



## SURVEY REPORT

# PREPARING CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE FOR AN INDEPENDENT LIFE PROJECT

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT AMONG CHILDREN AND  
YOUTH IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY NECESSARY  
INTERVENTIONS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

**The study is funded by LU-MUN Holding LLC.**

Zarina Aliyeva

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The study is funded by LU-MUN HOLDING LLC aimed at creating an evidence-based support program for children deprived of parental care living in child institutions.

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## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>MHSE</b>	Mental Health Status Exam
<b>IDP</b>	Individual Development Plan
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Right of Children

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The statistics is usually uncertain, however, according to the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 849 children deprived of parental care were registered as residents of boarding schools for 2020. According to the Education Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan, development concept of “Azerbaijan – 2020: The Vision of The Future”, National Education Development Strategy of Azerbaijan Republic, as well as under the "State Program (for 2006-2015 years) on alternative care and giving of children (Deinstitutionalization) from state child establishments to the families in Azerbaijan Republic" and Decision of Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan no 5 from January 13, 2010, the Department on Deinstitutionalization and Child Protection under the Ministry was assigned to prevent institutionalization of orphans and stimulate their deinstitutionalization through reunification with families, adoption and alternative care services.

According to UNICEF world data, many children in orphanages are not orphans and have at least one parent or other relative. The immediate and long-term damage caused by family separation and unsuitable alternative care, particularly in institutions, is well documented. Institutions are often characterized by inherently harmful living arrangements. Deprived of parental care, they can endure physical, psychological, emotional, and social harm – with consequences that last a lifetime. These children are also more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Several shelters have been created in the country. In addition, the government continues reforms in Adoption system to stimulate alternative family-type care. However, transformation of boarding schools and orphanages into family-type services as well as promotion of foster care system establishment should be prioritized for future protection of children and youth deprived of parental care from all types of suffering and deficits.

Since, there is no information available on the quality of services provided by orphanages, boarding schools or alternative care services throughout Azerbaijan, the project initiates a study to explore the indicators on children and youth’s educational, social, psychological, health and mental health needs to identify main directions of possible support to make their life conditions more harmonious and reduce possible undesirable risk factors. A December 2019 UN General Assembly Resolution on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children recognises that “a child should grow up in a family environment to have a full and harmonious development of her or his personality and potential; urges member states to take actions to progressively replace institutionalisation with quality alternative care and redirect resources to family and community-based services”. (Lancet Child Adolesc Health. 2020 Aug)

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## 1.2 Survey process details

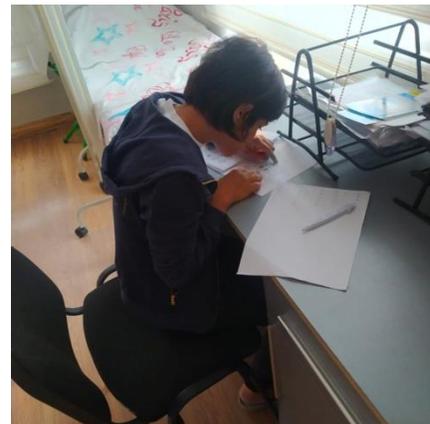
Project goal: The project “Addressing the needs of children deprived of parental care” aims to provide educational, employment and psychological support to the children and youth residing at shelters and orphanages to contribute to their smooth transition to independent adulthood equipped with necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to make healthy and constructive life choices.



The specific objective of the survey component of the project is organization of comprehensive needs assessment among children and youth deprived of parental care in order to identify their needs on the following levels:

1. Physical development
2. Psychological development
3. Emotional development
4. Intellectual development
5. Social development

The team of experts has started the project with identification of the tools and venue for Qualitative Research- Needs Assessment Survey. The survey has covered four shelters, three in Baku and one in Ganja and two regional boarding schools/orphanages. The tools of the survey included one detailed questionnaire, 4 intellectual tests to cover all different age groups, one test on emotional condition, one drawing test to identify psychological defence mechanisms, fears, and self-esteem, one test on professional orientation and Mental Health Status Exam to summarize observations of psychologists. The methods were appropriately selected for searching of explanations and experiences of the children and youth – residents of shelters/orphanages.



The survey process consisted of 5 stages:

1. Preparation of survey tools
2. Data collection
3. Data entry
4. Data analysis
5. Report writing

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The team of experts included three professional psychologists with more than 20 years of professional practice and seven students, future graduates of psychology department of the state and private universities of Azerbaijan who assisted during data collection, data entry and data processing:

1. Zarina Aliyeva, psychologist, and clinical social worker
  2. Asli Zeynalabdinova, psychologist
  3. Malakhat Kazibekova, psychologist and educational specialist
- Students – future graduates – psychologists:
4. Nihad Axundov
  5. Aysel Abdullayeva
  6. Nuray Mammadova
  7. Xana Gazibeyova
  8. Alsu Javadova
  9. Shahla Bagirova
  10. Fakhriyya Hasanli



Experience at the shelters during the survey also brought some interesting impressions for the team of psychologists. For example, when the survey was conducted at “Təmiz dünya” shelter on 20<sup>th</sup> of October, the team was well greeted and met not only children and youth who reside at the shelter, but some children with mothers who reside at the shelters or some children/youth from low-income families who attend shelter as a day care centre. When on 24<sup>th</sup> of October the team has visited “Ümid Yeri” shelter, although the shelter was informed about the visit, they seemed to be unprepared and not ready for the survey processing. The psychologist has requested to look at the questionnaires and tests. Later, the permission was granted, and one hall was allocated for the interviews and testing. The hall was big, but very cold with the outside door not fixed and open throughout the whole survey experience.



When it got late and dark, it turned out that there is no light available at the hall. Some tension was observed among little kids, like if they are scared. Some children of school age are not enrolled to public schools due to problems with documents. On 29<sup>th</sup> of October the team had a visit to “Təmas” shelter in Ganja. The administration of the shelter was very welcoming. The conditions of the shelter are not very good, it was cold and no light in the rooms. The relationships between staff and children seemed to be warm. The number of children is small.

The visit to the boarding school of Ganja on the same day discovered very good conditions and cleanliness of the place as well as quite friendly relationships between children and administration. The observation at Azerbaijan Children Union on 29<sup>th</sup> of October also showed that at the beginning of the visit the staff was nervous, the psychologist requested to look through the psychological tests and questionnaire before

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the survey. But later, quite authentic relationships between the psychologist and children were observed. Children were active during the survey. The rooms were very cold. There was no water in the bathroom. The smell of food was strongly felt in all the rooms. Then the team has finally visited Sheki mixed type orphanage on 11<sup>th</sup> of November. The staff was friendly, the building is newly repaired and spacious. However, the rooms were cold again. The kids were not very active and talkative. The

psychologist got an impression that the administration selected specific children for the participation at the survey. The survey was conducted in the library. When children were coming and waiting for their turn, they discovered colouring books on the shelves of the library. They were taking them and colouring. The psychologist could observe while they were colouring how much tension they had (pencil press, selection of colours, etc). It seems that this very needy for them activity which is available in terms of resources is not practiced with children and youth on a regular basis.

As with any survey using qualitative research methodology, some limitations of the process have been acknowledged by the project team. First, the data collected cannot be generalized to the population of the children and youth deprived of parental care in Azerbaijan. However, the data provides valuable information which helps to get better understanding of the target group and to explore available opinions, experiences, and reflections. Another limitation related to the sample is that the survey participants have been mainly nominated by the shelters and boarding schools' administration which may result in getting more of socially desirable or expected answers by the respondents. Finally, some of the data is a result of direct observations of the team of experts which may also result in some approximation of representation.

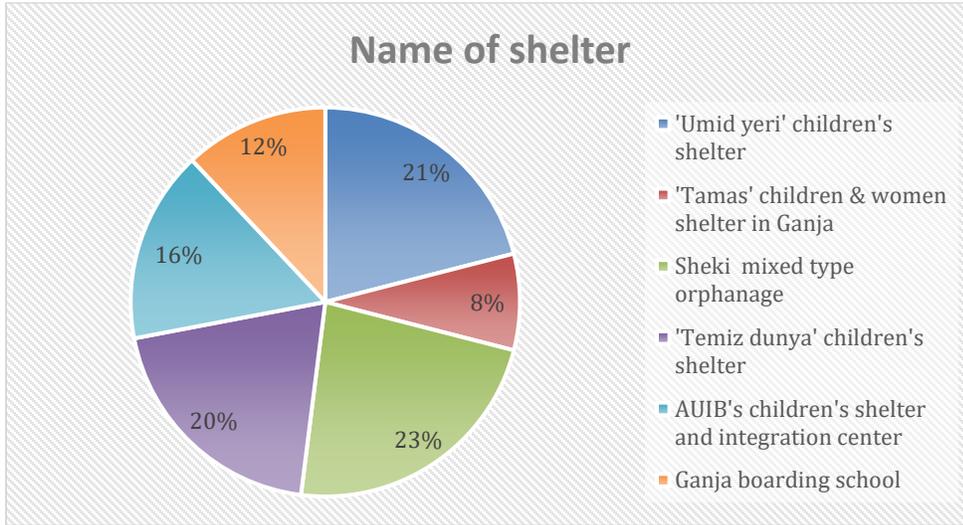
## 2. SURVEY RESULTS

### 2.1 SAMPLE

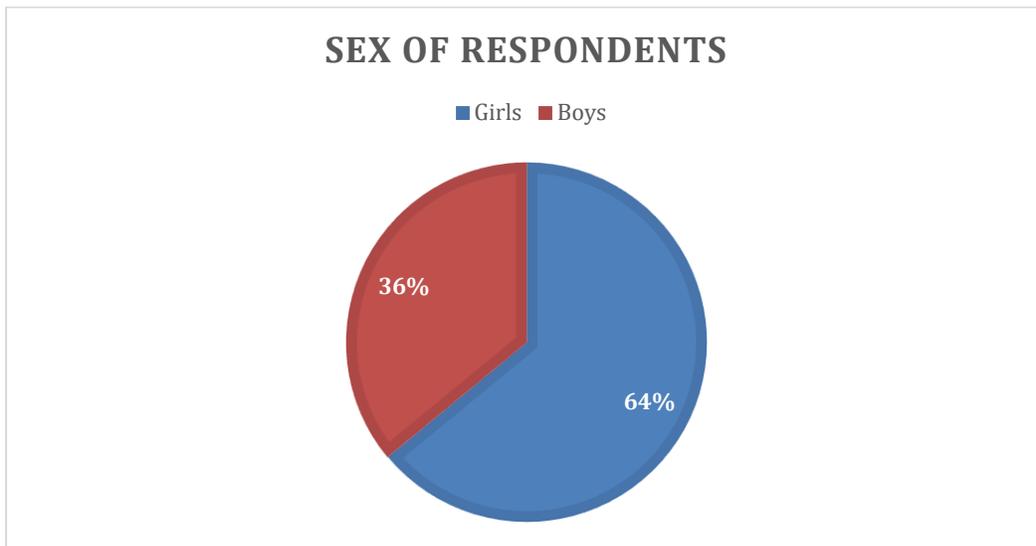
The sample of the project is comprised by 100 children and youth, residents of shelters, orphanages/boarding schools up to the age of 18. The team has covered 4 shelters, 3 located in Baku and one in Ganja, one orphanage located in Sheki and one boarding school located in Ganja. Demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in the following table:

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### 2.1.1 CURRENT RESIDENCE OF RESPONDENTS:

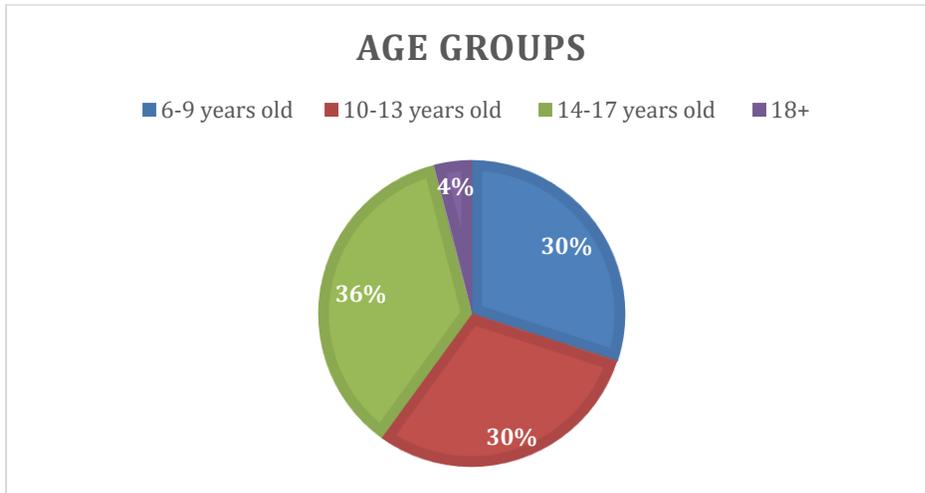


### 2.1.2 SEX OF RESPONDENTS:

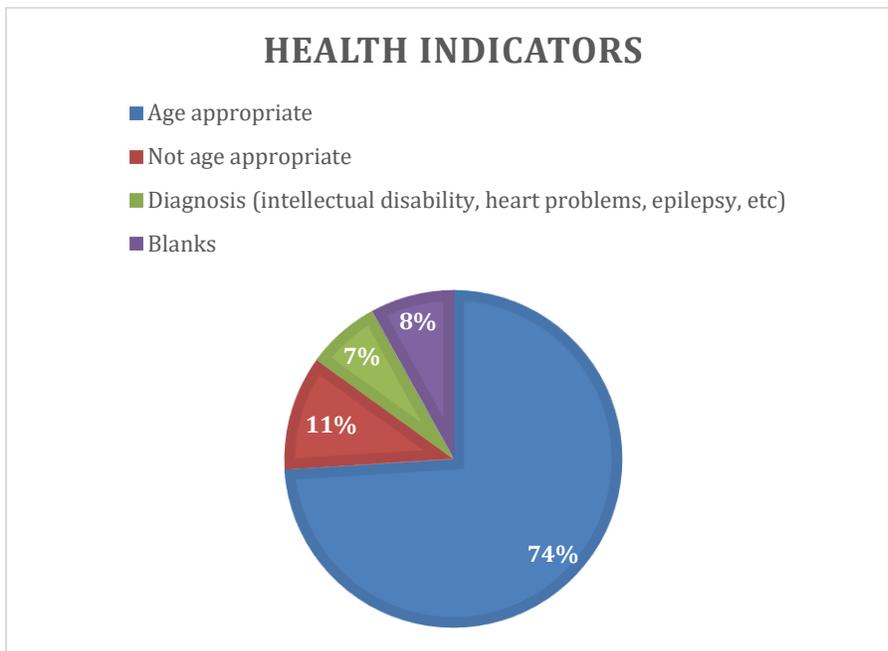


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### 2.1.3 AGE OF RESPONDENTS:



### 2.1.4 HEALTH INDICATORS OF RESPONDENTS:



Based on the diagrams presented above, the sample is split between 6 shelters. The team was trying to have approximately equal number of respondents from each shelter and of each age group to the level possible due to diverse composition of residents of shelters/orphanages and

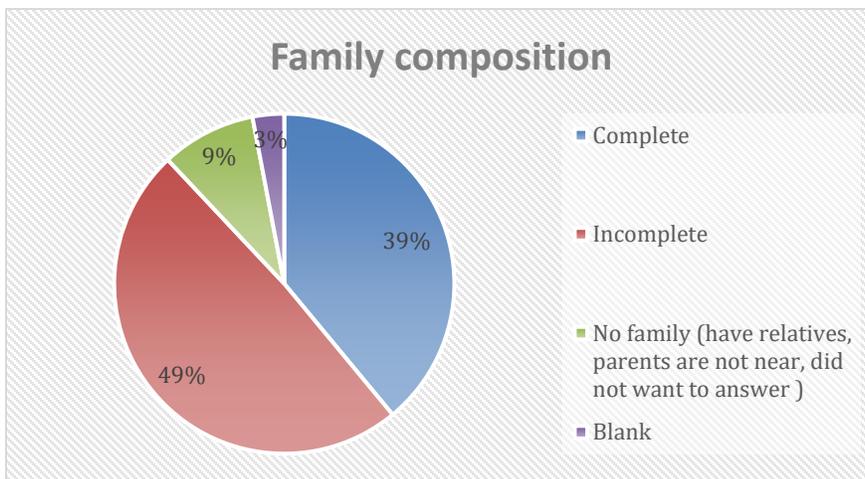
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different availability of children/youth for the survey. The majority of respondents are boys. Based on observations and interview results, most of the respondents have age-appropriate health indicators. Some individual mentioning of diagnosis such as epilepsy, intellectual disability, head injury, problems with eyes or legs was registered from 7 respondents.

