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Only children who know their rights can make a better future for children

Children are humans, therefore they deserve some natural rights that they must know of and demand their fulfillment. Unfortunately, most children today don't know about all of the rights they deserve. The children also don't know about the rights they deserve as humans. In order to create a world fit for children, we must teach them about their rights, so they'll be able to receive equal rights as the adults.
Many children are discriminated, humiliated and affected because they don't know about the existence of their rights, hence one of the first actions we must take, if not the first, in order to make a better world for children, is to let them know about their rights and create certain bodies that will enforce the execution of these rights.

The world has acknowledged the special rights of the children in the United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and showed its interest in it by setting goals for improvement till the year 2015. In order to make the operative goals follow the CRC, child-delegates from all over the world were invited to report the actions that were taken in their countries, and by that helped creating a clearer image of the true necessities of the children of the world; all of the children's voices were heard and recorded in order to check their needs on the next conference which will be held in the year 2015.

In many countries children live in terrible conditions; They are enslaved, raped, diseased, don't get medical treatment, facing difficulties in getting clean water and proper food – all these things harm the children. All of them are violations of the natural rights of these children.
Children also have certain rights that are special for them – it was agreed by the UN and many countries. Because of this agreement, representatives of countries sat

together at the UN in the year 2002, in order to form a plan that would include certain objectives to be reached till the year 2015 in order to make a **world fit for children.**
Many child-delegates (from all over the world) were invited to this conference, to help creating this plan of action and to participate in the different discussions of the UN. By cooperation between the child-delegates and the representatives of the countries and NGOs this plan was created and the goals were set.
Now, five years after this resolution has passed, the UN and UNICEF called the UN General Assembly and 93 child-delegates from all over the world to discuss the progress that have been made since 2002.
In order to get true results, that weren't affected by others, the child-delegates have worked together with each other (but not with anyone from the outside…) during two days in the **Children's Forum** and arranged various events that were to be a part of the special follow-up session on children in the UN the following two days, where delegates (adults) of countries and NGOs were present.
Some of the events were two roundtables (one about education and the other about HIV/AIDS), an intergenerational dialogue about different issues concerning children (both child-delegates and adult-delegates of governments and NGOs took part in it) and a side-event about education during emergencies.
We took part in almost all of the events – the roundtable of education, the intergenerational dialogue and the education during emergencies event. In the roundtable, Maya spoke about education in Israel and about the importance of education for the world's economy and the world's development; in the intergenerational dialogue I represented Israel, asked various questions and answered questions concerning education, health and child participation in Israel.
Maya and I were a part of the group that planned the education during emergencies event, and help organize the event itself.

Only children can a better future for children. This is the reason why the UN and UNICEF called the Children's Forum and the UN's General Assembly to a meeting discussing children's rights and their status. From the belief that children who are active in their community know, more or less, to point out the problems and needs of the rest of the children, UNICEF and the UN called 93 child-delegates from all over the world to a meeting which in the children will discuss the results of the GA's resolution *"A World Fit For Children"* from 2002, that was also created with the cooperation of child-delegates from all over the world.
The Child-delegates discussed the four main-topics of the resolution – education, health, protection (from exploitation, harm, etc.) and HIV/AIDS. Many child-delegates came in order to promote an issue and do whatever the can in order to find a

solution to their problem – for example, the child-delegate of Namibia came in order to promote the work on the issue of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Every second person in Africa has AIDS, hence the HIV/AIDS is one of the main things that harm the right for life and the right of healthy lives of children in Africa – many of them are infected with diseases (easy to handle ones) and die, even before reaching the age of 5 (more than 20% of the children in certain African countries!).

In the Children's Forum, all of the ninety-three child-delegates sat together, while the adults were "expelled", in order for the children to be able to express themselves freely and without any influence from the outside. During the Children's Forum, we discussed various topics, such as the world's health problem, education problems, the right to be heard and participation of children in making decisions. The child-delegates who took part in this forum expressed their opinions not only one in front of the other, but also in front of various countries' delegates and NGOs during the special session in the UN Headquarters.
As the Israeli child-delegate, I spoke with other child-delegates and various delegates from other countries. I was very surprised to find out that Israel's status is much better than other developed countries. For example, the participation of children in making decisions (we have organized student and youth councils which are being taken seriously, children have rights in their schools) and violence (there is violence in Israel, but apparently other West-European countries have more violence than we do – especially bullying).

When I participated in the intergenerational dialogue and *told about the participation of children in making decisions in the Israeli ministry of education and the in-formal education in Israel*, other countries' delegates and NGOs were stunned. They were even more fascinated to find out we have a law in Israel about student councils. Apparently, in countries like Belgium and South Korea, which are known as highly developed countries, there isn't a lot of communication between the formal and in-formal education. It seems that these countries don't fully fill the UNCRC which they are signed on; the child-delegates from these countries discussed the 12^{th} and 13^{th} articles of the convention, which speak of the right of a child who can develop an opinion about issues concerning him, express it. While they were making statements, I was telling about the freedom of speech of children – at school, with teachers, counselors, principal of school, in the municipality – things that don't exist in other countries, such as South Korea.

Even if our status is good in comparison to other countries (concerning children's rights and pupil's rights), there is always a place for improvement. Even thought, I

would like to take what I saw and felt in this conference and try to produce something that could help somehow to improve the status of children in Israel.

It's very important to me that all of the children and students would know what their rights are in their society, in their school and in their communities, especially in a different culture than mine, like the Arab sector.

I did my best to attract the attention of the world to the issue of children's rights in the world by giving a speech in the UN's GA, and I hope I made some kind of an influence and by that perhaps making an improvement in the state of other children in other places in the world.

I know that if I won't start making the change, maybe it would not happen soon, therefore I have to take the lead, initiate and work in order to make this change happen.

I invite you to come to my school, to my place of education – and from here start the great movement of letting all of the students in Israel know about their rights as children (under the age of 18) and their rights as pupils. When we'll know our rights we'll be able to track the needs and rights of others and help them get what they rightfully deserve.

This is how we can build a more meaningful civil life for ourselves.

I call upon you to recruit yourself to our society, so that our children would grow into a better community, where the citizens are encouraged to involve.



