

Barnaverkætlanin

Eitt tvørgeira samstarv millum land og kommunur



Where Children Thrive: Voices, Visions, and Hopes from the Citizens of Tomorrow



Report presented Monday, 12 May 2025

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1 - Samandráttur

1.1.1 - Har børn trívast – Røddir, Visjónir og Vónir frá Morgindagsins borgarum

Henda frágreiðing leggur fram sjónarmið, raðfestingar og uppskot frá meira enn 670 børnum og ungum kring alt Føroya land. Tilfarið varð savnað inn, sum liður í Barnaverkætlanini og tilgongdini at gera eina barnalóg fyri Føroyar. Endamálið var at tryggja, at upplivingar, virðir og uppskot hjá børnum og ungum verða tikin við í menningina av nýggju barnalógini, og í arbeiðið at fremja trivnaðin hjá børnum og ungum í samfelagnum sum heild.

Dátinnsavnanin fór fram í skapandi verkstovum og viðkomandi samrøðuhættum bæði í Norðurlandahúsinum, í SALT, í Barnabata, í skúlum og stovnum, og vórðu fleiri enn 30 ymisk mál umboðað. Hetta gevur eitt óvanliga gott innlit í, hvussu føroysk børn og ung sjálvi halda, eitt gott lív er — og hvussu skipanir kunnu stuðla teirra trivnaði, rættindum og menning betri.

1.1.2 - Kjarnuboð frá børnunum og teim ungu

Tvørtur um allar aldursbólkar høvdu børnini og tey ungu greiðar og vælgrundaðar frágreiðingar um, hvat teimum tørva á fyri at trívast. Teirra íkast vísa á fimm týðningarmiklar raðfestingar:

- **Tryggleiki, ró og kenslulig nævera:** Børn og ung hava tørv á at føla seg trygg, og at hava rólig og stuðlandi umhvørvi í heimi, barnagarði, skúla, stovnum og nærumhvørvi – har tey kenna seg vard, sædd og kensluliga trygg.
- **At hoyra til og álítandi sambond:** At menna og varðveita vinarbond, at kenna seg sum part av felagsskapi og at hava álítandi samband við góð vaksin eru grundleggjandi fyri trivnað og tilknýti.
- **Spæl, hvíld og skapandi útrykk:** Børn og ung halda, at tað er sera týðningarmikið at hava tíð og rúm til frítt spæl, skapandi virksemi, hvíld og meningsfulla frítíð, har tey kunnu vísa hvørji tey eru og finna frið.
- **Rættvísi, meningsfull luttøka og rødd:** Tey ynskja veruliga ávirkan á umhvørvið – bæði í barnagarði, skúla, nærumhvørvi og skipanum, sum ávirka teirra lív. Tey vilja verða tikin í álvara og viðurkend.
- **Atgongd, javnrættindi og rættstundis stuðul:** Børnini og tey ungu søgdu, at øll børn og ung eiga at hava javnbjóðis møguleikar til umsorgan, útbúgving og menning. Hjálp eigur at vera tøk tíðliga – áðrenn støður gerast álvarsamar – og hetta eigur at vera óheft av bakgrund og lívsumstøðum.

Hesi sjónarmið endurspeгла gerandisdagin – frá matpakka og grønum øki til kenslur av útihýsan, trýsti ella gleði.

1.1.3 - Tilmæli til framtíðar barna og ungdómspolitikk

Tilfarið frá börnunum og teim ungu vísir á eina skipan, sum er fyribyrgjandi, fevnandi og menningargrundað. Høvuðstíðráðingarnar ella tilmælini eru:

- **Lógarfest rættin til trivnað, spæl og hvíld:** Rætturin hjá børnum og ungum til trivnað, spæl og hvíld eigur at verða staðfestur í lóggávu sum grundleggjandi rættindi.
- **Set í verk rættstundis og tørvsgrundaðan stuðul:** Tryggja at stuðul verður veittur tíðliga og eftir veruligum tørvi – diagnosa eigur ikki at vera eitt krav.
- **Tryggja rættin hjá børnum at luttaka í avgerðum:** Gera tað til eina skyldu at lurta eftir børnum og ungum og taka tey við í avgerðir, sum viðkoma teirra lívi – bæði í barnagørðum, skúlum, skipanum og í samfelagnum sum heild.
- **Krev samstarv tvørtur um geirar:** Styrk samstarvið millum allar viðkomandi tænastr, tilboð og skipanir, fyri at tryggja samanhagandi stuðul og tænastr, og forða fyri at barnið og familjan dettur niður í millum.
- **Raðfest inkluderandi læring og menning, og raðfest trygg umhvørvi:** Raðfest læring og menning, sum fevnir øll, stuðul til sálarligan trivnað og atgongd til skapandi, grøn og trygg umhvørvi.
- **Mát góðsku og trivnað út frá tí, sum veruliga hevur týðning fyri børnini og tey ungu:** Trivnaður hjá børnum og ungum eigur at verða mátaður eftir, hvussu tey kenna seg – tryggin, tilknýtið og virði – heldur enn bert at hyggja at atgongd til tilboð og tænastr.

1.1.4 - Nýskapandi arbeiðshættir

Vitanin hjá börnunum og teim ungu varð fingin til vega gjøgnum skipaða dátuinnsavnan, har ymisk sløg av skapandi kanninum og samrøðuhættum vórðu brúkt (t.d. tekningar, myndir, tvístøðumboð, lego, brotmyndir og yrkingar). Hesir hættir vístu seg at rigga væl í ymsum aldursbólum og málbólum, og vísti, at tað ber til at menna luttøkuhættir, sum eru fevnandi, motiverandi og fakliga haldførir. Vitlíki varð nýtt til at greina stórar nøgdir av kvalitativum dátum, umframt at fakfólk hava eftirhugt og góðskumett greiningarnar.

1.1.5 - Samanumtikið

Børn og ung í Føroyum siga ikki bara søgur – men koma við veruligum loysnum. Tey siga okkum frá, um upplivingar, halda fast í vónini og leggja fram uppskot til broytingar, sum eru grundaðar í empati, rættvísi og felagsskapskenslu. Tey vita ikki bara hvat skal broytast, men eisini hvussu tað eigur at henda – við tilknýti, inklusjón og álit. Sjónarmið teirra eru ein avbjóðing til okkara um at broyta lógir, politikk og stovnar, so skipaninar skapa góðar karmar fyri øll børn og ung – og ikki bert taka støði í hvussu tað altíð hevur verið, ella hvussu vit vaksnu halda tað eigur at vera.

Frágreiðingin er eitt boð um at handla **saman við** börnunum og teim ungu – og ikki bara fyri tey – og at byggja eitt samfelag, sum veruliga virðir nærveru, luttøku og møguleikar hjá børnum og ungum – eitt samfelag har øll børn og ung kunnu trívast.

2 - Executive Summary

2.1.1 - From Everyday Experience to Policy Reform: What Children and adolescents Say About a Good Life

This report presents the insights, priorities, and proposals of more than 670 children and young people across the Faroe Islands, representing more than 30 languages. The data were gathered as part of a national reform process aimed at developing a new Child Welfare Act and strengthening child policy across sectors. The purpose was to ensure that children's lived experiences, values, and proposals inform the development of a new Child Welfare Act and broader efforts to strengthen child well-being across society.

The data collection, conducted through creative workshops, school visits, and inclusive dialogue formats, offers an unprecedented account of what children and adolescents themselves define as a good life — and how systems can better support their well-being, rights, and development.

2.1.2 - Children's and adolescents Core Messages

Across all formats and age groups, children and adolescents expressed a coherent and emotionally grounded understanding of what they need to thrive. Their contributions reveal five consistent priorities:

1. **Safety, Calm, and Emotional Presence:** Children and adolescents need to feel safe, and to have calm, and supported spaces in their homes, kindergartens, schools, institutions and communities. Spaces where they feel protected, recognized, and emotionally secure.
2. **Belonging and Trustful Relationships:** Building and maintaining friendships, feeling included, and having trusting connections with adults are essential for a sense of belonging and well-being.
3. **Play, Rest, and Creative Expression:** Children and adolescents value time and space for play, creativity, relaxation, and meaningful leisure that allow them to express themselves freely and find peace.
4. **Fairness, Meaningful Participation, and Voice:** They want to have a real say in shaping their surroundings — whether it's in kindergarten, school, their local community, or the systems that affect their lives. They want their voices to matter and their contributions to be recognized.
5. **Access, Equity, and Early Support:** Every child and adolescent should have equal opportunities for care, education, and development, with help available early—before crises escalate—regardless of their background or circumstances.

These insights reflect everyday experiences: from the contents of lunchboxes and access to green spaces to feelings of exclusion, pressure, or joy.

2.1.3 - Recommendations for Future Policies

The children's and adolescents' inputs provide direction for a child and adolescent welfare system that is proactive, inclusive, and development oriented. Key recommendations include:

- **Legally Protect Emotional Well-being, Play, and Rest:** Integrate children's right to well-being, play, and rest into legal frameworks as essential rights.
- **Implement Early and Needs-based Support Systems:** Ensure support is accessible early and based on needs, not contingent on diagnoses or crisis escalation.
- **Guarantee Children's Right to Participate in Decision-making:** Secure children's right to be heard and involved in decisions affecting their lives across schools, communities, and care settings.
- **Require cross-sectoral collaboration:** Strengthen cooperation between caregiving, education, health, and social services to prevent gaps and ensure seamless support.
- **Invest in Inclusive Learning and Safe Community Spaces:** Prioritize inclusive education, mental health support, and access to creative, green, and safe environments.
- **Measure Well-being Through Lived Experiences:** Evaluate children's and adolescents' well-being based on how safe, included, and valued they feel, rather than solely on service access metrics.

2.1.4 - Methodological Innovations

The consultation used a mixed-method approach, combining structured data collection with creative tools (drawing, ranking, metaphors, and dilemmas). Generative AI was applied to analyse large volumes of quantitative and qualitative data, enabling real-time synthesis while ensuring human validation. The methodology proved effective across age groups and linguistic backgrounds, demonstrating that it is possible to design participatory methods that are inclusive, motivating, and analytically robust.

2.1.5 - Final Reflections

Children and adolescents in the Faroe Islands bring not just stories, but real solutions. They share their experiences, voice their hopes, and propose changes grounded in empathy, fairness, and connection. They understand not only what needs to change, but how change should happen—relationally, inclusively, and with trust. Their perspectives challenge us to reshape laws, policies, and institutions to reflect their realities, not adult assumptions.

This report is a call to act with them, not for them, and to build a society that values their presence, participation, and potential, a society where every child and adolescent is truly able to thrive.





3 - Key Learning Points

The national consultation process has generated a rich foundation of insights from children across the Faroe Islands. Through creative workshops and inclusive facilitation, children expressed clear priorities, values, and visions for the future.

The key learnings below summarise the most important themes and contributions that emerged from this work.

1. **Background and Vision:** The data collection was launched with the clear ambition of involving children on their own terms in policy development. The overarching goal is to create improved conditions for children's well-being and development through a new Child Welfare Act and adjustments to related sectoral legislation.
2. **Core Themes Identified by Children:** Children consistently prioritised safety, inclusion, community, access to resources, and personal freedom. These themes reflect foundational elements of well-being and development across all age groups. Key issues such as social relationships, access to education, mental health, and opportunities for play and leisure were also emphasised as central to a good life.
3. **Proposed Solutions:** Children's recommendations included the creation of more inclusive environments, better access to leisure activities, stronger use of nature, reinforcement of community ties, improved coordination across institutions, and the protection of their right to be heard and to influence decisions.
4. **Connections to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):** Children's contributions reflected core UNCRC principles such as non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, and the right to participation. In many cases, the children's ideas extended the Convention's scope by articulating contemporary needs and visions for the future.
5. **Broad Geographic Participation:** Children and young people from educational institutions, special services, and day care centres across all regions of the Faroe Islands contributed to the knowledge base. This ensured a geographically balanced and inclusive representation of voices.
6. **Creative and Participatory Workshop Design:** The conferences and local visits successfully engaged children in democratic dialogue. Workshops provided space for children to express their views through creative methods such as writing, drawing, and group collaboration. These approaches encouraged reflection, dialogue, and shared exploration of ideas.
7. **The Role of AI in Data Analysis:** Generative AI was applied to analyse large volumes of data from conferences and institutional visits. It supported real-time pattern recognition and synthesis of input from both children and staff. A human-in-the-loop approach ensured that interpretations remained grounded in professional judgement and ethical standards.





4 - Background

In March 2023, the Faroese Minister of Children and Education, in collaboration with other relevant ministries and the Association of Municipalities, launched a national initiative to create the best possible conditions for children and young people growing up in the Faroe Islands.

The vision is to build a child-friendly society through coordinated, early, and sustainable support systems.

The reform project draws inspiration from international best practices - particularly the "Icelandic model" - and aims to establish an integrated, rights-based strategy anchored in prevention, long-term investment, and strong collaboration across sectors. With a unified national vision and strategy now in place for the period up to 2030, the focus is on implementation, impact, and securing a better future for every child.

A key element is the development of a new cross-sectoral Child Welfare Act, where children's perspectives form the foundation of policy design. To that end, extensive data has been collected through child conferences and institutional visits, focusing on life at home, in the community, at school and day care, and during leisure time.

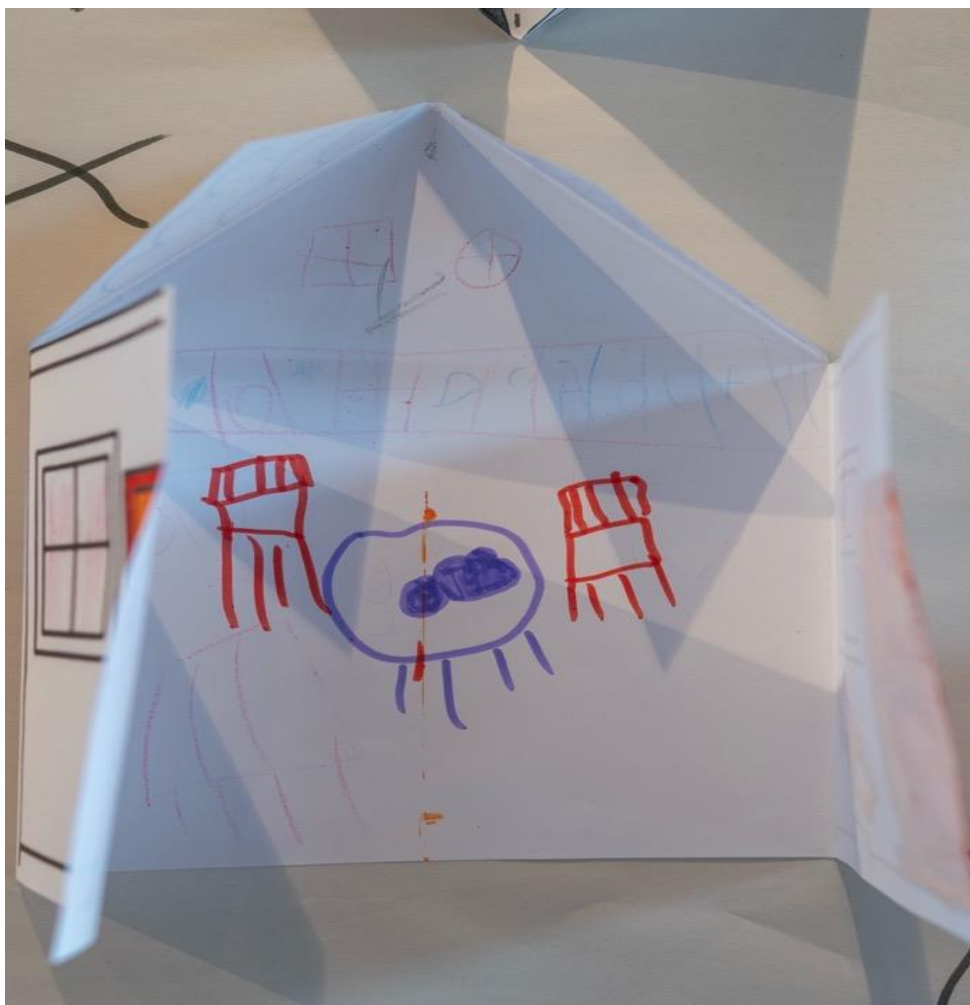
4.1 - Reader's Guide

This report is intended for a broad and engaged audience working to realise the vision of making the Faroe Islands the best place in the world to grow up. Key target groups include politicians, child representatives from participating workshops, agency and department directors, professionals across the child and youth sector, and those who took part in the national conferences and data collection. In addition, the report may be of interest to trade unions, the media, and civil society organisations that engage in children's rights and well-being.

The report begins with its core conclusions and recommendations to ensure that strategic decision-makers and time-constrained readers can access the key insights immediately. These findings are then elaborated throughout the report with supporting analysis, child quotations, and contextual commentary.

The insights of this report are already informing several parallel tracks within the broader reform project, including legislative development, policy design, local pilot efforts, and sector-based transformation. In the coming period, follow-up knowledge seminars and dialogues will be held in various professional and political settings to further explore and develop the findings presented here.

Finally, the report is accompanied by a substantial body of empirical data that may serve as a valuable foundation for further studies, thematic deep dives, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. The material is suitable for use in professional training, research, public administration, and policymaking.



4.2 - Analytical Perspective and Prioritisation

This report primarily adopts a child-centred perspective. The analyses are guided by what children themselves express, need, and hope for - in their own words, drawings, stories, and proposals. Children's lived experiences and reflections form the foundation for the conclusions and recommendations throughout the report.

In addition to the primary focus on children's voices, the report also integrates secondary perspectives from other key stakeholders involved in children's lives. These include professionals such as teachers, pedagogues, researchers, and public authorities. Their viewpoints contribute important contextual insights and help to highlight systemic patterns and opportunities for improvement in cross-sector collaboration.

4.2.1 - Language and Translation Note

This first edition of this report, prepared for the seminar on 12 May 2025, has been written in English. This makes the content more accessible to English-speaking child representatives, teachers, and researchers who have participated in the data collection. A full Faroese version of the report will be published later in May to ensure broad local dissemination and dialogue.

4.2.2 - Data Foundation

The data collected in spring 2025 provides a broad and diverse empirical foundation that reflects the lived experiences, needs, and hopes of children across different contexts in the Faroe Islands. The overall data set includes voices from children aged approximately 3 to 18, and spans a wide range of life situations, including children in mainstream education, day care institutions, minority backgrounds, vulnerable life conditions, and specialised care settings.

Each group was invited through structured workshop formats or facilitated group dialogues. The representation of children in vulnerable positions and those in specialised or non-mainstream environments is a particular strength of the dataset.

Moreover, the data reflects a balance across urban and rural contexts, as well as a range of institutional environments (schools, kindergartens, residential care, and community-based services). All data collected from smaller or particularly sensitive groups has been fully anonymised, and no personal or identifiable information is traceable in the dataset. This ethical foundation ensures the integrity and confidentiality of every child's contribution, while still enabling the analysis of meaningful group patterns.

Child Group	Participants	Age Range	Collection Dates	Locations
Student Council Representatives	365	Grades 1 to upper secondary	21–23 Jan and 20 Mar 2025	Nordic House
Preschool-aged Children (Daycare, Kindergarten)	172	3–7 years	19 Mar (NLH) and 29 Apr (Salt)	Nordic House and Salt
Children in Special Education	46	7–18 years	1, 2, 3, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30 April 2025	Four schools across urban and rural areas
Children in Foster Care or at Risk of Poverty	8	7–20 years	29 Apr – 5 May 2025	Barnabata and care institutions
Multilingual and Culturally Diverse Children	80	3rd grade to 21 years	18 Mar 2025	Nordic House

The national consultation was carried out through three coordinated rounds of data collection, combining structured workshops, targeted institutional visits, and inclusive facilitation methods. Altogether, over 670 children participated across these three rounds. Each one given the opportunity to express themselves in age-appropriate, safe, and context-sensitive ways:

- **Conference 1** (Nordic House, January 2025) engaged 365 children and young people from student councils, spanning public and independent schools, as well as upper secondary education. Most participants were part of mainstream schooling. The data was gathered through structured, dialogue-based workshops focused on children’s everyday experiences, rights, and visions for the future.
- **Conference 2 + 3** (Nordic House and Salt, March and April 2025) focused on younger children aged 3–7 from day care centres, preschools, and children with multilingual or foreign backgrounds. 252 children participated. Data collection formats were adapted to support non-verbal and creative expression, including play-based conversations, drawing, and storytelling. Language interpretation was offered across twelve languages to ensure inclusion.
- **Data Collection Round 4** (April–May 2025) involved local institutional visits and focused workshops with children in special education, foster care, poverty risk, and children with disabilities or neurodiverse profiles. This round included contributions from 46 children in special education, and smaller, anonymised inputs from children in foster care or social care institutions. Methods were tailored to individual communication needs, including visual supports, guided interviews, and flexible workshop formats. These settings provided in-depth insights into the everyday realities and complex support needs of children in vulnerable life situations.

4.2.3 - Linguistic Diversity and Inclusive Facilitation

The data collection reflects remarkable linguistic diversity, with children speaking 31 different languages across all sessions. This highlights the evolving demographic reality of the Faroe Islands: a small, open society that includes children from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds including newcomers, migrants, and refugee families. It is a testament to the Faroese context as both globally connected and locally rooted.

Languages that were facilitated or interpreted during the workshops are shown in bold							
Afrikaans	Amharic	Bisaya	Cebano	Creole	Danish	English	Ewe
Faroese	French	German	Ghanaian	Greek	Hindi	Hungarian	Icelandic
Igbo	Indonesian	Javanese	Kinaray-a	Lao	Nepali	Norwegian	Polish
Portuguese	Russian	Spanish	Swahili	Tagalog	Thai	Ukrainian	

Twelve of these languages were actively facilitated or interpreted during the national conferences and associated workshops, demonstrating the logistical and pedagogical success of the organising team in ensuring inclusive participation. Children were engaged in their own or preferred languages, enabling them to express themselves more confidently and authentically. This effort not only made space for multilingual expression but also showed that meaningful child engagement is possible even when linguistic needs are highly diverse.





5 - PART 1 – Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 - What Does the Data Show?

This section offers a comprehensive synthesis of insights drawn from all thematic sub-sections in Part 1 - *What Children Say About a Good Life and the Future*. The data collected across workshops, surveys, and consultations reveals a high level of consistency in how children understand well-being, safety, and development as well as divergences depending on age, life situation, and support needs.

- **Cross-segment conclusions:** Across all child groups, well-being is rooted in physical and emotional safety, caring adult relationships, the ability to play and rest, and the experience of being heard. Children highlight the importance of fair treatment, access to opportunities, and everyday dignity.
- **Divergences across subgroups:** Children in vulnerable situations report higher exposure to instability, stigma, and unmet basic needs. Children with disabilities seek relational consistency and tailored environments. Multilingual children call for inclusive communication, while adolescents express concern about mental health and performance pressure. Young children depend heavily on adult interpretation of their non-verbal needs.

5.2 - Key Considerations for the Development of a New Child Welfare Act

The insights from children call for a legal framework that is rights-based, inclusive, and grounded in real life. A new Child Welfare Act should address the everyday realities children face, while also equipping systems and adults to act early, consistently, and with care.

- **Identified gaps and needs:** Children describe fragmented support systems, slow or absent responses to distress, and symbolic rather than meaningful participation. Many also experience settings that are overstimulating, emotionally unsafe, or misaligned with their needs.
- **Principles for legislative development:** The law should reflect key child rights (participation, protection, equality), ensure relational continuity, recognise neurodiversity and social inequality, and include emotional well-being as a legal concern and not just an educational or health matter.

5.2.1 - Preliminary Recommendations – Inputs to the Legislative Development Process

Based on children's voices, the following should be considered in the drafting of the law:

- Protect children's access to rest, play, safety, and participation across all environments.
- Secure early, low-threshold support based on need and not just on diagnoses.
- Ensure every child has someone they trust who follows up and listens.
- Recognise mental well-being as part of daily rights and institutional obligations.
- Make children's perspectives visible in law, service coordination, and regulatory structures.
- Require inclusion in decision-making at the individual, group, and system level.

5.2.2 - Lawmaking for Children: Responding to Today and Anticipating Tomorrow

When designing legislation for children and youth, a fundamental question arises: *should laws respond primarily to the urgent challenges of today, or should they anticipate the structural shifts of the next decade?*

In practice, effective lawmaking must do both. Child welfare legislation, particularly if it aims to integrate multiple sectors, must address pressing issues such as inequality, mental health, and fragmented services. But because reforms are rarely revised at short intervals, they must also reflect emerging societal trends that are likely to define children's lives in 10 to 15 years from now.