## 2.2 GENERAL INFORMATION FROM INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONNAIRE

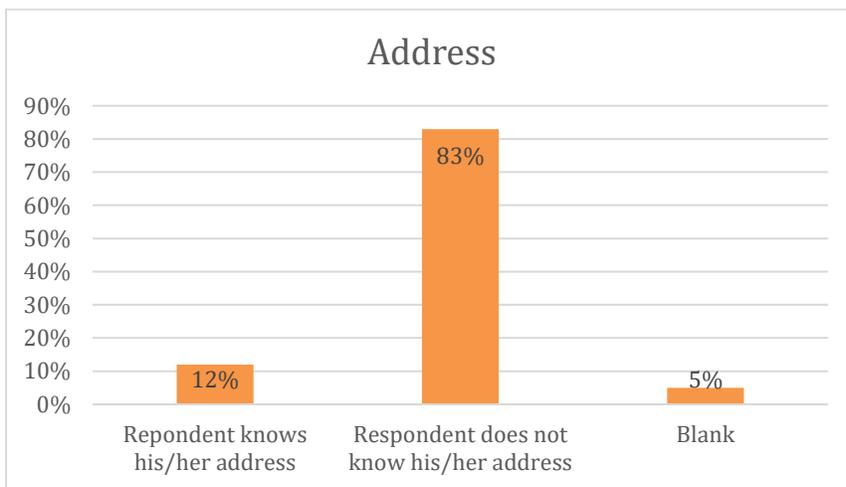
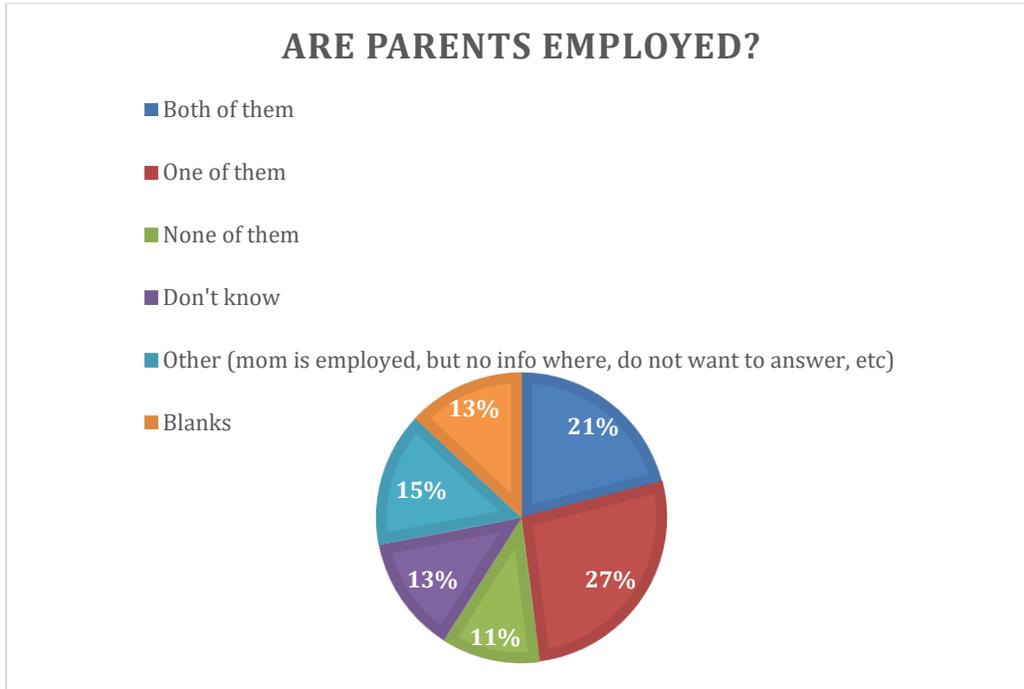
### 2.2.1 FAMILY RELATED EXPERIENCE

Our research was focusing on various family related aspects such as family composition, reasons for living in a shelter, employment status of parents and relationships with parents. Some family needs and aspirations were also indicated by respondents in a set of questions related to the future, such as dreams, plans, desires.



As it is presented in a diagram, more than half children and youth out of 100 have either incomplete meaning only one parent in the family or no families.

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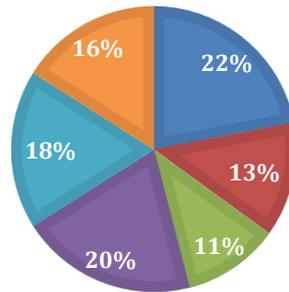
Another diagram related to employment status indicate that there are more cases when one parent is employed and many respondents who do not know about employment or do not want to answer this question.

Another question indicating relationships with the family is regarding the address where the family members live. The vast majority of children/youth do not have information on the address of the family members.

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## REASONS FOR STAYING IN THE SHELTER

- Family problems and disputes
- Violence in family
- Death of one parent
- Financial problems
- Other(doesn't know)
- Blanks



Critical situation leading to the child/youth being placed at the shelter or orphanage as shown by the diagram can be split in four main group of problems: family conflicts/problems, violence in the family, death of one of family members or financial problems. As an illustration of individual cases, several quotations are indicated in the thinking point box:

### THINKING POINTS

Some quotations of the respondents:

“My dad was forcing me to work. The Executive Committee sent me here.”

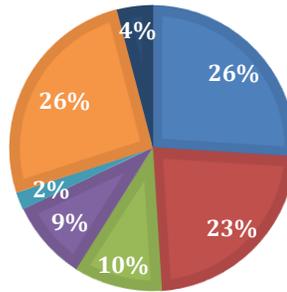
“Mother run away from dad with me. Then she left for Germany to take me there when I’m 18.”

“My mom is imprisoned...”

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## RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS

- I see them often
- I see them very rarely
- Communication only via phone
- Does not have communication
- Doesn't know parents
- Other (parents died, stays with mom at shelter, communicates only with mom, etc.)
- Blanks



As the diagram indicates, the majority of children/youth do not have regular communication to their parents or other family members.

### THINKING POINTS

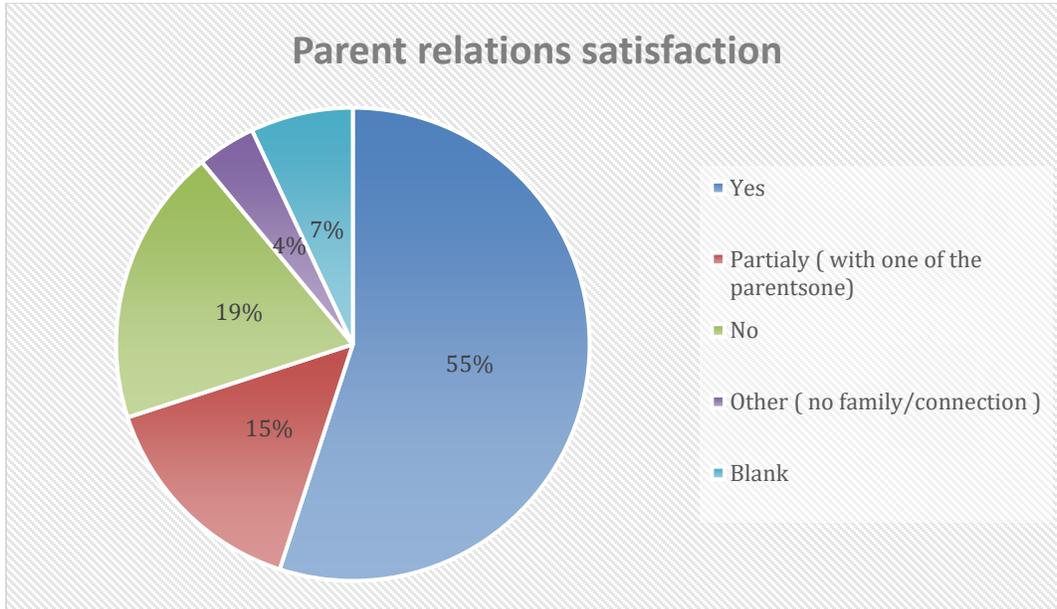
Some quotations of the respondents:

*"To see my mom, I'm sometimes taken to the prison she is at."*

*"Sometimes I talk to my grandmother."*

*"I have communication with my mom and grandmother, but not with father"*

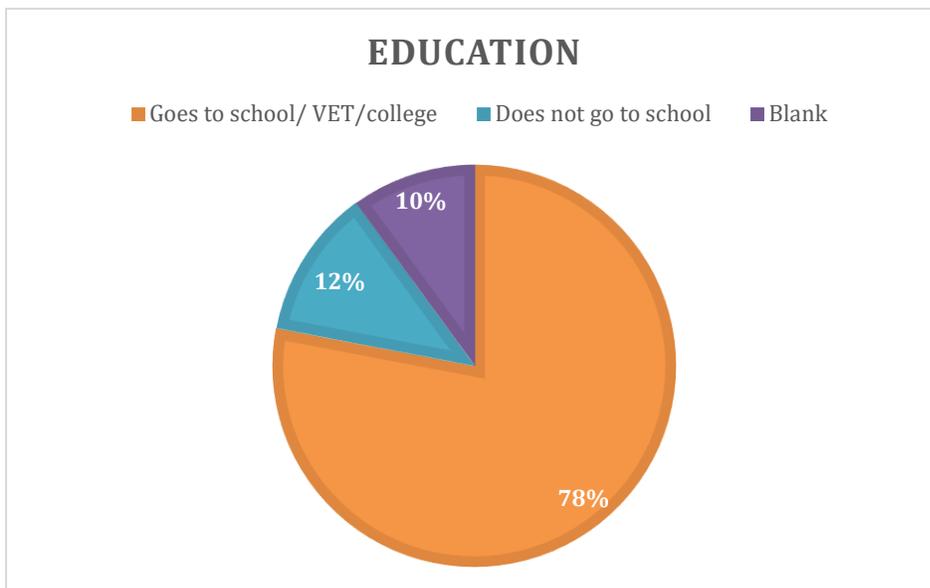
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Respondents have been asked to share if they are satisfied with their communication with parents. The majority of them positively evaluated communication with parents, others are partially satisfied or not satisfied with current state of relationships.

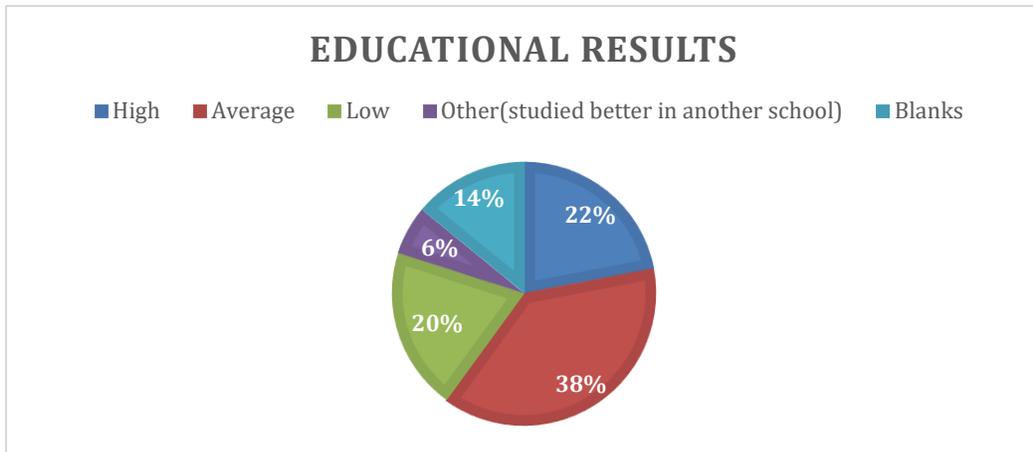
## 2.2.2 EDUCATION RELATED ASPECTS

Education level of children and youth, relationship with teachers, native language, career aspirations have been also explored within the survey.

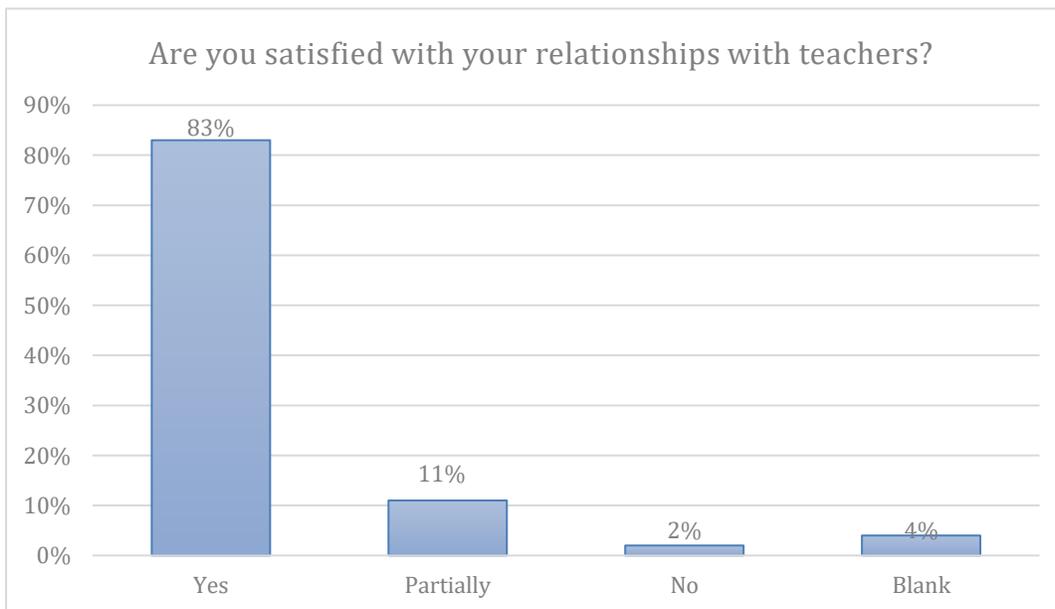


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As the first diagram on education indicates, the majority of kids and youth are enrolled in some type of education at the mainstream school, vocational school or college.

