HEB JIJ JE MENING KLAAR?

ALTIJD EEN EIGEN TIJDSCHRIFT WILLEN HEBBEN?

SPEAK UP!
IN JOUW MAGAZINE

Dan is Speak up! jouw kans. Doe mee!

Wanneer?     Middag 12 november (13.00-17.00).
Wat?          Maak een tijdschrift.
              Leer fotografie en schrijven
Waar?         Op AZC Apeldoorn
Content

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Background information

An introduction on how the Speak Up project was conducted in the Netherlands.

Involved organisations
Yohri (short for Youth and Human Rights Issues) works together with youth and other professionals to raise awareness and improve the situation of children and their rights. For this Eurochild Speak Up Project Yohri has worked with / consulted:
- Johan van Oldenbarnevelt Gymnasium in Amersfoort: Sandra Ekkelboom.
- ono-ono: makes your magazine on your event, activity or conference: www.ono-ono.nl.

Input:
- Unicef: Karin Kloosterboer
- Marjon Donkers: children’s rights consultant
- Har Torike :STUK coordinator

Timeline: (March to December 2011)
- Contact the organisations to reach out to the focus and control group. The school was the control group and COA working at the Asylum Seeking Centre the focus group.
- Plan the dates of both activities.
- Find the facilitators.
- Prepare the programme content with the facilitators.
- Prepare an invitation flyer, consent letter, information pack on how to make a magazine.
- Inform and invite the children.
- Inform their parents.
- Activity.
- Follow-up on the activity by giving the children the possibility to give feedback on their magazine.
- Follow-up on the activity by sending them their printed magazine.
Outreach
First of all the project had to match with the school curriculum. Since we were planning to make a magazine, the activity fell under Dutch class. At the school the children we’re invited by their Dutch teacher – Sandra Ekkelboom - with our Speak Up flyer. She invited children from different classes to participate. The children we’re asked to write a motivation letter and had to ask maximum three questions of what they want to know of the other group of asylum seeking children. We got 16 enthusiastic reactions, mostly by girls. After the children were selected, their parents received also the consent form and a description of the Speak Up project sent by the teacher. The teacher also participated during our whole activity.

‘It was a cosy place! Nice that we could also go out for taking our photo’s.’

Location Akimoto’s office basement
This office basement of our graphic designer is used for children’s parties. Therefore the room is very colourful (graffiti on walls), cosy, with couches, tables and enough space for the children to divide themselves in small groups. With upstairs a professional office, which might make the children feel more important.

‘I liked that we could all speak up and give our opinions on children’s rights’

Programme and methodology

12.30-13.00 Meeting at Central Station
We met the children and teacher at the Central Station. Together we went to Akimoto’s office.

13.00-13.20 Introduce your neighbour
The children were asked to (speed) interview their neighbour. Who are you? What are you’re hobby’s? What do you know about children’s rights? They split up in groups of two and sat at different spaces: couch, tables. There were paper and pencils laying there for them to use. They had to hand in the their paper afterwards. I used their information in the magazine and this report.

13.20-13.30 Plenary introductions
Introduction of the neighbour in the group you speed interviewed. We were sitting together on chairs in a circle.

13.30-14.30 Speak Up interactive workshop on children’s rights:
- 5 minutes: Introduction Speak Up information about the project. We deliberately didn’t use the Eurochild movie. It brought too much distance. Some room for questions and discussion.
- 5 minutes: Presentation on the CRC. With some room for questions & discussion.
- 20 minutes: Chose your right. The children’s rights were spread around the room (like garlands). The group was asked to stick post-its on four of their favourite rights with their explanation + name. Again in order for me to use their feedback in this report.
- 5 minutes: Together we looked which four rights had the most post-its.
- 25 minutes group discussion about the four most important rights. The facilitator answered questions – if others couldn’t – furthermore everybody felt free to speak.

14.30-14.45 short break for toilet visits, drinks, snacks.