The data gathered from children already hints at some of these shifts: increased digital presence, blurred boundaries between home and institutions, heightened social pressure, and emotional fatigue. These experiences align with broader megatrends identified in policy dialogues and foresight analyses. For example, demographic changes, climate concerns, evolving family structures, and rising expectations for individual performance are not just future projections, they are slowly materialising in children's everyday reflections.

5.2.3 - Emerging Trends and Future Regulatory Needs

In this light, legislation must not only reflect what is difficult to manage today, however institutionally nudge systems toward resilience and alignment with the needs of tomorrow's childhoods. This includes integrating long-term vision through mission-oriented frameworks, collective impact models, and principles of institutional design that supports relational continuity and adaptability. Future-facing laws must, in essence, be grounded but not static. They must evolve from what children currently experience into what they will inevitably face.

The table below present a series of societal trends that are expected to shape children's lives and the institutional landscapes surrounding them between now and 2035. While some of these developments are already visible in the data collected from children and professionals, others represent early signals that may become more pronounced over the coming years.

Importantly, these trends are not fixed destinies. They are potential trajectories shaped by technological change, demographic shifts, policy developments, and cultural norms that can be influenced or redirected through institutional choices. Lawmakers, practitioners, and civil society actors all play a role in how these trends unfold. As such, a child welfare law that is future-oriented must not only respond to today's realities but also anticipate and shape the conditions under which children grow up.

The tables offer a comparative view of how each theme is evolving from 2020 to 2030 and highlight potential areas of legislation and governance to consider in the 2035 horizon.

Trend / Theme	2020	2030	Regulatory Areas 2035?
Family Forms and Life Structures	Dominance of the heteronormative family	Greater diversity in family forms (rainbow families, shared parenthood arrangements)	Legal grey zones around parental roles and guardianship
Demography and Outmigration	Low child density in rural villages and outer islands	Continued centralisation creates uneven access to services	Legislation challenged by geographically unequal service needs
Migration and In-migration	Low immigration, mainly from Nordic countries	Increased immigration from Eastern Europe and Asia in specific sectors	Cultural encounters raise new demands for multilingualism and inclusion
Technological Environment	Parenting focuses on screen-time and technology criticism	Internet of Things and wearables in homes and institutions	Children gain digital profiles before school age – unregulated data frameworks
Digitalisation in Institutions	Screen use is mainly regulated through pedagogical practice	Expanded use of adaptive AI learning systems and care robots	Need for regulation of data privacy and algorithmic accountability
Labour Market	Parents have stable jobs and fixed working hours	Platform economy and freelance work affect daily family routines	Care systems challenged by flexibility and unpredictability
Institutional Learning	Separation between care, schooling, and leisure	Increasing hybridity: learning, well-being, and health are integrated	Need for new cross-sectoral legislation on institutional frameworks
Early Learning and Neurodiversity	Language stimulation and universal learning initiatives	Differentiated pathways for children with diverse cognitive profiles	Legal requirements for inclusive design and neurodiverse learning environments
Ethics and Children's Rights	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child formally incorporated into law	Debates on children as autonomous digital actors	New legal requirements on digital consent and representation rights for children
Climate and Sustainability	Environmental education is voluntary and non-mandatory	Green citizenship education becomes integrated in curricula	New child citizenship rights linked to climate responsibility
Mental Health	Focus on prevention in day care and schools	Well-being crisis among children and youth due to social media and performance pressure	New demands for cross-sectoral mental health legislation
Digital Well-being	Focus on physical health and general well-being	Increased attention to screen fatigue and social media impacts	Regulation of digital mental health interventions and responsibility for digital environments
Diagnosis and Needs-Based Support	Special support primarily follows formal diagnoses — long wait times in child psychiatry	Growing pressure on specialist services and need for early intervention without diagnosis	Development of interdisciplinary assessment systems; legislation must clarify responsibility
Relational Communities	Focus on early childhood education as community-building spaces	More children grow up in shifting family constellations and parallel communities	Institutions must accommodate fluid social affiliations — need for flexible norms and pedagogy
Hybrid Environments	Focus on physical and social safety in early childhood settings	Increased overlap between physical and digital spaces	New concept of protection: algorithmic surveillance, digital violations, home/school monitoring
Parental Engagement and Partnerships	Parenting guidance offered to vulnerable families	Higher expectations for active, digitally coordinated parenting	Increased demands for digitally informed and participatory parenting — with risk of inequality
Play, Creativity and Productivity	Play valued as pedagogical method and intrinsic good	Rising pressure on learning outcomes and test performance	Future debate on the value of play - need for protection through policy and law
Decision-making	Children are heard in specific cases, especially in out-of-home care	Participation institutionalised in student councils and municipal child panels	Child democracy on the agenda - demands for influence in daily life, personal cases, and data
Welfare Professions	Shortage of teachers and educators. High turnover – burnout and attrition	Growing difficulty managing children with special needs – more issues referred to schools	Systemic challenge in maintaining professional capacity
Cross-sectoral Coordination	Focus on collaboration in special cases and for vulnerable children	Increased emphasis on holistic pathways and network models	Digital infrastructure for cross-sectoral child services – legal/ethical issues with data linking
Views of Children	Focus on shared conceptual frameworks and values	Growing need for cross-professional competence development	Law may mandate shared views of children and professional ethics - challenging sector autonomy

5.3 - Strategic Considerations for Policy and Sector Development

While the law provides the framework, implementation depends on sector-specific and cross-sectoral alignment. Children's perspectives point to the need for strategic and systemic coordination and change beyond compliance.

5.3.1 - Mission-Oriented Development and Collective Impact

Mission-Oriented Development and Collective Impact are gaining traction as development approaches in public sector reform and leadership strategies across the Western world including the Nordic countries. And for good reason. These approaches offer a shift from siloed, problem-driven responses to collaborative, long-term solutions anchored in shared public value. They enable actors across sectors and levels to work toward common goals, align resources, and create measurable impact through joint accountability. By focusing on missions rather than isolated interventions, they promote innovation, adaptability, and inclusion, making them well-suited for addressing complex challenges such as child well-being.

Mission-oriented development is a framework for public sector innovation that sets clear, bold, and shared objectives. Rather than addressing fragmented problems in isolation, a mission defines a common societal goal such as ensuring every child has the right to a safe and thriving childhood and mobilises actors across sectors, levels, and disciplines to work toward that goal. Missions provide direction and legitimacy for long-term investment, policy alignment, and innovation in service delivery.

Collective impact is a method for collaborative governance and systemic change. It is based on the idea that no single actor or institution can solve complex social problems alone. Instead, lasting change requires a structured form of cross-sector collaboration, where stakeholders commit to a shared agenda, use common indicators to measure progress, and coordinate efforts continuously through a central backbone function.

Together, these two frameworks offer a practical and strategic logic for reform. They shift the focus from reactive, fragmented interventions to proactive, systemic alignment based on shared responsibility and measurable outcomes. In doing so, they acknowledge that children's lives are interconnected across institutions, and that effective responses require long-term, cross-sectoral collaboration. Specifically, they call for:

- Defining shared, long-term public goals for what constitutes a good childhood and youth.
- Anchoring implementation in network governance models that align actors around these goals.
- Mobilising multiple sectors - education, health, social services, civil society toward common outcomes.
- Using data and feedback loops to track progress and adapt over time.

This approach allows change to be sustained not through isolated reforms, but through a continuous process of joint learning, coordination, and accountability across the system.

The child welfare reform builds on these foundations. It defines clear public missions related to childhood well-being and embeds them into the legal, institutional, and professional frameworks

that support children every day. This approach ensures that the law does not stand alone but serves as a catalyst for coordinated action, learning, and accountability across the entire system.

5.3.2 - Proposed Cross-Sectoral Sub-Missions

To move from principles to practice, this analysis encourages the formation of strategic communities of action. These communities can operate across institutions, sectors, and local contexts to implement targeted priorities that align with the overarching mission of child well-being. Based on recurring patterns in the data, this analysis proposes the following illustrative sub-missions not as a final or exhaustive list, but as inspiration for collective efforts:

- Every child has a right to emotional safety and trusted relationships.
- All children experience inclusive and meaningful education.
- Children and youth participate in decisions that shape their lives.
- Support follows needs, not diagnoses or administrative categories.
- Children have time and space for play, creativity, and rest.

Each sub-mission reflects a central theme voiced by children and professionals alike and offers a concrete focus for collaboration, innovation, and measurable progress. Municipalities, ministries, institutions, and civil society organisations can shape their contributions by aligning with one or more of these ambitions, while tailoring actions to their own context and capacity.

5.3.3 - Preliminary Recommendations for Sector Development

To realise the ambitions of a child-centred and future-oriented welfare law, each sector must contribute actively to structural and cultural change. While a Children Welfare Act provides a common framework, sector-specific strategies are needed to bring it to life. The following recommendations outline how key sectors can support the mission through aligned priorities and actions:

5.3.3.1 - Education

- **Prioritise emotional safety and relational pedagogy alongside academic outcomes.** Children's capacity to learn is fundamentally shaped by whether they feel safe, seen, and supported. Day care institutions and schools should adopt pedagogical approaches that foster trust, inclusion, and emotional expression. This includes redesigning classroom environments, rethinking discipline practices, and training educators in relational methods. Emotional well-being should be seen not as a soft extra, but as a foundation for learning.

5.3.3.2 - Health and Mental Health

- **Integrate preventive emotional care in institutions and community settings.** Mental health support must move upstream. Services should be embedded in children's everyday environments such as schools, day care centres, and youth spaces where signs of distress can be recognised early and addressed through low-threshold interventions. This includes access to mental health professionals, as well as training for non-clinical staff in basic emotional support and referral practices.

5.3.3.3 - Social Services

- **Reduce system fragmentation and strengthen early intervention.** Children often describe support systems as disconnected and difficult to navigate. Social services must coordinate more effectively with day care centres, schools, health providers, and families to provide holistic, timely support. This requires shared case management, stable contact persons, and flexible pathways to support that are based on individual needs rather than administrative thresholds or diagnoses.

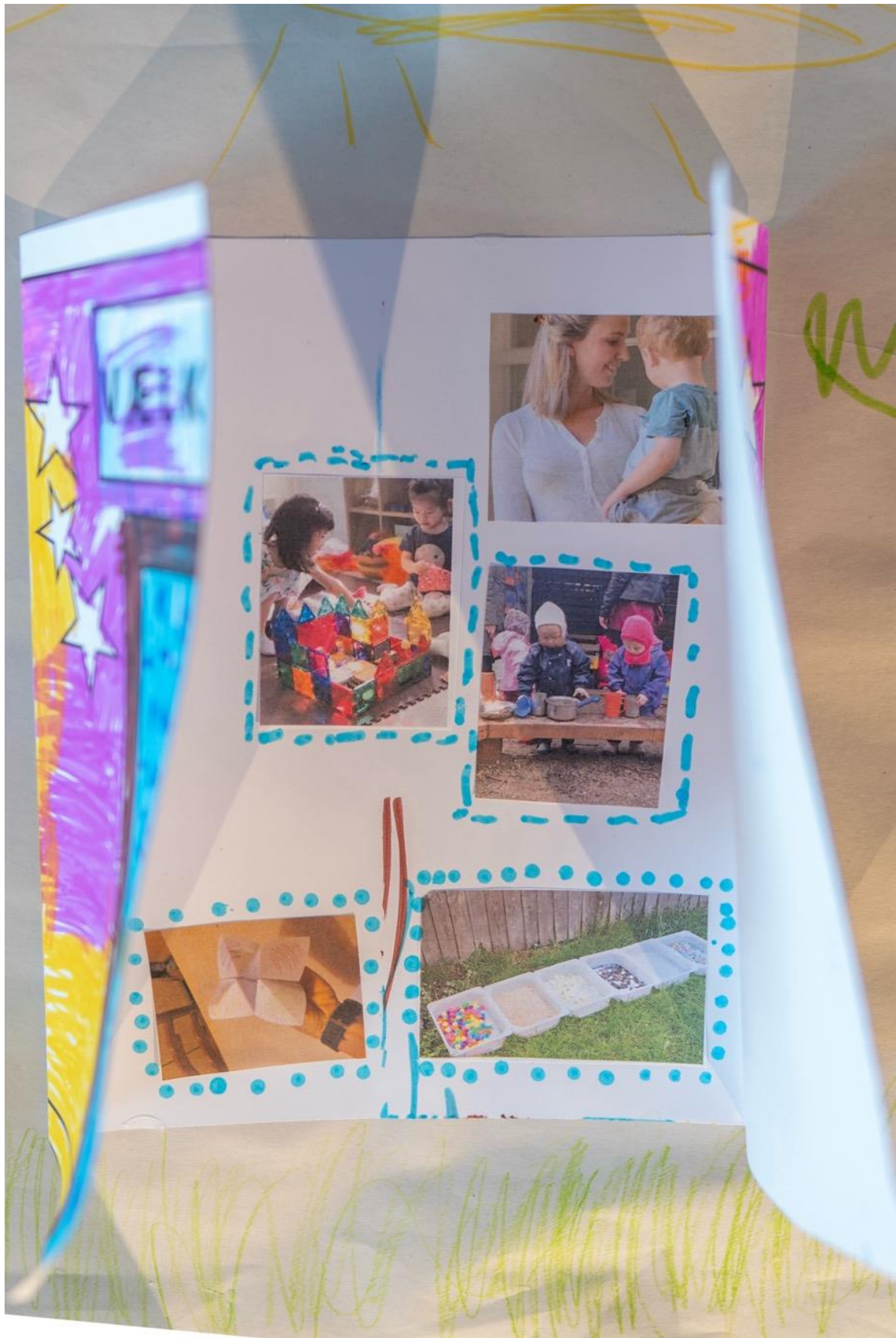
5.3.3.4 - Local Government and Municipalities

- **Build participatory structures where children can co-shape environments.** Municipalities play a vital role in implementing child-centred policies at the local level. They should establish participatory mechanisms such as child and youth councils, participatory budgeting, network coordinator roles, and school-level forums where children's voices are not only heard but used to inform decisions. Local leadership should ensure that inclusion, equity, and child rights are not only legal requirements, but cultural norms.

5.3.3.5 - Data, Learning, and Evaluation

- **Monitor not just service delivery, but children's lived experiences.** Evaluation systems should include indicators that reflect children's actual experiences of safety, belonging, influence, and well-being. This means combining quantitative data with qualitative insights and feedback loops that involve children as informants, co-analysts, and contributors to local changes and polity making.





6 - PART 2 – Analytical and Developmental Framework

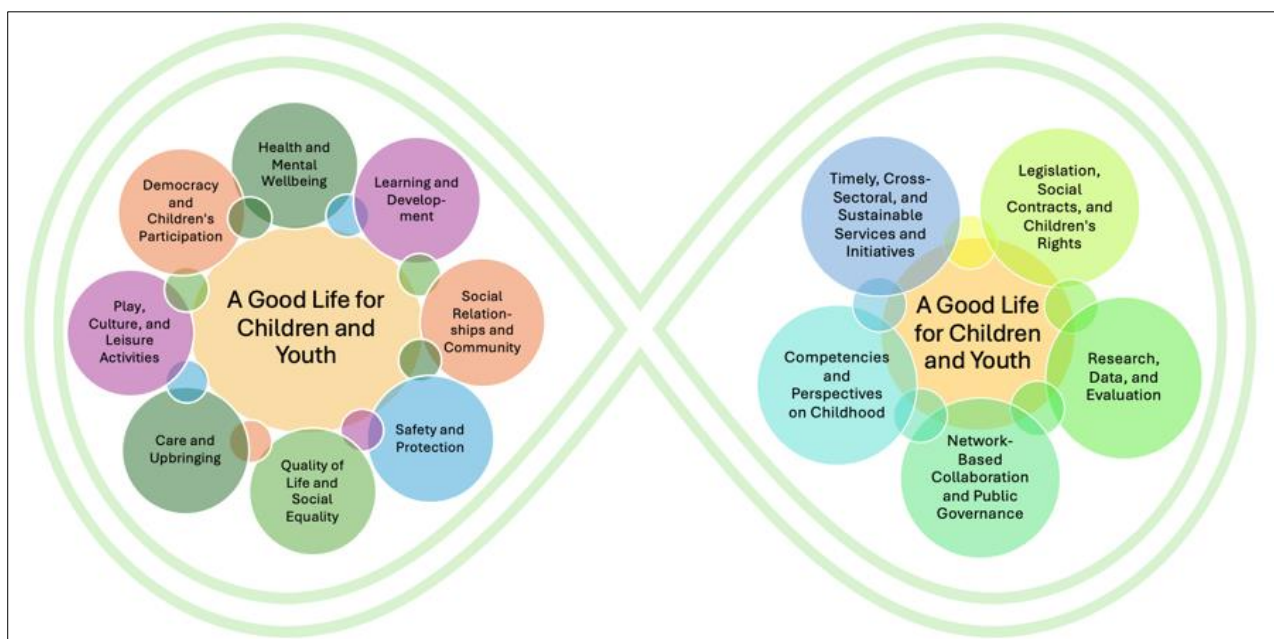
6.1 - Introduction to the Two Parts of the Analysis

This chapter presents the main analytical findings and introduces the strategic quality development model that structures both the analysis and the dialogue across the initiative. The purpose of this analytical section is to offer a coherent, evidence-informed understanding of the conditions shaping children's lives in the Faroe Islands today - as described by the children themselves, and in interaction with key institutions.

The structure of the analysis is based on the strategic quality development model, which has been presented, discussed, and formally approved by the Steering Committee of the reform project. The model serves both as an analytical tool and a guiding framework for systemic change. It consists of two interdependent parts:

- **Part 1** focuses on promoting a good life for children and young people through access to health, education, safety, participation, and meaningful relationships.
- **Part 2** addresses the development of societal actors and institutions including legislation, professional practice, cross-sectoral collaboration, and data-informed governance which are essential to realizing children's rights and well-being.

The model has not only guided this report's internal structure but also shaped the professional presentations and thematic discussions at the national seminar held on 12 May 2025. By integrating children's voices with strategic focus areas, the model facilitates a cross-cutting approach that supports dialogue, coordination, and alignment between practice, policy, and research.



6.2 - The strategic quality development model

The development and use of a strategic quality development model for the child and youth sector in the Faroe Islands is essential to ensure the systematic, holistic, and sustainable implementation of policy initiatives. The strength of a strategic quality development model lies in its capacity to provide a targeted foundation for decision-making, with children's well-being and rights at the centre. The model ensures policy coherence, enables prioritisation of areas over time, and fosters broad-based support among politicians, professionals, and civil society. Furthermore, it facilitates systematic follow-up and evaluation, allowing for ongoing improvement.

The model is informed by research and systemic approaches from countries including Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, and Scotland.

- **Iceland**, through the implementation of *Farsældarlögin (Children's Prosperity Act)*, has established a strong model for early intervention and cross-sectoral collaboration. These experiences demonstrate how a new legislative framework and enhanced strategic cooperation between national and municipal levels can enable the development of new preventive measures.
- **Scotland**, through the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*, has worked towards an integrated child policy. The accompanying national performance model ensures holistic sector development, informed by data and research. In addition, the country is currently strengthening its implementation of the UNCRC within public authorities.
- **Denmark** is in the process of implementing *Barnets Lov (The Child's Act)*, focusing on child-centred municipal services and rights. Parallel experiences from the regional initiative *De Små Børns Bornholm* illustrate how systems thinking, early intervention, and civil society engagement can ensure coherent support for children and families.
- **Sweden**, through initiatives such as *Kronobarnan* in Kronoberg County, has developed a systems-based model that integrates health and social services for children and young people.

What these cases have in common is a child-centered approach in which the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* serves as the foundation for new legislation and pedagogical development tools. Many of the initiatives are also inspired by the Scottish approach *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)*, which since the mid-2000s has served as an international model for cross-professional collaboration and integrated child support.

The model consists of two interdependent parts, which operate in continuous interaction and mutual influence. One part cannot be realised without the other. Their interplay resembles the structure of an infinity loop. Strong structures and coordination within society's institutions create the necessary conditions for children's well-being and development, while children's needs and experiences inform and enhance institutional strategies and practices.

6.2.1 - Promoting a good life for children and young people in the Faroe Islands

The left side of the model focuses on the factors that enable a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. It supports child well-being by ensuring access to healthcare, education, social relations, safety, and cultural activities. Central to the model is a broad understanding of child well-being that includes both physical and mental health, as well as social and democratic

participation. The goal is also to ensure that all children have access to relevant services, regardless of their social or geographic background.

A core assumption is that strengthened early intervention benefits both the individual child and society. The value of early action is supported by James J. Heckman's theory of social investment. Investments made from birth through the early school years can yield high returns across a lifetime. Early childhood healthcare, pedagogy, and social support can significantly improve children's cognitive and social skills, which in turn enhances educational attainment and employment prospects. Iceland's Farsældarlögin (Children's Prosperity Act) and the programme design in Bornholm are examples of applying this investment logic.

The model includes eight key focus areas:

1. **Health and mental well-being.** Preventive health efforts, early identification, and access to relevant services should ensure that children receive timely support. This includes physical health, nutrition, sleep, exercise, and mental well-being.
2. **Learning and development.** Children thrive in safe and stimulating learning environments. Early intervention, language development, and cognitive and social skill-building are crucial in preschools and schools.
3. **Social relationships and belonging.** Children's well-being is closely tied to their social connections and sense of community. Initiatives should support friendships, family ties, and inclusive environments in education and leisure.
4. **Safety and protection.** Children must grow up in stable, secure settings, free from neglect, violence, and abuse. A robust child protection system, safe school and recreational environments, and cross-sector coordination are key.
5. **Quality of life and social equality.** Social inequality directly affects children's life opportunities. Economic support, inclusive services, and targeted interventions are needed to ensure equal access for all.
6. **Care and upbringing.** For most children, the family is the primary foundation for development. Support for parenting, flexible services, and family-centred approaches are critical to secure healthy childhoods.
7. **Play, culture, and leisure.** Access to play and creativity is fundamental to child well-being. Participation in sports, arts, and cultural activities fosters learning, inclusion, and resilience.
8. **Democracy and child participation.** Children's voices must be included in decisions affecting their lives. Structures and policies must be developed to ensure meaningful participation in schools, early childhood settings, and personal development plans.

6.2.2 - Strengthening Faroese institutions and services

The right side of the model focuses on how institutions and systems in society can support child development. This includes legislation, implementation strategies, knowledge-building, and networked collaboration. The aim is to build a sustainable, coordinated system that protects children's rights and ensures their well-being.

The six key focus areas are:

1. **A good life for children and young people.** The goal of public systems and services must be to support a positive childhood and youth experience. A holistic approach combining health, learning, and social inclusion is essential. Daycare, schools, leisure, and community-based support must offer both preventive and supportive interventions.
2. **Legislation, social contracts, and child rights.** Children's rights must be embedded in national legislation through full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Cross-sector child rights frameworks and guidelines must be developed to ensure that children are heard and respected in decision-making.
3. **Timely, cross-sectoral, and sustainable services.** To ensure integrated support for children and families, local, regional, and national actors must coordinate interventions. Sustainable models are needed for integrating education, health, and social services around the needs of children.
4. **Research, data, and evaluation.** Evidence-based policy and practice require systematic data collection and analysis. A national dashboard should monitor child well-being and track the effects of political and organisational measures.
5. **Networked collaboration and public leadership.** Strong networks among municipalities, authorities, civil society, and private stakeholders are essential. Formalised collaboration models and shared leadership structures can enable co-creation and innovation.
6. **Professionalism and child perspective.** All professionals must be continuously supported in developing skills and a shared understanding of children as competent actors. Training programmes and cross-sector knowledge exchange are essential for a child-centred professional culture.

6.3 - Anchoring the Reform in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a legally and ethically binding framework for all policies, laws, and practices affecting children. As such, the proposed child welfare reform must comply with the Convention and actively use it as a foundation for lawmaking, service design, and professional development.

The Convention affirms children's right to protection, participation, provision, and identity, and these principles must be reflected not only in legal texts, but also in the cultures and practices of institutions that interact with children every day. This includes ensuring that emotional well-being, non-discrimination, and the child's best interests are embedded in everyday decision-making, cross-sector collaboration, and the ethos of public professionals.