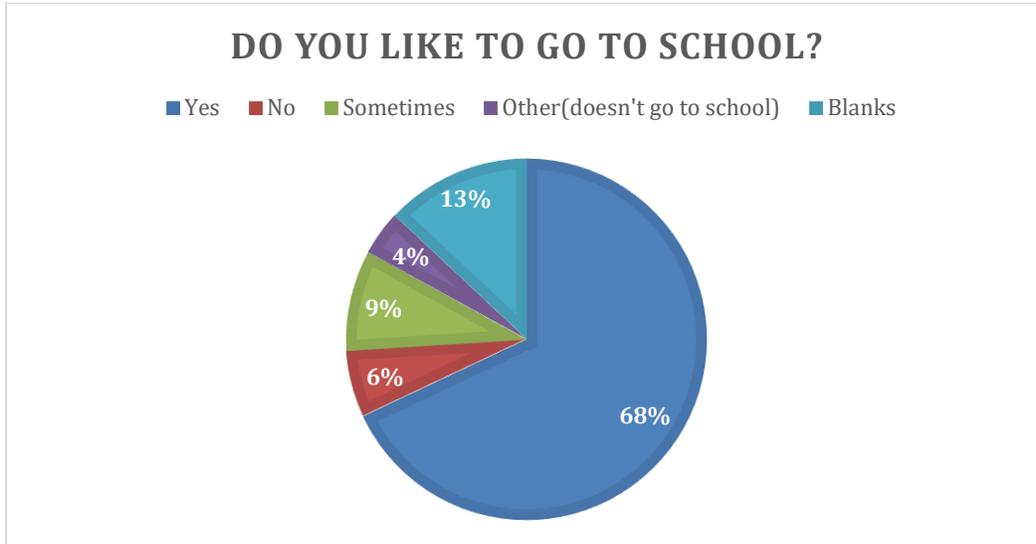


More than half of children/youth have average or low education results based on interview with them and staff of the shelters.



It turns out that the majority of respondents are satisfied with their relationships with teachers. Only two respondents who are not happy with the relationships, one of them clarified that the teacher is shouting at him/her. Whereas those who indicated partial satisfaction haven't clarified the reasons.

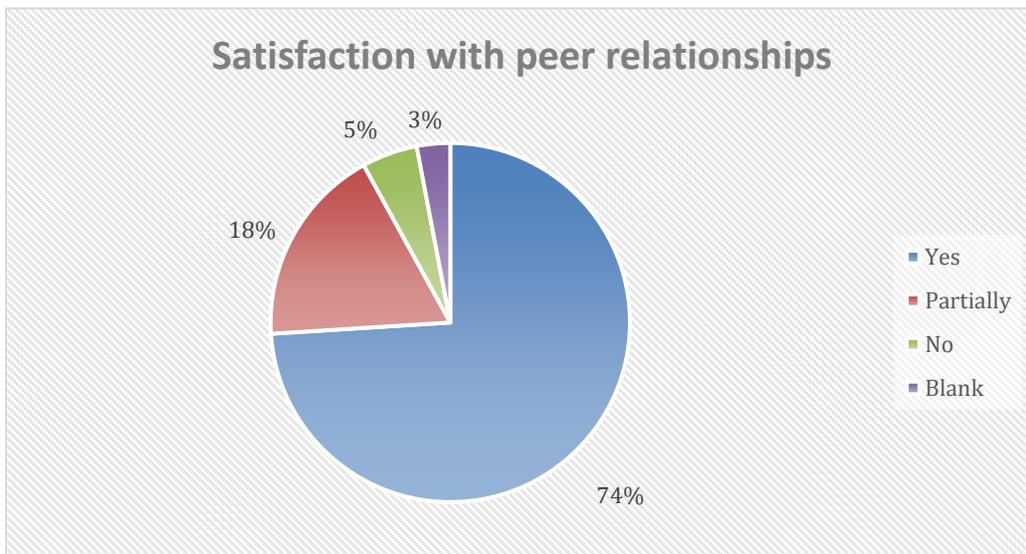
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The majority of respondents like to go to school, with only 6% children giving negative response.

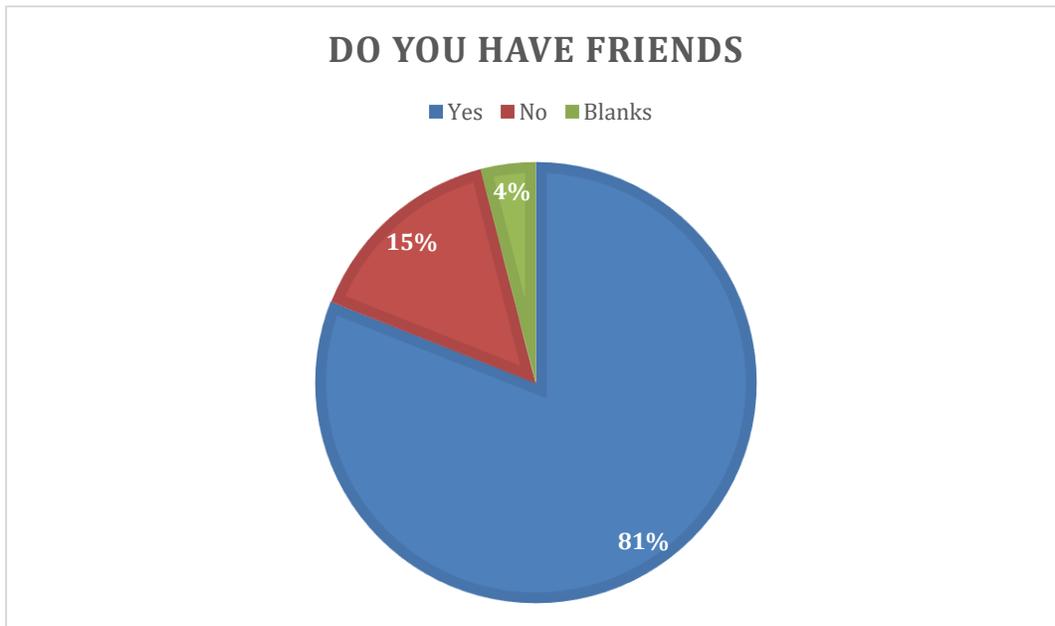
### 2.2.3 SOCIAL LIFE ASPECTS

The team has also explored social contacts of children and youth, the level of satisfaction with peer relationships, friendship experience, advice getting practice, etc.



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Based on the results of the survey, the majority is satisfied with general peer relationships. Several of those who are partially satisfied or dissatisfied with peer relationships shared misunderstandings, conflicts, or preference to be friends with boys more than girls because they are not gossiping among the reasons.



It was expected that the majority of children and youth would demonstrate relying on social contacts with peers and friends as a compensation of the deficit of family connections and support. The results indicate this tendency. At the same time mistrust is another frequently observed feature among orphans. Out of 15 respondents indicated that they do not have friends, some have shared their personal reasons for that:

#### THINKING POINTS

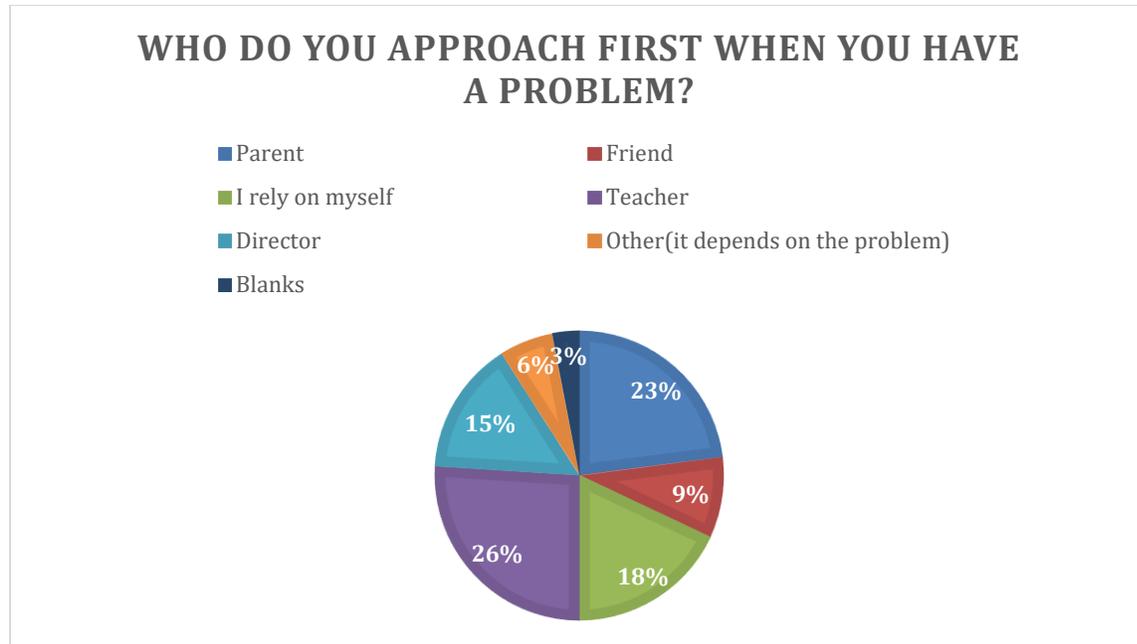
Some quotations of the respondents:

**“Nobody becomes your friend.”**

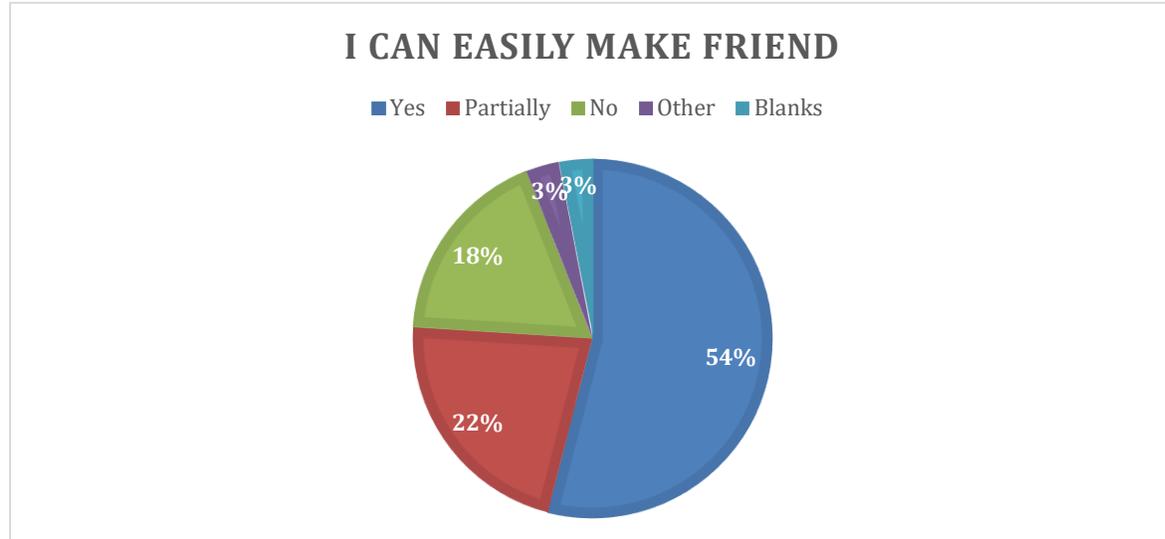
**“I have friends but prefer loneliness.”**

**“I don’t feel anybody as a close person”.**

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As it is indicated in the diagram, in case of any problems or challenges, many rely first of all on teachers, then parents or try to resolve everything themselves.



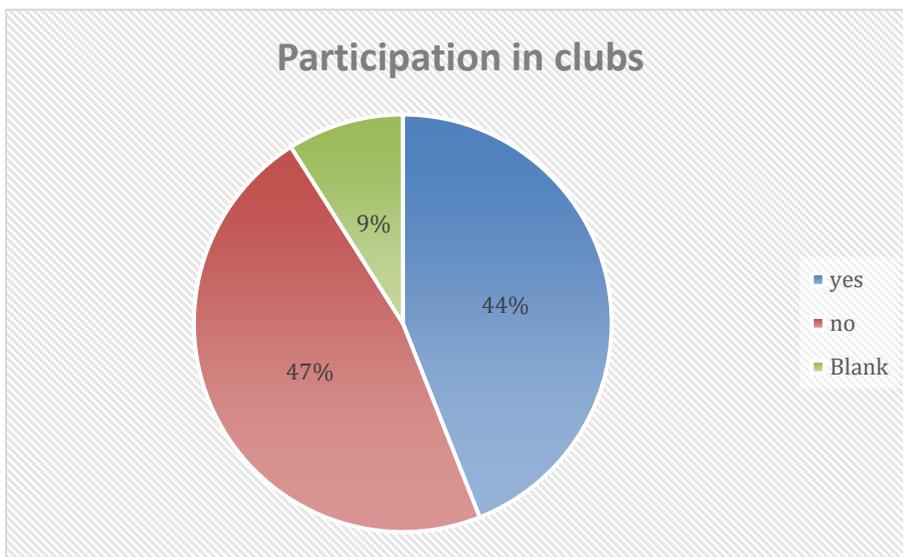
More than a half of respondents indicate that they can easily make friends, however, many also negatively responded to this question.

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#### 2.2.4 INTERESTS AND FUTURE PLANS

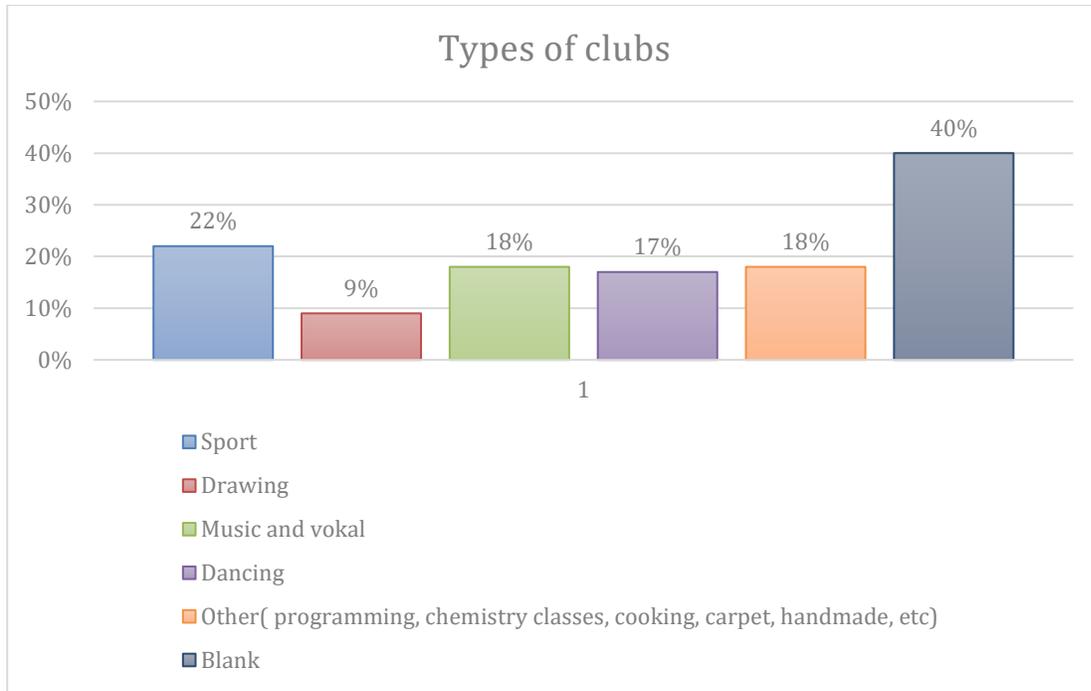
Since the project targets provision of supportive developmental programs for children and youth, residents of shelters, orphanages and boarding schools, a set of questions in questionnaire was devoted to interests, future planning strategies, career aspirations, leisure time activities.

