We received an overwhelming number of submissions and responses to our invitation to make a children’s rights magazine. Our target group was students in classes two and three of the Johan van Oldenbarnevelt Gymnasium in Amersfoort (hereafter referred to as the JVO).

How are your children’s rights met? What about children’s rights in the Netherlands? How are they met at your home and at your school? What would you change if you were in charge of the country? Starting with these questions, fifteen enthusiastic young people began to convert their ideas into words and images. They received professional guidance from photographer Roel Brekelmans, designer Gijsbert Raadgever, Akimoto graphics, Sandra Ekkelboom (teacher and editor) and Simone Bommeljé (children’s rights and communication specialist).

The making of this children’s rights magazine was run by ono-ono in the context of the European children’s rights project Speak Up!. Two days earlier a group of children living at the Asylum Seekers Centre in Amersfoort made their magazine about children’s rights. The results of both activities are included in European research on how children experience their rights. The research is conducted by seven other European countries with groups of school children and children that live in a vulnerable situation, e.g. they live up in a youth institution or are deaf.

The results of these international studies are incorporated in a report for the European Commission by the European Children’s rights organisation Eurochild.

The input of the children will be used to improve Europe’s policies for children.

We’d like to thank them for their work!
Speak Up
We talked to the fifteen young magazine makers and asked them: Who are you? Which children’s right is important in your life?

Hopeless existence
At first sight everything seems perfect in the Netherlands: you feel safe and at home. But is that true for everyone? Learn what the Netherlands would look like if Bram, Eloe, Liesanne and Jorien were in charge.

A fence around your children’s rights
What if your whole life is based here and it’s suddenly taken from you? This happened to Mauro.

Fragments from the diary of... At a normal school, in a normal class; friendships, love and homework. But not everything is as it seems...

At home Read stories about the lives of some girls from different families and the role that children’s rights plays.
We asked the young ladies and gentleman to quickly interview each other and then introduce each other to the group. Who are you? During the children’s rights workshop we asked for their opinions on rights. Which rights are important in your life and why?
**“WE LIVE IN A FREE COUNTRY WHERE CHILD LABOUR IS PROHIBITED!”**

**CHILDREN’S RIGHTS ONLY FOR DUTCH CHILDREN**

**Who:** Frederieke Pijl (13)
**Hobbies:** ‘I’ve been horse riding for over six years now. I’ve been acting at the Musicalschool for four years and love to sing and dance.’
**Future:** ‘In the future I want to do technical studies or architecture. I live in Kattenbroek with my three younger sisters.’
**Children’s rights:** ‘Children have the right to education and cannot be forced into child labour. In the Netherlands things are arranged well, except for non-Dutch children. Do they have the same rights? Like Mauro for instance?’

‘Education allows children to contribute more to society in the future. You break children if you imprison or torture them. Refugee children need extra protection. Handicapped children also need extra care.

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**THE KISS OF ZWARTIE PIET**

**Who:** Suzanne Hoogstraten (14)
**Hobbies:** ‘I love shopping, meeting friends, parties, social media, reading and watching GTST (famous Dutch soap series).’
**Children’s rights:** ‘I know that all children have the right to education, medical and social care, and freedom of opinion and that there’s a prohibition on child labour. Also it’s important that they get presents for their birthday and Sinterklaas (a Dutch tradition, like Christmas). With a kiss from Zwarte Piet, let there be happiness for everybody.’

‘Children are vulnerable. The scars of child abuse are physical as well as mental. Asylum seeking children also have a right to extra protection. They have probably fled from war or their government, because they were in danger.’

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**VEGETARIAN CHICK**

**Who:** Jorien de Vries (14)
**Hobbies:** ‘I love to act and play piano and hockey. She smiles humbly as Eloé says: She’s a vegetarian chick that looks good in front and behind the camera. Her good points are that she’s both sociable and sweet.’
**Children’s rights:** ‘The rights of children. They are the future.’

‘Children can’t take care of themselves without education. It is also not fair to have a child suffer or die unnecessarily, because of lack of medical care. Nobody should be abused.’
CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a United Nations Convention. A
convention is an agreement between countries. It is the most widely-adopt-
ed human rights Convention in the world, having been ratified by 193 out
of the 195 countries. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopt-
ed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989. The Netherlands
ratified the Convention in 1995.

The Convention covers everything you deal with in your life from birth to
your eighteenth birthday. It’s not only about school, living, health, religion,
parents and relatives, but also about child abuse, child labour, war and
refugees. For more information: www.defenceforchildren.nl.