6.3.1 - Using the Convention as a Reference Framework in the Report

Throughout this report, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is used to contextualise and strengthen the voices of children. Their priorities, concerns, and suggestions are consistently linked to specific rights such as the right to be heard (Article 12), the right to education (Articles 28–29), the right to protection from harm (Article 19), and the right to rest, play, and leisure (Article 31).

By situating children's recommendations in relation to the Convention, the report highlights that what children are asking for is both desirable and a matter of rights. This approach makes visible where current systems fall short and provides a normative compass for aligning future reforms with international obligations.

Article	Right	Explanation
1	Definition of a Child	Every person under 18 is considered a child unless otherwise stated by law.
2	Non-discrimination	All children have equal rights without discrimination.
3	Best Interests of the Child	The child's best interests must be a top priority in all decisions.
4	Implementation of Rights	Governments must take steps to realise children's rights.
5	Parental Guidance	Parents must guide children in exercising their rights.
6	Right to Life and Development	Children have the right to life, survival, and development.
7	Name and Nationality	Every child has the right to a name, nationality, and to know their parents.
8	Identity	Children have the right to preserve their identity and family ties.
9	Separation from Parents	Children should not be separated from their parents unless necessary for their well-being.
10	Family Reunification	Children have the right to reunite with family across borders.
12	Freedom of Expression	Children have the right to express their views and be heard.
13	Access to Information	Children have the right to access information and media.
14	Freedom of Thought and Religion	Children have the right to think freely and choose their religion.
15	Freedom of Association	Children may join peaceful groups and meetings.
16	Privacy	Children have the right to privacy in family and personal matters.
17	Media Access	Children should have access to diverse and appropriate media.
18	Parental Responsibility	Both parents share responsibility for raising the child.
19	Protection from Abuse	Children must be protected from all forms of violence and abuse.
20	Special Protection	Children without family support have a right to special care.
21	Adoption	Adoption must prioritise the child's best interests.
22	Refugee Children	Refugee children have the right to protection and assistance.
23	Children with Disabilities	Children with disabilities have the right to live with dignity and support.
24	Health and Healthcare	Children have the right to the best possible healthcare.
25	Review of Placement	Children in care have the right to regular review of their treatment.
26	Social Security	Children have the right to social security and benefits.
27	Standard of Living	Children have the right to a standard of living adequate for development.
28	Right to Education	Children have the right to free primary and accessible secondary education.
29	Aims of Education	Education must develop the child's abilities and respect for rights.
30	Minority Rights	Children have the right to enjoy their own culture and religion.
31	Leisure and Culture	Children have the right to rest, play, and take part in cultural life.
32	Protection from Exploitation	Children must be protected from economic exploitation.
33	Protection from Drugs	Children must be protected from drug abuse.
34	Protection from Sexual Exploitation	Children must be protected from sexual exploitation and abuse.
35	Protection from Trafficking	Children must be protected from human trafficking.
36	Protection from Other Exploitation	Children must be protected from all other harmful exploitation.
40	Fair Treatment in Justice System	Children accused of breaking the law have the right to fair treatment.



7 - Analysis: A Good Life for Children and Youth (Part 1)

This chapter presents a thematic analysis of what constitutes a good life for children and young people in their own words. Drawing on qualitative material from workshops, school visits, and creative activities, the analysis is structured according to the eight core domains of the Strategic Quality Development Model. Each subsection reflects a distinct aspect of children's everyday lives: from health and learning to belonging, care, safety, play, equality, and participation.

The chapter is grounded in direct contributions from children across different age groups, life situations, and geographic areas. Their reflections highlight both positive experiences and systemic challenges. Across themes, children consistently emphasise the importance of emotional safety, trusted relationships, meaningful activities, and the opportunity to be heard and taken seriously. They describe how small everyday moments like a quiet room, a kind adult, time to play, or being asked for their opinion can make a big difference. At the same time, many reports unmet needs, such as lack of support, limited access to leisure, unequal treatment, or feeling excluded from decisions that affect them.

Each thematic section concludes with a synthesis of children's identified needs, their own suggestions for change, and a link to relevant articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Together, these insights offer a powerful lens on children's lived realities and a strong foundation for future political action.

7.1.1 - Health and mental well-being

Children's perspectives on health and mental well-being reflect a deep awareness of what contributes to feeling safe, balanced, and emotionally supported. Their insights span home environments, leisure activities, educational settings, and special care arrangements. While children express concern about bullying, overstimulation, and lack of trusted adults, they also highlight positive dimensions: many find joy in nature, pets, and play, and some describe strong connections with caring adults who listen and understand. These relationships and routines provide essential foundations for mental well-being.

7.1.1.1 - *Home and Local Environment*

Children across all age groups describe emotional well-being as closely linked to the presence of safe, loving adults and predictable routines at home. Stability, kindness, and feeling noticed are central needs. Some children express this through quiet reflections on family life, others through pointed critiques of adult behaviour. For many, a "good life" begins with being cared for and respected by those closest to them. Children who live in unstable conditions or have experienced neglect often describe a longing for attention and relational safety. Their mental health is shaped not just by access to care, but by everyday gestures of recognition, warmth, and presence.

Privacy is another fundamental need, especially for older children. Having a room of one's own represents a sense of agency, dignity, and calm. Several children note that sharing rooms with siblings or lacking a private space contributes to stress, emotional overload, and sometimes conflict.

Personal space allows them to manage overstimulation and process difficult feelings on their own terms.

At the same time, children often describe nature and animals as emotionally soothing. Flowers, grass, birds, and pets are not just aesthetic pleasures but key sources of joy, calm, and self-regulation. Several children even imagine gardens, forests, and pet zones within their ideal schools or homes.

7.1.1.2 - Leisure and Health

Play and physical activity are vital to children's mental health. Children consistently describe outdoor movement, especially with peers, as something that “clears the head,” provides joy, and supports friendships. Football, climbing, running, or simply “being outside in good weather” were all associated with freedom and well-being. While not all children are enrolled in organized activities, many describe unstructured play as one of the few spaces where they feel mentally balanced.

Children also describe strong bodily connections between food, rest, and emotions. Feeling hungry, overtired, or physically neglected directly influences their emotional regulation and mood. Some describe erratic sleep patterns; others note a direct loss of appetite when under stress. In vulnerable families, access to nutritious food or rest may be limited, which further compounds emotional strain.

Technology plays a complex role in children’s mental lives. While gaming, watching YouTube, or chatting online is often described as a source of comfort or connection, many children are also aware of the isolating effects of too much screen time. Some describe it as a necessary escape, others as a self-defeating cycle that leads to loneliness or stress. Children reflect thoughtfully on their own habits, acknowledging both enjoyment and harm.

Solitude is another way children regulate their emotional states. Some describe rituals like showering for long periods as strategies for avoiding conflict or finding calm. Others emphasize the importance of being left alone, of having the freedom to “not do anything” and recover on their own terms.

7.1.1.3 - Educational and Institutional Settings

Children’s health and mental well-being are deeply affected by the institutional environments they encounter whether these are regular schools, special education settings, residential care institutions, or periods of non-enrolment. Across these varied contexts, children consistently describe their everyday experiences in relation to safety, stress, support, and inclusion.

A recurring and painful theme are the experience of bullying and adult inaction. Children from both mainstream and special educational settings report instances of emotional or physical bullying, exclusion, and verbal harassment without adequate adult intervention. Children express frustration and sadness over not being believed or supported when reporting such incidents. This perceived absence of protective adults contributes directly to anxiety, anger, and withdrawal.

Beyond peer conflicts, children often describe their institutional environments as noisy, overstimulating, and emotionally unsafe. This is especially true for children with neurodiverse needs or previous trauma. Schools and group settings with strict routines, high expectations, and little room for individual rhythms can exacerbate stress. Children in both special and mainstream settings ask for calmer, more predictable environments and spaces to retreat when overwhelmed.

Several children in special settings or outside education altogether also describe fragmented support systems, where the adults they meet change frequently, seem disconnected, or lack the knowledge to understand their situation. Whether it is teachers, care workers, or psychologists, continuity in adult relationships is identified as essential to feeling safe and supported. Without this continuity, trust becomes difficult.

Children also point to the lack of emotionally safe physical spaces in institutional contexts. For those in both special provision and regular schooling, quiet rooms, sensory spaces, or protected “time-out” zones are highly valued. These are not about escape, but about having tools to self-regulate.

Finally, some children highlight that systems and staff often fail to see beyond diagnoses or behavioural reactions. Several children from special provisions speak openly about how they were misunderstood or punished before anyone realized they had learning needs, trauma, or neurodivergent traits. They advocate for staff training, early identification, and a relational approach based on trust and recognition.

Despite these challenges, children also point to what works. Joyful learning environments, kind teachers, quiet rooms, sensory spaces, time to recover, and the ability to connect with animals or plants. These are not luxuries, but essential components of mental well-being. Their emotional resilience grows when they feel respected, understood, and free to express themselves whether through words, drawing, or silence. In their own way, children articulate a holistic understanding of health: one that includes emotional safety, trusted relationships, and freedom to just be.

7.1.1.4 - Identified Needs and Challenges

Children across contexts express clear needs for emotional safety, calm environments, stable relationships, and protection from bullying or neglect. They report a lack of continuity in support systems, overstimulating settings, and insufficient adult response to distress. For many, basic needs such as food, rest, privacy, and space to self-regulate are unmet. Especially among children with neurodiverse profiles or vulnerable backgrounds, systems often fail to recognise or respond to hidden distress. When adults change too often, or when institutions ignore emotional needs, trust is easily broken.

Children across settings express overlapping challenges that affect their mental and emotional well-being. These include:

- Lack of emotional safety at home, in schools, and in institutional settings.
- Inconsistent adult relationships, particularly in special provisions or social care, which undermine trust and stability.
- Overstimulation and noise, especially in classrooms or group settings without quiet zones.
- Unaddressed bullying and peer exclusion, often paired with inaction from adults.

- Insufficient access to basic needs such as nutritious food, adequate sleep, or private space for rest and self-regulation.
- Disconnection between systems and children's real lives, including over-reliance on diagnoses rather than understanding individual experiences.

7.1.1.5 - Suggestions and Solutions from Children

Children propose simple, yet powerful adjustments. They call for quiet rooms, sensory spaces, trusted adults who stay involved, and the freedom to recover at their own pace. They want teachers and caregivers who listen, believe them, and act. Nature, animals, and unstructured play are described as vital to recovery and joy. Children also suggest more flexible routines, early emotional support, and better understanding of their behaviour through patience. Some explicitly call for fewer diagnoses and more recognition of their full selves.

- Create quiet, emotionally safe spaces such as sensory rooms, retreat zones, or calm corners in schools and institutions.
- Ensure stable, kind adult figures who follow up and stay involved over time including teachers, caregivers, and support staff.
- Promote flexible and individualised routines, especially for children with different sensory or emotional needs.
- Encourage early identification and relational approaches to emotional distress through recognition and patience.
- Strengthen emotional education and support, including conversations, drawing, silence, or nature-based recovery.
- Include animals, plants, and access to nature as part of everyday environments to reduce stress and foster emotional balance.

7.1.1.6 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The children's perspectives on health and mental well-being closely align with core principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Their emphasis on emotional safety, trusted relationships, and responsive support reflects the spirit of Article 3, which states that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning them. Their desire to be heard in schools, care settings, and in relation to bullying or emotional distress directly relates to Article 12, which guarantees every child the right to express their views and have them taken seriously.

Children's concern about being left unsupported in stressful or unsafe environments resonates with Article 19, which protects children from all forms of violence, neglect, or harm (psychological harm or absence of adult protection). Their holistic understanding of mental health, linking it to food, rest, nature, play, and belonging, echoes Article 24, which affirms the child's right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

The importance they place on inclusive, caring schools connects to Articles 28 and 29, which define education not only as access to learning, but as a process that supports each child's full potential in a safe, supportive environment. Finally, their recurring calls for time to rest, play, and be themselves directly express Article 31, which protects the child's right to leisure and recreational activities.

- **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.
- **Article 12:** Children have the right to express their views and be taken seriously.
- **Article 19:** Children must be protected from all forms of violence, including psychological harm and neglect.
- **Article 24:** Children have the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- **Article 28/29:** Education must develop the child's abilities and personality in a supportive environment.
- **Article 31:** Children have the right to rest, leisure, and play, all central to mental well-being.

7.1.2 - Learning and Development

Children and young people express a broad and multifaceted understanding of learning. For some, learning is joyful, social, and creative. For others, it is stressful, irrelevant, or tied to experiences of exclusion and struggle. Their reflections reveal how learning environments at home, in leisure settings, and especially in schools shape their development, motivation, and sense of self.

7.1.2.1 - Home and Local Environment

At home, learning is often informal, relational, and linked to everyday life. Many children describe learning through play, creativity, and shared activities with family members. Some mention learning by doing – cooking, planting flowers, building things, playing music, or helping younger siblings. These small, relational acts of learning foster confidence and a sense of belonging. They also provide children with opportunities to feel competent and useful, particularly in contexts where school does not support their learning needs.

In a few cases, home is described as a site of withdrawal or necessity-driven self-regulation, particularly among children in vulnerable circumstances. When children feel unsupported or unsafe at school, they may retreat to their rooms, immerse themselves in online learning or hobbies, or find alternative ways to learn and process their world.

7.1.2.2 - Leisure and Health

Leisure is a significant context for learning, especially for children who thrive through action, creativity, and autonomy. Many children describe sports, crafts, gaming, and nature-based activities as meaningful ways of developing skills. Learning is often seen as enjoyable when it happens through movement, imagination, or social play. For example, one child described learning to play Dungeons & Dragons as a way of experimenting with identity, rules, and story-building.

Digital technology plays a dual role. For some, it opens doors to new cultures, languages, and interests. Others, however, report that too much screen time isolates them from peers and family. Some explicitly say that gaming hinders their learning motivation or leads to social withdrawal, even if they enjoy it in the moment. These ambivalent reflections are important when considering how digital habits shape broader developmental trajectories.

7.1.2.3 - Educational and Institutional Settings

School is the most mentioned learning environment – and the most polarising. Children describe both positive and negative experiences in relation to teachers, classroom structures, peer relations, and curriculum. While some appreciate creative subjects and practical assignments, others express deep dissatisfaction with the lack of individual support or understanding from educators.

For children with learning difficulties or neurodivergent needs, school is often a source of frustration. Several mentions having received late or insufficient help, and some describe feeling misunderstood by teachers who label them as difficult rather than recognising their learning style. In contrast, children in special provisions highlight the importance of smaller class sizes, more time, and relational approaches.

Children also emphasize that social learning and friendship-building are essential parts of development. Being allowed to help each other, play, collaborate, and move between age and class groups strengthens both confidence and connection. They call for more activity-based learning, project work, and practical skills such as gardening, cooking, or finance.

7.1.2.4 - Identified Needs and Challenges

Across the workshops, children and young people highlight several structural and emotional barriers to learning and development. Many feel that current learning environments fail to recognise the diversity of ways children learn. This is particularly relevant for those who rely on visual, physical, creative, or practical modalities.

There is a strong call for schools and institutions to move beyond one-size-fits-all instruction and support multiple forms of intelligence, including social, emotional, and bodily-kinaesthetic. Children who are neurodivergent or have learning difficulties often describe frustration, exclusion, or a lack of understanding from educators. Several say they received help too late or that the support they were offered did not match their actual needs.

Children also identify overexposure to screens as a factor that negatively affects their concentration and social motivation. While digital tools can support learning, children themselves emphasise the importance of balance and relational engagement. In addition, exclusion and bullying continue to undermine children's confidence and connection to school.

- Children need learning environments that acknowledge multiple intelligences, creativity, and physical expression.
- Many lack stable support from educators and tailored assistance for neurodiverse learning needs.
- Screen use can undermine motivation and social interaction when not balanced.
- Exclusion, bullying, and rigid curriculum structures hinder development and confidence.

7.1.2.5 - Suggestions and Solutions from Children

In response, children suggest a wide range of solutions that could make learning environments more engaging and supportive. These include the introduction of practical and creative subjects such as gardening, cooking, crafts, music, and personal finance. Such subjects are seen not only as

enjoyable but as meaningful, tangible ways of developing life skills. They also call for more flexible school structures with retreat spaces, sensory rooms, and time to complete assignments without pressure.

Several emphasise the importance of training teachers in trauma-informed and relational pedagogy, so they can better understand the needs of all students. Finally, children stress the need for earlier identification of learning difficulties and individual support systems that are not dependent on behavioural diagnosis or crisis.

- Provide more practical and creative subjects: gardening, cooking, crafts, music, finance.
- Create safe retreat spaces and flexible timetables.
- Train teachers in relational, trauma-informed, and differentiated pedagogy.
- Ensure early identification and support for learning difficulties.

7.1.2.6 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

These insights align closely with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 ensures the child's right to be heard in matters affecting them regarding how and what they learn. Article 28 affirms every child's right to education, while Article 29 calls for education to develop the child's full personality, talents, and abilities. Taken together, these rights underline the importance of tailoring educational systems to the lived realities and diverse strengths of all children.

- **Article 12:** Right to be heard in decisions affecting the child – including in school
- **Article 28:** Right to education
- **Article 29:** Education must develop every child's personality, talents, and abilities

7.1.3 - Social Relationships and Belonging

Children and young people across all settings express a deep and consistent concern for relationships both with peers and adults. Belonging is not a peripheral need; it is central to how children experience everyday life. Their descriptions range from the joy of strong friendships to the pain of exclusion and mistrust. Many associate relational safeties with their ability to learn, thrive, and be themselves at home, in leisure time, and in school.

7.1.3.1 - Home and Local Environment

In the home and immediate environment, feelings of belonging are closely tied to family relationships and the presence of adults who take time to be with them. Children across age groups describe a desire to be close to those they trust, to laugh together, talk, or simply share space. Even mundane rituals like drawing together or talking over dinner carry great emotional weight.

For children in unstable family situations or care arrangements, the experience of belonging can be far more complex. Some express doubts about who they can trust or whether they are genuinely accepted in their household. In such cases, belonging becomes conditional shaped by adult behaviour, family roles, and emotional recognition.

7.1.3.2 - Leisure and Health

In leisure contexts, children experience belonging through shared interests and unstructured time with peers. They describe meaningful friendships formed during sports, gaming, walks, creative activities, or simply “hanging out.” These moments often serve as emotional anchors — spaces where they feel free, competent, and seen. Belonging is also about shared laughter and inside jokes, where children feel that “someone gets them.”

However, particularly for those living in remote areas or without access to transport, friendship is harder to sustain. They may depend on adults to drive them or feel isolated when others are not nearby. Geographic and infrastructural factors can severely limit opportunities to belong in peer communities.

7.1.3.3 - Educational and Institutional Settings

School is a central arena for social belonging — and for many, a source of relational vulnerability. Children describe both positive and painful experiences. When friendship works, it enhances learning, self-confidence, and joy. But when relationships are strained due to bullying, exclusion, or teacher inaction it can be deeply damaging. Being without friends in recess or feeling isolated in class leads to lasting distress.

When children feel that adults fail to intervene in exclusion or unsafe dynamics, it erodes their trust both in the institution and in their own worth. Several children describe being ignored or dismissed when they raised concerns about being unsafe or unwelcome.

Some children advocate for inclusive practices and activities that foster connection. They propose buddy systems, interest-based groups, and social games to create conditions where friendships can grow naturally. Children also emphasize the importance of relational continuity with teachers and adults who genuinely care.

7.1.3.4 - Identified Needs and Challenges

- Emotional security is rooted in consistent, caring relationships at home, school, and in leisure spaces.
- Exclusion, loneliness, and bullying are widespread and have serious impacts.
- Children in rural or unstable settings often lack access to peer interaction.
- Mistrust in adults reduces the likelihood of seeking help or building meaningful bonds.

Children’s experiences across all age groups underline that emotional security and a sense of belonging are not secondary needs. They are essential for development. At home, in leisure settings, and especially in school, children seek consistent, caring relationships that make them feel safe and valued. For many, this relational stability is the foundation for learning, mental health, and identity formation. When these bonds are absent, fragile, or conditional, children describe feelings of insecurity, mistrust, and withdrawal.

Social exclusion, loneliness, and bullying are recurring concerns. These are not isolated incidents but patterns that children experience in classrooms, schoolyards, peer groups, and sometimes even within families. The consequences are serious: reduced self-esteem, emotional stress, and in some

cases, avoidance of learning or social settings altogether. The situation is often worsened by a lack of adult response. When teachers, caregivers, or parents fail to act - or act unfairly - children learn that their feelings and safety may not be protected.

In rural areas or unstable living conditions, many children face logistical and social barriers to peer interaction. Distance, lack of transport, or missing recreational spaces limit spontaneous play and shared experiences. Several children express frustration at being dependent on adults to access social life or being excluded altogether.

7.1.3.5 - Suggestions and Solutions from Children

To address these challenges, children propose a range of practical and relational solutions. They call for the presence of at least one adult or peer they can trust. They advocate for inclusive play and friendship-building practices, such as buddy systems, interest-based groups, and adult-facilitated activities that lower the social threshold. For those in remote areas, they highlight the importance of having access to transport or local meeting places. And they consistently emphasise that adults must be trained not just in academic instruction, but in how to recognise and respond to social exclusion, relational distress, and peer dynamics.

- Ensure every child has someone they trust — a friend or supportive adult.
- Promote inclusive social practices through buddy systems, shared interests, and adult-facilitated play.
- Provide transportation and local opportunities for social interaction, especially in rural areas.
- Train adults to respond to social exclusion and create relational safety.

7.1.3.6 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

These child-led perspectives are deeply aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 15 protects the right to form friendships and social groups. Article 19 demands protection from all forms of violence, including bullying. Article 31 guarantees the right to rest, play, and recreation, which is fundamental arenas for building social bonds. And Article 12 upholds the child's right to be heard in matters that affect their inclusion, relationships, and sense of belonging. Ensuring these rights is not only a legal obligation, but also a relational responsibility shared by families, educators, and society at large.

- **Article 15:** Right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.
- **Article 19:** Protection from all forms of violence, including bullying.
- **Article 31:** Right to rest, play, and recreational activities that foster relationships.
- **Article 12:** Right to be heard, especially in matters affecting social inclusion and group dynamics.

7.1.4 - Safety and Protection

Children's perspectives on safety and protection reveal a complex and often ambivalent relationship with the environments and adults meant to keep them safe. While some children feel secure in their daily lives, many others describe physical, emotional, and social insecurities that affect their well-being. They speak of violence, neglect, bullying, and uncertainty — but also of the people, spaces, and routines that make them feel protected and cared for. Children's understanding of safety is not

limited to physical threats; it includes emotional stability, predictability, and the assurance that someone will listen and act when something is wrong.

7.1.4.1 - Home and Local Environment

In the home environment, safety is most often linked to adult behaviour, relational stability, and emotional presence. Many children say they feel safe when they are with family members they trust (calm, predictable, and supportive persons). However, others express distress about unstable living conditions, exposure to substance abuse, or family members who fail to provide protection. Some children describe witnessing or experiencing neglect, physical aggression, or emotionally harmful behaviour from parents or guardians. These accounts are often paired with a sense of resignation or emotional withdrawal.

Children also express concerns about neighbourhood safety. Particularly in urban areas, they describe encounters with intoxicated adults, fights, or environments where they feel vulnerable. Some recall frightening incidents involving unknown adults or lack of proper supervision. This led them to avoid public spaces or rely entirely on adults to accompany them.

Despite these concerns, several children also describe home as a place of comfort and security, especially when they have their own space, stable routines, and kind adults who listen and respect boundaries.

7.1.4.2 - Leisure and Health

Safety in leisure contexts is often associated with freedom to explore, social interaction, and respectful boundaries. Many children express enjoyment of outdoor play, sports, or creative hobbies.

In both urban and rural settings, children describe nature and daily routines as stabilising. Access to green space, animals, and quiet outdoor areas is consistently linked to emotional safety and calm. Likewise, predictable rhythms in the home, such as shared meals, a warm room, or simply knowing who will be there, give children a felt sense of being held in place. These elements provide structure and reassurance, especially in contrast to chaotic environments or adult unpredictability.

In the physical world, some children feel unsafe due to a lack of structured recreational options or adequate adult presence. Particularly in rural areas or institutional settings, children highlight boredom and the lack of meaningful activities as risk factors. This can lead to risky behaviour or social conflict. Yet others mention how nature, quiet walks, and creative solitude offer a sense of refuge, where they can feel safe and calm on their own terms.

