



Representations of Children

#CovidUnder19: Life Under Coronavirus is an initiative to meaningfully involve children in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. 26,258 children from 137 countries across all five UN regions responded to our survey. More detail on this can be found at the end of this paper. This briefing presents findings that relate to representations of children



UNCRC ARTICLE 2 - NON-DISCRIMINATION

In their analysis of how countries are meeting their commitments under the UNCRC, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has noted that in some countries there is an **intolerance towards children and young people, particularly in the media** (see for example Concluding Observations (2016) CRC/C/GBR/CO/5).

Article 2 of the UNCRC, states that children **should not be discriminated against in exercising their rights**. The survey showed some children felt discriminated against on the basis of their age during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was the case for children in some countries more than others.



MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN

We asked children across the world if they thought that children were **represented better, worse or the same in the media** since the Coronavirus began. While many children felt that the media representation of them was better (24%) or the same (21%) as it had been before the outbreak of Coronavirus, **16%** of children felt that they were **portrayed more negatively in the media**.



Older children aged 13-17 years (17%) were more likely than younger children aged 11-12 years (11%) to feel the portrayal of children and young people **had gotten worse** since Coronavirus began.

Children in the United Kingdom and Ireland were more likely (**34%**) to feel the portrayal of children and young people had gotten worse since the pandemic began compared to children from other countries (15%).



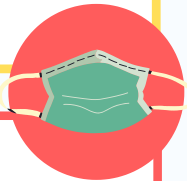
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WHAT WOULD YOU TELL GOVERNMENT TO DO?

Children in the survey were asked what advice they would give to government to help them **make sure that children's rights are protected**.

In some of their responses, children across different countries raised **concerns about ways in which they were perceived and treated more negatively** or **discriminated against on the basis of age** during the Coronavirus crisis.

They were concerned about how they were viewed during the crisis, particularly relating to **blame** for spreading the virus. They were also angry about being **excluded** from public places and that the **sacrifices** they made hadn't be recognised.



VIEWS ON CHILDREN DURING CRISIS

Stop telling people we are vectors it hurts our feelings and make us sad I want to see my friends and my nana and grandad. (Boy, 8, Ireland)

I think the government should see that children are not dumb and easily manipulated. Some can have their own stand and think of new creative ways to face the crisis. Children should feel that trust and not feel like they have to remain silent.

*This would increase their confidence and motivated to report injustice.
(Girl, 17, Bolivia)*

*Children are not as clueless as you think they are. They have a voice, and no voice should be shut out. Being a child doesn't mean our voices are less credible, moreover, it should serve as an insight as to what the situation on sectors that you may have forgotten or have not given much importance is like.
(Boy, 10, Philippines)*

Don't ignore children because they are young (Boy, 8, South Korea)



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EXCLUSION FROM PUBLIC SPACES

Tell them that we need to go outside and do the same things like going into a shop like our Mom's and Dad's. Tell them that they said we were the problem in the spread of the virus but we are not & they still won't let us outside. (Girl, 11, Ireland)

Please tell the shops I'm not a germ infested brat like the man said so I can go into shops and help mum I miss being able to help her dad is always working and mum is stressed trying to get important stuff for us when shops give out and won't us in because I'm with her please send us some help we have a new baby and can't get all we need because shops think I'll make everyone sick by helping my mum. (Boy, 8, Ireland)

RECOGNISING CHILDREN'S SACRIFICES

I think that the president should take actions and thank the children of the U.S. and thank them for the sacrifices that they are making to help stop the spread of COVID-19. We, children, have made many sacrifices for this pandemic, and we have missed our friends, graduations and proms. Sometimes it will feel like we are being punished for this pandemic, when in reality, we are making sacrifices. I think that it would make many children feel appreciated and helpful if our city council members, mayors, governors, and even, the First Family would thank us, children, for our do help and sacrifices due to the virus. (Girl, 11, United States of America)

I didn't have the chance to graduate from high school, I can't have the prom night party and the tour with all of my friends, I have to cancel a lot of holiday plans, I really miss hanging out with my friends (Girl, 17, Indonesia)

The pandemic deprived me of my friends, my colleagues, of the possibility to go on holidays. And poverty, very high poverty, because my mother did not work. (Girl, 9, Moldova)

My exams got cancelled and my prom too. Every year I attend a summer camp and that got cancelled to because we could not keep 1.5 meter distance. So this Corona crisis came completely at the wrong time because this year should be one of the best years of my life and now it is all ruined. (Girl, 9, Netherlands)



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All children have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). #CovidUnder19 is a multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together children, civil society organisations, academia and other partners to work together in understanding children's experiences of their rights during the COVID19 pandemic. A goal of #CovidUnder19 is to create a space for children across the globe to be meaningfully involved in the discussions around issues triggered by the COVID19 pandemic and contribute towards shaping the post-COVID19 world.

On 28 May 2020, the initiative launched a global consultation survey to understand children's experiences of their rights under the coronavirus pandemic and their views on how their rights could be better realised. The survey applied the Centre for Children's Rights' innovative approach to rights-based research directly involving children and young people as advisors from the outset. The survey has been designed by child rights experts and 270 children from 26 countries. The survey was open until 31 July 2020. It was made available in 27 languages as well as an Easy Read version for children and young people with intellectual disabilities.

Children and young people contributed to data analysis and interpretation. Each thematic paper presents key findings. Data is disaggregated as far as possible and where findings are significant. Please note that the survey is not intended to be representative of the global child population. Findings are presented on a global basis.

For more information please contact covidunder19@gmail.com

The Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast designed and conducted the survey and developed the thematic briefings in collaboration with Initiative partners and a team of child advisors. This was supported by an ESRC Impact Acceleration Account award through Queen's University Belfast