14.45-15.00: split into four groups: 3x4 and 1x3. There were four articles topics they could chose from:
1. Children’s rights in general
2. Children’s rights in your environment (school)
3. Children’s rights at home
4. What if you were the boss…

We used the World café method. The four groups all got to switch four times each half an hour. In order for them to get an introduction and feeling with: text, photography and design.

15.00-15.30 Photography: facilitated by Roel Brekelmans
15.30-16.00 Text I (on your article): facilitated by Simone Bommelje
16.00-16.15 Short break for group picture and individual portraits made by photographer Roel Brekelmans.
16.15-16.30 Design your article: facilitated by Gijsbert Raadgever
16.30-17.00 Text II Finish your articles: facilitated by Sandra Ekkelboom

Individual evaluations with children who were ready with their article by Simone Bommelje.

Most information was written down by the children themselves:
- About themselves during: Introduce your neighbour.
- About children’s rights: on the post-its. Furthermore, I took notes on the discussion.
- In their own magazine articles. They wrote down their opinions.

‘I liked that we worked independently, but if we needed help we could ask the professionals’

Demographic data school children
- Number of children who participated: 15
- Ages of the children who participated: 12-15 years of age.
  ➔ 12 years of age (2x)
  ➔ 13 years of age (8x)
  ➔ 14 years of age (5x)
- Gender breakdown: 14 girls and 1 boy. At first two boys were interested. In the Netherlands girls seem to be more eager to learn about children’s rights and journalism than boys.
- Geographical background: They live in and around Amersfoort. Amersfoort is a central middle big town in the Netherlands with rural surroundings.

Ethnicity breakdown: Very white group of children. With only one girl who had a parent from Morocco. This is illustrative for the school. We chose to work with the Johan Van Oldenbarnevelt Gymnasium because:
- It was in a central middle big Dutch town, with rural surroundings.
- We knew the Dutch teacher.
- The children were interested to participate in their spare time.
- It was practical to use the free of charge children’s location of Akimoto in Amersfoort.

One of the parents commented:

‘It’s good to read that JVO (the school) supports this project. Our ‘normal’ children are so advantaged. It’s good to learn it’s not so normal for all children (humans) to be able to use their rights.’

Characteristics of their specific vulnerability:
There was one girl with a disabled brother, and one with a disabled sister. That was the main reason for them to participate in this Speak Up project.
- One girl was very small and her nickname was midget. She told that she was bullied sometimes.
- One girl’s father is from Morocco and she got bullied for that.
- Another girl had diabetes.

Key findings

The key findings were:

- During our activity the children pointed out, they hadn’t got so much specific information on children’s rights in the past. However, some had had some information in primary school. One girl told they once had a lesson to experience how good our situation is in the Netherlands. They also stipulated the Anti-Bully Day.
- Most children talked about children’s rights for other children. Although we kept on stipulating that the focus was on their own rights.
- The own experiences were mostly based on being bullied because you’re different (small, half Moroccan, separated parents, not being a girly girl, but liking soccer). One friend of the girls had to return to Angola after living in the Netherlands for ten years. And we especially talked about the right for special care for handicapped children. Because there were two girls with a handicapped sister and/or brother. They really wanted information, because they felt not listened to enough. They didn’t get the respect they liked from Dutch people. One of the girls got a medal of honour for taking so good care of her handicapped brother. She wanted to know, whether that was some right too.
- Being different seemed to be the reason why children/other people did not listen to them.
- These children felt that their rights were guaranteed. Accept abovementioned.
- According to the group of children who wrote an article about what they would change if they were the boss of the Netherlands. They would change the Asylum Seeking Policies and procedures in advantage of the refugees and asylum seeking children. They suggest speedy procedures that provide clarity fast, and don’t make you wait in uncertainty for years and being sent back anyway. They also suggest a possibility for the asylum seeking children’s parents to work. According to the group of children who wrote about children’s rights in general: they suggested that asylum seeking children should not be detained and need more privacy in stead of living in a small room in an Asylum Seeking Centre with the whole family.
- It was really strange to see that this group of very interested children didn’t bring any of the materials we prepared for them. Even the Speak Up buttons most of them didn’t bring.
- The hobbies the children had were unbelievable diverse: from hockey to musical, theatre, piano lessons. Even the asylum seeking children had multiple hobbies from swimming to going to bible class, but most of them loved to play.