Some children describe being exposed to online risks, including grooming, harassment, or being pressured to share private content on social media. They emphasize that safety in digital environments is poorly monitored, both by platforms and by parents.

7.1.4.3 - Educational and Institutional Settings

For several children, a single adult made the difference between feeling unsafe and feeling seen. These relationships are remembered not just for what the adult did, but for how they made the child

feel: respected, recognised, and protected. When adults take time, show care, and respond consistently, children regain trust in their surroundings and in themselves.

Schools and institutions are critical spaces for protection and yet, many children describe them as emotionally or physically unsafe. Some participants across age groups mention bullying, fights, or aggressive behaviour, often left unaddressed by teachers. When children report being harmed or scared, and adults fail to act (or blame the child). In these situations, the institution becomes not just ineffective but harmful.

Some children describe safe spaces such as sensory rooms, quiet corners, or designated “retreat zones” as crucial for managing stress and maintaining emotional balance. These are not merely places to rest; they are active tools for self-regulation and self-protection. When overwhelmed, children seek environments where they can withdraw without punishment and return when ready. Such spaces are particularly important for neurodiverse children or those with trauma experiences.

In these environments, children are more likely to feel seen and respected. Several mention that a single teacher or pedagogogue made a critical difference in how safe they felt.

Finally, some children point to institutional systems outside the school, such as child protection services, as overwhelming, confusing, or unhelpful. The experience of speaking to too many adults, or being moved between services, creates a sense of chaos rather than care.

7.1.4.4 - Identified Needs and Challenges

Children’s voices across all workshops and age groups reveal that safety is not a given. It must be actively created, protected, and maintained in all environments where children live, learn, and grow. A primary need identified by children is the presence of adults who are consistently caring, responsive, and attentive. Emotional and physical safety are deeply interlinked in their narratives: children feel safe when they are heard, when boundaries are respected, and when adults act on their behalf. However, many describe situations where adults failed to listen or respond adequately to distress or harm.

Bullying, aggression, and social exclusion are recurring threats, particularly in educational settings. Several children highlight the absence of adult intervention as more damaging than the incident itself. The mistrust that follows these experiences can be long-lasting and deter children from seeking help in the future. In care arrangements and child protection systems, children describe instability, too many changing adults, and rules that feel arbitrary or unfair. Safety, in their view, is not created through control, but through relationship.

Children also identify risks related to leisure and digital life. Many express deep concerns about unsafe online interactions, predators, and the lack of meaningful adult guidance. At the same time, children in rural areas describe physical isolation and limited access to safe places to meet peers, play, or rest. The lack of engaging local activities or adult presence makes some environments feel more risky than protective.

7.1.4.5 - Suggestions and Solutions from Children

To respond to these challenges, children suggest several clear and practical solutions. First, they emphasise the importance of having at least one adult they trust, which they then can turn to when they feel unsafe. They also call for more visible adult supervision in schoolyards, classrooms, and online environments. Specific proposals include age limits on apps, local safe zones for play, and the right to retreat into quiet or sensory spaces when overwhelmed. In institutional settings, children ask for fewer transitions between professionals and more respectful, relationally grounded support systems. They want to be met with calm, dignity, and predictability - not punishment, dismissal, or "cold procedures".

7.1.4.6 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

These concerns and suggestions strongly relate to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 19 demands protection from all forms of violence, neglect, and abuse whether physical, emotional, or institutional. Article 16 upholds the child's right to privacy and dignity. Article 3 states that the best interests of the child must always come first in all actions concerning them. Article 12 reaffirms the right to be heard, including in matters of safety and protection. And Article 34 explicitly mandates protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including online. Together, these rights underline that children's safety must be understood relationally, not just legally: it is about being protected by, and connected to, the people and systems that surround them.

- **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning them.
- **Article 12:** Children have the right to be heard in all matters affecting them — including safety and protection.
- **Article 16:** Children have the right to privacy and dignity.
- **Article 19:** Children must be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect — physical, emotional, and institutional.
- **Article 34:** Children must be protected from sexual exploitation and abuse, including online risks.

7.1.5 - Quality of Life and Social Equality

Children's reflections on quality of life and social equality reveal a highly relational and material understanding of fairness, dignity, and everyday well-being. Their perspectives point to the unequal distribution of opportunities, resources, and recognition across families, schools, and communities. Some children describe feeling cared for, safe, and supported. Others speak of poverty, shame, or systemic barriers that limit their freedom and sense of worth. Despite these differences, there is a common aspiration: that all children should be able to live with dignity, have the things they need, and feel included.

7.1.5.1 - Home and Local Environment

At home, quality of life is most directly linked to access to food, warmth, private space, and a sense of being valued. Several children living in vulnerable situations describe not having enough to eat or lacking basic comforts. Some report empty fridges, cold rooms, or financial struggles that shape their daily lives. These children often do not speak about "poverty" as an abstract concept but

describe it through lived realities such as not having toothpaste, appropriate clothing, or snacks for school.

A recurring theme is inequality in what children can afford and what others expect. Children sometimes express shame or frustration when they cannot join peers in activities due to lack of money. This sense of exclusion can begin at home and follow them into every other social setting.

At the same time, many children describe the presence of loving adults and routines that give their lives structure and emotional stability even in modest living conditions. Being together with family, eating meals, or having a space to retreat to is often described as a source of happiness.

7.1.5.2 - Leisure and Health

Children see leisure as a space for friendship, growth, and emotional balance. Several speak enthusiastically about nature, sports, and play. Green areas, walking routes, and pet-friendly environments are highlighted as deeply valuable. These spaces offer a sense of freedom, peace, and equality, especially when they are unstructured and open to all.

However, access to leisure is unequally distributed. Some children have a wide range of activities and support for hobbies; others have little or no access due to cost, transport, or lack of local offers. This leads to a sense of deprivation and injustice.

7.1.5.3 - Educational and Institutional Settings

Positive experiences arise where teachers show personal commitment and relational respect. These moments have a significant impact on children's sense of equality and self-worth. Even in challenging environments, some children mention specific teachers who took the time to understand them, support them, and treat them with respect. These relationships can redefine their entire school experience and create a sense of value and trust.

Schools are also places where children experience social inequalities. Children speak about the gap between them when it comes to clothes, food, abilities, and how they are treated by teachers. Some feel ashamed of their packed lunches, accents, or lack of support, and this directly affects their sense of belonging and value.

Children attending special education settings often highlight how smaller class sizes, flexible timeframes, and more adult presence give them a better chance to learn at their own pace. This tailored approach makes them feel recognised and less pressured compared to mainstream schooling.

However, children in special education or out-of-school settings describe more individualised care but also point out a sense of disconnection from mainstream experiences. Several express that they learn better in smaller environments but feel left behind or labelled by the system. There is a repeated desire for fairness and recognition not just in resources.

7.1.5.4 - Identified Needs and Challenges

Children's reflections across all workshops show that quality of life is not just about comfort, but about dignity, fairness, and the ability to participate on equal terms with others. Many children speak of basic material needs such as food, heating, clothing, and hygiene, and that are not always met. These are not abstract concerns; they are daily realities for children who describe empty fridges, cold homes, or being mocked for what they wear or bring to school. The shame and isolation that follow such experiences create invisible barriers to participation, learning, and confidence.

Social inequality is also experienced in access to leisure activities, sports, and hobbies. Children living in rural areas or low-income households often express that "there's nothing to do". Not because they lack interests, but because transport, money, or structured offers are missing. This compounds social exclusion and reduces opportunities for development and joy. In schools, inequality is felt when some children receive help while others are left behind, when teachers treat students unequally, or when resources are not adapted to different needs and backgrounds.

- Children experience significant disparities in living standards, educational support, and access to leisure.
- Feelings of exclusion arise when children cannot afford the same things as peers in clothes, food, or activities.
- Institutional systems sometimes reinforce inequality through labelling or lack of individualised support.
- Shame and silence are common responses to inequality, especially among vulnerable children.

7.1.5.5 - Suggestions and Solutions Proposed by Children

To improve quality of life, children propose concrete and inclusive solutions. They call for equal access to food, clothing, and learning materials. They want free, local leisure opportunities, especially in rural areas, where access is limited. Many ask for schools to be more responsive to different learning styles and for teachers to be trained to recognise the value and potential of all children. Furthermore, children suggest recognising creative expression, practical skills, and nature-based activities as part of what constitutes a meaningful and dignified life.

- Ensure equal access to school support, nutritious food, clothing, and hygiene items.
- Provide local, free leisure activities for all, especially in rural areas.
- Nature-based activities as part of dignified living.
- Strengthen relational and emotional awareness among teachers and professionals.
- Design schools and institutions to respond to children's diverse starting points, not just standardised expectations.

7.1.5.6 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

These needs and ideas are strongly supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 2 guarantees every child protection against discrimination including due to social status or economic background. Article 6 affirms each child's right to develop their full potential. Article 24 ensures access to health and well-being, including nutrition and hygiene. Article 26 provides the

right to social protection, and Article 27 establishes the child's right to a standard of living adequate for their development. Taken together, these rights underscore that equality is not about sameness, but about ensuring every child has the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

- **Article 2:** All children have the right to protection from discrimination.
- **Article 6:** Every child has the right to develop to their full potential.
- **Article 24:** Right to the highest attainable standard of health.
- **Article 26:** Right to benefit from social security and support.
- **Article 27:** Right to an adequate standard of living for physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

7.1.6 - Care and Upbringing

Children's perspectives on care and upbringing reflect a deep awareness of how adults shape their sense of safety, value, and belonging in everyday life. Across all age groups and contexts, children describe care not simply as provision, but as emotional presence, trust, and respect. They emphasise the importance of stable relationships, private spaces, shared routines, and being listened to without judgement. Their accounts highlight both nurturing and neglectful dynamics and they express a clear vision for how adults, institutions, and systems can do better.

7.1.6.1 - Home and Local Environment

Children's perspectives on care within the home reveal that good upbringing is fundamentally relational. It is not about control, but about feeling seen, supported, and safe. Several children express how important it is to have a stable family life, where routines and emotional connection are part of everyday life. Even in modest households, care is experienced when adults spend time with children, show interest, and create space for dialogue or shared joy. A private space is described as essential for emotional self-regulation and autonomy. Having one's own room is a recurring need, especially when emotions become overwhelming.

Some children associate care with physical warmth, affection, and being allowed to be themselves without being punished or constantly corrected. Time spent with parents, doing small things together like watching YouTube or painting nails, is seen as genuine care. These moments signal that the adult is emotionally present and enjoys being with the child.

At the same time, many children express frustration with adults who control or intrude on their privacy, especially regarding their digital life. Some describe being punished for being honest or for making small mistakes, which in turn teaches them to withhold or lie. Respect, trust and two-way communication are highlighted as key to good caregiving — not just being obeyed because one is older.

7.1.6.2 - Leisure and Health

Leisure time plays a vital role in how children experience care and the right to just be themselves. For many, being allowed to engage in hobbies, explore nature, play outside or relax alone is as much about freedom as about well-being. Having time to "just be" without pressure to perform or conform is part of what makes them feel emotionally safe. Some describe moments of solitude or

repetitive rituals (like long showers) as their primary form of self-care. These are not just preferences but important strategies for mental balance.

Leisure is also where some children feel most affirmed for example, through pets, creativity, gaming, or time in nature. These environments often offer emotional safety that institutions or homes do not. Activities like drawing, gardening, or going for walks provide both stimulation and rest. Children also value having friends and peers around during their free time, however those in rural areas or care arrangements often face isolation.

While children express joy in these activities, they also mention that they don't want their free time to be fully structured or supervised. Feeling trusted and free to explore, without constant adult surveillance, is described as part of being respected as a growing person. Leisure is not just "play", it is a protected time for identity development and emotional repair.

7.1.6.3 - Educational and Institutional Settings

Care and upbringing within institutions such as schools, residential settings, or special provisions are judged by the presence of reliable and respectful adults. Children describe how feeling heard and taken seriously in school can change their sense of self-worth. For those in special education or therapeutic schools, individual attention and flexibility are often highlighted as sources of emotional safety. These environments give children time and space to learn and grow at their own pace, and several mention specific staff who had time to listen or adjust expectations.

However, many children also express how mainstream schooling can feel cold, punitive, or unresponsive. They describe being scolded for needing breaks or not being believed when reporting distress. Feeling unfairly treated by teachers, or witnessing adults play favourites, undermines their trust and sense of dignity. Some note that being "different" due to mental health issues, sexuality, clothing, or behaviour can result in being marginalised rather than supported.

Children also ask for schools to care more about emotional education such as teaching life skills, understanding mental health, and helping them navigate relationships. They want learning environments where care is actively practiced through listening and genuine interest in who they are.

7.1.6.4 - Identified Needs and Challenges

Across home, leisure, and institutional contexts, children articulate that care is not only something they receive, but also something they notice, interpret, and evaluate. One of the most frequently identified needs is the presence of emotionally available adults who listen, take children seriously, and respond without anger or ridicule. Children describe care as trust, consistency, kindness, and respect. They are quite quick to point out when these qualities are missing. In both families and institutions, several note that adults often think they "know better", but fail to listen or explain themselves. This disconnect creates not only frustration, but a sense of not being valued or believed.

Children also express a strong need for privacy and personal space. Having their own room, a space to retreat to, or time alone is described as essential to managing emotions and protecting one's inner world. This need appears across age groups and is especially pronounced among those living in care

arrangements or crowded homes. For these children, care is about boundaries, self-regulation, and having control over one's body, time, and thoughts.

In institutional settings, many children report unstable adult contact, rapid staff turnover, and rigid structures that don't accommodate individual needs. The absence of relational continuity is experienced as neglect, even when basic services are in place. Being cared for, they say, is about whether anyone genuinely "sees" them. Some children describe being supported in special educational settings where staff have more time, flexibility, and patience. Other children feel excluded or stigmatised in mainstream settings where difference is treated as disruption rather than diversity.

Children also highlight how care must be relational rather than transactional. Systems designed to "protect" sometimes end up feeling controlling or arbitrary. Whether it's teachers who dismiss emotions, parents who punish honesty, or caregivers who enforce rules without explanation, these practices are perceived not as upbringing but as oppression. Children consistently ask for fairness, dialogue, and dignity in how rules are communicated and enforced.

- Children need emotionally present and respectful adults in all domains of their lives.
- Many lack private spaces and time for emotional regulation.
- Some children experience adult behaviour as inconsistent, intrusive, or unresponsive.
- Schools often struggle to meet children's psychological and relational needs, especially for those with neurodiverse profiles.
- Children in care or vulnerable settings describe instability and lack of continuity in adult relationships.

7.1.6.5 - Suggestions and Solutions Proposed by Children

In response, children offer a range of constructive and clear suggestions. They call for adults who listen without interrupting, explain their decisions, and respect children's need for autonomy. They suggest retreats at home and school and environments where they feel emotionally safe. They want adults to show trust in them, without giving up on guidance. Most importantly, they ask for care to be expressed through relational presence, not control.

- Ensure every child has access to private space and moments of calm.
- Support children's autonomy while maintaining respectful dialogue.
- Foster adult-child relationships built on trust.
- Prioritise stable caregiving and attentive teacher presence in institutional settings.
- Include emotional education and life skills in school curricula.
- Strengthen rights-based approaches to discipline, support, and inclusion.

7.1.6.6 - UNCRC Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The children's perspectives on care and upbringing reflect several key rights outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 5 recognises children's evolving capacities and calls on adults to offer guidance with respect and understanding. This is a recurring theme in children's requests to be heard rather than controlled. Article 12 secures their right to be listened to in all matters affecting them, which many children feel is still lacking at home and in school.

Article 16 affirms the right to privacy, echoed in children's desire for their own room, autonomy, and protection from invasive adult behaviour. Article 18 places responsibility for upbringing on parents and calls for systems to support them, which is especially important when families face emotional or structural challenges. Article 27 guarantees a standard of living that supports full development, which children link to basic needs like food, warmth, and access to play. Lastly, Article 31 protects the right to rest and leisure. This is expressed by children as essential to their emotional balance and self-expression. Together, these rights confirm that good care is about both protection and participation.

- **Article 5:** The right to receive guidance from parents and guardians in a manner consistent with the child's evolving capacities.
- **Article 12:** The right to be heard in all matters affecting the child.
- **Article 16:** The right to privacy, including personal space.
- **Article 18:** Parents or guardians have the primary responsibility for upbringing and should be supported in fulfilling this.
- **Article 27:** The right to a standard of living adequate for development.
- **Article 31:** The right to rest, leisure, and play.

7.1.7 - Play, Culture, and Leisure Activities

Children and young people across the Faroe Islands describe play and leisure as essential to their development, identity, and well-being. Play is how they learn, explore, regulate emotions, and connect with others. Their experiences span digital spaces, nature, creative activities, and peer interaction. While many share joyful and meaningful memories, others describe limited access to leisure due to cost, location, or adult control. Cultural life including creative expression, traditions, and language plays a less explicit but still important role, often linked to belonging and self-understanding.

7.1.7.1 - Home and Local Environment

At home and in nearby surroundings, play is shaped by the physical and emotional space available. Many children enjoy being at home when there is room to move, someone to play with, or the freedom to choose their own activities. Some describe playing on trampolines, with siblings, or simply relaxing with their own toys and imagination.

Nature also plays a central role, with children highlighting the importance of green spaces, animals, and places to walk, build or simply be quiet. For some children, play in the local environment is experienced as both joyful and restorative. These children describe how being allowed to roam outdoors, interact with animals, or simply observe flowers and birds gives them a sense of peace, freedom, and emotional balance. In these cases, the local environment is not only physically accessible, but also emotionally safe and open to the child's imagination.

A recurring theme, however, is the lack of accessible outdoor play areas. Several children mention that there is "nothing to do", particularly during bad weather or in isolated areas. The absence of communal spaces reduces opportunities for shared play and exploration. Despite this, some children express pride in their creativity and ability to make something out of very little.

7.1.7.2 - Leisure and Health

Leisure is often where children feel most free and most themselves. Across age groups, they mention activities such as gaming, sports, music, swimming, walking, crafting, and “doing nothing” as essential to feeling good. Play is described as a time for release, connection, and creativity. Older children speak positively of spending time with friends, watching movies, staying up late, or simply hanging out.

However, several children and young people also mention barriers: high costs, limited transport, lack of offerings tailored to teens, and an overemphasis on traditional sports. Some feel that “fun” is not something adults take seriously or support actively. The absence of inclusive, youth-friendly spaces leads to frustration, boredom, or passive screen time. Still, several children describe the value of free, unstructured activities such as walking, drawing, or listening to music as deeply restorative and meaningful.

7.1.7.3 - Educational and Institutional Settings

Children repeatedly express that they learn and thrive through movement, creativity, and practical engagement. For many, subjects like art, music, gardening, woodworking, or even free play are not simply leisure activities. They are meaningful ways to explore the world, build confidence, and express themselves. These domains allow for emotional learning, collaboration, and sensory development, which children experience as deeply motivating and enjoyable.

Children call for a shift in how schools structure time and value learning: they want creative and hands-on experiences to be integrated into the daily rhythm of school life, not only confined to “special days” or after-school hours. Outdoor learning is associated with calmness, curiosity, and physical well-being. Many describe these environments as more inclusive and less stressful than standard classrooms.

In some schools, particularly those with smaller class sizes or special educational approaches, children describe environments where creative projects and hands-on learning are part of the curriculum. These schools include gardening, crafts, and outdoor activities as legitimate parts of education. Children feel that such activities are fun, meaningful, and help them express themselves while learning useful skills.

In educational settings, play and creativity are often under pressure. Especially older children note that structured learning takes precedence, and that opportunities for play are sometimes limited or undervalued. Several workshops highlight how schoolyards are not well equipped, or how bad weather keeps children indoors without meaningful alternatives. This creates a mismatch between children’s needs for movement and the realities of school infrastructure.

7.1.7.4 - Identified Needs and Challenges

Across all groups, children describe play and leisure as essential for well-being, learning, and social connection. However, they also identify significant limitations in access and quality. A central challenge is the lack of inclusive and accessible leisure opportunities, particularly for teenagers and children living in rural areas. Some children express frustrations over having “nothing to do”, especially during bad weather or outside school hours. Public play spaces are often poorly

maintained or non-existent, and transport limitations make it hard to join clubs or activities in other towns.

Another recurring issue is the lack of adult recognition of play as important. Children report that leisure is often undervalued by adults, who focus on academic outcomes or structured sports. Creative, unstructured, or imaginative play is seen as less legitimate (especially for older children). This narrows the scope of what is considered acceptable recreation and excludes children with different interests, abilities, or temperaments.

Schools also present barriers: when it rains, indoor recess often comes with strict behavioural rules and no room for physical expression or fun. Children describe how limited space, noise rules, or rigid supervision reduce the joy of play, making school feel like a place of control rather than possibility.

- Lack of accessible, inclusive leisure activities, especially for teens and children in rural areas.
- Poor infrastructure for play in schools (e.g. indoor play options during bad weather).
- Limited adult support for play and creative expression. They are often perceived as "not serious".
- Economic barriers to participation in sports, arts, and hobbies.
- Few structured options for teens that match their interests and social rhythms.

7.1.7.5 - Suggestions and Solutions Proposed by Children

In response to these challenges, children offer clear and thoughtful proposals. They ask for more youth-friendly indoor spaces, where they can relax, play, or simply be together without pressure. They suggest a wider range of creative and cultural activities such as music, drawing, crafts, role-playing, and storytelling. Several propose that children themselves should be involved in the design of leisure spaces, to ensure they are engaging and relevant.

Children also call for investment in infrastructure: covered playgrounds, green spaces, and community centres that remain open and accessible. Finally, they ask that play, rest, and culture be treated with the same seriousness as learning. This should be considered as core parts of a good life.

- Create free, local leisure activities and youth-friendly indoor spaces.
- Expand non-sporting options: music, drawing, crafts, gaming, storytelling, theatre.
- Invest in weatherproof schoolyards and multipurpose play zones.
- Recognise play, rest, and creativity as valid and important for all age groups.
- Include children in designing play and leisure spaces to reflect their real interests.

7.1.7.6 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

These needs and proposals are strongly supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 2 calls for protection against discrimination. This includes exclusion based on geography, age, or access to resources. And Article 12 ensures the child's right to be heard regarding how play, space, and culture are organised in their everyday lives. Article 13 protects freedom of expression in all its forms, including creative and symbolic play. Article 15 guarantees the right to form groups

and friendships, and fundamental to social play. Article 31 affirms the child's right to rest, leisure, play, and participation in cultural and artistic life.

- **Article 2:** Protection from discrimination due to geography, age or ability.
- **Article 12:** Right to be heard regarding in the design of recreational and educational environments.
- **Article 13:** Freedom of expression through creative and cultural forms.
- **Article 15:** Right to association and peaceful assembly including with peers.
- **Article 31:** Right to rest, leisure, play, and cultural life.

7.1.8 - Democracy and Child Participation

Children and young people express a growing awareness of their right to be heard and to take part in decisions that affect them. While many describe being overlooked or dismissed, others share experiences of being taken seriously, trusted, and invited into dialogue. Their understanding of participation spans family life, school settings, and the public sphere. Participation is about being listened to, respected, and involved in shaping decisions.

7.1.8.1 - Home and Local Environment

At home, children describe a wide range of experiences when it comes to being involved in decisions. Some speak of parents who explain rules, negotiate boundaries, and listen with interest. In these homes, children feel respected and valued, even when limits are set. This mutual trust reinforces the child's confidence and sense of agency.

Others, however, describe households where decisions are made unilaterally, and children are expected to comply without explanation. Some report that their opinions are dismissed outright, or that attempts to speak up lead to punishment. In these cases, children learn to withhold their thoughts because they don't feel safe saying it.

Despite these challenges, several children reflect positively on experiences where adults have shown trust and allowed them to make choices. The choice to use their time, what clothes to wear, who to be together with or when to go out. These small everyday decisions are experienced as meaningful exercises in autonomy.

7.1.8.2 - Leisure and Health

In leisure settings, children often enjoy greater freedom and influence over their activities. However, this varies by age and environment. Many describe choosing what to do, where to go, and who to be with as key aspects of feeling "in control." Being allowed to participate in the planning of events, trips, or social gatherings is mentioned as both fun and empowering.