HELP PEOPLE WHO CAN’T HELP THEMSELVES

Who: Annemieke van Straalen (12)
Hobbies: ‘Singing, drawing, shopping and chatting’
Children’s rights: Children are
the future. I think that the right to
education and health care are the most
important.

‘All children should be able to be
healthy. They have the right to their
own identity and are able to achieve
more through education. Children
cannot be imprisoned.’

APPLES AND CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

Who: Lotje Merks (13)
Favourite food: ‘I like apples.’
Hobbies: ‘Dancing, hockey,
writing and playing. My nickname
is ‘Dwarf’.
Family: ‘I have three brothers.’

‘Everybody has the right to ex-
press their opinion, the right to
good care and to feel safe if you
have fled your home country. You
can learn from playing, which is
also a children’s right.’

WHEN I GROW UP…

Who: NawalBes(13)
Hobbies: ‘Reading, playing on the
computer and playing my cello.’
Favourite colour: ‘Red’
Speak Up: ‘I want to fight for chil-
dren’s rights when I’m older.’

‘Children are the future. That’s
why education and help for ill
children are very important. The
right to family life is also very im-
portant. Without a family you’re
all alone. Children should be able
to play and enjoy life.’

“THE RIGHT TO KNOWLEDGE IS NECESSARY TO GET FURTHER IN LIFE”
THE RIGHT TO WISDOM

Who: Nanske Biesma (13)
Hobbies: ‘I love hockey, tennis, piano, cycle racing and running.’
Family: ‘I have two brothers.’
Children’s rights: ‘Are there for children worldwide. I vote for playing and learning!’

‘The right to identity: You have to be able to know who you are, where you’re from and who your parents are. It’s also important that you are informed when your parents die. The right to knowledge is necessary to get further in life.’

ILL CHILDREN DO COUNT

Who: Karlijn Diender (14)
Hobbies: ‘I play clarinet and love to jump on a trampoline. I have a cat of 17 years of age! I live in Soesterberg and I like music from the sixties.’
Family: ‘I have a brother and a sister.’
Children’s rights: ‘These are the rights of children. For example, that children cannot be abused and that child labour is not allowed.’

‘With education you can get further in life. Children without a family are sad and need help. Also ill children count.’

SPECIAL ATTENTION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IS NECESSARY

Who: Floor Rothengatter (13)
Hobbies: ‘Tennis, chilling, reading the Hitkrant and Cosmogirl.’
Family: ‘I have a brother and a sister.’
Children’s rights: ‘I’ve heard of them.’

‘Children are the future. Everybody has equal rights. It would be boring if we were all the same. I have a handicapped brother and I know from my experience that special care is definitely necessary for handicapped children.’
**JUST BEING A CHILD**

**Who:** Jip van der Rest (14)

**Hobbies:** ‘I love the circus, reading, playing the flute and watching GTST (famous Dutch soap series).’

**Ambition:** ‘Something medical or to work in journalism.’

**Children’s rights:** ‘I know that it is important that all children have rights, otherwise they cannot function in society. This is important because children are the future.’

‘It is important that children can express their opinions, because they often have good ideas.” It makes no difference where you come from. A child must be able to be a child without always having to work or bear heavy responsibilities, for example.’

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**HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER**

**Who:** Bram van den Heuvel (12)

**Hobbies:** ‘Media, films, making cartoons and playing the violin.’

**Speak Up:** ‘In the future I’d like to work in the media and I think children’s rights are important.’

**Favourite colours:** ‘Red and dark green.’

‘I find the right to health very important, because you can live longer and happier if you are healthy. If you have fled and are full of fear and are in danger then the only hope left is to die and find peace. The prohibition of child abuse is important, because abuse can ruin your life. Children need equal rights, otherwise you get racism.’

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**NO FUTURE WITHOUT EDUCATION**

**Who:** Eloë Boele van Hensbroek (14)

**Hobbies:** ‘I love acting, reading, my laptop, shopping and chilling. Like Jorien, I’m a vegetarian chick. I’m creative.’

**Children’s rights:** ‘Children’s rights are the rights that children have all over the world.’

‘Without education children have no future. It shouldn’t make a difference where you’re from or which sex you are to claim your rights. Children sometimes need a little help. They are the future, so keep them healthy and teach them.’
SAFE IN THE NETHERLANDS
Who: Valerie Boschloo (13)
Hobbies: ‘Playing the keyboard, handball and dancing.’
Children’s rights: ‘To my knowledge children’s rights are sometimes not met.’
‘Everybody has a right to their own opinion. Children should be helped when they are in pain or have fled to the Netherlands. Otherwise they are still not safe here.’

