“My Voice Matters”
Results, conclusions and recommendations
Campaign objectives:

- Survey children’s opinion of issues that affect them: family, school, healthcare, social protection, leisure time, society, state
- Present the results in order to be taken into consideration when updating the National Strategy for the Child 2008-2018
- Change the public attitudes to child participation
Campaign stages

- **Information campaign** – outdoor advertising, Internet advertising

- **Online questionnaires** (10 March- 11 April 2015)
  Participants: 6531 children

- **Direct consultations with children from vulnerable communities** (19 March - 7 April 2015)
  Participants: 139 children from Roma communities, children with disabilities and child users of social services

- **Party with a balloon**

- **National Children’s Forum “My Voice Matters”** (22 - 24 April 2015)
Total number of analysed questionnaires: 6158

**By gender**

**Q.1. You are?**

- **44%** a boy
- **56%** a girl

**By age**

**Q.2. How old are you?**

- **7-9 г.** 3%
- **10-11 г.** 9%
- **12-13 г.** 27%
- **14-15 г.** 32%
- **16-17 г.** 22%
- **18 г.** 7%
**Participants’ profile (2)**

**By type of settlement**

- **Q.3. Where do you live?**
  - Village: 24%
  - Small town: 42%
  - Big city: 25%
  - The capital: 9%

**By type of school**

- **Q.9. Where do you go to school?**
  - Primary School: 25.0%
  - Secondary General Education School: 44.6%
  - Private Primary School: 0.7%
  - High school - foreign languages: 7.3%
  - High school - science/maths: 4.6%
  - Vocational technical school: 10.8%
  - Other school: 5.9%
  - At home: 0.5%
  - Don’t go to school: 0.7%

N=6158
Q.23. Whom do you live with?

- with two parents: 81.7%
- with one parent: 9.5%
- only with a grandparent: 3.1%
- with one parent and another adult: 2.1%
- live alone/in an institution: 1.1%
- only with a sibling: 1.0%
- with friends: 0.9%
- live with a more distant relative: 0.3%
- no answer: 0.4%

N=6093
The ideas of children for their future

5% of children replied to the question “How do you see your future?”

- 18% - “rich”
- 12% - “successful”
- 6% - “happy”
- 63% - “to have a job”
- 61% - “to have a family of their own”
### Q.5. What do you want to do for a living?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and healthcare - dentist, doctor, nurse, pharmacy</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT and telecommunications - programmer, graphic design</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, legal services</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher, pedagogue, writer, translator</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, construction, town planning, interior design</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy, finance, banking, insurance, accounting</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cars - engineer, designer, car mechanic, driver</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinarian</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and development</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, carpentry</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading, sales</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronomy and space research</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and advertising</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronomy and space research</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and advertising</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=6158
Q. 4. Where do you most want to live?

- 43% want to live abroad
- 35% in the same place where I live now
- 22% in another town in Bulgaria

N=6094
Children propose:

- Adults to adopt policies, measures and strategies by means of which to retain the young people in Bulgaria
- Provide financial and moral help and support
- Implement more flexible education programmes
- Organise an initiative “Let’s Keep Things Bulgarian”
- Explain the PROs and CONs of living abroad
Main problems of children in Bulgaria

- **Poverty** - 46% of respondents
- **Unhindered access to cigarettes, alcohol and drugs** - 44%
- **Education** - 39%
- **Abuse, aggression, bullying** - 38%
### Q.7/8. Problems of children in Bulgaria and around the world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
<th>World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to cigarettes, alcohol, drugs</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour and values</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned / homeless children</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems in the family</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill health, diseases, obesity</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technologies - phones, computers, social networks, Internet, computer games</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of free time</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of trust in children / not being respected / not being heard / not respecting their rights</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination, racism</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of security</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promiscuous/early sex; get married early / have children</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - positive</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - negative</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The total percentage exceeds 100%, since more than one reply was provided.
The voice of children...

“Help should be provided to poor children so that they could also be educated and civilized like the rest of the children and not be different from them.”

“I do not like that 50% of the things we study will never be of use to us, and we don’t learn very important things about life that we will need.”

”I want us to study useful things; to be interesting at school”.
Children and school

Do you like going to school?

47% replied YES
46% - Not always, it depends on the day
6% - NO

What do you like at school?

63% - the time with the classmates
58% - that we learn new things
31% - art lessons
20% - extracurricular activities
18% - the school lessons
15% - the teachers
Q.13. What DON'T you like about school?

- Student-student relationships: 55%
- Student-teacher relationships: 42%
- Studying: textbooks / lessons / extracurricular activities: 26%
- Setting: building / classroom / conditions for spots at school: 25%

Note: The total percentage exceeds 100%, since more than one reply was provided.
"I want the whole school system to change; better teachers to be available. That students would study contemporary works such as The Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit, Harry Potter."