Some children express frustration with a lack of youth involvement in organising leisure offers. Teens often feel that many activities are either adult-driven or aimed at younger children. Others point to uneven access to cultural spaces or youth clubs, which makes it harder to express opinions or shape their own leisure lives.

A positive pattern emerges in how children use digital platforms to communicate, create, and connect. Some describe using social media and games to build friendships, collaborate, and express identity. These platforms can function as informal arenas for participation and peer dialogue.

7.1.8.3 - Educational and Institutional Settings

School is the most mentioned context for participation. Schools are perceived as a place where children want to be heard and as a place where they often are not. While some children describe teachers who invite dialogue and value their input, many report that their voices are ignored, especially when they express discomfort, ask for help, or question rules. When children are not taken seriously, they tend to disengage or withdraw altogether.

A few positive exceptions stand out. Children who participate in student councils or know specific teachers they can talk to report feeling more empowered. These relationships are built on respect, consistency, and a willingness to share power. When adults genuinely engage with children's ideas in relation to curriculum design, classroom rules, or school culture, children respond with commitment and creativity.

Preschool children primarily express participation through bodily, playful, and symbolic means. Their sense of influence is most visible when adults follow their rhythm, validate non-verbal expression, and allow them to use storytelling, drawing, or gestures instead of words. Participation happens through choosing activities, deciding how to play, or expressing emotions through objects and actions.

Children also point to systemic barriers. They describe decision-making processes as adult-centred, with student input often being symbolic rather than real. Even when asked, children feel their contributions don't change anything which can lead to disillusionment.

Children in foster care or difficult home environments often express low levels of real participation. Participation is often symbolic rather than meaningful, with adults controlling the outcome regardless of what the child says. These children ask for safe spaces where they don't have to speak immediately but can build trust over time and where their life situation is recognised without exposure or judgement. Some point to the importance of being acknowledged for their silence. Silence is sometimes used as a form of emotional self-protection.

Children in special education or care settings often express that their ability to participate depends heavily on the relational quality. When adults take time, show patience, and adapt daily routines, children feel more able to express themselves and influence their day. They specifically highlight staff who "try to understand" and who allow them to withdraw or engage in alternative forms of learning, such as games or projects. However, this sense of influence is fragile. When rules are rigid or adults are perceived as uninterested, children withdraw or stop expressing their views.

7.1.8.4 - Identified Needs and Challenges

Across workshops, children express a clear desire to be listened to and taken seriously in everyday decisions. A central challenge is that participation is often conditional, symbolic, or inconsistently applied. Children describe situations where they are invited to speak, but where their input has little or no influence on the outcome. This creates a sense of frustration and disengagement.

Another recurring need is for structured, safe, and respectful spaces where participation is possible without fear or pressure. Others mention the absence of real platforms for influence in leisure and cultural settings, especially for older children and teenagers.

- Many children feel that their voices are not taken seriously in families, schools, or public life.
- Adults often ask for input without acting on it, creating symbolic rather than real participation.
- Rules are rarely explained or negotiated, and dissent is often punished.
- Children lack structured and supportive arenas for dialogue and influence, especially outside school.

7.1.8.5 - Suggestions and Solutions Proposed by Children

Despite these barriers, children articulate several clear and constructive suggestions. They call for adults to explain decisions, engage in respectful dialogue, and allow room for negotiation in daily life. In schools, they want student councils to have real influence. Several propose that children should help design the spaces and structures they use, whether playgrounds, clubs, or learning activities. They also stress the need for adult responsiveness: it is not enough to ask children what they think if no one listens or acts on what is shared.

- Adults should explain decisions and involve children in small, everyday choices.
- Schools should provide real platforms for participation, such as empowered student councils.
- Children want to help shape leisure activities and have a say in how free time is spent.
- Respectful dialogue should replace punishment, especially when children speak up.
- Participation should be built on mutual respect and followed by visible impact.

7.1.8.6 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The proposals are deeply rooted in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 guarantees every child the right to express their views in all matters affecting them, and to have those views taken seriously. Article 13 protects the child's right to freedom of expression through speech, writing, art, or other forms. Article 15 secures the right to form associations and participate in groups. This is a key foundation for social participation and democratic practice. Article 17 ensures children's access to information, including digital platforms where informal participation often takes place. And Article 5 reminds us that adult guidance must always be respectful of the child's evolving capacities.

- **Article 5:** Adults must provide guidance in ways that respect children's evolving capacities.
- **Article 12:** The right to be heard in all matters affecting the child.
- **Article 13:** Freedom of expression in all forms, including speech, writing, and art.
- **Article 15:** Right to form groups, associations, and peaceful assemblies.
- **Article 17:** Right to access information, including digital and media based.

7.2 - Summary of Part 1 – What Children Say About a Good Life and the Future

Across all workshops and thematic areas, children describe a good life as one built on trust, care, freedom, and fairness. They emphasise the importance of being safe, both physically and emotionally, having stable and kind relationships with adults, and access to spaces where they can play, rest, and express themselves.

A good life also includes being listened to, having a say in everyday decisions, and feeling part of a community whether through friendship, creative activities, or shared routines. Children associate well-being with balance: between activity and calm, independence and support, structure and choice.

When looking to the future, children express a strong desire for inclusive, youth-oriented environments. They call for better access to leisure activities, more respect for children's voices, and systems that respond to emotional as well as practical needs. Many stress the need for less pressure and more empathy in schools, families, and institutions. They want the Faroe Islands to be a place where all children are treated equally, where there is space for diversity, imagination, and self-expression, and where adults see children not as passive recipients, but as active co-creators of society.

Subsection	Key Conclusions	Preliminary Recommendations
2.3.1 Health and Mental Well-being	Well-being depends on emotional safety, trusted adults, and spaces for rest, play, and calm. Bullying and overstimulation are major stressors.	Provide calm spaces, stable adults, and access to nature. Support emotional needs early and holistically.
2.3.2 Learning and Development	Children seek learning that is meaningful, creative, and fair. Rigid systems and lack of support for diverse needs hinder motivation and confidence.	Adapt teaching to different learning styles. Include creative subjects and emotional safety in school environments.
2.3.3 Social Relationships and Belonging	Friendships, inclusion, and recognition are central. Loneliness, exclusion, and feeling invisible are recurring concerns.	Strengthen inclusive practices and peer support. Adults should help children build and maintain positive relationships.
2.3.4 Safety and Protection	Children want protection from harm and trust in adults. They often feel unheard when reporting violence or discomfort.	Listen actively to children's concerns. Create clear, safe channels to report harm and feel protected.
2.3.5 Quality of Life and Social Equality	Inequality is experienced in everyday life. Children notice differences in access to food, clothing, housing, and opportunities.	Ensure all children have access to basics and dignity. Address visible and invisible inequalities with care.
2.3.6 Care and Upbringing	Stable, caring adults and respectful family dynamics are key. Children value love, privacy, and routines — and notice when these are lacking.	Support family relationships and early guidance. Respect children's privacy and emotional expression.
2.3.7 Play, Culture, and Leisure Activities	Play, creativity, and access to nature are vital. Structured activities are often limited, and older children feel leisure spaces are not for them.	Offer time, space, and support for free play. Ensure leisure opportunities are inclusive, diverse, and youth driven.
2.3.8 Democracy and Child Participation	Children want to be heard and taken seriously. Participation is often symbolic, and decision-making structures lack transparency and follow-up.	Enable meaningful child participation. Respect children's input and create visible links between their voice and real decisions.



8 - Analysis: Societal Actors and Structures (Part 2)

The second part of the analysis explores how children perceive and experience the systems and structures that shape their everyday lives. While children rarely speak in technical terms, their accounts provide clear insights into how the “system” works in practice, as when it protects and includes, and when it fails or excludes. The section is structured around six thematic domains that are understood as the structural conditions and public responsibilities that must be in place to facilitate, protect, and regulate the realisation of those aspirations expressed by children in Part 1 and the overall political vision of Faroe Island as the best place to grow up.

Each subsection identifies structural patterns across the data and highlights both what children experience public systems do or fail to do, and what they would change if they had the power. From their reflections on legislation and rights to their thoughts on data, governance, and professionalism, children offer both explicit and implicit critiques and proposals. They call for earlier support, greater fairness, better communication, and adults who see, hear, and respect them as individuals.

8.1.1 - Public Goals: A Good Childhood and Youth as a Common Societal Aim

This part of the system model reflects what a good life means in practice to children. The insights are presented in Part 1. The element serves as the connective bridge to the model's institutional context and second part of the analysis.

8.1.2 - Legislation, Children's Rights, and Social Contracts

While few children refer directly to “laws” or “legislation,” many express strong opinions about rules, rights, fairness, and responsibility in private life and in institutional settings. Their perspectives on justice and protection are grounded in their everyday experiences: when adults listen or ignore them, when systems help or fail, when something feels fair or deeply wrong. Children demonstrate an intuitive grasp of what a “social contract” should offer even when they don't use that language.

Several children raise the idea that laws should exist to protect children from harm, especially in relation to the internet, family life, and violence. One group repeatedly called for stricter rules on adult behaviour such as limiting access to alcohol or creating registries for sexual predators. Their reasoning is both emotional and pragmatic: if adults cannot control themselves, someone else should.

These concerns point to a clear frustration with the lack of protection, especially for children living in unsafe homes or without stable caregiving. Children also reflect on rules that feel unfair or inconsistent, particularly in schools or foster care. Some describe situations where they are punished for small things, not allowed to explain themselves, or subjected to rules that seem arbitrary.

At the same time, there are positive examples of children recognising and valuing rules that protect them such as privacy, time to rest, or being treated with dignity. Some children suggest that rules are acceptable when they are explained and applied respectfully.

Despite limited knowledge of formal rights and frameworks, several children express an interest in how decisions are made and who decides on their behalf. They often feel excluded from these processes, but they are not indifferent. Instead, they propose changes that reflect both empathy and a sense of justice.

If given the power, children would introduce laws that better protect their well-being and autonomy. They would also make sure that rules were fair, explained, and consistently enforced, and that children had the right to privacy, freedom of expression, and participation in decision-making. These include:

- Setting age limits for digital platforms like YouTube, TikTok and Snapchat to protect against grooming and exposure to harmful content.
- Creating public monitoring or registries for dangerous adults.
- Making sure that teens have more social spaces, more say in decisions, and protection from adult overreach into private matters.
- Establishing clear consequences for adults who do not fulfil their caregiving responsibilities including limits on alcohol use and financial neglect.

8.1.2.1 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Children may not use legal language, but their voices offer a compelling reminder: laws and policies must be rooted in real-life experience and not just formal frameworks. For children, the law matters when it protects, listens, and restores fairness. The children's perspectives in this theme reflect several core articles of the UNCRC:

- **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all decisions affecting them.
- **Article 12:** Children have the right to express their views in all matters and to have them taken seriously.
- **Article 16:** Right to privacy regarding protection from arbitrary or intrusive supervision.
- **Article 17:** Access to reliable information and protection from harmful media content.
- **Article 19:** Protection from all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect — both physical and emotional.
- **Article 34:** Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including grooming and online threats.

8.1.3 - Timely and Cross-Sectoral Initiatives

Across the workshops, children describe significant delays and disconnects in how support is offered particularly when they experience emotional distress, exclusion, or instability. While children rarely refer directly to “systems” or “inter-agency coordination,” many describe gaps between needs and timely help. Across settings and ages, some children express frustration that when something is wrong and help is either absent, too late, or fragmented. This suggests that children are highly aware of the effects of delayed responses and poor collaboration between the adults and institutions that are supposed to support them.

Children in care or in vulnerable families are among the most vocal in expressing that help often comes too late, or that they don't know who to talk to. They describe having to repeat their stories

to multiple adults, feeling that no one takes full responsibility, and being moved around without follow-up. Some express that by the time help arrives, the situation has already become worse, and trust has eroded. In these cases, they call for one reliable contact person, earlier intervention, and more understanding of their situation.

Children in special educational settings are more likely to have experienced continuity and relational presence. Some describe how certain teachers or support staff consistently check in, adapt routines, and give them space to decompress. This continuity builds trust and allows children to express needs before they escalate. Still, even in these settings, children notice when professionals don't communicate for instance, when a new staff member does not know about previous agreements or needs. They value coherence between adults, not just kindness in isolation.

For younger children, timely support is expressed more through routines and emotional availability. These children respond strongly to adults who notice their mood, who pick up on their signals, and who react gently. They interpret care through presence and not being rushed or redirected without explanation. Cross-sectoral aspects (e.g., between home and daycare) show up when they speak of wanting more adult consistency and familiarity across spaces. They may not name "systems" but they sense the disruption when key adults are replaced or unavailable.

In the more general school context, several children express disappointment that teachers and school staff often act alone or are slow to respond. Requests for breaks, emotional support, or help with bullying are sometimes met with inaction or misunderstanding. This cloud delays the needed help and signals to children that their concerns are not a priority.

Children describe how teachers, parents, social workers, and other adults often act in isolation, without coordination or shared understanding of the child's situation. This lack of communication leads to frustration, especially when children are required to retell their story to multiple professionals, without seeing change or continuity. Several mentions that being moved between schools, caregivers, or support services with little explanation, leaves them feeling overlooked and emotionally exhausted.

There are also positive experiences with institutions and cross-sectorial initiatives. Children highlight that even one consistent and responsive adult (someone who takes long-term responsibility, listens, remembers, and follows through) can transform their experience of support. When a teacher, social worker, or support person stays involved over time, children feel safer, more understood, and more willing to engage. Consistency and relational continuity matter greatly for trust, especially among children who have experienced instability.

Children also value simple, timely responses. A kind question, a quiet place to sit, or someone checking in regularly can be effective, in particular when support is delivered with warmth and without judgement.

If children had decision-making power, they would prioritise earlier and more personal support. Children clearly want systems that see them early, respond quickly, and work together. They prefer not fragmented interventions that arrive only when things become very critical. Children would:

- Ensure that support comes when needed, not weeks or months later.

- Assign one trusted adult (a teacher, pedagogue, mentor or contact person) to follow them across transitions.
- Improve communication and coordination between sectors, so children don't feel lost between systems.
- Establish low-threshold support services at schools and in local communities.
- Allow children to ask for help without fear of being judged, punished, or ignored.

8.1.3.1 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The children's experiences and proposals resonate strongly with several articles of the UNCRC. Organising the public support according to the articles support a vision of coherent, child-centred systems where children do not have to ask twice, explain everything again, or wait until things are unbearable. Timely and coordinated help is a matter of efficiency and rights.

- **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in coordination between services.
- **Article 12:** The right to be heard in identifying what help is needed and how it should be delivered.
- **Article 18:** Parents have primary responsibility for upbringing, but authorities must support them through coordinated services.
- **Article 19:** Protection from all forms of neglect which includes timely response and system oversight.
- **Article 24:** The right to access health and support services which implies removing barriers and ensuring cross-sector collaboration.

8.1.4 - Research, Data, and Evaluation Culture

Although children do not speak explicitly about "research," "data systems," or "evaluation," they express strong awareness of what it means to be seen, heard, or overlooked. Their reflections highlight key gaps between how systems record or respond to their needs. Children are highly sensitive to whether information about them leads to care, follow-up, and change.

Several children describe a kind of disconnect between external performance and internal experience. They feel that adults often make assumptions based on behaviour or grades without noticing emotional distress, loneliness, or deeper challenges. For children in vulnerable positions, this misalignment can lead to a sense of invisibility.

Others point to the symbolic nature of participation in school councils or feedback sessions where they are asked for their input but see no follow-up or change. This leads to scepticism toward evaluation and consultation practices.

At the same time, children describe moments when they do feel seen and remembered, especially when adults follow up on what they said days or weeks earlier. These moments make a deep impression and affirm that their voices matter (maybe in the moment, but over time).

Children in more vulnerable contexts also express uncertainty about who is responsible for following up on what they share. They are unsure who they can talk to, or who "keeps track" of

their well-being. This indicates a lack of relational continuity in how children's information is handled.

If children could decide, they would call for a more human, responsive, and meaningful evaluation culture. They want to be asked in ways that feel genuine, at the right time, by people they trust. Most importantly, they want what they say to lead to action. They would prioritise:

- Follow-up: When children say something, they want to know what happened next.
- Depth over surface: Not just measuring grades or behaviour, but understanding emotions, friendships, safety, and well-being.
- Trust-based data: Information shared in a relationship, not extracted in isolation.
- Integrated systems: Children don't have to repeat themselves to multiple professionals.

8.1.4.1 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

While children may not name the concept of data culture, their reflections align closely with several core rights. To build a rights-based evaluation culture, systems must do more than measure outcomes. They must listen, follow up, and build trust over time.

- **Article 12:** The right to be heard and taken seriously in all matters affecting the child.
- **Article 13:** The right to express oneself in multiple ways - verbally, visually, symbolically.
- **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must guide all decisions which requires understanding their actual needs.
- **Article 17:** The right to access relevant, appropriate information and to be included in knowledge processes.
- **Article 36:** Protection from activities or processes that exploit or disregard the child's experience including superficial participation.

8.1.5 - Network-Based Collaboration and Public Governance

Children do not use terms like "governance" or "inter-agency collaboration". Yet their experiences and reflections provide valuable insight into how connected or fragmented public systems feel from their perspective. Their concerns centre around continuity, responsiveness, and whether adults are "on the same page" when it comes to their needs.

There are positive stories of what effective, network-based support can feel like. Usually, the support is anchored around one stable adult who serves as a connector or network coordinator. Whether it's a teacher, pedagogue, school manager, counsellor, or caseworker, this person helps the child navigate between systems and ensures that their story and needs are carried forward. In some cases, this shows up as small but coordinated actions like communication between teachers and social workers, or alignment between what happens at home and in school. When collaboration works, children feel safer, more supported, and less alone in managing their challenges.

Across all age groups, children express some frustration with fragmented support, unclear responsibilities, and systems that shift or disappear when staff members change. They feel the burden of navigating between disconnected adults and services, often without a clear point of contact or continuity. These concerns are especially strong among children in vulnerable positions. These children frequently report that they don't know who is responsible, who they can talk to, or

whether different adults are even aware of each other's involvement. They describe the system as either invisible, uncoordinated, or intrusive. The system often reacts too late and without a sense of shared responsibility.

Children in mainstream school settings, particularly through student councils, often identify the system as overly reactive and dependent on individuals. They notice that when a key adult is absent or replaced, support quickly breaks down. These children call for better coordination between schools, families, and support professionals including visible contact persons and integrated social and academic support.

In contrast, children in daycare settings do not explicitly speak about systems, but they express a deep emotional sensitivity to breaks in relationships, such as when staff change, or routines are disrupted. For them, public governance is not abstract thing, systems are experienced physically and emotionally, through consistent, trusted adults who provide a sense of safety across home and daycare.

If children were in charge, they would build clear, stable, and interconnected systems that is built around their everyday life hence prioritise their lived experience over institutional silos. They would ensure:

- That information is shared respectfully between relevant adults, so children don't have to repeat themselves.
- That every child has one known and trusted adult who coordinates help, explains decisions, and stays involved through changes and transitions.
- That services communicate directly to each other including schools, health services, and social supports.
- Guarantee that support is continuous, not person dependent.
- That children are involved in decision-making as co-actors rather than as subjects.

8.1.5.1 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

While the term "governance" may be distant from children's language, their reflections strongly relate to the UNCRC principles. Children do not ask for perfect systems; they ask for coherent, compassionate, and connected ones. Systems that talk to each other, remember their stories, and support them in ways that feel whole:

- **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration requiring aligned efforts across systems.
- **Article 12:** The right to be heard in all matters affecting the child including decisions made across public agencies.
- **Article 18:** Parents and legal guardians have primary responsibility, but public authorities must support them through well-coordinated services.
- **Article 19:** The child has a right to protection from harm, which includes preventing neglect caused by system failures.
- **Article 25:** The right to periodic review of treatment and services, continuity and shared responsibility across institutions.

8.1.6 - Professionalism and Child Perspectives Across Sectors

Children may not speak explicitly about “professionalism” or “cross-sector competencies”, but their reflections reveal an awareness of how adults across sectors see, hear, and treat them. Their experiences with teachers, pedagogues, social workers, care staff, and health professionals show that the attitude and approach of professionals profoundly shape how children feel about themselves and the systems around them.

There are many strong examples of good professional practice across sectors. When one pedagogue, teacher or social worker maintains a stable, respectful relationship with a child, it often becomes a turning point in that child’s sense of worth and safety.

Children comment on how different professionals have different ways of seeing children even within the same social setting. Many are capable to detect when professionals treat them as passive or incapable and quick to appreciate when they are treated as competent, thinking individuals. Some adults are described as supportive and fair, others as dismissive or punitive. Some involve children in decisions, ask for their opinions, and allow them to make appropriate choices. These experiences reflect a rights-based, capability-oriented view of the child: one that recognises children as co-actors rather than subjects.

In early childhood settings and among children who do not speak Faroese as their first language, communication often happens through actions, gestures, play, and emotional cues rather than spoken words. In these cases, professionalism requires attentive, non-verbal sensitivity: the ability to read tone, movement, silence, or distress signals and respond with care. Children in both groups depend on adults who can interpret their needs without demanding verbal explanation. When this succeeds, children feel safe, included, and emotionally recognised even in the absence of a shared language.

Children in vulnerable situations are particularly sensitive to whether adults act out of genuine care or just routine. They distinguish between professional authority and relational competence. Professionals who rush, use formal or cold language, or fail to explain rules are seen as disconnected. By contrast, those who take time, speak calmly, and adapt their approach to the individual child are remembered as trustworthy and supportive.

Across all groups, children express a need for adults who take time to understand them, explain decisions clearly, and avoid assumptions. If children could shape professionalism across sectors, they would:

- Ensure that all adults working with children are trained in listening and emotional awareness.
- Require professionals to explain rules, decisions, and procedures in ways children can understand.
- Promote relational continuity, so children don’t have to build new trust with each system encounter.
- Expect professionals to adapt their approach to each child, not treat everyone the same.
- Encourage calm, respectful, and culturally sensitive communication in all interactions.

8.1.6.1 - Links to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Children's reflections on professional behaviour and cross-sector practice speak directly to several articles in the UNCRC. Competency is about recognition, empathy, and the ability to meet each child as a person:

- **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration including how professionals act and relate to them.
- **Article 5:** Adults must guide and support children in ways that respect their evolving capacities.
- **Article 12:** Children have the right to be heard and understood.
- **Article 13:** Children must be able to express themselves in their own ways including non-verbal expression.
- **Article 19:** Protection from harm includes emotional harm caused by professional neglect or poor practice.
- **Article 29:** Education must be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents, and abilities which requires inclusive, respectful professional behaviour

8.2 - What do Children Say About Societal Actors and Structures?

The second part of the analysis shifts the focus from children's lived experiences to the systems, structures, and professional practices that shape their everyday lives. Children do not speak in institutional or policy terms. Even so, their inputs during the workshops provide a clear lens on how public goals, legal frameworks, service systems, and adult behaviours either support or undermine their well-being.

Across the themes in Part 2, children highlight how societal actors like teachers, parents, caseworkers, and decision-makers influence their lives through presence, coordination, and responsiveness. Some children express frustration with delayed or fragmented support, unclear responsibilities, and adults who act without listening or explaining. At the same time, they describe powerful moments of trust and inclusion, often made possible by one consistent adult who listens, remembers, and acts. These experiences underscore the importance of professionalism, collaboration, and governance models that are relational, child-centred, and rights-based.

Children call for systems that are coherent, timely, and built around their real needs. They want their voices to be taken seriously. They express a sense of justice and are quick to notice when structures or professionals fail to live up to their standards in terms of fairness, recognition, and emotional safety.

The table below summarises the main conclusions and recommendations drawn from children's insights across the six thematic areas. Their messages are clear: systems must not only exist, but truly work in ways that centre children's needs, rights, and voices.

Subsection	Key Conclusions	Preliminary Recommendations
2.4.1 Public Goals: A Good Childhood and Youth	Children want society to prioritise care, fairness, and participation. They see a good life as everyone's responsibility.	Define clear, shared values around childhood. Make care, inclusion, and equality visible priorities in public agendas.
2.4.2 Legislation, Children's Rights, and Social Contracts	Children experience a gap between rights and reality. They want rights to be visible, understandable, and acted upon.	Make rights education real. Train adults to understand and act on children's rights in everyday decisions.
2.4.3 Timely and Cross-Sectoral Initiatives	Children express frustration with late, uncoordinated support. They value early help and one consistent adult across systems.	Provide early, coordinated support. Appoint key contact adults and reduce fragmentation in services.
2.4.4 Research, Data, and Evaluation Culture	Children feel that adults often collect information without acting on it. They want their voices to lead to real change.	Use children's input meaningfully. Show how their voices influence change and avoid symbolic consultation.
2.4.5 Network-Based Collaboration and Public Governance	Children notice when adults and institutions act in silos. They want services to talk to each other and support them coherently.	Improve coordination between sectors. Children should not carry the burden of system failures.
2.4.6 Professionalism and Child Perspectives Across Sectors	Children differentiate between adults who truly listen and those who don't. They value relational presence over authority.	Train professionals in listening, empathy, and emotional awareness. Build relationships before rules.