##### Clubs experience

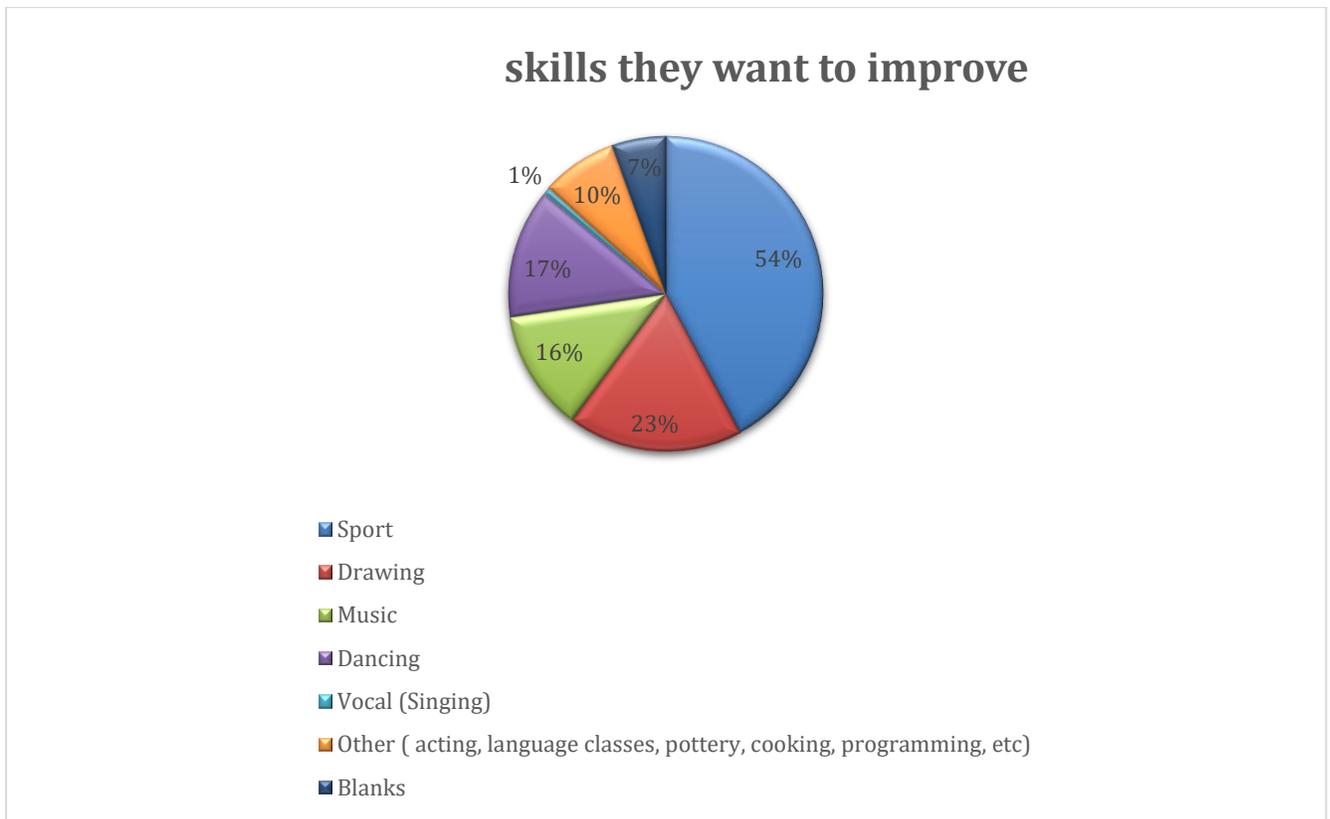


The team was interested if children and youth have some experience of participation in different clubs such as sport, art, etc. The majority of respondents reported that they do not have such an experience. One of the reasons is that nowadays, most of the clubs and activities are paid and, of course, the majority of children and youth, residents of shelters and orphanages have such an opportunity mainly in the framework of charity projects and initiatives with limited options.

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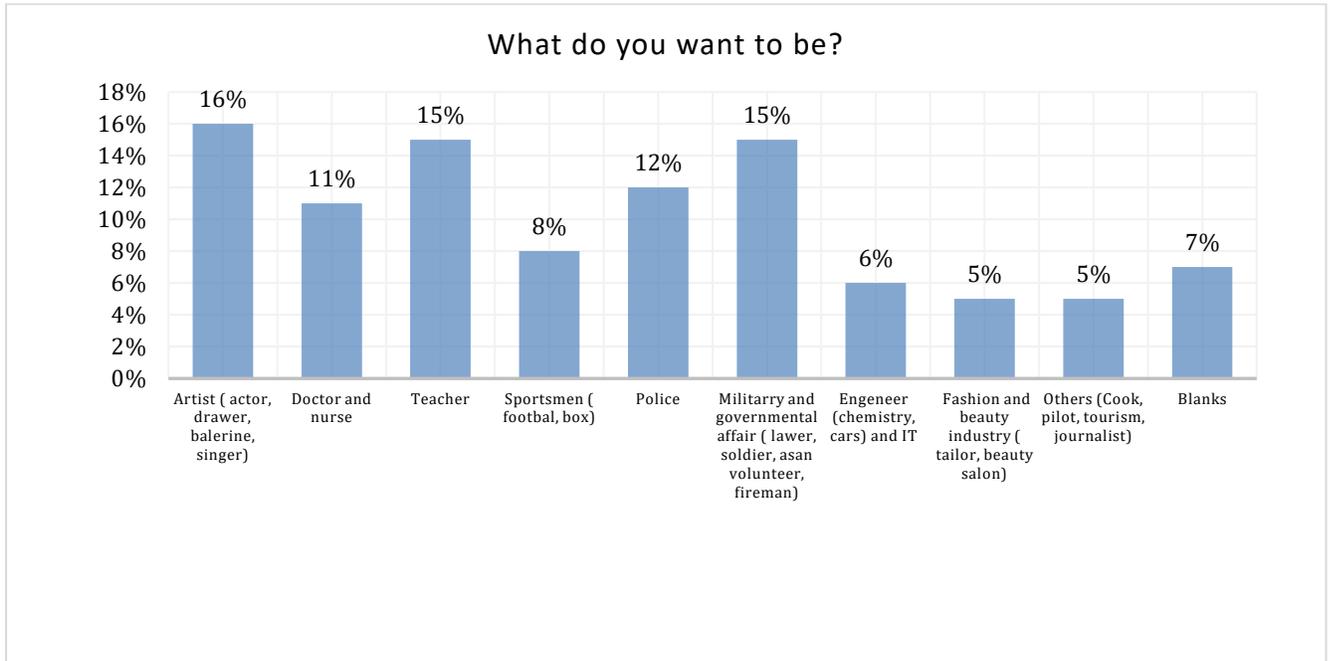
Some of the respondents reported that they participate at several clubs. The most popular are sport, music, vocal and dancing clubs.



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Again, the most popular clubs which attracts the respondents are sports and art directions.

### 2.2.5 CAREER PLANS



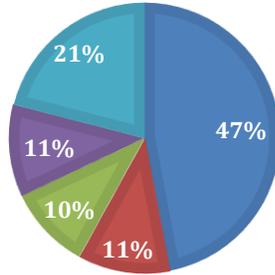
As the diagram indicates, the most popular professions among respondents include artist, teacher, military or governmental affairs, police, medical professions.

To clarify career planning process of the respondents, they were asked about three steps they think of undertaking in order to become a professional in a selected field.

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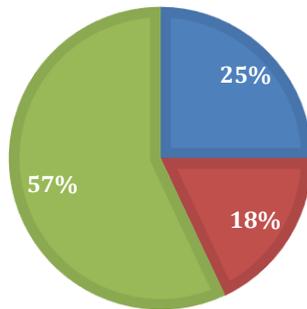
### WHAT STEPS ARE YOU PLANNING TO TAKE. STEP ONE

- To study
- To do sport
- To take dance/choreography classes
- Other(work in the market, work in asan xidmet)
- Blanks

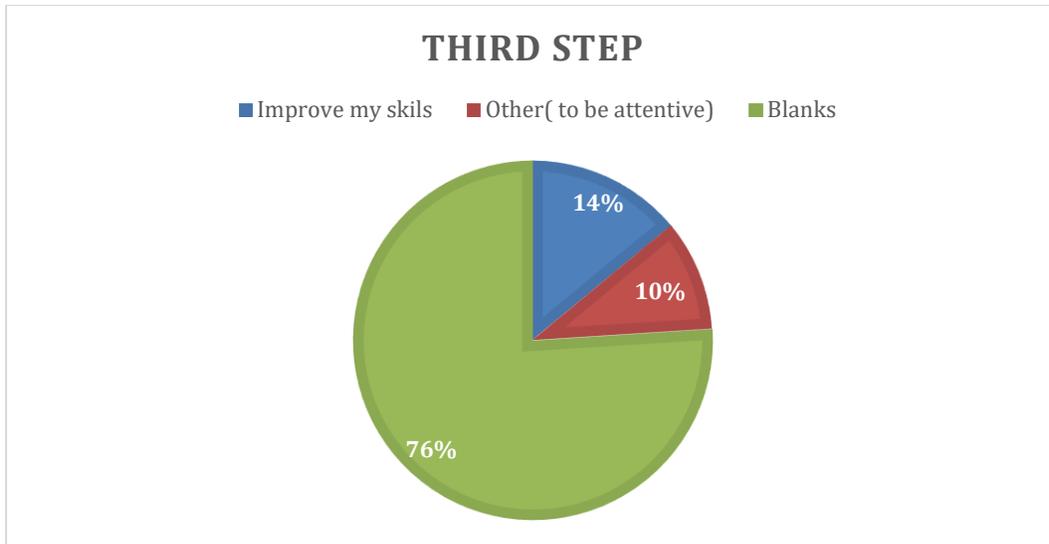


### SECOND STEP

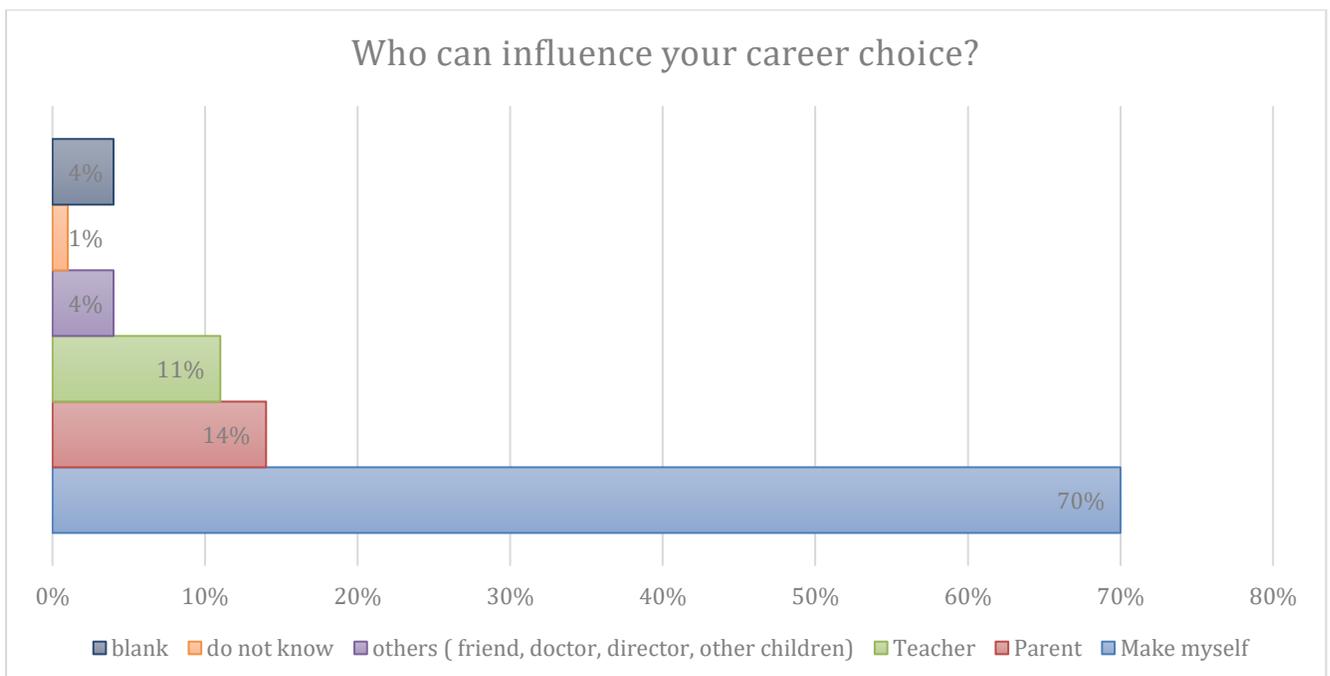
- To study
- Other(learn language, be smart, learn cooking)
- Blanks



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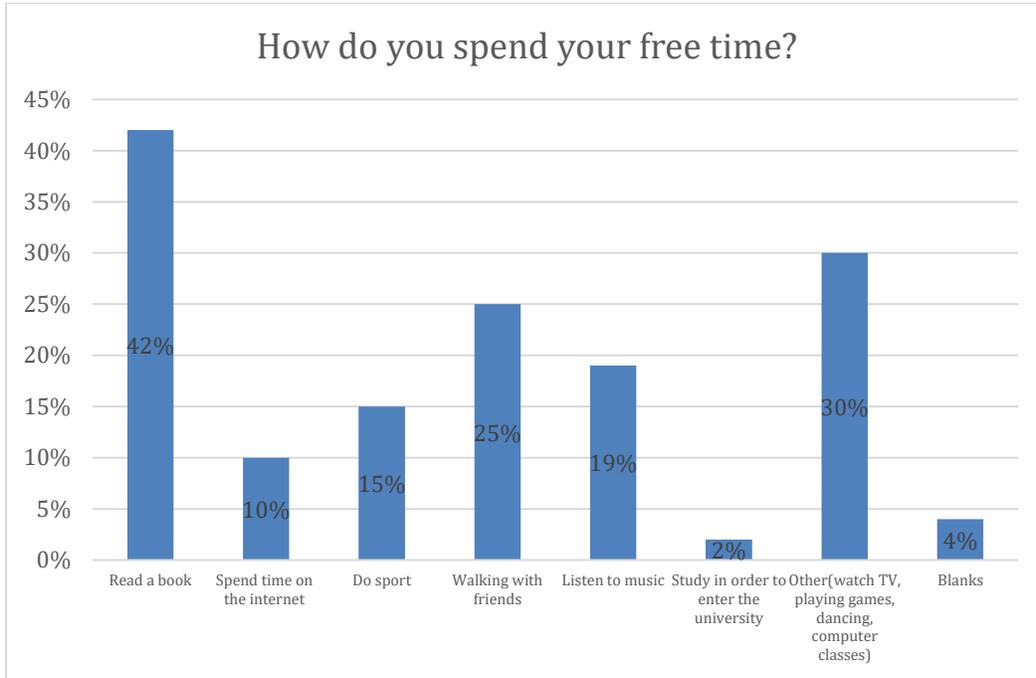
As it is seen at the diagrams, studying, or learning skills as well as sport activities is the main strategy of children/youth when it comes to planning the future. The choice they make during the survey indicates the value of important and productive skills. However, the majority did not indicate anything as step two and three, meaning that it is difficult for them to imagine step-by-step strategy to become a professional in a desired field. Lack of parental care, general joined family planning experience, educational and vocational resources make their vision of future career rather vague and unpredicted.



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According to the survey, the majority of respondents independently make decision in their career choices, some have indicated the influence of parents and teachers.

Additional question regarding their leisure time to clarify their interests and aspirations once more.

