrimination.

3) Campaign and publicity activities

“Launch a campaign by a child rights protection organization led by students.”

“Post articles on the Internet about invasion of privacy experienced by children, in order to raise awareness on the right to privacy.”
“Create an online café about respect for privacy.”
“Produce public campaign advertisement about respect for privacy of children.”
“Inform people to respect rights anywhere at homes, schools, and workplaces, teaching them what rights are.”

Figure 37 Suggested idea of producing and broadcasting public campaign advertisement about respect for child right (group work)

2. Change in the attitude of adults dealing with children

It has been revealed that children of ROK have minimal chances of expressing their opinions at home and school. Even when they can, their opinions are often met with negative responses, which makes children even less positive about expressing what they think. Regarding having dialogues with adults such as parents and teachers, many children said “What for?” “Doesn’t help” “I will be scolded if I tell them” “No use… We avoid each other, just ignore. I just need to put up with it for another year until I graduate”. It can be learned that many children regard talking to adults(mainly teachers and parents) about themselves meaningless, which affects the children to keep avoiding them by ignoring them, or even to make extreme decisions like running away from home or quitting school, as alternative solutions. However, children made efforts to find more fundamental solutions and here are their suggestions.

Figure 38 Children’s expression saying they want to be understood (group work)

1) Role play
“Children and adults can change their roles and live in a society without freedom. How about adults becoming one-day middle school students?” – Park, Gyong Seon (Age 15, girl)

2) Education for parents
“We hope that our parents ‘sympathize’ with us.” – Park, Ta Ryung, Im Yoo Jin (Age 12 & 11, girls)

“Education for parents –
1. Children also have privacy.
2. Please wait for a child to speak first.
3. Please show mutual respect!”

3) Psychotherapy
“I hope adults stop justifying themselves and try to genuinely understand children. Parents who want to get vicarious satisfaction from their children... (to get rid of it) need to see a therapist. I wish both such adults and their children receive psychotherapy, so that they can be more free from it.” – Park, Gyon Seon (Age 15, girl)

4) End the use of discriminative language and the use of positive language
“I don’t think my family is multicultural. It’s not necessary, because we are the same ethnic people anyway. We are the same people, just speaking a bit differently.” (Kim, Yu Jin, Age 11, girl)

“Why do they call us “New Settlers(Sae-teo-min)”?” (Anonymous)

“Words that make us happy: Take rest, Well done, Thank you, You don’t have to do it, Do it as you like, You can play games.

Words that make us sad: Go quickly and study, Why can’t you do this, Don’t think about coming home if you don’t do well in the exam, If you continue like that, you will be of no use, Already finished? Do it more!”

2 A new term adopted in ROK to refer to North Koreans who have been admitted into ROK, which has been suggested to be used instead of the term “defector” or “escapee.”
5) Alternative methods
“What about keeping score and treat someone with good behaviors or give additional points?”
(Anonymous)
“I wish I can get more supplementary assistance than others.” –Park Gyong Seon (Age 15, girl)

3. Drawing up strict laws and institutions & strengthening community safety facilities

“Please ban smoking by children under 18 years old.”
(Anonymous)
“Please make more protection facilities where we can go when bad folks or adults approach us to do bad things.” –Jeong, Yeon Seong (Age 12, boy)
“It will be good if teachers are prohibited from hitting or punishing children.” –Kim, Han Beom (Age 11, boy)
“We will change the laws so that children and adults will be treated more or less equal. The only difference is that children need protection because they are weak.” (Group work)
“Enact law on the respect of privacy (with a reporting system which can fine people who violate the law).”
(Anonymous)

4. What to do when the rights are not being respected

1) Increase Chances to Express Opinions through Class Assembly
“Suggestions can be made at class assembly and break time should be kept” (Anonymous)

2) Diversify Communication Methods
“Talk to teachers by writing letters or making phone calls.”
“Write a letter asking them to knock on the door.”
“Speak with a counseling teacher or a principal.”
“If discrimination is a serious case, you can consult the National Human Rights Commission. If you can’t go to see them yourself, you can get information on the Internet.”
“We must inform the UN about it.” – Ju, Jae Hee (Age 10, boy)

“Teacher! Do not play favorites!
Writing a letter or making a phone call to a teacher,
consulting the National Human Rights Commission,
sending a letter to the UN.”

Figure 43 Various communication channels that can be used when the rights are not respected (Group work)

V. Conclusion

ROK ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, and as of 2010, is awaiting the review of its 3rd and 4th combined reports. For the upcoming review, we have heard of the voices of 669 children living in ROK. Among them, 103 children gave their opinions in direct contacts/meetings with us.

We could learn that many children in ROK are not familiar with the concepts of the rights as well as the fact that they are rights-holders, and also that their rights are not well respected over all. When we categorize the rights of the child into the rights to survival, protection, development, and participation, the children in ROK can be said to be enjoying the right to survival. But, for some children, the level of respect for the rights to development, protection, and particularly participation fall short of the standards.

Many children we met in preparation for the first ROK children’s report were under excessive stress from being forced to study in fierce competition, doing what adults tell them to do without clear goals. Their typical complaint “I want to play. But, I can’t” reveals what they really want. This is a sad
reality of ROK society which has been in the blind pursuit of success, university prestige, and economic affluence. Such social atmosphere deprived children of the opportunities to express their right to play and leisure and could not guarantee their right to be heard.

Children have their own needs and also their own thoughts and opinions, and moreover, they know how to express them. When these rights of the child are respected by the society, the potentials of children can be fully realized. This is what children want from the society and adults, and ROK must pay attention to such voices of children.

There are much to be done if we are to have an environment for children to fully live as children, and also to deepen social awareness that prioritizes children’s needs and rights. In order for the rights of children in ROK to be respected, change in the attitudes of people in the society, especially adults like parents and teachers, as to put the interests of the child first, is most important.

“From Our Heart to the World”
It is our hope that the messages from the children living in ROK as clearly expressed in this report can spread beyond ROK and be part of the global efforts to uphold the rights of the child and to create a world where all children are happy.