8.3 - Shared Themes Across Age, Geography, and Background

Children and young people across all groups share a level of consistency in how they understand well-being, express needs, and evaluate the systems and adults around them. Their reflections demonstrate not only what matters most to them, but also what they expect (and hope) from the society they grow up in. The following synthesis presents key cross-cutting themes across four areas.

8.3.1 - Shared Understandings of a Good Childhood and Youth

Across all workshops, ages, and backgrounds, children and young people demonstrate a striking level of agreement on what matters most for a good life and meaningful development. Despite living in different parts of the country and growing up under different circumstances, their reflections share core values, needs, and expectations both in their daily environments and in their interactions with adults and institutions.

Children across contexts associate a good life with five core elements:

- **Emotional safety and stability:** Being with people they trust, having predictable routines, and feeling protected and accepted.
- **Freedom and time to play.** Play is not only fun but a vital space for imagination, rest, and identity.
- **Connection and belonging:** Having friends, being part of a group, and feeling recognised for who they are and what they can do.
- **Recognition and voice:** Being listened to and taken seriously, especially in matters that affect their everyday life.
- **Balance between guidance and autonomy:** Children want clear support but also freedom to explore, make choices, and express themselves without fear.

Children consistently describe a good life as one where they feel safe, connected, and recognised. Emotional security and trust in adults are essential; without these, nothing else feels stable. They associate well-being with being able to play freely, have time to rest, and engage in creative or imaginative activities. Belonging is another universal theme: having friends, being accepted, and feeling good at something are fundamental to how children see themselves and navigate the world. Across all groups, children also emphasise the importance of being heard.

8.3.2 - Shared Starting Points for Experiencing Well-being

The starting points that enable children to experience well-being are remarkably similar. What they need is not complex: adults who are present and take them seriously, a room or quiet space to retreat to, routines that offer predictability, access to green surroundings, and opportunities to express emotions safely. Regardless of geography or social background, these everyday conditions are described as central to how children manage stress, build identity, and feel seen.

Children's experience of well-being is shaped by similar everyday conditions across groups:

- **Trustworthy and present adults:** The quality of the relationship that makes the difference whether at home, in school, or in day care.

- **Personal space and retreat:** Having a room of one's own or a place to be alone is key for emotional regulation.
- **Access to nature:** Green spaces, animals, sea, and open air are sources of play, recovery, and calm across all ages and settings.
- **Rhythms and routines:** Shared meals, sleep schedules, and school structures create predictability and a sense of order.
- **Space for emotion and expression:** Environments where children can cry, be quiet, or speak without judgement are consistently valued.

8.3.3 - Shared Positive and Negative Experiences of Key Life Arenas

Children's descriptions of home, leisure, and institutional settings reflect a clear pattern. They value moments of connection, care, and autonomy, and they are quick to notice when those are missing. At home, comfort and warmth are prized, but many children also describe cold houses, absent parents, or lack of emotional attention. In their free time, they seek unstructured, non-evaluative spaces where they can move, play, or be creative without adult control. In schools, they identify major differences between teachers who listen and those who punish; between environments that include and those that exclude.

Home and Local Environment

- Positives: Closeness to family, time with siblings or grandparents, and feeling safe in familiar surroundings.
- Negatives: Housing instability, emotional neglect, absence of quiet spaces, or parental unavailability due to stress or work.

Leisure and Health

- Positives: Unstructured time, nature, physical activity, animals, and creative pursuits.
- Negatives: Boredom, lack of youth-oriented offers (especially in rural areas), financial barriers, and excessive screen time without meaningful alternatives.

Educational and Institutional Settings

- Positives: Teachers who listen, creative subjects, peer friendships, and smaller group environments that allow for dialogue.
- Negatives: Unfair treatment, lack of individualised support, rigid rules, and insufficient help with emotional or mental health needs.

8.3.4 - Preliminary Recommendations and Proposals for Change

Across all themes, children express a desire not only to be supported, but to be involved in shaping their environments. They propose improvements with clarity and consistency: better access to inclusive leisure activities, more warm and stable relationships with adults, more nature and outdoor play, and systems that listen with intention. They ask for protection, but also for trust, for calm, but also for participation. They want to grow up in a society where children are recognised as full persons with ideas, emotions, and the capacity to contribute.

The children articulate concrete, recurring proposals for how their lives can be improved:

- **Safety through relationships:** All groups emphasise the importance of stable, listening adults as the single most important protective factor in their lives.
- **Belonging and recognition:** Having friends, feeling included, and being good at something are described as essential for well-being, across age and background.
- **Meaningful participation:** Children do not want to be consulted as a formality. They want to be taken seriously and actively involved in decisions that affect them.
- **Access to nature and outdoor space:** Many children express joy and calm in nature, and view the outdoors as a space for play, learning, and emotional recovery.
- **The value of leisure and informal space:** Children describe a need for free spaces where they can be themselves without pressure, performance, or surveillance.

8.4 - Differences and Specific Considerations for Subgroups

While many themes are shared across child groups, distinct patterns emerge when looking more closely at children in vulnerable positions, children with disabilities or special educational needs, multilingual or foreign-background children, children in early childhood, and older youth. These groups experience everyday life under different conditions and their reflections reveal both systemic blind spots and group-specific needs that require attention.

8.4.1 - Understanding of a Good Childhood

Children across groups value care, safety, and belonging, but with different emphasis. Vulnerable children describe a good life as calm and secure, free from stress and unpredictability. Children with disabilities want to be understood and accepted without judgment. Multilingual children associate well-being with being able to express themselves without linguistic pressure, using images, play, and movement. Young children in daycare express their understanding of a good life through play, attention, and emotional attunement, whereas older children and adolescents increasingly describe a good life as a balance.

Each group frames their vision of a good life through the lens of recognition and fit: what matters is not the same for everyone, but the need to be seen and supported remains universal:

- Children with disabilities and in special provisions often describe a good life as one where they are understood as individuals, not “cases”. They express a strong desire for predictability, lower sensory demands, and adults who have specialised knowledge and stay with them over time.
- Children with a foreign-language background describe a good life as one where they are included without having to speak perfectly. They express themselves through gestures, play, and images, and associate well-being with being understood nonverbally and not misjudged due to cultural differences.
- Vulnerable children define a good life through emotional calm and basic dignity: access to food, warmth, and adults who expect something from them.
- Children in daycare relate a good life to play, attention, and gentle routines. Their understanding is conveyed through storytelling, imitation, and bodily expression, often without words.

- Older children and adolescents increasingly link a good life to balance freedom from performance pressure, time to rest, and adults who see the early signs of stress and loneliness.

8.4.2 - Starting Points for Experiencing Well-being

Children do not enter school, play, or social life from equal ground. Starting points differ markedly depending on material conditions, cognitive or emotional needs, and access to recognition. Children in vulnerable families often face unmet basic needs, such as food, sleep, and care, which hinders their capacity to participate on equal terms. Some report being treated with lower expectations reinforcing stigma. Children with special needs require predictability and adapted support, especially when staff or routines change. Multilingual children often face language fatigue and social disconnection unless communication is adjusted. Young children depend on adult interpretation of their signals. And teenagers face rising pressure from school and social media, often without the support to handle it.

The different starting points seems to be influenced by structural and relational conditions:

- Children in vulnerable situations frequently lack stability in home, caregiving, and expectations. Some experience low expectations or stigmatisation from both peers and adults.
- Children with special needs like neurodivergent profiles need often quiet environments, consistent routines, and adults who coordinate support across sectors.
- Foreign-background children need emotionally safe environments where they are not forced into verbal participation before they are ready. Cultural misunderstandings and lack of translation can lead to withdrawal.
- Young children are highly dependent on adult interpretation. Their starting point depends on how well adults read their play, stories, and silences.
- Teenagers increasingly experience stress from school, social media, and future expectations, and they call for recognition of this pressure.

8.4.3 - Positive and Negative Experiences Across Life Arenas

When looking at positive and negative experiences, children in vulnerable positions often describe unstable homes and exclusion from leisure activities. Children with disabilities value calm spaces, smaller groups, and relational safety but struggle in rigid or overstimulating environments. Multilingual children thrive in creative, sensory, and physical activities where language is not central. Younger children need emotionally present adults who notice their nonverbal expressions. Older youth respond positively to fairness, flexibility, and teachers who see them as individuals.

Home and Local Environment

- Vulnerable children often lack basic provisions and describe emotional neglect or chaotic conditions.
- Children with disabilities feel safer where they are understood, and routines are predictable.
- Multilingual children may feel most comfortable at home but disconnected in the local environment.
- Daycare children are sensitive to adult absence or change.

- Older children may feel socially isolated even in busy homes especially without adult availability.

Leisure and Health

- Vulnerable children report limited access to leisure and exclusion from group activities.
- Children with special needs enjoy calm, repetitive, or nature-based activities.
- Multilingual children thrive in physical or creative activities where language is not central.
- Young children need space to play freely and repeat routines.
- Adolescents seek unstructured, social spaces where they are not constantly evaluated.

Educational and Institutional Settings

- Vulnerable children often feel overlooked or punished in school systems that don't respond to their full context.
- Children in special provisions report thriving where there are fewer pupils, more time, and relational continuity.
- Foreign-language speakers benefit from visual support, patience, and teachers who use bodily or creative communication.
- Daycare children often lack structured opportunities to influence their day. Their voice depends entirely on adult sensitivity.
- Older children report rising pressure, inequality in how teachers respond, and lack of support for mental health or social anxiety.

8.4.4 - Recommendations for Improvement

The children's recommendations reflect their unique lived realities. Children in vulnerable positions call for earlier and more respectful support, help with basic needs, and freedom from stigma. They want to be met with the same expectations and encouragement as others, not lowered standards. Children with special needs ask for adjusted environments, consistent adult figures, and educators who understand behaviour as communication. They request not to be punished for things they cannot control and want better coordination between school, health, and social services.

Multilingual children want adults to communicate visually, patiently, and without assuming fluency. They call for culturally inclusive environments and the opportunity to participate regardless of language proficiency. Daycare children need more systematic inclusion, where their play, silence, and gestures are recognised as meaningful contributions. Adolescents want space for rest, honest conversations, and time away from pressure.

Each group offers experience-based and group-specific suggestions:

- Children in special provisions ask for fewer changes in adults, better coordination between school, social services, and health, and professionals with special training.
- Multilingual children ask for more visual and embodied communication, culturally sensitive support, and patience in language acquisition.
- Vulnerable children want help with basic needs, equal access to support, and to be met with the same expectations and respect as other children — not pity or stigma.

- Children in daycare need adults to notice and respond to their play, silence, and small signals and systems that take their early expressions seriously.
- Teenagers ask protected spaces to rest, talk freely, and be seen before the pressure becomes too much.

8.4.5 - Overview: Key Insights by Child Group

The table below presents a structured overview of how different child groups understand and experience well-being, based on their unique needs and contexts. It highlights age- and situation-specific patterns across four key dimensions:

1. understanding of a good childhood,
2. starting points for well-being,
3. positive and negative experiences in everyday settings, and
4. recommendations for improvement.

These distinctions are essential for designing inclusive policies and practices that reflect the diverse realities of children across the Faroe Islands.

Child Group	Understanding of a Good Childhood	Starting Points for Well-being	Positive / Negative Experiences	Preliminary Recommendations
Children with Special Needs / Disabilities	Being understood as individuals, not 'cases'; predictability and low sensory demand; emotional and learning support.	Require quiet settings, consistent support; stress from shifting adults and systems.	Thrive in small groups and adapted routines; struggle in overstimulating environments.	Stable adult support, cross-sector coordination, and understanding of behaviour as communication.
Children in Vulnerable Situations	Emotional calm, dignity, fairness; being treated equally and not with lowered expectations.	Often lack basics (food, rest); stigma and instability from home or society.	Positive moments at home; negative experiences of exclusion and sanction in schools.	Early, equal support, and practical help without labels; focus on dignity.
Foreign-Background / Multilingual Children	Participation without perfect language; play, gesture, and being understood non-verbally.	Language fatigue, cultural disconnection; need safe, adjusted communication.	Thrive in physical/creative activities; struggle in verbal, inflexible environments.	Visual, patient, and inclusive communication; cultural awareness and inclusion.
Young Children / Daycare Children	Play, safety, and attention; expressed through non-verbal means and routines.	Depend entirely on adult interpretation; rely on rhythms and predictability.	Enjoy free play and repetition; vulnerable to adult inconsistency or absence.	Legitimise non-verbal expression; adult presence and sensitivity to early signals.
Teenagers / Adolescents	Balance between pressure and freedom; autonomy, rest, identity, and recognition.	Experience high pressure from school/social media; need early, trusting support.	Value fairness and autonomy; struggle with mental health support and control.	Spaces for rest and dialogue; co-agency and mental health recognition.



8.5 - Insights from Professionals

In parallel with the voices of children, professionals from schools and child-related services have contributed reflections through two conferences at the Nordic House. Their inputs reveal alignment with children's concerns including stress, stigma, and a lack of responsive support. The professionals also highlighting the structural and professional conditions that shape how children's rights and well-being are realised in practice.

Data Collection Round / Date	Staff Responses (qualitative answers)		
	Q1. On development of the Act	Q2. On implementation of the Act	Q3. On multilingual children's rights
Conference 1 (21–23 January 2025)	36	31	0
Conference 2 (20 March 2025)	10	7	0
Post-conference follow-up (March–April 2025)	0	0	9

Professionals consistently describe children's well-being as closely linked to emotional safety, meaningful relationships, and supportive everyday structures. They observe rising levels of stress, loneliness, and performance pressure, particularly among older children and adolescents. There is broad concern that children's emotional needs are often unmet in a system that prioritises compliance. Some professionals note that children in vulnerable situations like those in care, with disabilities, or from marginalised backgrounds are disproportionately affected by system fragmentation, adult turnover, and unmet basic needs.

Educators and child-focused professionals provide thoughtful and grounded reflections on what a new Child Welfare Act should contain and how it could work in practice. Their inputs reveal a shared commitment to making legislation understandable, applicable, and supportive of children's daily lives. Many emphasise the importance of a clear and child-friendly legal framework, noting that laws must be written in accessible language, with practical relevance for those working in schools, day care centres, and frontline services.

Staff also highlighted the need for realistic implementation conditions: time, training, and stable resources are essential if the law is to move from principle to practice. There was strong support for better cross-sectoral coordination, particularly between education, health, and social services. Respondents called for a system where support follows the needs of the child, rather than waiting for formal diagnoses or bureaucratic thresholds.

Moreover, professionals stressed the value of children's participation as a principle that must be embedded in the everyday culture of institutions. Inputs also called attention to multilingual children's rights, urging lawmakers to address language barriers and ensure inclusive communication in all settings. Taken together, the staff feedback provides crucial insights that connect legal development with the practical conditions necessary for its success.

Across the surveys, six shared themes emerge:

1. **A clear and child-friendly legal framework.** Professionals stress the importance of a future welfare law that is simple, accessible, and understandable. It should be easy to understand for legal experts, children and frontline staff. They call for “a law at children’s eye level” that can be used in practice and integrated into daily routines.
2. **Strong focus on well-being and rights.** The law should reflect children’s needs for safety, dignity, and emotional care. Emphasis is placed on the rights and well-being of children in vulnerable life situations.
3. **Practical tools and implementation resources.** Professionals point to the gap between legal ambition and actual capacity. They ask for time, tools, and structures to make the law effective in practice including low-threshold support, accessible spaces, and emotional regulation strategies in day care and schools.
4. **Participation and inclusion.** Many respondents underline the need for meaningful involvement of both children and professionals. School councils, for example, must be given time and resources to function as real spaces of influence.
5. **Support for institutions as key arenas for protection and development.** Day care and schools are seen as frontline care environments. Staff ask for a legal framework that supports their work in noticing, following up on, and responding to early signs of distress.
6. **Equity and accessibility.** A recurring theme is the need for physically, socially, and emotionally inclusive practices. The law should guarantee that all children, regardless of background, are supported to thrive and participate.

Professionals also point to specific conditions that must be addressed for the law to be effective:

- The gap between formal rights and lived experience, especially for children in vulnerable families
- Structural inequality in access to help, care, and protection
- Stigma and silence, particularly among children who fear being judged or ignored
- Time pressure and limited adult capacity to build trust or follow up consistently
- The importance of calm and sensory-sensitive environments, including nature, rest zones, and non-verbal space for regulation and reflection

These concerns are linked to a strong wish for legislation that enables professionals to act earlier, more relationally, and with confidence. Staff propose that a child welfare law should:

- Provide legal backing for low-threshold, preventive support in day care, schools and communities
- Ensure relational continuity, with fewer shifts in key adult contacts
- Acknowledge and support teachers’ roles in emotional care
- Establish participation structures that give children real influence
- Include training and tools for recognising early signs of emotional distress — especially non-verbal signals

When it comes to implementation, staff emphasise the need for realism, clarity, and long-term support. A child welfare law will only succeed if it is backed by:

- Adequate capacity and resources for schools and institutions

- Simple and clear role definitions for professionals across sectors
- Trust in relational practice, not just compliance with procedures
- Cultural sensitivity and adaptability, respecting local context and diversity
- Stability and continuity, with sustained investment in long-term structures

8.5.1 - Overview: Key themes raised by professionals

This table below captures key themes raised by professionals across two consultation rounds. Their insights reinforce children’s concerns and point to the structural factors that enable or obstruct well-being. The feedback stresses the importance of relational, preventive, and inclusive approaches alongside clear, actionable legal frameworks that are usable in practice.

Professional Insight	Key Theme	Summary
1. Experiences of Children’s Well-being	Focus on well-being and rights	The law must prioritise safety, dignity, and emotional care, especially for vulnerable children.
	Gaps between rights and lived experience	Professionals observe a disconnect between what the law promises and children's actual experiences.
	Structural inequality in access	Access to care and support is uneven across regions and social groups.
	Stigma and silence	Children may stay silent out of fear of judgment; stigma prevents help-seeking.
2. Recommendations for the Child Welfare Act	Child-friendly legal framework	A new welfare law should be simple, accessible, and usable by children, professionals, and legal staff.
	Participation and inclusion	Professionals and children must be genuinely involved; school councils need time and support.
	Equity and accessibility	Inclusive practices are needed socially, physically, and emotionally; all children must be supported.
3. Implementation Considerations	Implementation support	Staff need time, tools, and structures like low-threshold services and emotional regulation strategies.
	Support for schools and day care	Day care and schools are key for early detection and care; professionals need legal backing.
	Time pressure and limited capacity	Staff face challenges in building relationships due to time constraints and system fragmentation.
	Need for sensory-sensitive environments	Children need calm, nature, rest zones, and non-verbal space for emotional regulation.



9 - Insights from the Workshops

The six creative workshops conducted during the national child conferences offered a unique opportunity to explore children's perspectives through a variety of expressive formats. Each workshop was designed to address one or more of the core thematic areas (home and local environment, leisure and well-being, education and participation) while also allowing for open-ended input on cross-cutting issues.

Workshop	Keywords	Focus
Workshop #1: Letter to Rúni	Letter writing, drawing, home and local environment	Children expressed their thoughts and wishes for their home and neighbourhood through personal letters and illustrations.
Workshop #2: The Line	Ranking, leisure and health, prioritisation	Children discussed and ranked different life elements they considered important for a healthy and meaningful everyday life.
Workshop #3: Dilemmas	Value reflection, decision-making, school and institutions	Children worked through real-life dilemmas to explore ethical reasoning and possible actions within institutional settings.
Workshop #4: Student Council Assignment	Cross-school dialogue, school well-being, student voice	Preparatory discussions where student councils collaborated to identify their main priorities and challenges related to school life and well-being.
Workshop #5: Statement Wall	Free expression, short statements, drawings, cross-cutting themes	Children contributed spontaneous messages and visual expressions to share key opinions, hopes, and frustrations.
Workshop #6: The Tree	Metaphor, challenges and solutions, shared reflection	Using a tree metaphor, children identified 'roots' as problems and 'branches' as ideas for positive change visualising collective challenges and aspirations.
Workshop #7: Participatory Visual Workshops	Observation, collage, lived experience, interpretation	The series of participatory visual workshops explored children's daily environments and perspectives on home, neighbourhoods, schools, and institutions.

The methods were intentionally varied: from written letters and drawings to visual ranking lines, dilemma-based group discussions, and symbolic metaphors. Across these settings, children reflected on what constitutes safety, well-being, inclusion, and meaningful everyday experiences. Whether drawing a dream neighbourhood, ranking essential needs, negotiating difficult school-based scenarios, or contributing personal statements and metaphors, participants brought insight and authenticity to the consultation process.

The following analysis presents selected observations from the workshops. These insights illustrate not only children's priorities and values, but also the social and institutional conditions that shape their everyday lives.

9.1 - Visions of Home and Belonging - Insights from Workshop #1

The letters written in Workshop #1 ("Letter to Rúni") provide a vivid and heartfelt insight into how children and young people across age groups envision a good life in their local environments. Through drawings, sentences, and longer reflections, participants expressed what they value most in their homes, neighbourhoods, and daily surroundings and what they believe should change.

Across the material, five central themes recur. First, *safety and emotional comfort* are consistently described as foundational. Children link a good life with feeling secure, calm, and cared for, whether in their homes or outdoor spaces. Several mention the need for “quiet places” or that “everyone should feel safe where they live.”

Second, *clean and green environments* are seen as essential. Children refer to grass, trees, flowers, fresh air, and spaces free of rubbish. A good local environment is one that is well cared for, beautiful, and accessible. Third, opportunities for play and movement are central. Especially younger participants describe playgrounds, trampolines, nature trails, and sports fields as core to their everyday joy and well-being.

Fourth, children emphasise *community and relationships*. They describe homes and neighbourhoods as places where people talk to each other, share meals, or help each other. Loneliness, exclusion, and noise are often mentioned as signs that something is not right. Finally, older children in particular stress the importance of being heard. They express a wish to be taken seriously in decisions about their environments and to be involved in shaping their own lives.

The analysis also shows clear differences by educational stage. Young children focus on sensory and relational elements (light, colour, play, and family closeness). Middle school students begin to comment on social issues and the state of public spaces. Teenagers reflect on participation, social inequality, and the emotional tone of their environments - noting stress, exclusion, or a lack of listening adults.

9.1.1 - Preliminary Recommendations

Based on their reflections, several concrete recommendations emerge for local planning, community development, and legislative frameworks. First and foremost, children emphasise the need for safe and calm environments. This calls for investment in both housing standards and neighbourhood safety, as well as community-based efforts to prevent conflict and strengthen social support. A second strong theme is the desire for clean and green surroundings. Their recommendations include keeping beaches and roads clean, planting more trees, and preserving nature in their everyday environments. These insights point to the importance of integrating children’s voices in urban planning and environmental policy.

Children also highlight the importance of space for play and movement. Policies should ensure equitable access to such spaces, particularly in under-served areas. Another recurring idea is the value of stronger, more connected communities. Children want neighbourhoods where people greet each other, where different generations talk and support one another, and where inclusion is visible and felt. They suggest creating common spaces for social interaction, encouraging mutual care, and making sure no one is left out - including newcomers or people with special needs.

Finally, children call for participation and recognition. They want to be heard in decisions that shape their surroundings. According to the children, the local governments and community planners should therefore create regular opportunities for children to co-design their environments and offer feedback on public services.

Based on the children's letters, the following recommendations and solution ideas can be extracted:

Theme	Preliminary Recommendations
Safe and calm environments	More adult presence, less violence, places where “you can relax and feel safe”
Clean and green surroundings	“No trash,” “more trees,” “keep beaches and roads clean”
Space for play and movement	More playgrounds, trampolines, access to nature and sports
Strengthened communities	Create spaces where people meet and talk, include everyone, support neighbours
Child participation	Ensure children are heard in decisions about their local areas and daily lives







9.2 - Prioritisation of Daily Needs and Values - Insights from workshop #2

The workshop “Virðistrikan” (The Line) invited children and young people to rank and negotiate the importance of different aspects of daily life, ranging from basic needs and relationships to leisure, education, and material items.