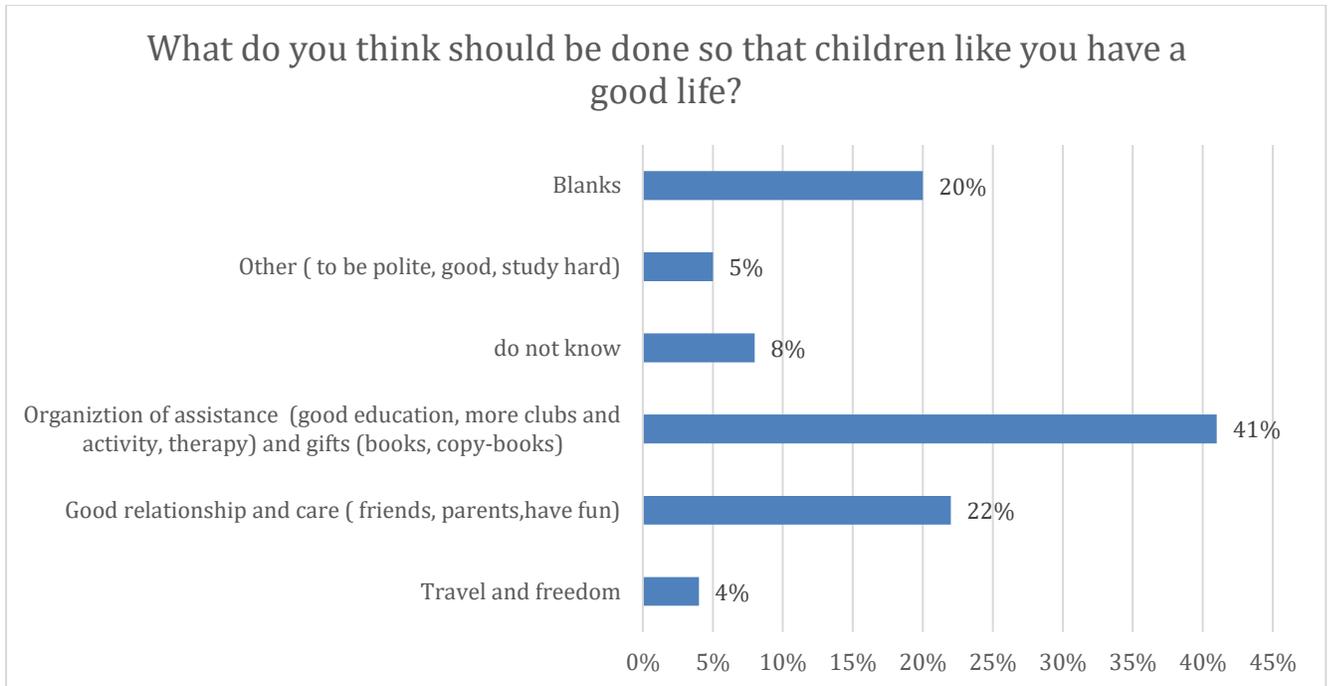


Many of the respondents were selecting several optional answers to these question with mostly frequent indication of reading a book, walking with friends, listening to the music and sport.

## 2.2.6 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS: SELF-ESTEEM, VALUES, REFLECTIONS

The question was asked regarding what should be done so that the children and youth deprived from parental care would have a better life to get their own perspective and reflections on what they think might help them.

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The most popular choices of respondents were about assistance with getting an education or be enrolled in some clubs, better relationships with friends, parents, entertainments, gifts. Some more individual and unique answers are given in a thinking point box to have a better understanding of their reflections on possible solutions of current experiences.

### THINKING POINTS

Quotations of answers of some respondents:

“Attention should be given to children. Supervision should be strengthened”.

“Children should be put on a positive pathway”.

“A job should be found for parents; apartment should be rented”.

“Children like me should learn how to protect themselves.”

“To adopt us”.

“To give children education, to give parental care and attention”.

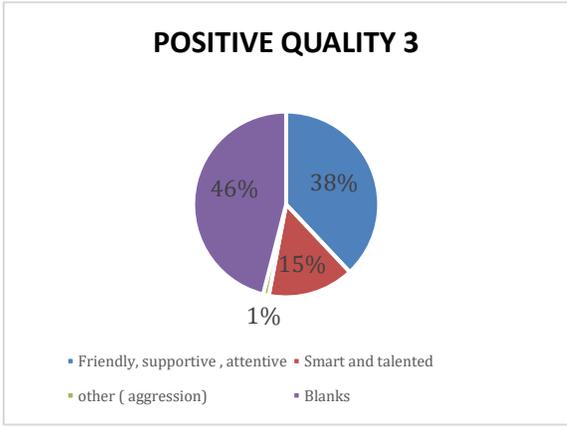
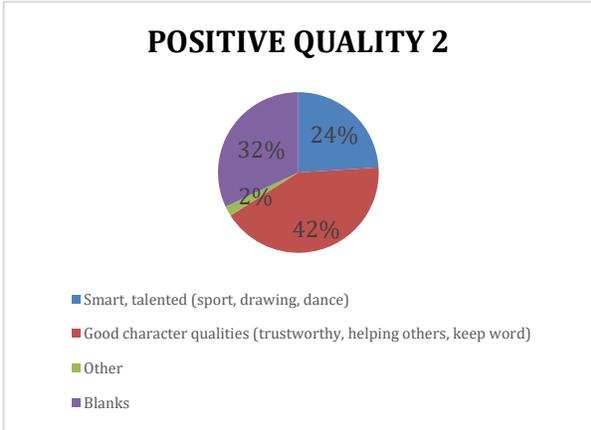
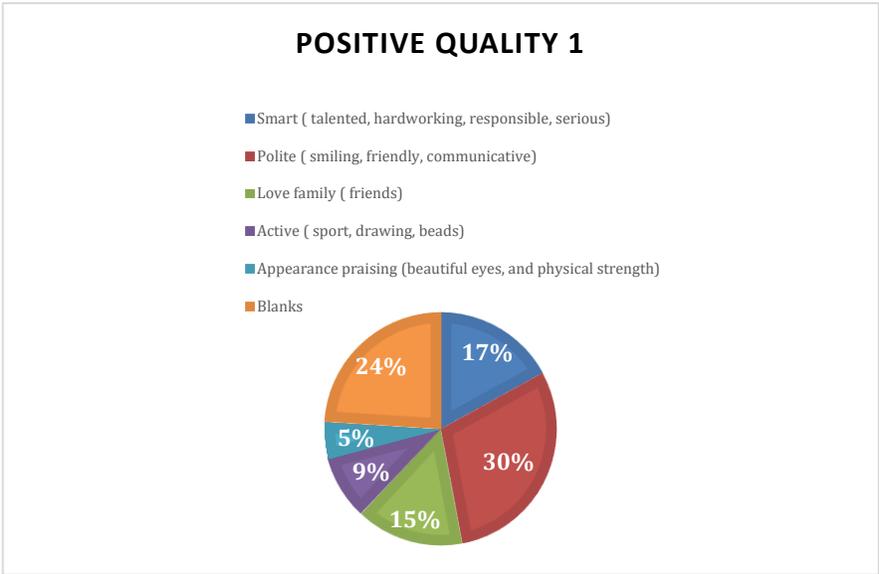
“We should be left alone to make our own decisions”.

“To organize therapies for us”

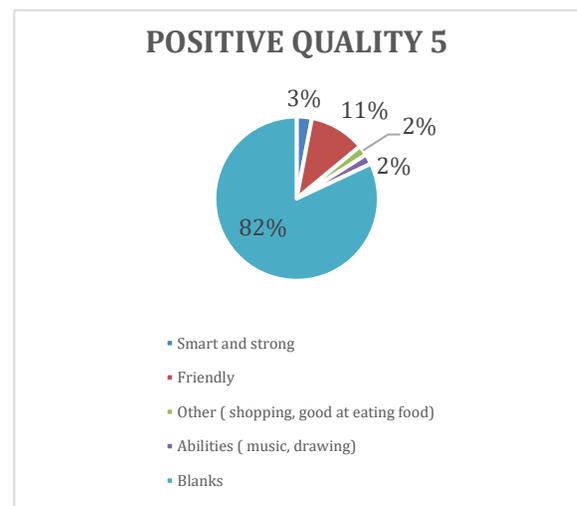
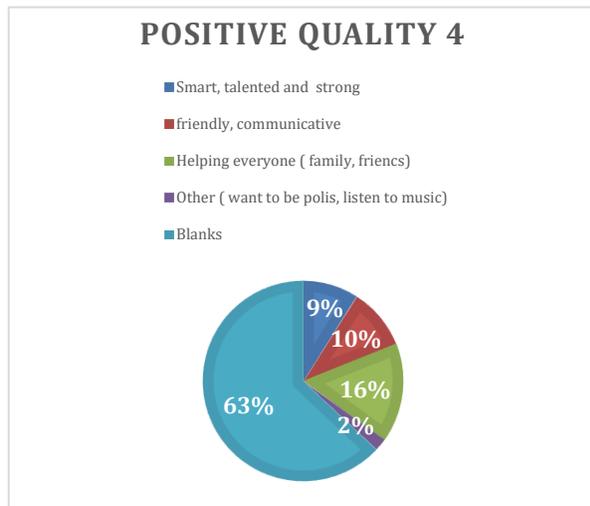
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**“To get an education, to stand up on feet and be independent.”**

Other set of questions helped to identify how the respondents evaluate themselves and their positive and negative qualities. So, they were asked to name 5 positive and 5 negative qualities they think they have if any.

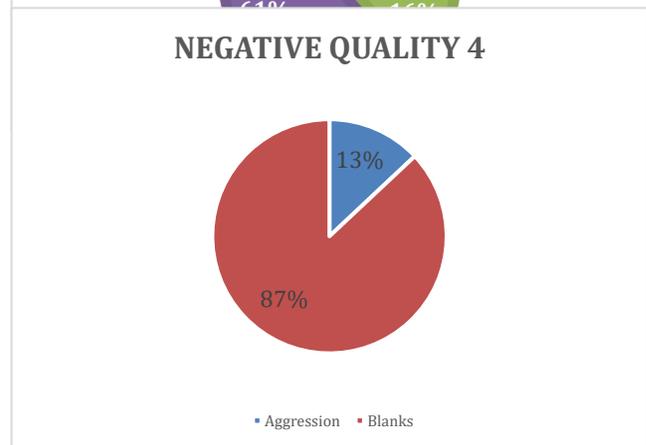
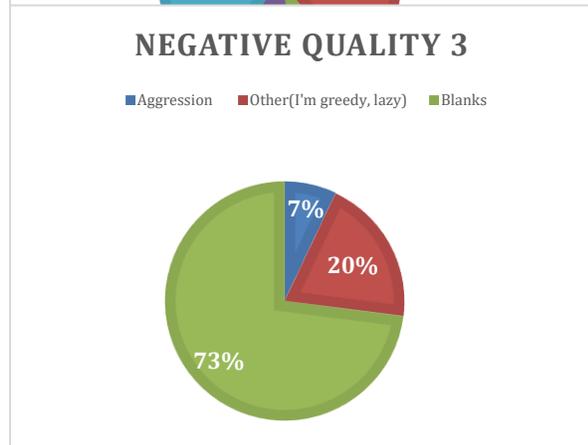
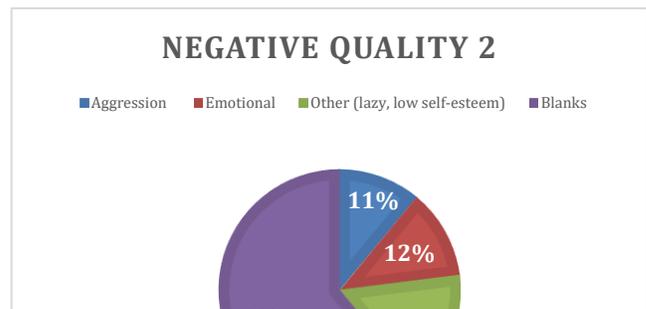
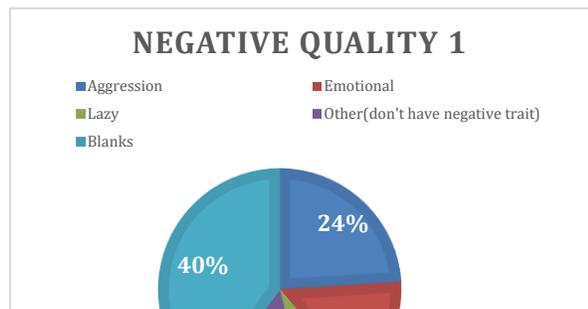


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Overall, many respondents haven't answered this question for some or all 5 positions in the table which indicate that self-esteem of these children and youth is not high. Among the qualities indicated as positive by respondents the most frequently used are smart/ talented (strong, hardworking, good at certain skills) and friendly (polite, smiling, caring, supportive, trustworthy). The results indicate which qualities are important for these children and youth which will direct their personal and professional aspiration.

The 5 positions of negative qualities were distributed in the following way:

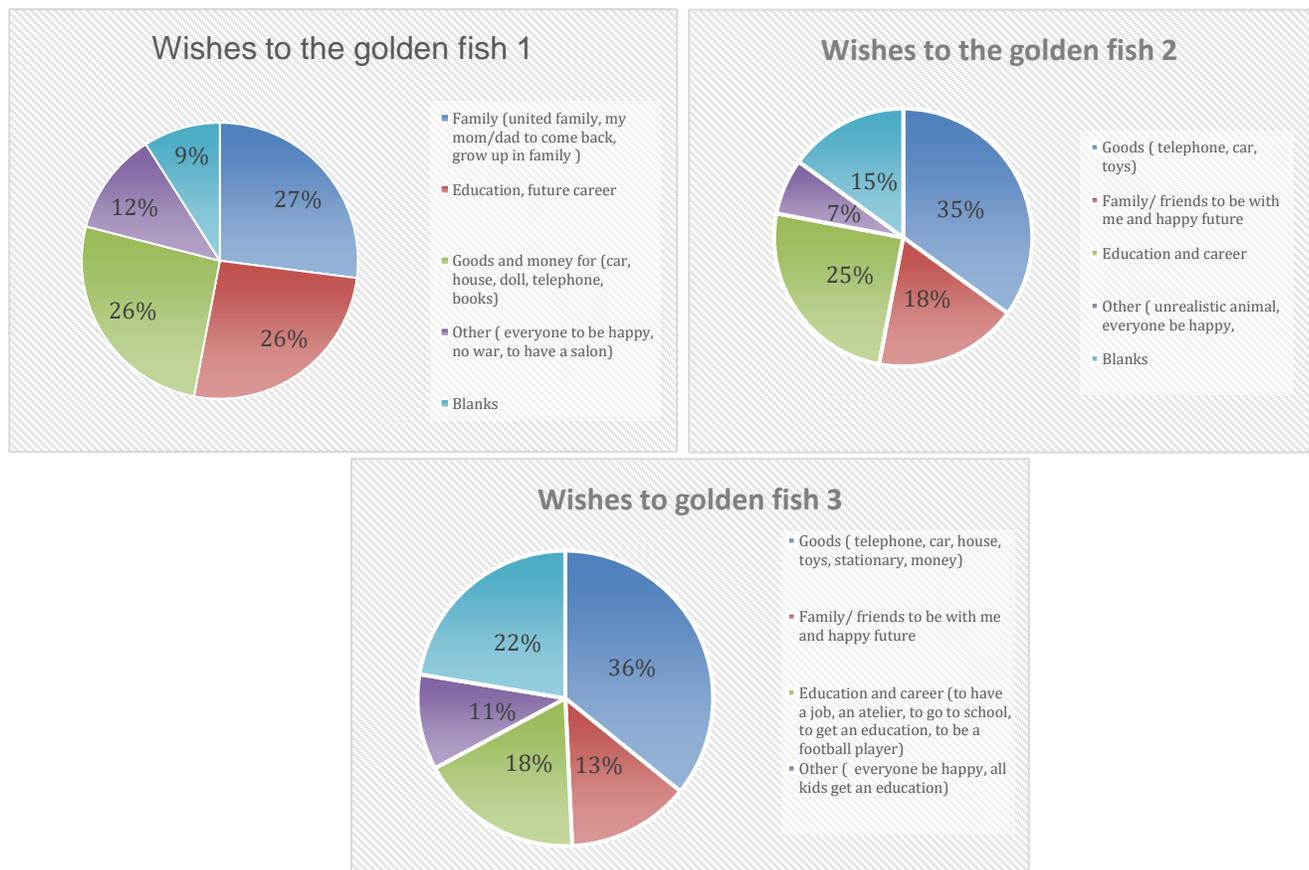


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There was no negative quality number 5 indicated by respondents and overall, not many characteristics specified under quality 1, 2, 3 and 4 as well (lots of blank responses). Aggression and being emotional are main negative qualities specified by the

respondents. Being lazy, greedy, having low self-esteem are among qualities which were less frequently indicated among responses.