EXTRA PROTECTION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN
Who: Tarifa Versteeg (13)
Hobbies: ‘Horse riding and writing stories. My favourite animal is a horse.’
Favourite colour: ‘Yellow.’
Children’s rights: ‘I’ve heard about them, but don’t know a lot about them yet.’
‘By playing children can develop better. Without education and healthcare as a child you won’t get as far in the future. Refugee children have an extra right to protection. They are often very afraid, are sometimes ill and have the right to be taken care of.’

KEEP SCIENCE ALIVE
Who: Liesanne van Veen (13)
Family: ‘I have a brother.’
Hobbies: ‘I love hockey, singing and acting. I like to read Cosmo Girl and Elle. I also like shopping. I’ve made a magazine before.’
Children’s rights: ‘Are rights for children all over the world, but in some countries these rights are taken from children.’
‘When children are well educated from generation to generation, science will be kept alive. If you are bullied because you are different, this can follow you for the rest of your life. It’s stupid that children are being tortured. Children are needed for the future!’

“IF YOU ARE BULLIED BECAUSE YOU ARE DIFFERENT, THIS CAN FOLLOW YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.”
At a normal school, in one normal class; friendships, love and homework. But nothing is as it seems in this fictitious diary...
Dear diary,

Today was a totally bad day. I skipped class for the first time. I felt so bad. After the big break I went straight to my horse’s stable “Het stapje”. Ricardo had sent me 10 threatening texts. But I do love Ravel. He is so sweet. He is the only one that really understands me. My parents could follow his example. They totally don’t understand me. Shit, I think my Mum’s coming home. She is probably furious.
Dear diary,

Tomorrow, there’s a big party at school, but my Mum still didn’t give me the money to go. I do understand that she’s still mad, but I told her, I’m sorry. And I mean it. I shouldn’t have skipped my class. But, I do want to go to the party. Cos that guy Lucas is going.

Xxx Soraya
Dear diary,

Mum thinks something’s going on. She shouldn’t worry, or... I did eat two bread roles and threw up immediately. Isn’t that great?

 Loads of kisses, Lisa.
Hey,

Today I was at school much too early. But I didn’t want to stay one minute longer at my father’s place. When I arrived at my locker I finally saw Bob, my best mate. We talked about Soraya. Than a fat first grader came by, and I hit him.
HOPELESS EXISTENCE IF WE WERE IN CHARGE OF THE NETHERLANDS...
If we were in charge of the Netherlands, we would first do something about the asylum policy. At first sight the Netherlands probably looks absolutely fine to you: you feel safe and at home. But is that true for everyone?

Asylum seekers are a well known phenomenon. Refugees come here for protection and shelter as the Netherlands is a symbol of freedom to them and a country where they can start a new life. But it doesn’t always end like this.

**EQUAL RIGHTS**

Take Mauro, a boy who could have lived in your street. What makes him so different from you or me? Why would a boy, who has lived a large part of his life in the Netherlands and is integrated here suddenly need to leave the country? What has he done wrong? Children are equal. They should also have equal rights.

**SPEED IN A HUMAN WAY**

We believe that some parts of the refugee policy can be improved. We especially demand clarity concerning the procedures that an asylum seeker can expect when he comes in the Netherlands, so that he does not have to leave the country after having lived in the Netherlands for several years. Speed and clarity is necessary! But in a human way.

"**SPEED AND CLARITY IS NECESSARY! BUT IN A HUMAN WAY.**"
All families live differently. There are many individual differences. Some have no father, others have two fathers. Some have only one child and others have many brothers or sisters. The way you treat each other, whether you’re completely healthy or have a disabled brother/sister, the relationship between you and your parents differs from family to family. Even the hobbies of various family members can impact on your life. There are indigenous or immigrant families. Read the stories about the lives of these girls from different families and how children’s rights play a role in their families.

**Name:** Karlijn Diender (14)

**Children:** Every child is entitled to medical assistance and to play.

**DIABETES IS A JOB IN ITSELF**

Hi, I’m Karlijn. I live with my parents, brother (12) and sister (9) in a terraced house in the Amersfoort region. Our family seems quite normal at first sight. Everyone does their own thing, does their homework, goes to clubs or does the laundry. My life, however, is less normal than it seems. I have diabetes, which is a job in itself. Besides doing my homework, I’m also busy making sure that my blood sugars are good, especially during school tests. If that is not the case, I will definitely get low marks. People do not always understand and if I need to measure my blood sugar, I often get weird looks. Luckily I have an insulin pump, so I do not need to inject. But I don’t suffer too much from my diabetes. I’m 12 years old now and I’m pretty used to it.
**Name:** Nawal (13)  
**Children's rights:** Discrimination isn’t allowed! Every child is equal.