Across 118 group responses, the activity revealed strong and consistent patterns across child groups, while also highlighting developmental, cultural, and situational differences in how children evaluate what matters most.



9.2.1 - Core Findings Across All Groups

Across all participating groups, basic human needs emerged as the highest priorities. Items such as *clean water, food, a home, family, healthcare access, and safety* were consistently placed at the top of children's rankings. This preference was reinforced by qualitative comments, in which children linked survival, emotional comfort, and well-being directly to these fundamental needs. In contrast, *material items* such as nice clothes, expensive shoes, and smartphones were almost universally ranked lowest, often accompanied by reflections that they are “not necessary to live” or “not more important than food or medicine.”

This hierarchy (prioritising basic and relational needs over possessions) suggests a high level of ethical and practical awareness, even among the youngest participants. Children did not simply rank based on desire or popularity; they reasoned through their choices and, in many cases, adjusted them through group dialogue.

9.2.2 - Student Councils and Children in Vulnerable Positions

Among student council participants and children in special education or vulnerable life situations, the ranking patterns were particularly clear: *clean water, food, a home, family, and healthcare*

topped the lists. These children frequently highlighted safety and stability as conditions for well-being. Older participants placed increased emphasis on *education*, *privacy*, and *being heard*, while younger participants focused more on *play*, *family*, and *friends*.

Qualitative comments reflected a nuanced understanding of emotional safety. For instance, several students noted that a home is only meaningful “if it is safe,” and that *privacy* is essential when the home environment is unstable. “Being heard” also appeared as a recurring middle-priority theme, with teenagers explaining that while they often talk to friends, they rarely feel listened to by adults.

The analysis also revealed a developmental progression: younger children tended to prioritise emotional closeness and play, while older students increasingly integrated concerns about *mental health*, *personal space*, and *digital identity*. These insights offer valuable direction for tailoring support across age groups and underline the maturity and critical thinking present among adolescents.

9.2.3 - Preschool-aged Children

Preschool-aged children emphasised emotional relationships, sensory well-being, and immediate needs. *Family* emerged as the most consistently ranked priority, often followed by *food*, *rest*, *play*, and *healthcare*. Children expressed strong emotional bonds through symbols, drawings, and phrases like “family is in our hearts” and “sleep is important so we can have energy.” Many also referenced grandparents, pets, and siblings as central to their experience of security and happiness.

Interestingly, *screen time* and *sweets*, while present in the dataset, were generally ranked lower than physical and relational needs. Children showed awareness of health implications, saying things like “you get square eyes from too much TV” or “too many sweets give you a bellyache”. These reflections indicate that even at a young age, children possess basic health literacy and an intuitive understanding of balance.

Notably, outdoor play and time in nature were valued highly by many participants, and some even differentiated between types of play (e.g., “hiking with grandpa” vs. “trampoline jumping”). These nuances highlight the importance of context-sensitive environments for early childhood well-being.

9.2.4 - Foreign-background Children

Children with a foreign or multilingual background (FSA group) expressed strong prioritisation of survival needs and emotional security, with *family*, *clean water*, *food*, *a home*, and *safety* consistently ranking highest. The discussions revealed that many participants had lived experiences of instability or displacement, which shaped their responses. As one participant explained, “Family is more important than a house because you can live anywhere - but family is warmth.”

Children in this group were highly reflective. Some adjusted their rankings of smartphones downward after group dialogue, recognising that while phones help them stay connected with family, they are not essential for survival. Cultural differences also surfaced. Some participants prioritised *privacy* and *healthcare* more highly than *family*, suggesting that individual backgrounds and experiences shape perceptions of need.

There were also tensions in how *clothing* and *self-expression* were valued. Some boys placed higher importance on clothing as a form of identity, while others considered it non-essential. Comments about being heard were especially strong among teenagers, who noted that their peers are often more attentive than the adults around them.

Among foreign-background children, *travel* is typically ranked low in priority compared to basic needs like food, clean water, safety, and healthcare. However, discussions reveal that while it is not viewed as essential for survival, travel holds emotional and relational significance. Several children emphasised that the ability to visit family across borders makes travel meaningful. It is valued less as a form of leisure and more as a means of maintaining family ties, cultural identity, and emotional security. For some, travel is seen as a bridge between separated lives, offering connection rather than recreation. In this sense, travel is a way to preserve continuity, belonging, and love across distance.

Child Group	Key Priorities	Observations
Student Councils and Vulnerable Children	Clean water, food, family, a home, and access to healthcare. Strong consensus across age groups that basic needs are most important. Material goods ranked lowest. Older children valued safety, education, and privacy.	Priorities evolve with age - younger children focus on family and play, older children on health and emotional safety. Consistent preference for basic needs over luxury or status items. Significant differences noted in value placed on privacy and being heard.
Preschool-aged Children	Family, food, social play, rest, and healthcare. Children showed high awareness of well-being, responsibility, and relationships. Technology and treats were ranked lower than basic and social needs.	Children linked love and safety to family, understood health habits, and expressed mixed views on technology. Comments reflected cultural patterns and environmental context. Rest, helping at home, and outdoor play were seen as important.
Foreign-background Children	Family, clean water, food, safety, and healthcare. Strong emphasis on basic and emotional needs over material items. Discussion revealed nuanced views on privacy, self-expression, and the role of technology.	Children showed deep understanding of emotional safety and hierarchy of needs. Family often ranked above housing. Cultural differences emerged in attitudes to health and privacy. Technology valued more for connection than entertainment.

9.2.5 - Preliminary Recommendations

Across all groups, there was a striking consensus: basic human needs come first. Clean water, food, family, a home, and healthcare consistently ranked as top priorities, while material goods like fashionable clothes, phones, or travel were consistently deprioritised. Children clearly distinguished between what is essential and what is optional.

Children from student councils and vulnerable backgrounds showed a strong preference for fundamental needs over luxury items. They also raised the importance of emotional safety, access to healthcare, and continuity in trusted adult relationships. As children grew older, they also began to emphasise privacy, fairness, and being heard, suggesting that legal frameworks should grow with the child and accommodate changing developmental needs.

Preschool-aged children, meanwhile, prioritised love, social interaction, and security in the form of family, food, and play. Their comments reflected a high level of emotional awareness and responsibility, including reflections on helping at home, avoiding too much sugar, and enjoying

nature. Despite their young age, they demonstrated a clear understanding of cause and effect in their lives and surroundings.

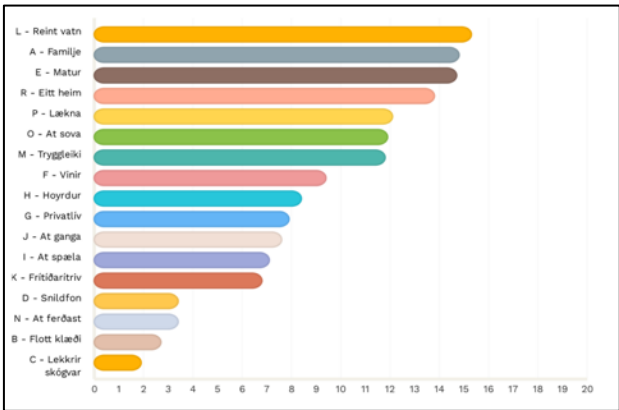
Among foreign-background children, priorities remained aligned with the other groups with culturally distinct expressions of emotional needs, privacy, and the role of technology. For these children, mobile phones were less about status and more about connection to family or information, reflecting different meanings attributed to the same object.

Together, the children's rankings and reflections suggest a legislative imperative: policies should be grounded in the everyday realities of children. According to the children, any future welfare reform or educational development should begin by guaranteeing universal access to food, water, shelter, emotional safety, and care.

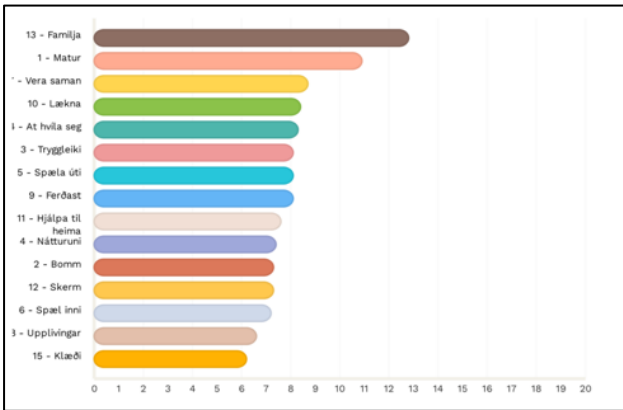
Theme	Preliminary Recommendation
Basic needs as top priority	Anchor future legislation in children's clear prioritisation of survival needs such as clean water, food, shelter, and healthcare.
Emotional safety and trust	Recognise safety and trusted relationships as fundamental, particularly for older children and those in vulnerable positions.
Inclusion across age groups	Design differentiated policies that reflect developmental stages with age-appropriate support for autonomy, privacy, and voice.
Non-material well-being	De-emphasise material status markers (e.g., brands, luxury items) in school and welfare policy; promote equity through universal design.
Culturally sensitive support	Recognise the diverse value systems of multilingual and migrant children when shaping inclusive welfare and education initiatives.
Family and relational care	Ensure public support for families as key sites of love, support, and well-being. Especially in legislation around housing, income, and parenting.



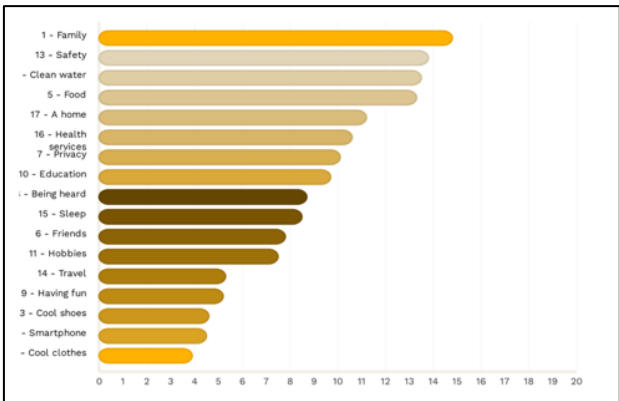
Student Councils and Vulnerable Children:



Preschool-aged Children:



Foreign-background Children:



9.3 - Reflections on Everyday Dilemmas - Insights from Workshop #3

In Workshop #3, children and young people were invited to discuss and reflect on a series of age-appropriate school-related dilemmas. The scenarios covered a wide range of topics from lunchbox inequalities and mobile phone policies to clothing norms and student representation. The children's responses reveal both their ethical reasoning and their lived experiences of institutional culture.

Across all educational levels, participants demonstrated a strong capacity to balance fairness, autonomy, and care for others. While younger students focused more on immediate social dynamics, older students engaged critically with institutional norms and the meaning of rules.

Key Themes and Reflections:

1. **Social fairness and inclusion.** Several dilemmas prompted discussions about how to ensure no one is excluded for example, in relation to food (dilemma: "Mikkjal and the lunchbox") or participation (Dilemma: "Nora and the student council"). Many children argued that fairness means recognising difference: some may not afford the same things, and schools should protect against humiliation or inequality. Suggestions included shared lunch systems or anonymous support for children without packed meals.
2. **Rule clarity and proportionality.** In dilemmas about phone rules and clothing policies, students were not against rules — but stressed that they should be clear, fair, and not overly rigid. Many called for reasonable guidelines that take different situations into account. For instance, some suggested phones be allowed during breaks but not in class. Others questioned whether clothing restrictions are fair or reflect unequal treatment based on gender.
3. **Autonomy and voice.** Participants expressed a clear desire for being heard and having influence in shaping rules. In the dilemma about student councils, many argued that all students should have the right to participate, and that adults should listen more. Children advocated for co-decision models where rules are discussed openly with them and not imposed top-down.
4. **Care for emotional well-being.** Emotional safety emerged as a recurring concern. In dilemmas about being excluded, unfair treatment, or strict enforcement of rules, children often returned to the importance of kindness, respect, and feeling seen. They expressed frustration when adults dismiss their perspectives or fail to recognise emotional impact.
5. **Differentiated expectations and gender roles.** In reflections on clothing, some children raised questions about gender norms, asking why girls are often more restricted than boys. Others questioned why certain styles are considered inappropriate. These reflections reveal awareness of societal expectations and a desire for greater equity and personal freedom.

The dilemma workshop shows that children are capable of sophisticated reasoning about rules, norms, and fairness. They call for inclusive, transparent, and participatory decision-making, grounded in empathy and mutual respect.

9.3.1 - Preliminary Recommendations

The insights provide valuable guidance for schools and policymakers: include children in shaping rules, ensure proportionality and clarity, and foster a culture where rights, voice, and emotional safety are seen as interconnected. As one child remarked: “It’s not just about what’s allowed — it’s about how we are treated.”

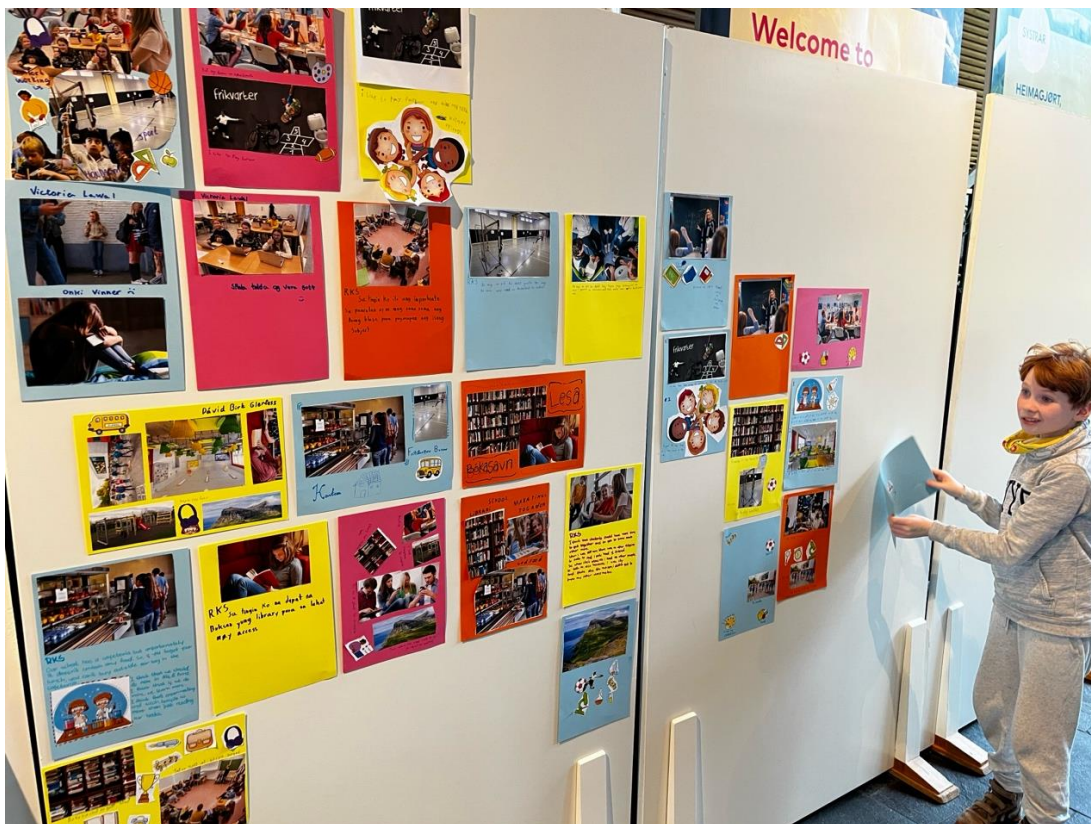
A key insight is that rules must be co-created to feel fair. Children want to understand the reasons behind rules and believe they should have a say in their development. For instance, discussions about clothing policies and phone use showed that children are capable of nuanced thinking and are often more focused on clarity and fairness than on complete freedom. This suggests that schools should engage students in dialogue about rulemaking, ensuring that policies are transparent, context-aware, and emotionally attuned.

The dilemma about lunchbox inequality brought attention to social and economic differences that can cause embarrassment or exclusion. Children expressed compassion and proposed practical ideas like shared lunch systems or discrete support. Such reflections point to the need for inclusive and stigma-free welfare provisions within the school day.

Similarly, questions around student council access revealed concerns about exclusion and underrepresentation. Children highlighted that not everyone feels confident enough to participate or is given the same opportunity. Schools should therefore take active steps to promote equitable participation, ensuring that decision-making structures are inclusive, open, and representative.

Across all themes - from mobile phone use to emotional safety - the message was clear: how rules are applied matters as much as the rules themselves. Children want adults to enforce policies with empathy and to consider the emotional impact of disciplinary actions. Training in relational and trauma-sensitive approaches can help create school cultures where authority is exercised with care, and where all students feel safe and heard.

Dilemma Theme	Children’s Reflections	Preliminary Recommendations
Lunchbox inequality	Not all children have the same lunch; avoid embarrassment and promote shared responsibility.	Create inclusive meal systems or anonymous support for children without lunch.
Student council access	Everyone should be able to participate in decision-making, regardless of background or confidence.	Ensure fair and open access to student councils, with active encouragement from staff.
Phone use in school	Phones should be allowed in some contexts (e.g., breaks), but rules should be clear and balanced.	Develop nuanced mobile phone policies with student input and context-sensitive exceptions.
Clothing rules	Rules on clothing must not be arbitrary or gender-biased; comfort and self-expression matter.	Review clothing policies for fairness and gender neutrality; engage students in shaping guidelines.
Participation and voice	Children want rules to be co-created, not imposed — voice and dialogue are key to legitimacy.	Institutionalise regular dialogue with children about school rules and policies.
Emotional safety and fairness	Adults should act with kindness and empathy; emotional impact must be considered in all rules.	Train staff in relational and trauma-sensitive approaches to rule enforcement and inclusion.



9.4 - Perspectives on Everyday Democracy - Insights from Workshop #4

Workshop #4 focused on strengthening democratic engagement among students through the Student Council Assignment. Conducted as a preparatory exercise before the main conference, this workshop gave school councils across the country an opportunity to reflect on well-being, rights, and responsibilities. The assignment encouraged student councils to formulate their own visions for a future child welfare law.

A total of nine student council contributions were submitted, including one from the upper secondary school Glasir, which carried out a web survey with 115 student responses. The data from both the survey and the group submissions reveal clear patterns in how students understand well-being, social justice, and participation. Across the material, three recurring themes stand out: safety and care in home and community, access and equity in leisure and health, and inclusion and support in day care and schools.

9.4.1 - Home and Local Environment

Students emphasise that every child has the right to a safe home and inclusive neighbourhood. Their reflections link emotional security to access to loving caregivers and surroundings that are clean, welcoming, and accessible, especially for children with disabilities. They call for more meeting spaces, safer routes, and playgrounds where all children can play together.

"Leikvöllir skulu vera fyrri öll, eisini tey, ið sita í koyristóli."
"Eg vil ikki vera bangin fyrri at fara heim."

Their proposals advocate for legislation that guarantees safety, accessibility, and active inclusion at both family and community level.

9.4.2 - Leisure and Health

The second theme centres on the role of free time and health in children's overall well-being. Students point out that leisure is not just about fun — it contributes to mental and physical balance, social connection, and personal development. However, economic barriers are a significant concern. The Glasir survey showed that 18% of students had been unable to join activities due to cost, and 90% supported the idea of a "leisure card" to ensure equal access.

Students also highlight the importance of outdoor play, green spaces, and support for mental health. Freetime, they argue, must include physical activity, rest, and opportunities for creative expression.

"Ítróttafeløg skulu ikki vera ov dýr fyrri familjur."
"Vit hava tørv á hjálp, um vit ikki hava tað gott."

Their recommendations call for publicly supported leisure options, free or subsidised participation, and greater focus on mental well-being through accessible services.

9.4.3 - Day Care and School

The third and perhaps most detailed theme is that of the school and early education environment. Students describe schools as spaces that should foster safety, learning, and a sense of belonging. They express a strong wish for inclusive and respectful learning communities, where teachers listen, bullying is addressed proactively, and all children are supported to succeed regardless of background or ability.

"Ein trygg skúli er ein góð skúli."

"Lærarar skulu lurta eftir okkum og hjálpa, tá vit hava tað trupult."

They also stress the importance of group-based activities and social projects as tools to build shared understanding and solidarity, especially between Faroese and foreign-background students. In short, school is not only a place for academic learning, but a central setting for social cohesion and personal development.

9.4.4 - Preliminary Recommendations

First, children emphasised the importance of home and community environments that feel secure, welcoming, and inclusive. Their reflections show that safety is not only about protection from harm, but also about emotional warmth, accessibility, and a sense of belonging. Many expressed concern about unsafe streets or a lack of gathering spaces. Future legislation should therefore guarantee every child's right to a loving home and clean, inclusive neighbourhoods, with particular attention to children with disabilities and those living in under-served areas.

Second, children raised concerns about leisure and health — highlighting unequal access to recreational activities and mental health services. They called for safe, affordable, and inclusive spaces for physical play and relaxation. Moreover, children acknowledged the importance of emotional well-being, noting that mental health support is not always available or tailored to their needs. As a result, national frameworks should include free or low-cost access to sports, arts, and social activities, alongside expanded mental health resources designed specifically for children.

Finally, children see day care and school as central arenas for well-being, learning, and inclusion. They ask for schools that are not only places of academic instruction, but also communities where they feel safe, supported, and respected. Their proposals include more peer-based cooperation, stronger anti-bullying policies, and greater capacity for teachers to meet both academic and emotional needs. Public investment should therefore prioritise inclusive school cultures, differentiated pedagogy, and professional development that empowers educators to respond to diverse learners.

The insights gathered from the Student Council Assignment point to concrete legislative and institutional needs:

Theme	Proposed Focus Areas	Preliminary Recommendations
Home & Community	Guarantee safety and inclusion in both home and neighbourhood.	Ensure children live in secure, loving homes and have access to clean, accessible, and inclusive public spaces.
Leisure & Health	Ensure equal access to leisure and health services, regardless of background.	Offer free or low-cost recreational activities, maintain safe and inclusive play areas, and provide mental health support tailored to children's needs.
Day Care & Education	Prioritise well-being, learning, and social inclusion in all educational environments.	Promote strong peer communities, support anti-bullying efforts, and allocate resources for teachers to address individual learning and social needs.

Hetta vóru svarini frá B. Róðri:

Okkara heim og grannalag:
Tað er trygt og gott fyri øll børn og ung, at.....

- Allir næmingarnir fáa mat í skúlatíð
- Aldursmark á heimum skúlu miðunum
- Betti vegir og gangubreytir

Fritíð og heilsa:
Góð og gevandi fritíð og góð heilsa er, tá ið.....

- Rætt til fastan læsna
- Børn skulu hava rætt til foru saman við vaksnum
- Øll skulu hava møguleika at ganga til okkurt frítíðarlív úrskýpt
- Stytta skúladagin (frídag kl. 13.30 + 1 dag kl. 12.30)

Dagstovnur og skúli:
Tað verður gott hjá børnum og ungum at verða á stovni og í skúla, um.....

- Øll børn við avbjóðingum skulu hava rætt til ein stuðul
- Rætt til at gera skúlatíng í skúlanum – lættahjálpi

HEIM OG GRANNALAG/NÆRUMHVØRVI

Góð foreldur, sum gera tað sum er best fyri okkum

Foreldur skulu ikki rópa og skrúla eftir børnunum, um tey hava gjørt okkurt lítið ting skeivt.

Hava silt trygt og gott heim og eina góða og tryggja bygd/bý at veksa upp í

Góð spælipláss

Gætuljós framvið vegnum og á kalini

Ansa eftir náttúruni, ikki kasta rusk. Fáa meir skrellispannir upp.

Fritíð og heilsa



- Hava møguleika at ganga til ítrótt.
- Fara út at spæla, har tey búgva.
- Møguleika fyri at ganga úti í náttúruni.
- Fáa nóg nógvan svøvn.
- Hava atgongd til bækur.
- Ferðast í nærumhvørvinum, til aðrar bygdar og onnur lond fyri at uppliva.
- Koma saman við familjuni.
- Møguleika at ganga í kirkju og sunnudagsskúla.