"I want to learn things that are useful in life. Most lessons are difficult and not necessary to know......"
Children propose:

- Education to develop such skills in children that will prepare them for their life and career.
- Simplify the learning content and make it more practically focused.
- New teaching methods and younger teachers.
- Opportunity to choose between school subjects and changing the scheme of optional subjects.
- Creating conditions for children with special educational needs and with disabilities to attend school on equal terms with the other children.
- Organise team activities to bring the children in the class and between the classes together (extracurricular activities, sports events, competitions or logical games).
**Children and leisure time**

Q.21. Do you have enough free time for the following activities...? - YES, I have for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>having fun (computer games, board games, etc.)</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meeting with friends</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practicing sports</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watching TV</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spending time with your family</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Internet</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q.22. What do you most like to do in your leisure time?

- to be with friends, outdoors: 30.4%
- to play sports: 20.3%
- to read: 9.8%
- to play computer games: 8.4%
- to have fun, to play: 6.4%
- to draw: 4.9%
- to listen to music: 4.5%
- to go for a walk: 3.8%
- to sleep, to have rest: 3.8%
- to watch TV: 3.4%
- to browse in the Internet: 3.0%
- to dance: 2.3%
- other: 19.5%

Note: The total percentage exceeds 100%, since more than one reply was provided.

N=3696
Children propose:

- Refurbish the old sports playgrounds and build new in the places with no such facilities
- Give scholarships to children with proven talent in different sports
- Organise consultations during school days on topics that concern children
- Psychologist to come to talk to all children
Q. 27. Do you help with earning money for the family?

- Yes, most of the time: 72%
- From time to time: 22%
- No: 5%

N=6094
Q.25 Which of the following is true for you and your parents/people you live with?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They spend time with me always when I want</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are interested in how I feel</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are interested what I do / how I am doing at school</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They listen to me when I have a problem and help me</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They listen to me when I have a problem but don't help</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They support me</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get well together with my parents / the people I live with</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 6158
Q. 20. Whom would you ask for advice, if you have a problem with:...?

- **Problem with a teacher**: 70% my parents, 15% a sibling, 5% an adult whom I trust, 7% a teacher, 1% a friend, 9% the Internet, 6% don't turn to anybody
- **Problem with another adult**: 64% my parents, 4% a sibling, 7% an adult whom I trust, 2% a teacher, 12% a friend, 9% the Internet, 2% don't turn to anybody
- **Problem with a friend**: 39% my parents, 12% a sibling, 4% an adult whom I trust, 30% a teacher, 1% a friend, 9% the Internet, 2% don't turn to anybody
- **Problem with the lessons**: 37% my parents, 5% a sibling, 3% an adult whom I trust, 35% a teacher, 8% a friend, 5% the Internet, 2% don't turn to anybody
Children propose:

- Organise workshops for improving the relationships and communication between parents and children

- Provide free counselling by family psychologists – experts in working with children of a certain age (face to face and online)

- Organise sexual education seminars to be delivered by experts
Children and the right to opinion

91% have heard that they have rights

- 42% understood about that in their family
- 24% - at school
- 9% from their friends
- 9% from the Internet
- 7% - from other adults
- 8% - nobody has told them
Children and the right to opinion

56% always express their opinion

- 29% - only on some issues
- 13% - rarely say what they think
- 2% - never express their opinion
Q. 32. Do adults listen to your words / opinion?

- yes, always: 38%
- only on some issues: 48%
- I rarely say what I think: 11%
- I never express my opinion: 3%

N=6079
**Children propose:**

- Disseminate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Increase the number of school lessons dedicated to the rights of the child
- Deliver extracurricular trainings or summer academies for children, dedicated to the rights and protection of children
- Organise competitions and presentation on controversial topics with the participation of children and adults, children and parents
- Support children who are too shy to express their opinion
- Organise more debates and sketches on “taboo” topics for children
Children and solidarity

- Every second child (50%) is interested how the other children and young people in Bulgaria live
- 6% are interested in the life of children in other countries
- 31% showed no interest

93% declared willingness to help children, who need help
Q. 34. Do you believe that there are groups of children, who get somewhat different treatment:

- Children with disabilities: 39% yes, worse treatment, 46% yes, better treatment, 15% no, the same treatment
- Children from the minorities: 48% yes, worse treatment, 22% yes, better treatment, 30% no, the same treatment
- Children from poor families: 54% yes, worse treatment, 19% yes, better treatment, 27% no, the same treatment
- Child refugees: 62% yes, worse treatment, 16% yes, better treatment, 22% no, the same treatment
Children propose:

- Encourage volunteering for children and young people
- Support participation of children in international activities and projects
- Develop websites with information about the life of children in other countries
- 30% of the lessons, dedicated to the class issues to present in films, presentations and stories the lives and problems of children around the world
- Develop a special school subject for presenting in a meaningful way the place and role of children in the society
- Organise more information campaigns for children and parents, focused on the lives of children around the world
- More and higher scholarships for children in need
For more information:

http://www.unicef.bg/kampanii/Moyat-glas-e-vazhen/34