**THE GIRL WHO LOVES FOOTBALL**
Hi, I am Nawal. I live with my sister (18) and my mother. My parents have been separated for as long as I can remember. My father is from Morocco. In elementary school I was sometimes bullied. Children would suddenly start talking like foreigners, with weird grammar. I wouldn’t have minded that, although it was annoying, but I would also get bullied for not being the typical ‘pink’ girl. I’m more the kind of girl that loves football. Primary school was actually hell for me and I cried at night in the summer holidays because school would start again. Fortunately, in high school it got better. Now I’m no longer bullied, but I think it’ll always remain a painful experience.

**“BULLYING WILL ALWAYS BE A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE.”**

**Name:** Floor Rothengatter and Valerie Boschloo (both 13 years of age)  
**Living with a disability**
We both have a special home situation. We have someone in the family with a physical/mental disability and so we often have issues with children’s rights. An example would be the right to special care and medical help for people with disabilities. Some ‘normal’ people do not have any consideration for people with disabilities. This hurts us a lot because they are human beings as well.

We start with the Floor’s brother. He has Down’s syndrome.

**A HAPPY BOY**
My brother has many limitations. He can’t talk, eat or walk independently for too long, but he is a happy boy and has a fun and happy life. What really hurts me is that people call him a moron, which will always be simply an insult and a form of discrimination.

**IN A HOT PINK WHEELCHAIR**
My sister also has several limitations. She can’t talk, walk, or eat independently, she has a glass eye and a curved back (and therefore can’t stand up straight). Like Floor, I can not stand people swearing and using words like ‘mongol’. People also call her a boy, which I find very annoying and frustrating. She has a bright pink wheelchair and wears a purple coat and shoes and still they can’t see that she’s a girl!

**WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH CHILDREN’S RIGHTS?**
One of the children’s rights is that children with disabilities are entitled to extra care. All men are equal, all children are entitled to love and care and all children are entitled to play. This also means children with disabilities. We think it is very important and necessary that children have these rights and that their rights are met.
What if your whole life is based here and it’s suddenly taken from you? This is what happened to Mauro, a boy of 18 who was recently sent back to Angola.
Here in the Netherlands you have clear children’s rights, but even in the Netherlands not all children are treated equally.

Take the children of asylum seekers, for instance. Sometimes they have to wait for years for a permit and they are often discriminated against. When they fled their country, they were taken to live here in a refugee centre. Some of these centres are surrounded by a fence.

**RIGHT TO FREEDOM**

In this case, the right to protect refugee children is at stake. There’s little privacy if you’re waiting to get a residency permit in a refugee centre. You are living in uncertainty as to whether you are allowed to stay or not. Asylum seekers’ children can often not learn easily at home because of the stress and minimal space they live in. Their right to freedom in such a centre is minimal and they sometimes live in a building with large fences around it. They live with their whole family in one room, which is often not bigger than your bedroom at home. If asylum seekers wait for a residency permit they cannot work so the only income they have is from the government. Children, however, are obliged to attend school.

**EDUCATION**

In the Netherlands, education is well organised. You must attend school until your sixteenth birthday. If you do not go to school (before you are sixteen), an attendance officer first gives a warning and the second time your parents get a fine. You also have children, however, who cannot afford school supplies, such as a set square, diaries or notebooks. These kids can get a ‘backpack’ from the local council. In the Netherlands, (almost) everything in education is well organised. We can continue education after primary school, to high school and even further. In many countries this is not the case. The Netherlands is able to organise some things well for all children, including the children of asylum seekers! Why don’t they do it in all their policies?
On these post-its you find a compilation of what the children said about their rights (see p.4 – p.9, Speak Up).
This time the ono-ono team consisted of

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photography by Roel Brekelmans

**ono-ono, your magazine**

www.ono-ono.nl

ono-ono is Japanese for “so many men, so many minds”. Your own ono-ono Magazine will capture your event and the participants in words and photos and it’ll make it last longer. This can even be done within 24 hours after your event.

Contact us for your magazine: Akimoto (graphic design) Gijsbert Raadgever (06-51626041) and Simone Bommeljé (06-41509962)