Outcomes of the children’s rights game:

They found all rights important, but chose the right to:
- education
- health
- extra protection of refugee children
- play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s rights</th>
<th>Opinions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education (13x)</td>
<td>Without education, no future (Elie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They are able to do more for society in future. (Frederieke)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children are the future</td>
<td>(Floor, Nawal) Otherwise education will disappear. (Valerie) With education you make it further in life. (Karlijn) Children are the future without education they can't take care of themselves. (Jorien) Without a future you won't come as far. (Tarifa, Suzanne) With proper education this will go on from generation to generation. Otherwise science might die. (Liesanne) Education is a good basis to reach your goals. (Annemieke) You have to have the right of wisdom to develop in life. (Nanske)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care (11x)</td>
<td>You will live longer, healthier and happier (Bram) It's not fair when children are in pain. (Valerie) Children who are different than others also have a right to health. (Lotje) Ill children need help (Nawal) It mustn't make a difference what your background or sex is. (Eloe) Unnecessary pain or death is not necessary in our world (Jorien) Ill children do count (Karlijn) All children should have this right (Tarifa) Children are the future keep them healthy (Annemieke, Eloe &amp; Liesanne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee children 6x</td>
<td>They can feel safe and secure and know they have chosen well (Lotje) This right is important because they (most possibly) have fled for war or a government and are in danger. (Suzanne) Otherwise they can still be caught in the Netherlands (Frederieke) Otherwise they are still not safe in the Netherlands (Valerie) To be full of fear is hoping to die to get some peace (Bram) These children often are scared, sometimes ill and need care. (Tarifa)</td>
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<td>Play 5x</td>
<td>Children should enjoy life (Nawal) Just be a child and play in stead of working or carry responsibility is very important (Jip) Every child, should be able to be a child (Floor) By playing you develop better (Tarifa) You also learn by playing (Lotje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without family 2x</td>
<td>You are all alone without your family. (Nawal) Children without family are sad and need help. (Karlijn) Children sometimes can't take care of themselves and need help (Eloe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information 2x</td>
<td>In case your parents die you have the right to be informed (Nanske) It's important for everybody to have a basic knowledge to have certainty. (Jip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicapped 2x</td>
<td>This right is needed a lot!! (Big exclamation marks by Floor) Without this special care they can almost do nothing. (Frederieke)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity (2x)</td>
<td>You must be able to know who you are and who your parents are and where you come from. (Nanske, age) All children must have an ID. (Annemieke)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abuse (2x)  
Children are vulnerable. These scars physically as well as mentally will follow them all their lives. (Suzanne, age)  
Child abuse can ruin you whole life. (Bram)

Opinion (4x)  
It’s equally important what children think (Jorien)  
Everybody has an opinion if you don’t tell people might do things wrong (Lotje)  
Children often have good ideas, therefore it’s important to be able to express their opinions. (Jip)  
Everybody has a right to his opinion. (Valerie)

Equal (4x)  
It’s important that there’s no difference wherever you come from (Jip)  
Otherwise, there will be racism and some children will be able to have more children’s rights than others. (Bram)  
If we were all the same that would be boring (Floor)  
To be bullied because you’re different can stay with you your whole life. (Liesanne)

Evaluation method

_Bram: ‘I found today very cosy and our group worked together perfectly.’_

We prepared to do the evaluation in pairs. The children would interview each other in the group about the day. However, after the whole programme had finished most children were too tired, finished earlier than others and/or had to go somewhere. Therefore I improvised the evaluation by asking each individual child their feedback. I asked them: What did you think about the activity? What did you like? What could have gone better?