Another question was about imagining a situation when children or youth could ask the golden fish for 3 wishes. The choice of the respondents for wish number one, two and three was distributed in the following way:



As the diagrams demonstrate, children and youth want their families to get back to normal life, they wish to have their own money, homes, cars, telephones, stationary, toys, books, etc. Other category of wishes relates to education and employment opportunities, such as to study at school or university, to become a professional (actor, police, businessman), to see everybody happy, no children in the streets, etc. As it was expected, the respondents have lots of deficits in terms of

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family care and support as well as lack of financial opportunities and resources which is reflected in the answers. Some individual responses are presented in the thinking point box:

### THINKING POINTS

Quotations of answers of some respondents:

“My mom and brother to be healthy. To protect my mom”

“My mom would not have any pain”.

“To go back to the past when my dad was a good person”.

“So that all poor people with have good income.”

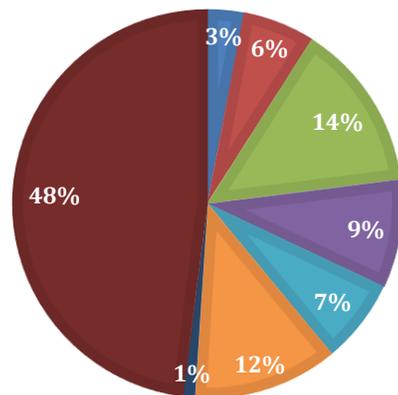
“My native mom and dad to be with me.”

“I don’t have any dream left”.

“Eliminate unfair teachers”.

### MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE

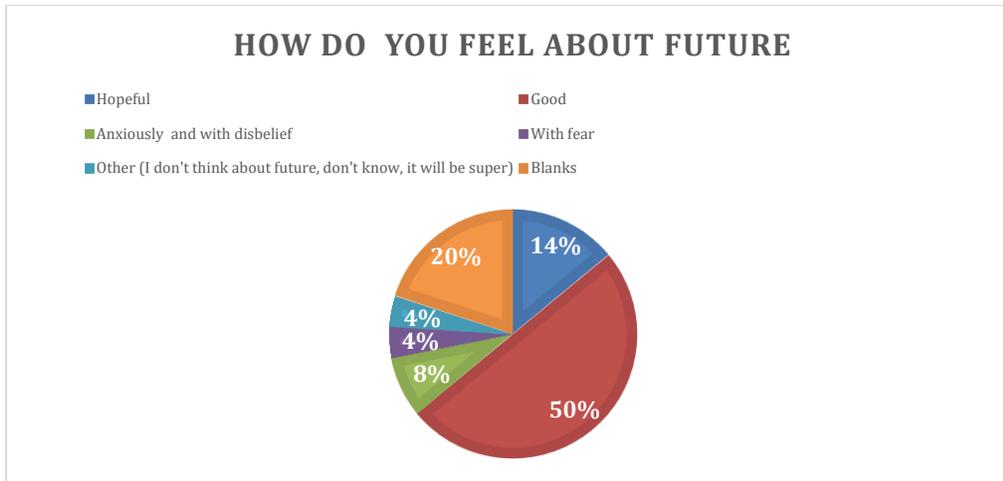
■ Health ■ Education ■ Family ■ Love ■ Many ■ Friendship ■ Other(my thoughts) ■ Blanks



The respondents were also asked what they think is the most important in life. According to their responses, the most important is family, friendship, and love.

The last question of the survey form was about their feeling regarding the future.

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As it seen at the diagram, more than a half of the respondents have good or hopeful feelings about the future, while certain percent have anxious feelings or feelings of fear regarding their future lives.

## 2.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING RESULTS

The team has also conducted a number of psychological tests to identify various aspects of emotional state, intellectual potential, professional orientation of children and youth.

### 2.3.1 EMOTIONAL STATE TEST

The Luscher test, which uses a range of colours has gained wide popularity as a tool for identifying emotional, characterological personality basis and the subtle nuances of its current state.

The team has selected the version of Luscher test usually used by school psychologists with children and youth.

In accordance with the theory of personality developed by M. Luscher, each of the colours has its own, clearly defined emotional and personal meaning.

The test allows us to diagnose the emotional sphere of the child in terms of higher emotions of social genesis. The technique gives a psychotherapeutic effect, which is achieved using colour, the possibility of responding to negative and positive emotions.

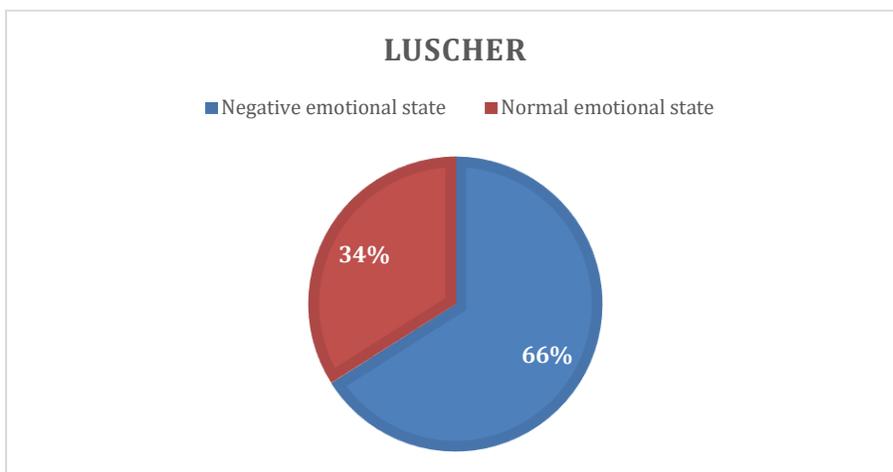
A certain order of colours (34251607) - autogenous norm - is an indicator of psychological well-being. Next, the indicator of the total deviation from the autogenous norm is calculated.

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The numerical values of colouring order are interpreted as follows:

- More than 20 - the predominance of negative emotions. The child's mood is predominately bad, and he/she has unpleasant experiences. There are problems that the child cannot solve on his/her own. So, a numerical value above 20 means that the child experienced one or more traumatic events that deeply affected his psyche.
- 10 - 18 - the emotional state is normal. The child can be happy and sad, there is no reason for concern.
- Less than 10 - Predominance of positive emotions. The child is cheerful, happy, optimistic.

The results of the test are presented in the following diagram:



The results of the test identify that the majority of respondents have negative emotional state. Children whose total deviation from the norm is above 20 is an indicator that these children were subjected to psychological stress of varying intensity and sequence. In children of primary school age, serious inner experiences were observed, in children of middle and older adolescence, latent neurotic states. Some older adolescent girls who have experienced domestic violence have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder. It was observed in the form of an exaggerated response to external noise, touch (flinching when touched), irritability (wanting to complete tests faster and running away), and outbursts of anger (unwillingness to answer questions about the past).

So, based on the result of the test, it becomes clear that addressing the emotional needs of children should be crucial in any type of programs/interventions.

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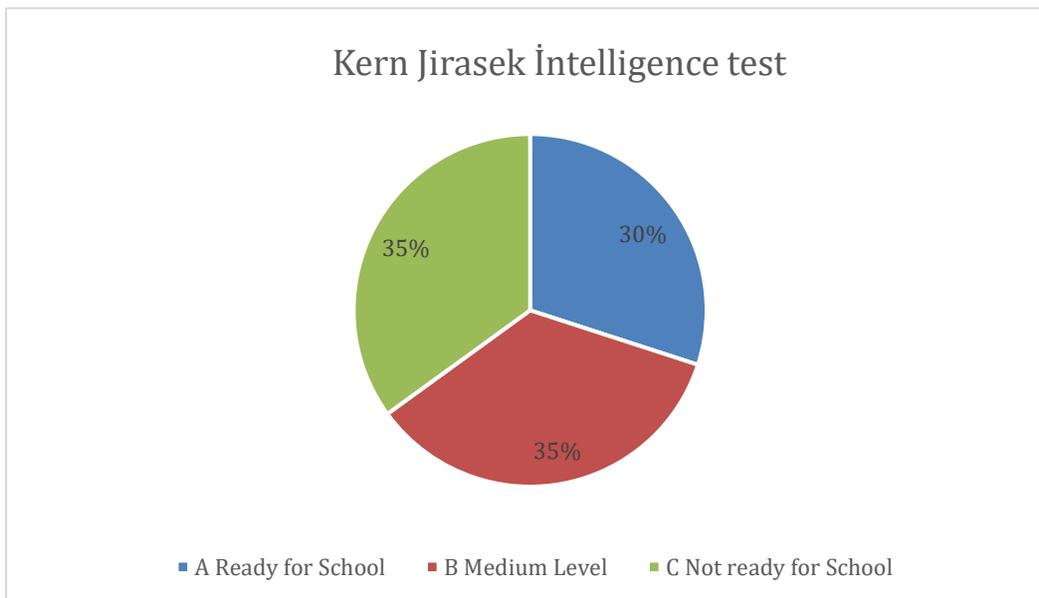
### 2.3.2 INTELLECTUAL TESTS

The team used four intelligence tests to cover different age group of respondents. For the children of 5-7 years old who are supposed to be starting primary school Kern-Jirasek Intelligence test identifying the level of readiness for school was used. With some children of older age who have never being studied at school this test was also applied.

This test designed for the pre-schoolers is simple and most often used, ideal for working with 6-7-year-olds and actively used by school psychologists in Azerbaijan. The Kern-Jirasek test is assessing the development of children and their readiness for school. It includes a series of written tasks and an additional verbal subtest.

The test allows you to assess the development of fine motor skills of the child, as well as determine visual attention and hand coordination. The drawing helps to find out how much the child has developed memory and spacious thinking. The psychologist also draws a conclusion about the intellectual level of the future student.

The result of the testing is the following:



Out of 20 children tested for readiness to school three almost equal groups have been identified: those who are ready for school, those who have medium level of readiness and those who are not ready.

Nine children of different age who haven't started school yet were identified as not ready for school. Data is presented in the following table:

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Age	Result
3 persons - 6-year-old	Not ready for school
3 persons - 7-year-old	
1 person – 13 -year- old	

The second age group tested by the team included respondents aged from 8 to 10.

The "Knowledge level" test consists of 5 subtests.

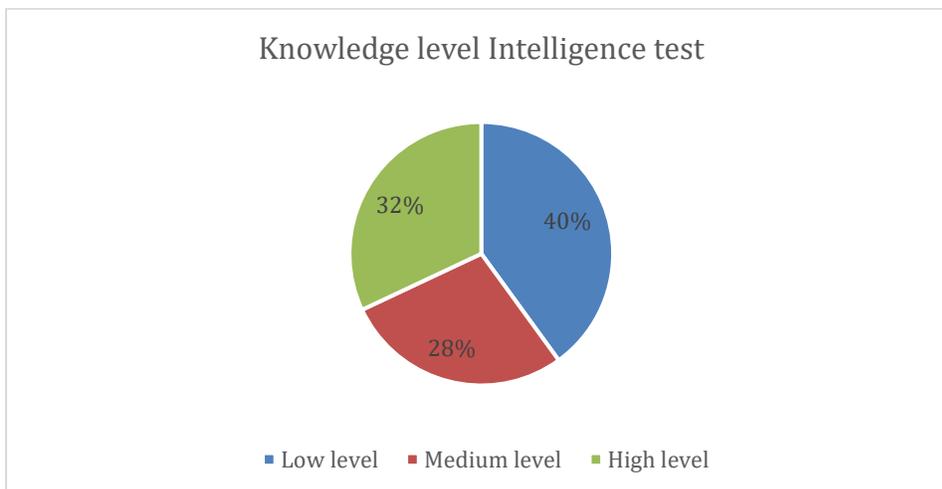
The first subtest "Awareness" is focusing on the general purview of students. The task of the student is to complete the sentence with one of the given words, making a logical choice based on inductive thinking.

The second subtest "Unnecessary concepts" is exploring the logical action of classification. Through the qualitative analysis of the results of completing tasks, it becomes possible to see whether the student identifies usual relationships between objects, about his ability to classify.

Subtest III "Generalization" is focusing on the ability to generalize concepts (bringing two concepts under a common category - generalization). Tasks are aimed at highlighting the general trait.

The test also has subtests four and five which were not used with respondents. The last subtest "Number Series" which is focusing on the ability to find the rules by which the series of numbers are written and then continue the row were too complex for the respondents to be used.

The results of the test are presented in the following diagram:



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Out of 25 children who were tested, there are more children with low level of knowledge appropriate for the age than the ones with high level of knowledge. Some students of older age than typical 2-3<sup>rd</sup> graders who had difficulty to perform at the age-appropriate intelligence test were tested by this test as well. The following table demonstrates the results of students with indication of their factual age:

Factual Age	Result
14	Low level
9 (2 persons)	Low level
7 (3 persons)	Low level
6	Low level
10	Low level
8	Medium level
11	Medium level
9 (3 persons)	Medium level
10	Medium level
7	Medium level
9 (4 persons)	High level
14	High level
10 (2 persons)	High level
11 (2 persons)	High level
12	High level

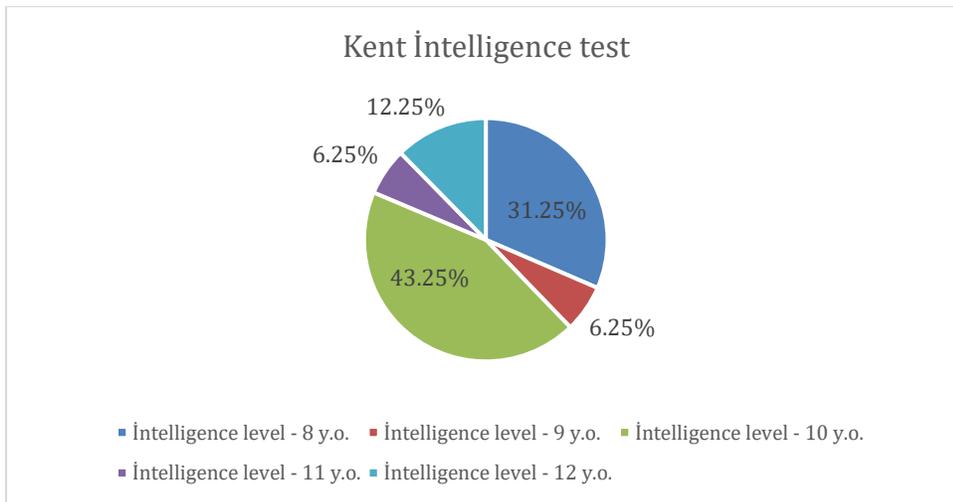
The third group of respondents was tested by Kent intelligence test. It is a paper-pencil test based on verbal performance. There is no time limit in the application. Suitable for children aged 6-14 and adults with suspected mental delay. The application and evaluation of this intelligence test, which consists of 10 simple questions is quite simple.

