



**SOS
LAPSIKYLÄ**

**UPR Pre-session of
Finland 29 August
2022**

Delivered by:

SOS Children's Villages Finland

- SOS Children's Villages Finland is a non-governmental organization, which has been active since the 1960's.
- At present, SOS Children's Villages is a non-profit, independent, non-partisan service provider and advocacy organization that supports children, young people and families all around Finland.
- SOS Children's Villages Finland also has a Youth Development Team. The group is an expert by experience group of young people, who all have some experience of child protection services, for example foster care in families or institutions. The group's aim is to develop child protection services.

Child and youth participation in decision making

We emphasize:

- **Participation of children and young people in society, decision making and in foster care services**
- Importance of **informing young people about their rights within social welfare services** and when in foster care

Pointed out in previous review:

- Finland should **ensure that children are heard in the judicial and administrative procedures concerning them**, in accordance with procedures adapted to their maturity.

New developments:

- Finnish **National Child Strategy** has been prepared - child and youth participation has received a lot of attention in the process
- **In practice participation of young people is not very strong in decision making** within health and social services

New needs:

- More **social worker resources** within social services and foster care
- **Other platforms** than meetings with social workers **for youth to be informed about their rights**

Recommendations

- Take measures to ensure that **children's rights** and **child-friendly policies** are also at the center of **health and social services reform**, so that children and families in vulnerable situations are not excluded and benefit from high-quality services.
- Ensure active and meaningful **participation of children and young people, especially vulnerable groups**, in the implementation of health and social services reform by involving them in the planning and provision of services. In this regard, **collaborate with and support civil society organizations** working with and for children in vulnerable situations, such as children in alternative care.
- Take concrete steps to make **legal protection practices** for children and young people clearer, more accessible and more effective as part of the health and social services reform, to ensure that **children**, particularly those in vulnerable situations, **have easy access to legal protection services** and are **adequately informed about them** as well as their **rights** within social services provided.

Timely and appropriate kind of help and services for young people

We emphasize:

- **Society should** (and at the moment doesn't have enough resources allocated to) **provide enough accessible mental health care services**
- Instead, **many young people who need mental care services might be taken into foster care** even if mental health support would be more sensible solution

Pointed out in previous preview:

- Finland should develop and introduce specific measures directed at improving **professional training** for the staff of children's institutions
- Improve the legislation and practice in the provision of psychiatric treatment

New needs:

- In children's institutions more **trauma and mental health training** for the personnel would be needed
- **Health and social care services need to communicate more** since now the information does not proceed from one service to another and it also is sometimes unclear who is responsible for what
- In psychiatric treatment more knowledge about **gender diversity** should be provided to professionals in child protection and welfare services as well as in mental health services

Recommendations

- Focus resources on **accessible and available services and protect vulnerable groups**, such as children in alternative care and children in families with challenging situations, during the implementation process of the health and social services reform.
- Provide high-quality social services and mental health services as well as use **quality indicators and impact assessment criteria** in policy development and decision-making when making procurement decisions regarding child protection and wellbeing services.



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Kiitos!

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