_Annemieke: It was super fun to get professional help on all fronts (photography, text, design). The system of switching worked really well.’_

Despite the teacher had warned me for some very critical children, the overall conclusion was that they liked the activity, the group and the place a lot, and they didn’t really know what could have gone better. Some suggested to include more time to write the articles. One girl even suggested that it wasn’t necessary to have everybody speak so long during the interactive Speak Up workshop. Two of the girls complained that they had two tests the day after and they asked whether these could be moved. This would definitely be something to consider communicating with a teacher before another activity.

_Lisanne: ‘I have learned to write, photograph and design. Children’s rights are important and I found it important to think and talk about it. It was nice that everybody could give their opinion.’_
II. Children at Asylum Seeking Centre
12 November 2011
Outreach
It took a lot of effort to plan this activity with the COA (organisation working at the Asylum Seeking Centre). I was already warned for this. Therefore, I contacted ‘Stichting Ter Bevordering van de Vrolijkheid’ (a ‘Foundation for the promotion of happiness’) who organise a lot of projects at the Centres. They suggested to contact the centre in Apeldoorn. Because they have a big amount of children living there and find it important to organise activities for them. COA Apeldoorn has three locations with in total 225 asylum seekers, amongst which 32 children. After waiting for the permission for our activity of the COA headquarter in Rijswijk, the employee Sahin Gulcemal was really enthusiastic. He invited children between 12 and 17 years of age (because there weren’t enough children in the 12-15 year age group) the Thursday before our activity took place with our Speak Up invitation.* It is their experience that works best. Sahin got enthusiastic reactions, mostly by the girls. We discussed that after we would arrive on the Saturday we would go to the rooms of the children together to pick them up. The parents were asked to sign the consent form at the door. Unfortunately, when the day of the activity arrived we had to chose in a split second to work with either a group of younger children or older youth. Since we don’t have a lot of participation projects with younger children, we chose to work with them. That meant we had to improvise big time. Sahin and Margreet explicitly told us beforehand that they didn’t want to join the meeting, because the children already see them so often. In practise they joined a big part of our activity in- and outside, because they liked it that much.

*Seen the earlier experience with COA and the time-line we decided in consultation with Mieke Schuurman and Eurochild, to work with this age group.

Location Asylum Centre’s office basement
The location was at the headquarter of the Asylum Seeking Centre in Apeldoorn. This centre is located in a street full of villas. The building itself is also a villa. However, the accommodation of the families doesn’t really differ from the other asylum seeking centres, since they have to share small rooms with sometimes eight people. Our activity took place in the basement of the COA office. A nice place with a big table in the middle and a flip-over. It was quite modern. However, the color of the floor made it a bit more cosy. And all the colourful pencils, children’s rights posters, cards, candy and fruits made a big difference.

Programme and methodology
The planned programme was exactly the same as for the school children. However, in this case we had to improvise because of the younger children. Also we started out late, because a lot of the children had to come back from ‘Sinterklaas’ (Dutch tradition) first.

13.00-14.00 Picking up the children and have parents sign consent form
14.00-14.20 Introduce your neighbour
This exercise also worked well in this group. With the difference that I asked these children, to also draw their neighbour and most of them asked also the favourite colour and food.
14.20-14.30 Plenary introductions
Introduction of the neighbour in the group you speed interviewed. We were sitting together on chairs around the big table.
13.30-15.30 Speak Up interactive workshop on children’s rights: Quickly improvising we decided it would be best to split the group in two. One group would go outside to learn how to
take photographs. The other group stayed inside with me to learn about children’s rights and be individually interviewed. The individual interviews took around 10 minutes per child. While the other children were drawing or making a poem. And after we switched the groups again.

15.30-16.00 Evaluation and ‘after-party’ for who liked to stay.

I took notes during the whole meeting and the individual interviews. The children wrote information about each other on the papers while introducing their neighbour.

**Demographic data asylum seeking children**
- Number of children who participated: 12
- Ages of the children who participated: 7-14 years of age.
  - 7 years of age (2x)
  - 8 years of age (3x)
  - 9 years of age (2x)
  - 11 years of age (2x)
  - 12 years of age (2x)
  - 14 years of age (1x)
- Gender breakdown: 6 boys and 6 girls.
- Geographical background: They all live in one of the three departments of the Asylum Seeking Centre in Amersfoort.

**Ethnicity breakdown:** Of course this group was the opposite of the ‘white’ schoolchildren.
- Armenian boy from Rusland
- Armenian boy and girl
- Three boys from Colombia and one girl
- Iraq: 1 girl
- One girl and two boys from Afghanistan
- One girl from Congo

**Characteristics of their specific vulnerability:**
- Having experienced to flee your home country.
- Some might have experienced war or being treated badly in country of origin.
- Some of them had split up families. With brothers and sisters still in country of origin.
- Small living circumstances with big families in one room. No privacy and not a whole lot of room to play.
- Stress of uncertainty of getting permit to stay or not.
- Language difficulties.
- Being ‘bullied’. The youngest girl from Congo in the group was particularly picked on by the others. She was the only dark girl in the group. She cried a lot (normally as well) and therefore was called cry-baby.
- Only having arrived recently in the Netherlands and need to adapt.
- One girl told her brother was hitting her.
- Living in relatively poverty, without parents being able to work.
- Nightmares

**Key findings**

The key findings were:
- During our activity most of the older children 11 and up told they had heard about children’s rights at school. One girl had seen the pictograms at her friends place, when they were doing their homework together. The 14 year old boy said: ‘Since I’m in the Netherlands everybody keeps telling me about my rights.’ And: Children’s rights?
‘Doesn’t that have to do something with the Government?’ Somebody said: ‘Everybody knows that children can play!’ And the children found it important to be able to learn.

- During the individual interviews all children (except two of the youngest) have a clear opinion about what they think is important for them and what they would want to change if they were in charge. Most children talked about children’s rights for other children. However, what they found important was almost each time related to their own stories.
- Their own experience was mostly based on: The situation in their country from origin: war, fights, discrimination; no split ups of families; nobody being killed; poverty in the Netherlands; housing; right to privacy; one boy found it important that handicapped children received special care and one girl the right of not being abused/maltreated.
- Most of the children told that they were very happy in the Netherlands: Felt safe; no war; nice at the ‘Loolaan’ (in their street): playing with other children; learning at school; all kinds of hobbies; Of course despite all abovementioned.
- Most of the children would give either money or a house if they were the boss of the Netherlands. One boy would solve all fights; One girl would do something against child abuse; Two girls wanted to keep families together. One boy didn’t want to change anything in the Netherlands. One girl wanted to have a residence permit.
- No one complained about not being listened to in the Netherlands. The teachers were nice and the seemed to love Margreet and Sahin (COA).
- Again most of these children didn’t bring the materials we brought them. The only brought their own drawing back home.

Outcomes of the children’s rights game:
I used the pictograms to explain about their rights and use it for the short discussion. We didn’t really play the game, because there was a lack of concentration and it was better to interview them separately and have the other children draw or write a poem.

During the interviews the four rights that were mentioned most:
- right of housing (3x)
- right to safety / no war / special care refugee children (2x)
- Right to secure income (2x)
- Right for special protection for handicapped children and health (2x)
- Family right: right to stay together as family (2x)

Other rights mentioned:
- Right to not being abused/maltreated (1x) This right was mentioned by a girl. Who during her interview shared that her brother sometimes hit her.
- Right to education was mentioned by some children during the general discussion. And by one girl during the individual interview.
- The right to play was mentioned during the general discussion.
- No discrimination was mentioned during the general discussion.

Evaluation method

Valentina: I enjoyed taking the pictures and draw my friend Christina.

During the individual interviews I asked the children: What did you think about the activity? Most of them told me: ‘I had fun.’

Christina: I liked everything, but especially the photo’s.
General remarks for both groups

- The people (school, parents, facilitators) who I talked to found it a pity we couldn’t bring the two groups together. While that would be most interesting for the youth themselves and also for the results.
- Both groups of children had very busy schedules. They needed to choose from different activities to join Speak Up.
- The facebook account we made for the project we barely use.
- Both groups liked the buttons we gave them, but didn't bring the written information.