While giving the instruction, the questions of the test are read to the respondent. If the person does not understand the questions and it is concluded by the practicing psychologist that the person can answer this question, a short explanation can be made that will not guide the answer.

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For example, If the child answers: "paper and pencil" to the question "What is used in building a house", the practitioner should explain the question again as "So what is used in making a real house".

The result of the test shows to what age level the intelligence level of the respondent corresponds. The results of Kent testing are presented in the following diagram:



Out of 13 children and youth participated in this test in accordance with age, the majority of respondents correspond to 8-year-old level (43,25%) and 10-year-old level (31,25 %). The table with factual age and identified intelligence level age is also presented to see the level of correspondence of what is expected at this age to what is in the reality.

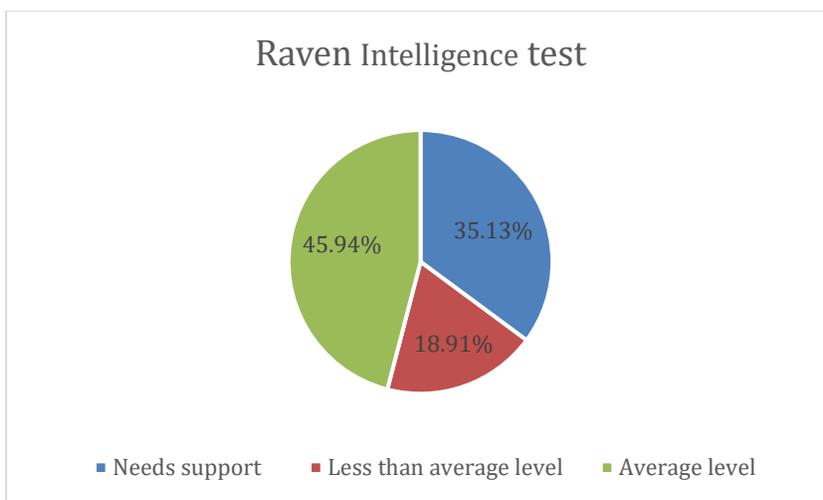
Factual Age	Tes Result Age
12	11
14	10
11	10
11	9
11	8
13	8
13	10
14	12
14	10

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12	8
13	10
13	8
14	10

As it is seen from the table, all respondents of 11-14 age participating in this test demonstrate the level which is one-two year below than the actual one.

Finally, with the youth who are older than 14 the team has used Raven Intelligence test. Raven's matrices are a nonverbal ability test used to assess abstract reasoning. The test is progressive in the sense that questions get harder as the test progresses. The task is to determine the missing element in a pattern which is generally presented in the form of a matrix, hence the name Raven's matrices. The results of the test are presented in the following diagram:



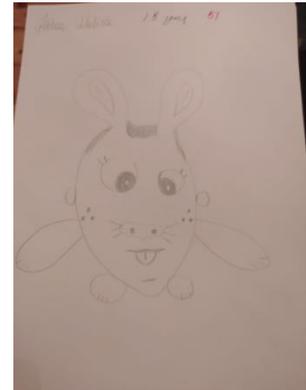
As it is seen from the diagram, none of respondents got high results in this test. Out of 37 respondents, almost 46 % have average level. More than 35% need support based on the test results.

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### 2.3.3 DRAWING TEST – NON-EXISTENT ANIMAL



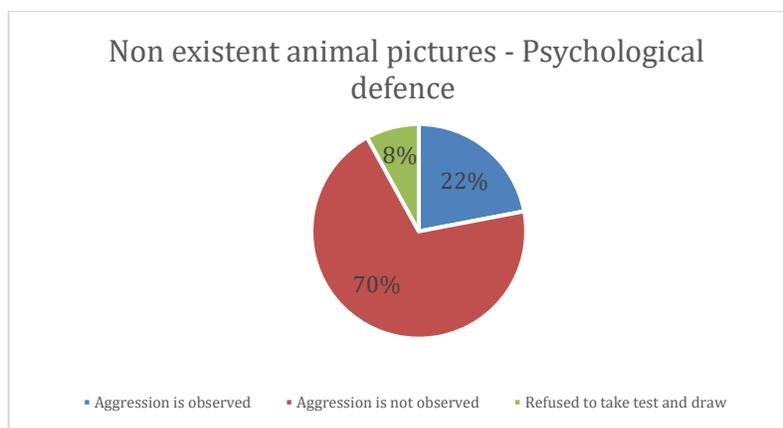
Among the many psychological methods for studying personality, the projective method "Non-existent animal" occupies a special place. This is due to the fact that its interpretation provides extensive information about the individual while spending a minimum amount of time to complete the task. The test is not only simple, but also very interesting, available to both adults and children.



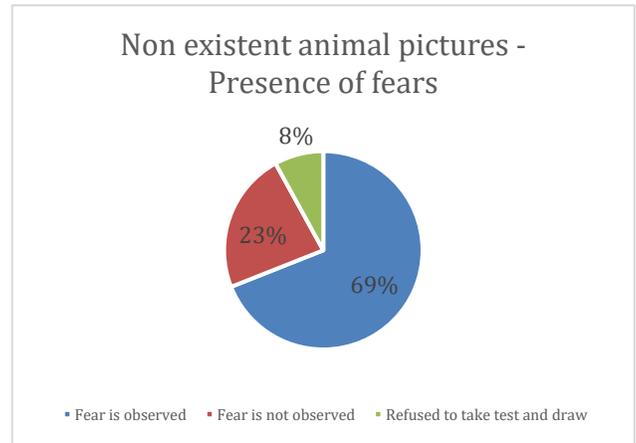
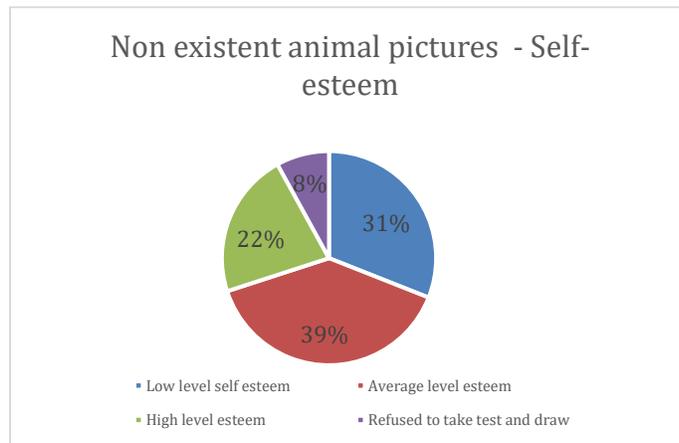
The goal of the "non-existent animal" test in psychodiagnostics is mainly the identification of hidden emotions in everyone from 5–6-year-old children to adults. Unlike most projective tests, this test is the most informative method and is widely used in psychological examinations.

Children project their inner world while drawing. By looking at the picture, you can think about the child's mood and characteristics. Of course, although it is impossible to create an accurate psychological portrait of a child with only one test, it is possible to find out that he/she has problems in interpersonal relationships.

The results of the test were analysed in accordance with three main indicators: self defence mechanisms (presence of aggression), presence of fears and self-esteem. The results are presented in the following diagrams:



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The majority of respondents have rather average or low self-esteem. In the analysis of the results of the study, the indicators of fears attract more attention. Thus, (69%) most of the children's drawings demonstrate signs of fear, aggression, excitement, mistrust of others, withdrawal, reluctance to give information about themselves, anxiety, tension. On one hand, the existence of these fears can be explained by the deficit of the main emotional bonds (child-parent relations). On the other hand, not all children residing in shelters and orphanages are without parents. Such factors as living in closed conditions, limited circle of communication, internal rules at shelters or boarding schools all play specific role in this dynamic. As a team we could observe that most of the children felt emotional and communicational deficit because they were so eager to communicate with us.

Aggression was observed in 22% of children. This can be for various reasons. Aggressive behaviour can be caused by the personality features, as well as by the situation they live in. The aggression can be directed against the environment that disturbs the children due to the people they interact with, whether in shelters, or at school or in the family. Some children had signs of verbal aggression at their drawings which can be a self-defence mechanism to protect themselves from negative attitudes and communications.

#### 2.3.4 PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION TESTING

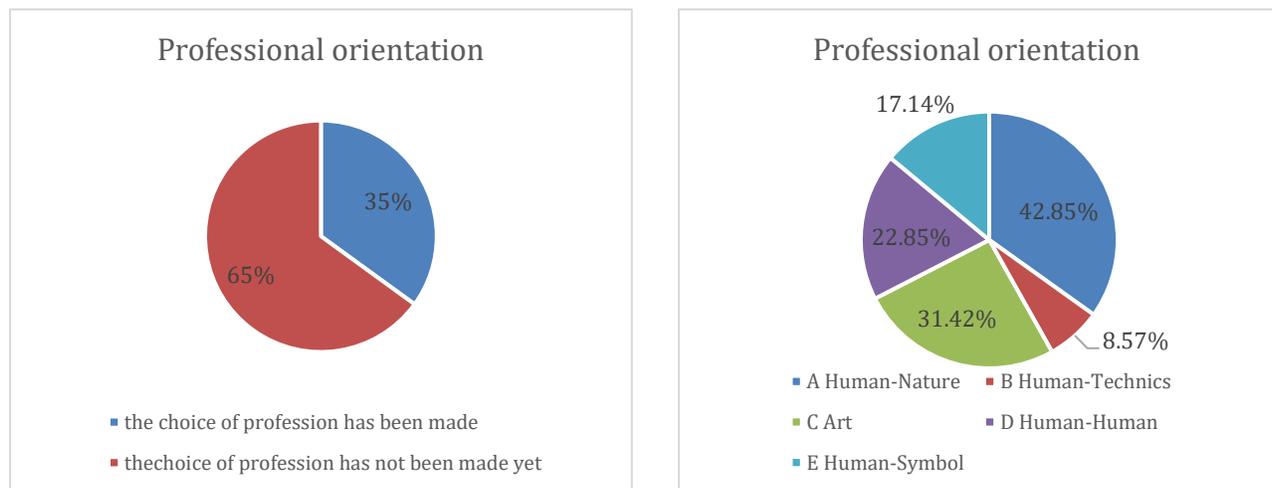
The psychological test based on methodology of E.A. Klimov is called "Determining the type of future profession". The methodology is based on the classification of professional interests. It allows to identify which area is the best for a high school student to choose a profession in which he/she will receive education or vocational training after school. The test participant is recommended to choose the type of profession that received the maximum number of points

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based on answers to the list of questions. There are four options of results. Name of profession types:

- "human-nature" - all professions related to agriculture, taking care of animals and forestry.
- "human-technology" - all technical professions.
- "human-human" - all professions related to serving people, with communication.
- "human-symbol" - all professions related to short calculations, digital and alphabetic signs, including musical specialties.
- "human-artistic image" - all creative specialties.

The results of the test are presented in the following diagrams:



The results show that the majority of respondents have not formed their future professional choice yet. As to the popular types of professions 1. Human-Nature, 2. Art, 3. Human-Human are the most popular directions. One of explanations for the leading Human-Nature choice is the certain level of stress that children and youth deprived of parental care experience due to human – human relationships deficits starting from the loss of the family of origin. Gardening and care for animals is the direction which helps to reduce stress and get abstracted from the reality. Art professions were specified by respondents as the most popular when the direct question on career choice was given. Art is another relaxing field of activities. The choice of the children and youth at the test is intuitive and reflects their inner mental condition.

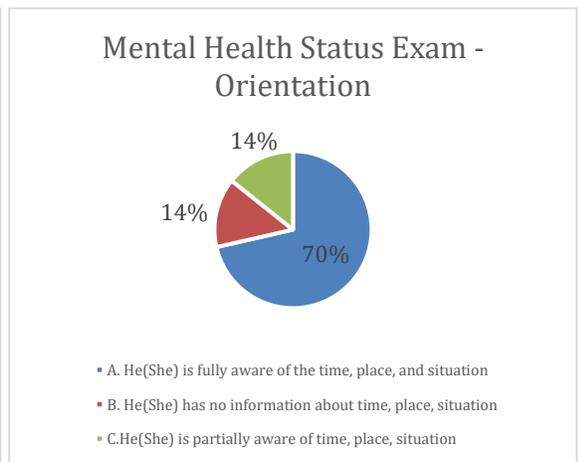
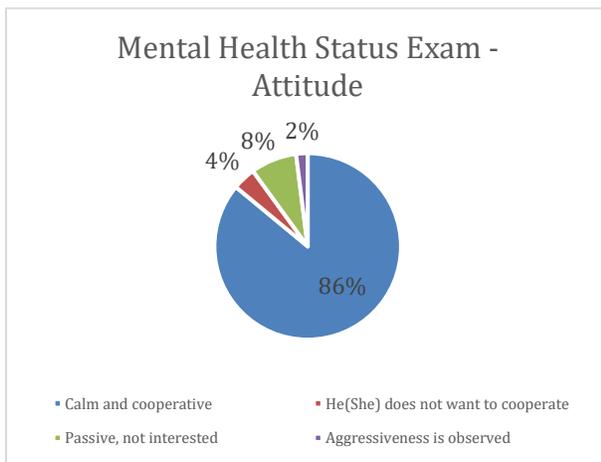
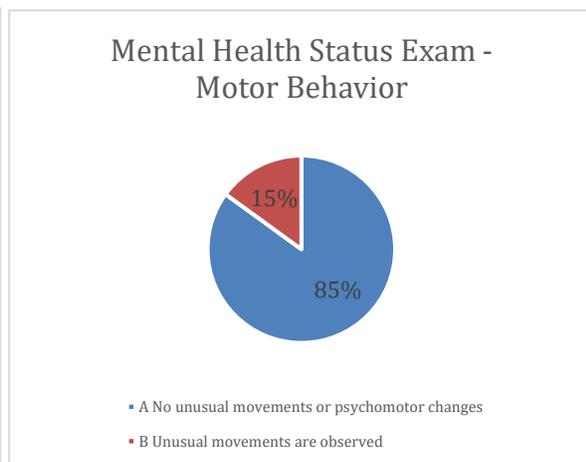
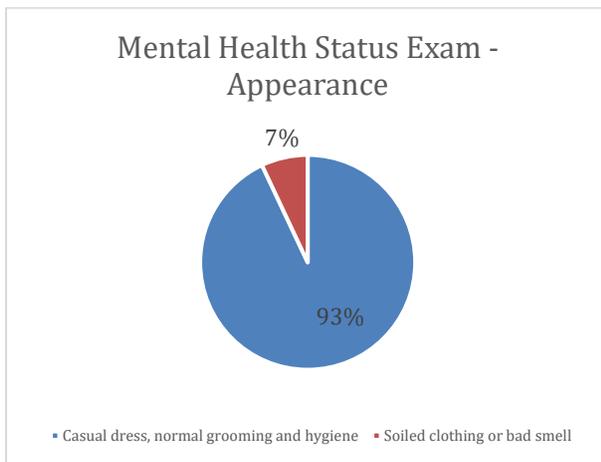
### 2.3.5 MENTAL HEALTH STATUS EXAM

The study is funded by LU-MUN HOLDING LLC aimed at creating an evidence-based support program for children deprived of parental care living in child institutions.

The mental health status examination (MHSE) is a structured assessment of the patient's behavioural and cognitive functioning. It includes descriptions of the patient's appearance and general behaviour, level of consciousness and attentiveness, motor and speech activity, mood and affect, thought and perception, attitude and insight, the reaction evoked in the examiner, and, finally, higher cognitive abilities.

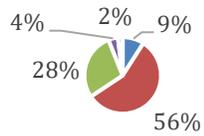
The team was filling out the mental health status exam for the respondents based on the observations regarding their behaviour and specific characteristics.