9.5 - Free Expression and Collective Identity - Insights from Workshop #5

The *Statement Wall* was designed as an open, creative space where children could freely express themselves through short statements, drawings, or symbolic tags. Unlike the more structured workshops, this format allowed for spontaneity and emotional immediacy. It invited participants to reflect on themes such as rights, identity, and well-being - but also to joke and leave their mark.



By the end of day 3, a total of 140 individual statements or tags had been registered on the wall. These contributions spanned a wide spectrum from light-hearted and humorous remarks to sincere reflections on rights, friendship, and social belonging. The diversity of content demonstrates how children navigate between playfulness and seriousness, and how an unstructured format can reveal core values, frustrations, and desires. A thematic analysis of the contributions reveals four patterns:

1. **Rights and Inclusion.** Many children used the wall to assert their right to be heard, included, and treated equally. Statements like “*Vit hava rættindi yaaaay!!*” and “*Öll hava rætt til at spæla fótþólt*” indicate a growing awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the desire for those rights to be recognised in everyday settings. These remarks were often emphatic and celebratory, suggesting both pride and aspiration.
2. **Social Connections and Friendship.** Another strong theme was the importance of friendship and togetherness. Phrases such as “*Vit eru ymisk, vit eru vinir*” (We are different, we are friends) and “*At hava vinir*” express children’s desire for social acceptance, inclusion, and emotional bonds. These values were often expressed simply, directly, and with emotional weight.
3. **Individual Identity and Self-expression.** Several statements reflected children’s emphasis on being seen and accepted as they are. The phrase “*Ver tann tú er*” (Be who you are) appeared multiple times, signalling a shared desire for personal freedom and authenticity. These messages link identity with safety and recognition — reinforcing the need for inclusive environments where children do not have to hide aspects of themselves.

4. **Creativity and Humour.** Many statements leaned into playful and humorous territory. From “*Hey breyð*” to “*Niklas var her*” or simply “Ronaldo”, these expressions mirror popular culture, inside jokes, or the simple joy of being noticed. Rather than undermining the seriousness of the exercise, these entries reflect an important part of child culture: the value of joy, recognition, and shared codes of meaning.

While many of the statements were informal, they collectively illustrate children’s intuitive understanding of rights, relationships, identity, and emotional expression. The wall functioned as both an outlet and a mirror showing what matters to children when no one dictates the format.

9.5.1 - Preliminary Recommendations

Based on the analysis, several recommendations can be made.

First, legislation should actively uphold children’s right to be heard and strengthen their role in shaping everyday environments, especially where decisions affect their well-being. Second, children’s emphasis on friendship and inclusion points to the need for targeted investment in peer-based programmes and community-building in schools.

Third, their call for freedom of self-expression underlines the importance of legal and institutional safeguards against discrimination, bullying, and pressure to conform. Lastly, children’s frequent use of humour and visual play suggests that creative spontaneity is not just entertainment - it is a powerful tool for identity formation and emotional health. Schools and afterschool programmes should therefore create space for playful and imaginative expression, recognising that creativity is integral to a child’s voice, not separate from it.

Based on the emerging themes, the following recommendations can be drawn:

Theme	Example Statements	Preliminary Recommendations
Rights and inclusion	“Vit hava rættindi yaaaay!!”	Strengthen legislation that guarantees children’s right to be heard and prioritises their well-being.
Social relationships	“Øll hava rætt til at hava vinir.”	Fund school- and community-based initiatives that promote friendship, inclusion, and peer connection.
Individual freedom	“Ver tann tú er.”	Ensure legal protection of children’s right to self-expression and protection from discrimination or bullying.
Creativity and humour	“Hey breyð.”	Support creative initiatives in schools and afterschool programs that allow for spontaneous expression.

9.6 - Reflections on Well-being and Belonging - Insights from Workshop #6

Workshop #6, *The Tree*, offered children a symbolic and emotionally resonant space to express what fosters or hinders their well-being. Through brief personal messages attached to a large tree-shaped installation, students shared what helps them thrive in everyday life and how their surroundings could support stronger communities. Messages were grouped by colour to represent different themes, such as relationships, emotional safety, learning, and creativity.



A total of 94 contributions were submitted. Though brief, these statements reveal a rich picture of children's values, priorities, and emotional needs. The workshop functioned not only as a data collection tool, but also as a moment for personal reflection where students were encouraged to think about what really matters in their lives.

Three overarching themes emerged from the children's statements:

1. **Social relationships and emotional closeness.** Across age groups, students highlight how friends, siblings, and trusted adults play a central role in their daily well-being. Statements such as "Eg spæli við mínar vinir" (I play with my friends) and "Mínar vinkonur eru har" (My friends are there) show how companionship, shared activity, and belonging underpin emotional security. As one child wrote: "Eg trívist, tá eg kann vera saman við vinum og vera meg sjálfan." (I thrive when I can be with friends and be myself.)
2. **Safety, peace, and personal space.** Children also emphasise the importance of feeling safe at home, in their neighbourhoods, and at school. The presence of calm, privacy, and

emotional stability is linked to overall well-being. Some statements associate these feelings with quiet environments, time for rest, or the absence of conflict: “Eg trívist væl í grannalagnum, tí har er nógvur friður” (I thrive in my neighbourhood because it is peaceful).

3. **Engagement through activity and learning.** Free time activities, creativity, and physical movement are also identified as vital contributors to mental well-being and personal growth. Children mention football, drawing, and reading as meaningful outlets — often tied to joy, pride, or relaxation. Others highlight how school becomes a source of well-being when teachers are kind and learning is active and inclusive: “Tí vit hava góðar lærarar” (Because we have good teachers).

9.6.1 - Preliminary Recommendations

Based on the insights above, the following recommendations can be drawn to support children’s well-being, strengthen everyday environments, and address the structural barriers identified by the children themselves.

First, social relationships and friendship were among the most frequently cited sources of joy and comfort. Yet children also revealed feelings of loneliness or exclusion. Schools and local communities should therefore establish inclusive programmes that promote peer connection and prevent social isolation.

Second, access to play and physical activity emerged as essential. Play was not described as an extra, but as a basic part of feeling good and staying well. Many children called for better access to outdoor spaces, structured sports, and unstructured play areas. National infrastructure plans and leisure support schemes (such as free activity passes) should reflect this priority.

Third, concerns related to school learning and emotional well-being appeared across age groups. Children expressed stress linked to academic pressure, inflexible routines, and lack of individual support. To counter this, recommendations include reducing overly demanding schedules, increasing access to tutors and school psychologists, and funding inclusive educational environments.

Children also highlighted the need for privacy and emotional safety, particularly in homes where instability, parental conflict, or screen-related distraction interferes with connection. Preventive family support, positive parenting programmes, and early intervention services are critical here — both to reduce risk and build resilience.

Lastly, children expressed a strong desire for access to nature and creative opportunities. Trees, animals, water, and artistic activities were named as sources of calm and personal joy. Yet many lack safe access to nature or resources for creativity. National programmes should support environmental education, outdoor learning, and hands-on creative spaces across both urban and rural schools.

The table below summarises key activity areas identified by children, the typical barriers they face, proposed solutions, and concrete recommendations:

Activity Area	Barrier	Potential Solutions	Preliminary Recommendations
Social relationships and friendship	Loneliness and lack of networks, esp. in small towns or for children with special needs	Foster inclusive spaces through school- and community-based friendship programmes	Legislate funding for social inclusion programmes and structured peer support
Physical activity and play	Limited access to playgrounds and sports facilities	Build more public sports/play spaces; introduce free access initiatives	Finance public infrastructure and implement "leisure cards" for universal access
School learning and well-being	Stress, lack of tailored support	Reduce timetable load; invest in academic and emotional support like tutors and school psychologists	Set maximum lesson hours; fund inclusive education and support services
Privacy and emotional safety	Instability in home or community; parental conflict or digital distraction	Promote parenting programmes on conflict resolution and positive engagement	Develop family support systems and monitor vulnerable children through social services
Nature and creativity	Inaccessible nature or lack of creative resources	Expand nature-based activities; create accessible creative workshops in schools and communities	National programmes for environmental learning and funding for school-based creative spaces





9.7 - Everyday Well-being - Insights from Participatory Visual Workshops #7

The series of participatory visual workshops explored children's daily environments and perspectives on home, neighbourhoods, schools, and institutions. Data was collected through observation notes, child statements, collages, and facilitator interpretations during sessions held with preschool and school-aged children.

- Workshop "*Home and neighbourhood*" focused on home and local surroundings, asking children to describe what makes a good home and a safe neighbourhood.
- Workshop "*The institution*" provided a relaxed space to talk about institutional settings, such as day care or school life.
- Workshop "*Collage*" used images to spark discussion about school, social life, and aspirations.

The data collected from the workshops reveal a consistent set of themes that reflect children's lived realities and emotional landscapes.

The first and most prominent theme is emotional and physical safety. Children describe well-being as closely linked to feeling safe, such as clean neighbourhoods and well-lit playgrounds, but also in emotional terms, such as being protected from conflict or being comforted by kind adults. Safety is the condition upon which all other experiences depend.

A second theme is the value of relationships and friendship. Children repeatedly highlight the importance of being with friends and having adults around who listen and care. Whether in the context of school, leisure, or home, relationships provide children with a sense of meaning, joy, and reassurance.

Play and free time emerge as a third core element. Across age groups and workshop formats, children describe unstructured play as a vital outlet for energy, creativity, and emotional regulation. Activities such as football, running, or simply "being outside" are more than pastimes. They are essential for mental balance and social bonding.

A fourth theme is the significance of nature and outdoor spaces. Many children express a clear preference for being near green areas, animals, or open landscapes. Nature is described as calming, stimulating, and essential for well-being. This theme is particularly strong among children from smaller communities or those with access to outdoor space in their daily routines.

Another important theme is the school environment and learning. While children generally value school as a place for development and belonging, they are also critical of stress, rigid routines, and lack of support. A good school, in their view, is one that nurtures not only academic learning but also emotional safety, fairness, and inclusion.

Family and belonging also rank high in children's reflections. A home filled with care, familiarity, and support is seen as essential to daily well-being. Children mention parents, siblings, pets, and warm rituals as crucial components of a good life.

Finally, the workshops show that self-expression and creativity are fundamental to how children navigate and make sense of the world. Especially in the more open-ended formats, such as the

collage and the living room workshop, children used drawing, storytelling, and physical gestures to articulate needs and values. This underlines the importance of providing space for multiple forms of communication in participatory processes.

9.7.1 - Preliminary Recommendations

The insights gathered across the five workshops point to clear priorities expressed by children regarding what they need to thrive. Their perspectives highlight not only individual preferences but systemic patterns that can inform both policy and everyday practices in schools, communities, and homes.

- Ensure safe, inclusive, and calm environments in homes, schools, and public spaces.
- Support social relationships through school activities and peer engagement structures.
- Protect time and space for free play, including the design of safe green areas and play zones.
- Embed nature and sensory-friendly elements into learning and care environments.
- Promote caring school cultures with relational pedagogy and emotional support systems.
- Recognise and support diverse family structures as central to child well-being.
- Facilitate creative expression as a daily right, especially for non-verbal or young children.

First, children strongly emphasise the importance of safe and calm environments, both physically and emotionally. Whether discussing homes, playgrounds, or school settings, children describe safety as the foundation for learning, play, and connection. This calls for a policy focus on ensuring well-maintained, secure infrastructure in schools, housing areas, and public spaces.

Second, friendship and social belonging are central to children's understanding of a good life. They want to be with friends, feel part of a group, and share positive experiences. This indicates the need for school-based programmes that actively foster inclusion, peer relationships, and a sense of community.

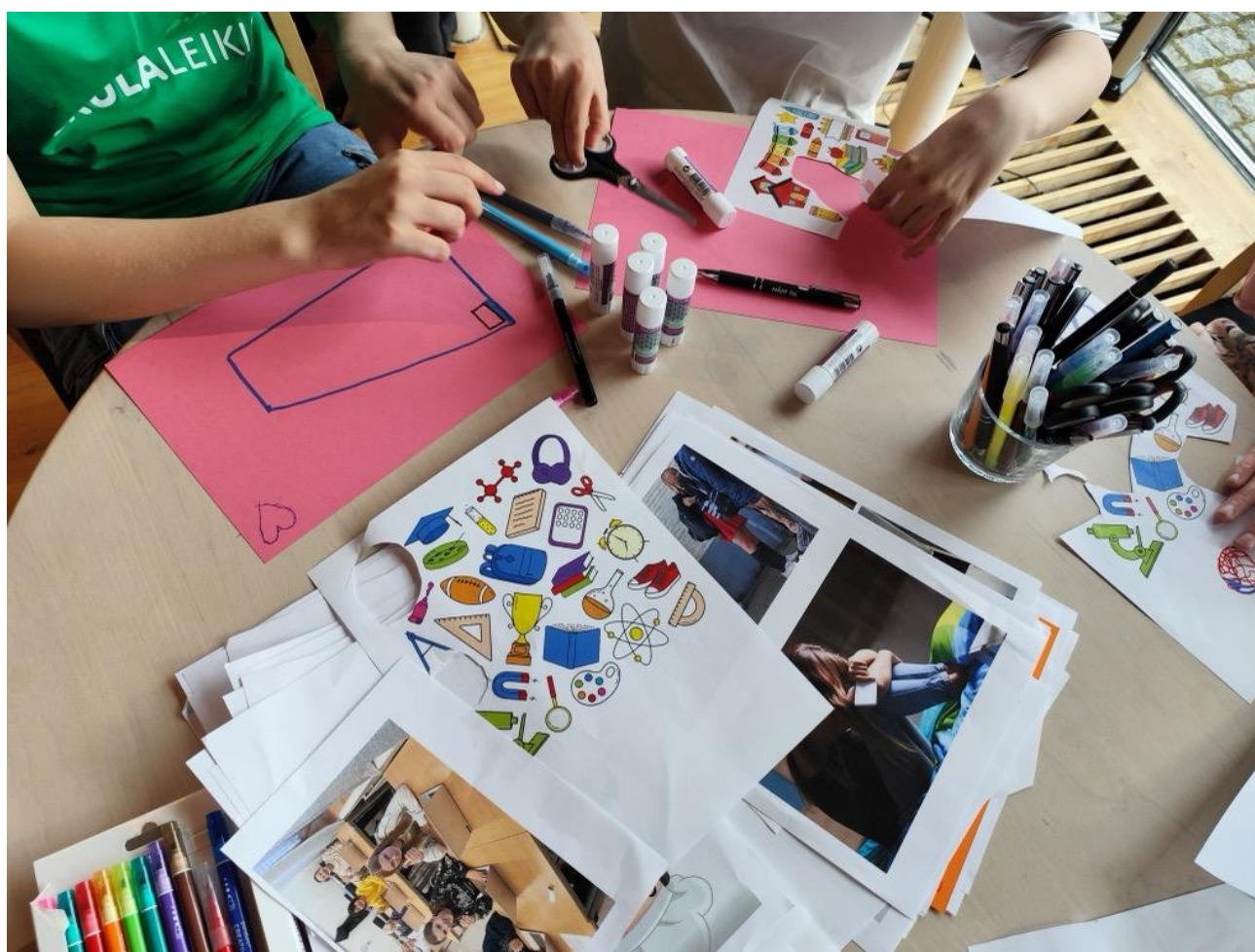
Third, children advocate for ample time and space for play, free movement, and rest. Structured academic settings should make room for unstructured exploration and recovery. Policymakers and practitioners should therefore safeguard time for leisure and prioritise outdoor play environments in both urban and rural settings.

Fourth, access to nature (grass, animals, water, and open air) emerges as both a calming and joyful experience. Schools and communities should integrate natural elements in everyday environments, including schoolyards, green corridors, and activity zones that reflect the Faroese landscape.

Fifth, the school environment is seen not only as a place for learning but as a space for relationships, self-confidence, and emotional development. Children call for caring, listening adults and school cultures that support all learners. This reinforces the importance of relational pedagogy, professional development for teachers, and mental health support systems.

Finally, the workshops underline the importance of creative expression, especially for younger children or those who struggle to verbalise their needs. Play, drawing, and symbolic communication should be recognised as legitimate and insightful forms of participation.

Theme	Workshops	Preliminary Recommendation
Emotional Safety	W1A, W1B, W4, W5	Prioritise safe, calm settings in schools and neighbourhoods
Friendship and Belonging	All workshops	Foster peer relationships through inclusive school and leisure programmes
Play and Free Time	W1A, W1B, W4, W5	Ensure protected, accessible play time in daily life
Nature and Outdoor Access	W1A, W1B, W4	Expand green spaces and include nature in school/play design
School Environment	W3, W5	Invest in teachers, reduce stress, and strengthen inclusive learning environments
Family Life	W1A, W1B, W4	Support parenting and home-based care in policy and services
Creativity and Expression	W3, W5, W4	Integrate creative methods in school and early childhood education



9.8 - Synthesis Across the Workshops

The thematic workshops conducted throughout the national child consultation process provided a uniquely rich, multimodal foundation for understanding children's priorities, values, and ideas for a better everyday life. The insights reflect coherence across age groups, educational levels, and backgrounds.

9.8.1 - Key Highlights and Shared Messages

Children emphasised the importance of five domains:

1. **Safety and emotional security:** Whether in homes, schools, or neighbourhoods, children expressed a strong desire to feel protected, supported, and respected. Emotional safety was seen as the foundation for all other aspects of well-being.
2. **Social connection and inclusion:** Friendship, belonging, and the right to be part of a group were recurring themes. Children repeatedly called for inclusive spaces where difference is embraced, and loneliness is addressed.
3. **Play, creativity, and rest:** Across workshops, children identified play and rest as essential to their development. Free time, creative expression, and unstructured social interaction are valued as much as formal learning.
4. **Fairness and voice:** Children called for meaningful participation in decisions that affect them, fair treatment in rules and discipline, and respect for diverse perspectives. Dilemmas and student council reflections demonstrated their moral reasoning and democratic aspirations.
5. **Access and equity:** From Statement Wall declarations to leisure rankings and school reflections, children highlighted the need for equal access to healthcare, education, creative outlets, and community participation regardless of background, ability, or income.

9.8.2 - Coherence Across Workshops

Despite different workshop formats and focus areas, children's contributions reveal strong internal consistency. For instance, children in "Letter to Rúni", "Participatory Drawings" and "The Tree" described emotional safety and nature as sources of well-being, while "The Line" and "Dilemmas" showed how material needs and moral values interact in daily life. "Statement Wall" and "Student Council Assignment" further validated that when given freedom, children express views aligned with rights-based policy even in playful formats.

9.8.3 - Methodological Reflections

The workshop formats proved highly effective in capturing the perspectives of diverse child populations. This is notable, given how difficult it can be to design engagement formats that are both motivating, accessible, and analytically precise for children and youth.

The methods succeeded because they:

- Were age- and language-sensitive, allowing both verbal and non-verbal expression
- Offered creative freedom (drawings, metaphors, symbols) alongside structured dialogue
- Supported peer-based exploration, enabling shared reflection without adult filtering

- Maintained clear thematic focus, ensuring data could be analysed meaningfully

From a research perspective, this shows the viability of combining structured, semi-structured, and free-form participation formats when working with children. From a policy perspective, it demonstrates that when invited with care, children contribute real, reasoned insights.





10 - PART 3 – Methodology

This section outlines the methodological framework behind the national consultation with children and professionals. It describes how data was collected, analysed, and communicated across multiple formats and settings. The approach aimed to ensure broad participation, ethical sensitivity, and thematic depth using creative, age-appropriate methods and multilingual facilitation. It also reflects an effort to integrate both human insight and digital tools in the processing and interpretation of complex, multimodal data.

10.1 - Methodological Approach and Data Structure

The methodology for the national consultation was designed to ensure broad, inclusive, and meaningful participation of children and youth. The data collection consisted of three coordinated rounds:

- **Conference 1** (Nordic House, January 2025) engaged 365 student council representatives from public and independent schools, including upper secondary levels. Structured workshops allowed students to express themselves through dialogue, discussion, and ranking exercises.
- **Conference 2 + 3** (Nordic House and Salt, March–April 2025) involved 172 preschool-aged children and 80 multilingual children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Methods were adapted for younger age groups and included drawing, storytelling, and visual communication, supported by interpretation in 12 languages.
- **Institutional Data Collection** (April–May 2025) reached children in special education, disability services, and social care. This included 46 children in special education, and 8 children in foster care or poverty risk. Local workshops and interviews were tailored to individual communication needs and supported by staff.

The combined dataset includes both quantitative and qualitative data, gathered in real time through structured web-based forms during each workshop. Facilitators and notetakers captured group discussions, drawings, and decisions, which were logged directly into a central spreadsheet. The spreadsheet contains multiple sub-sheets corresponding to each workshop format and child group, with more than 4,000 filled cells, covering both numeric rankings and free-text responses.

In addition, photos were systematically taken of workshop productions (drawings, posters, visual tools), and compiled in a shared digital repository. These visual artefacts add richness to the dataset and support multimodal interpretation. A series of written summaries and anonymised transcripts from interviews and group sessions with vulnerable children and those in special institutions added qualitative depth.



10.1.1 - Analytical Methods

The analysis applied a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data. Data from all workshops including verbal statements, drawings, and group outputs were categorised and coded into thematic areas aligned with the strategic model of well-being. These diverse contributions were then brought together in an analytical framework.

To uphold ethical standards, particular attention was given to anonymising data from smaller and vulnerable groups. In addition, multilingual facilitation ensured that all children could participate on equal terms regardless of age, language, or communication style.

The dataset itself was inherently multimodal, comprising structured spreadsheets, photographs of workshop productions, and written transcripts or summaries from guided sessions. This richness provided nuanced insight but also required analytical judgement to connect perspectives across different formats. Ensuring coherence and validity demanded close collaboration between facilitators, analysts, and AI-based interpretation tools.

Generative AI was used to support pattern identification across datasets, using iterative prompting strategies to explore themes and divergences. This allowed for the extraction of recurring priorities, concerns, and perspectives across age groups, regions, and workshop formats.

Strengths of using generative AI include its capacity to process large amounts of unstructured data efficiently and to surface cross-cutting patterns that may otherwise remain hidden. It enabled rapid iteration and the ability to test emerging hypotheses across diverse materials. However, limitations include potential misinterpretation of cultural nuance, overemphasis on frequent patterns over rare but important ones, and reliance on training data that may not reflect the Faroese context. Human validation was therefore essential at all stages.

While AI-assisted analysis offers new possibilities for pattern recognition, limitations remain. Results may be influenced by biases in language, facilitation, or AI training data not grounded in Faroese context. Therefore, human review and interpretation remain critical.

10.1.2 - Communication of Results

The results of the consultation were communicated through multiple complementary formats, aimed at ensuring both transparency and accessibility:

- Real-time synthesis was shared at the end of each conference day to validate and visualise key themes.
- Visual artefacts and poster formats such as the Statement Wall and Tree Workshop provided children with tangible ways to express and revisit their contributions.
- Digital dashboards supported internal coordination, allowing teams to track participation and emerging insights across workshops and groups.
- Written reflections from participating school staff, collected via open-ended survey questions, contributed additional context to children’s voices and offered adult perspectives on implementation challenges and legal development.

10.1.3 - Summary of the Methodological Approach

The methodological design behind the national consultation reflects a commitment to inclusion, ethical sensitivity, and analytical depth. It combined structured and creative methods across three rounds of engagement, resulting in a rich, multimodal dataset.

Analytical processes balanced human interpretation with digital tools, including generative AI, to identify patterns and perspectives across diverse child groups. The table below summarises the core components of the approach from data structure and ethics to the strengths and challenges of using AI and communicating findings effectively.

Dimension	Summary
Methodological Approach	Three-round consultation involving children across age groups, education levels, and vulnerabilities. Methods tailored to age and language.
Dataset Composition	Multimodal data including spreadsheets with over 6,000 entries, photographs of workshop outputs, and written transcripts/summaries.
Ethical Considerations	Anonymisation of small group data; inclusive facilitation across 12 languages to ensure participation regardless of background.
Use of Generative AI	AI used to detect patterns and extract insights through iterative prompting. Human validation ensured contextual relevance and accuracy.
Strengths of the Approach	Broad participation, rich multimodal inputs, child-centred methods, and efficient integration of human and AI-based analysis.
Limitations and Cautions	Risk of cultural misinterpretation, bias in AI training data, and overemphasis on frequent patterns. Requires careful human review.
Communication of Results	Findings shared in real time, visual formats, digital dashboards, and reflective staff surveys to ensure accessibility and transparency.