The results of MHSE observations are presented in the following diagrams:



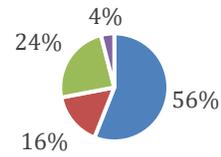
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### Mental Health Status Exam - Speech



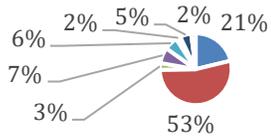
- A- Speed, volume, intonation are perfect (vocabulary is rich)
- B- Normal rate; tone; volume; w/out pressure
- C- Stopping speech, Difficulty finding words
- D- Dysarthric or difficulty pronouncing
- F- Monotonous speech

### Mental Health Status Exam - Affect



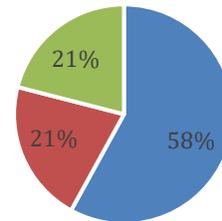
- A- Normal range
- B- Dull or limited (underexpressed emotion)
- C- Flat
- D- Labile

### Mental Health Status Exam - Mood



- A- Positive mood
- B- Normal, stable
- C- Sad or dysphoric
- D- Desperate
- E- Mood swings
- F- Nervous

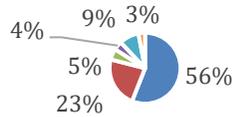
### Mental Health Status Exam - Attention



- A- Attentiv
- B- Instability of attention is observed
- C- Distraction

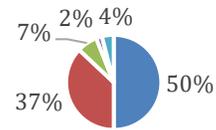
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### Mental Health Status Exam - Thought Processes



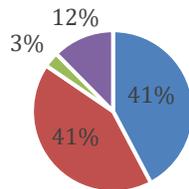
- A- It is consistent and purposeful
- B- Your thoughts are scattered
- C- Associations are unrelated
- D- Thoughts change rapidly or repeat themselves frequently
- E- Unable to Express Thoughts (Blocking)
- F- Additional observations:

### Mental Health Status Exam - Thought Content



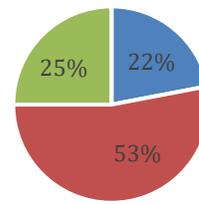
- A- Normal thought content
- B- Fixed thoughts
- C- Fabrications
- D- Hallucinations (auditory or visual, etc.)
- E- Additional observations:

### Mental Health Status Exam - Memory/Concentration



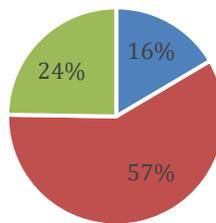
- A- Ability to encode, store and retrieve information
- B- He remembers recent events comfortably
- C- He remembers long past events
- D- Memory is limited or lacking

### Mental Health Status Exam - Insight/Judgement



- A- Good
- B- Fair
- C- Poor

### Mental Health Status Exam - Perception



- A- Strong
- B- Medium
- C- There is no understanding

Overall analysis of MHSE data shows that the majority of respondents' appearance and motor behaviour is normal except for a number of exclusions. Attitude of the majority was cooperative, not aggressive. The majority are fully aware of time, place, and situation, however, around 28% are partially or not aware of those. More than a half have normal speech in terms of speed, volume,

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intonation, however, around 28% have difficulty to find words. 56% have normal range of affect, while around 40% have flat or limited under expressed emotions. Mood of the majority was rather positive or normal, however, some indications of mood swings, worries were also specified. The majority have normal or fixed thoughts. Around 42% have instability of attention or distractions. 12% has limited memory abilities. More than a half with fair judgment and medium perception.

### 3.1 IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS

Based on all the presented information collected by survey forms, psychological tastings, MHSE, observations at shelters, boarding schools and orphanages, the team came up with specific sections of findings and possible interventions to support children and youth deprived of parental care maximally efficiently.

1. **Hygiene and conditions.** Visits to the shelter, boarding schools and orphanages identifies a series of problems such as lack of heating, in some meeting rooms there was no light, strong smell from the kitchen, no water in the bathroom. These conditions require additional attention of the administration and supporting stakeholders.
2. **Reaction to Survey:** General attitude towards survey was quite tense which also indicates that administration of all the places visited is not interested in the results of the surveys which could improve their services. Narrow minded attitude and approach also one of the signs that institutionalization of children deprived of parental care is not the best option. Existing research recommendations focus on two main aspects of how to tackle children's institutionalization, namely, preventive measures and childcare deinstitutionalization. "These aim to address the root causes of children being enrolled in institutions, and thereby stop the enrolment in institutions and the demand for their services by minimizing them. Social support services are, undoubtedly, crucial to prevent family separation". Using staff and facilities is another important aspect of care transition policy discussions. According to the guidelines of the convention on the rights of children (CRC) principle of continuity of upbringing but in various wording, paragraph 12 states that "All decisions concerning alternative care should take full account of the desirability, in principle, of maintaining the child as close as possible to his/her habitual place of residence, in order to facilitate contact and potential reintegration with his/her family and to minimize disruption of his/her educational, cultural and social life." Taking into consideration the extensive research data, prevention of institutionalization and creation of alternative services requires very serious attention of all stakeholders serving children and youth at risk of institutionalization and loss of family contacts.
3. **Family situation and children's reflection:** Most of the children are from incomplete families or have no families (49% incomplete, 9% no family). Less than half of respondents indicate that one or two parents are employed. 84% do not know the address where existing family members live. As the reasons for living at the shelter, the main indicated reasons are family problems/conflicts, violence, death of parents, financial problems. Only

26% indicate that they see parents often. When the children were asked what they would ask from the golden fish as 3 wishes, the majority have indicated a united family. When they were asked what they think is the most important in life, again the majority indicated that the family. All this data suggests a special focus on family support interventions to prevent long-term institutionalization of children. If the programs tackling family conflicts, violence or financial problems of families would be available, children and youth would be at much less risk of growing up in an institutionalized environment away from family members. The research show that among evidence-based interventions is provision of community/family- based care in areas where there are no alternatives to institutions successfully, extensive capacity building on multiple levels is required. Children's deinstitutionalization and care services look at approaches where institutionalized children can be moved from institutional care to other alternative support services or reintegrated into their communities or family of origin. For example, community-based day-care centres where one working parent (incomplete families) could leave children during the day may result in deinstitutionalization of many children. Another intervention could be job assistance for parents. Stakeholders providing assistance to shelters and orphanage may reconsider their mission by replacing it into assistance to low-income families with the risk of institutionalization. Because, for a child, a functional family is the "natural environment for the growth and well-being" and considered to be the best placement to nurture the child's "full and harmonious development of his or her personality."

- 4. Education – where are they now and where are they want to be:** The majority of respondents go to school, vocational school or college. More than a half of respondents have average educational results and report to be satisfied with the relationships with teachers and specify that they like to go to school. When they have problems, 26% indicated that they would approach teacher for help. It seems that in educational environment children and youth feel comfortable because they have inclusion while studying together with children and youth living with families. Positive attitude towards educational activities and teachers suggests a strategy of organization of more educational programs outside of the shelters where children and youth would enjoy inclusion and socializing with both teachers and peers (one of the examples is Ders Evi course). Research on evidence-based educational interventions shows that peer and social group interventions at schools/centers or through community organizations could be very beneficial for children and youth. For example, "kids clubs" or safe social spaces for children, preadolescents, and adolescents can be key interventions, consisting of both educational and recreational activities. Mentorship programs providing individual and group assistance to children with difficulties in education process is another evidence-based intervention popular in other countries. Volunteers from the communities could be engaged to support children and youth with educational sessions and group projects.

- 5. Vision of future/career plans:** Rating of professions by respondents based on the survey are: 1. Artist, 2. Military or governmental jobs (soldier, lawyer, fireman), 3. Teacher, 4. Policemen. In order to achieve the goal of getting a profession they say that they need to study, improve their skills (to do sport, learn languages, etc.). To the question who influences their career choice, the majority (70%) make this decision themselves. Professional orientation test results show that the majority of respondents have not formed their decision on the choice of profession yet. The most popular professional choices are human-nature professions (agriculture, gardening, care for animals) and art professions. Both choices indicate that intuitively children and youth want to be in the field which is reducing the tension and relaxing by its nature. All this data suggests the necessity of some career counselling activities to assist children and youth to make more informed decision. Moreover, the selection of professions suggests the necessity of vocational trainings in the field of art, gardening, floristics, hairdressing for pets, etc. In addition, organization of animal and planting corners in shelters/orphanages may also help children and youth reduce stress and learn to take care of plants and animals which in turn will help them to get a more mature decision on the choice of professions. Research on evidence-based educational interventions shows that vocational training organization for children deprived of parental care help them to learn skills to get into labour market and take care of their current or future families more efficiently.
- 6. Intellectual abilities:** Intellectual abilities were evaluated based on 4 different tests in accordance with each age group. The results show not high intellectual abilities of respondents. 35% of children of 6-7 years old and some older children who have never studied to school are not ready to school. Knowledge level among 2-3<sup>rd</sup> graders show that 40% have low level of knowledge. All respondents of older group (8-14) show the result which is one or two years below than their actual age is. Among the oldest group of respondents (14+), 35% show the result of intellectual abilities which needs support. Based on the results of the testing, the evidence-based intervention is required to assist children and youth whose level does not correspond to their factual age level to be successful in educational level. One of the interventions which could be considered for this category of children and youth are individual support mentorships programs. When educational interventions are planned, individual problems should be taken into consideration. Research shows that community-based mentorship programs result in positive changes in educational and vocational results of children and youth deprived of parental care. Volunteers from the communities, students of universities could be contracted to provide mentorships services
- 7. Social life:** The majority of respondents are satisfied with peer relationships and indicate that they have friends. More than a half of the respondents share that they easily or partially easily can find friends. Almost half of children and youth indicated that they do not

have an experience of going to some clubs. Those who do have an experience indicated sport and art clubs. More than a half would like to improve their skills in sport and drawing. When they were asked about leisure time, the answers were included reading, sport, walking with friends or listening to the music. As data suggests, peer relationships is a desired resource for the children and youth deprived of parental care, especially those who can hardly trust other people and has fears. One of the peer group interventions which could be used as an evidence-based practice is peer support groups, during which staff (psychologists, social worker) address topics of concern to orphans through plays, poems, stories, games, and interactive group therapy techniques, including approaches to problem solving and positive deviance. If the staff of shelters/orphanages are not capable to work on such an intervention, outsourcing of the services could be organised by supporting stakeholders through local NGOs, Public Unions, service providers.

- 8. Psychological aspects:** when the respondents were asked about what should be done so that children like them would have a better life, the most frequent answers would be regarding organization of assistance (good opportunities for education, clubs, activities, therapy) or good relationships and care (parents, friends, fun activities). When the respondents were asked to specify their positive and negative qualities, the answers specified 1. Friendly/supportive, 2. Smart/talented, 3. Love family as the main positive qualities. As to negative qualities 1. Aggression, 2. Emotional, 3. Lazy, greedy, were the main specified answers. When asked about which wishes to the Golden fish they would like to say, the most frequent answers were 1. United family, 2. Education, future career, 3. Goods (money, house, car, phone, etc). When they were asked about the most important aspects of life, three main values identified by answer were 1. Family, 2. Friendships, 3. Love. To the question how they look at the future, the majority mentioned their attitude as good and hopeful. Psychological interventions should focus on reduction of stress of children and youth, as findings of survey suggests. Some of the evidence-based interventions for children and adolescents deprived of parental care includes play therapy and cognitive therapy. Among group interventions, support groups, self-help groups, teaching-learning group are cited in the literature as evidence-based interventions. Giving group-based or peer group interventions are more effective than individual approaches, because group members have the opportunity to share about the problems and challenges that they are facing. The main goal about learning in this group of adolescents is they learn from each other how to deal with the grief of the death of one or both of their parents and learn socialization skills that will help them later in life. Game therapy, which is conducted in groups for adolescents, shows significant results in increasing low self-esteem, creating communication, cooperation, and being able to withstand stress.
- 9. Emotional well-being:** Emotional state of the majority of respondents is negative. It testifies that children and youth have been subjected to stressful factors. Behaviour of

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some of respondents identify that they were victims of domestic violence. The drawing test also identified presence of fears, anxiety, and mistrust in most of the respondents (69%). Art therapy sessions is one of the evidence-based interventions for children who experience stress due to various factors. There are different forms of art therapy sessions, individual, group, parent-child dyads, etc. In some of the shelters where children live together with parents, dyad art therapy sessions may help them to reduce level of emotional tension due to traumatic experience. Art therapy sessions include various activities such as drawing, creation of joint project like journal, postcard, dance, drama, expressive therapy, music therapy, etc. Organization of art therapy sessions at shelters/orphanages may be though invited art professionals and psychologists.

**10. Health and Mental health status:** According to the observations and interviews, 74% of respondents have age-appropriate characteristics. 7% of respondents have a diagnosis such as intellectual disability, heart problems, epilepsy, etc. MHSE checklists indicators of the most of respondents are around normal level for most of the criteria. Some characteristics such as difficulties to find words, flat affect, mood swings, distraction, or instability of attention, scattered or fixed thoughts, limited memory, poor judgment have also been observed among some respondents which are mainly caused by stressful experienced the children and youth have in their life. Health interventions for this category of children represent referral for necessary medical assistance in accordance with individual needs.

### 3.2 CONCLUSION

This survey report has introduced all the details on the process of planning of the survey, implementation, all the data and research findings, analysis of the results accompanied with the most relevant interventions as the solutions of the major problems children and youth deprived of parental care face.

First impression and conclusion is that the process of prevention of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization requires very special attention of all the stakeholders. Through timely assistance to families struggling with financial problems, loss of one or two parents, domestic violence, conflicts or other challenges, preventive programs and interventions may significantly reduce the number of children and youth who are at the risk of the institutionalization. Family support programs should become one of the central focuses for supporting stakeholders and organizations.

Educational development requires engagement of more volunteers from the communities to support children and youth who can benefit from individual or group mentorship sessions. “Kids/youth support clubs” could be organized at schools or educational centres to promote peer communication and support.

Career choice is a complex task which requires preparatory activities such as career counselling sessions as well as vocational sessions in different directions to try own skills and explore the personal queries. This survey indicated that the majority of children and youth intuitively want to reach out nature related directions such as gardening, agriculture, care for animals. Therefore, vocational training sessions on gardening, floristics, related to animal care would be helpful for children and youth to reduce stress and be ready to make mature decision on future career choice. For older youth, vocational training scholarships which will allow them to visit vocational schools and study will promote their socialization and entering labour market more successfully. Planting and animal corners are another intervention which may help children and youth to start working on basic vocational skills and taking responsibilities.

Individual, peer, dyad and group activities such as art therapy, peer-support groups, play therapy, cognitive therapy sessions can significantly improve social skills, psychological well-being and emotional conditions of children and youth residents of shelters/orphanages/boarding schools.

Supporting stakeholders and organizations should strengthen collaboration with community-based organizations and resources. Moreover, some activities such as engagement of volunteers, social workers, psychologists could be organized through contracting NGOs, Public unions, services providers, private experts. Social workers and case managers may use individual development plan

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(IDP) or Individual Training Support Plan templates to track any changes and progress after all organized sessions/activities (Appendix B).

## APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A: LIST OF SOURCES CITED IN REPORT

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**APPENDIX B: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TEMPLATE)**

***Individual Training Support Plan template***

CHILD'S /YOUNG PERSON'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Current state of the student/beneficiary:</b>						
<b>Objectives (3 month period)</b>	<b>Measure/planned activities</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>1. Not achieved, terminated</b>	
					<b>2. Partly achieved, existing or anticipated problems with implementation</b>	
					<b>3. Achieved, going well, on track</b>	<b>4. Fully achieved with good results</b>
					<b>1-st review</b>	<b>2-nd review</b>

Coordinator/Psychologist:

Educator:

Student or Parent: