



Mavi Kalem Children's Rights and Respect for Differences Workshop

Final Report

January-November 2022

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1. Background

Since 2017, Mavi Kalem has been carrying out various projects on child protection and bringing children into education. Mavi Kalem has observed that “peer bullying” is one of the most important obstacles to children’s access and sustainability of their right to education. Bullying is a set of negative intentions and behaviors that are learned in childhood and acting directly or indirectly to another person or living thing throughout life. These behaviors, which are learned in childhood, are fed by various social and emotional needs, and become chronic towards adulthood.

For this reason, it is important to show that there is more than one option, especially when working with children who have entered the socialization period. Mavi Kalem created content targeting the situations and conditions that led to bullying, considering that peer bullying is the result of a process. In 2022,

the content of the “Children’s Rights and Respect for Differences Workshop” for children aged 7-14 was developed in a structure that could be applied with large groups of children. The content of the work and the implementation were completed in the first two months of the year. The work was produced by a team of three experts, Social Psychologist, Child and Adolescent Psychologist, and Psychological Counselor and Guidance.

Based on the cycle that the language used shapes the behaviors, different works have been prepared so that children can hear and experience the behaviors they describe as correct and good. At the end of the work, it was aimed for the children to see that they can get close to another person and living thing with the words they want to hear and to be treated, and to experience this opportunity.

2. Method

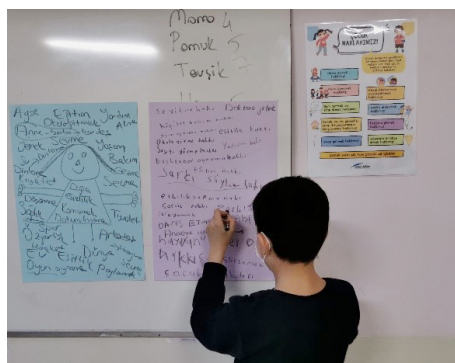
Situations where the children were able to sympathize with each other and empathize with others were created based on the work they carried out in the workshop. The first part of the workshop, which consists of two main parts, focuses on children's rights, and the second part focuses on the right to be different and gender equality.

In the first part, in the step of sympathy, the needs of a newborn rabbit cub, which is named jointly by children, are discussed and children's rights corresponding to every need are said. After the rabbit activity, the needs and rights of a newborn child are discussed. With

this work, it is aimed that children transfer the sympathetic approach they discovered with the rabbit to the individual. While taking note of the needs of the children, the implementer mentions the rights of the children that may correspond to each of them and writes them on the poster. He talks about the "child rights contract" in which each of the last rights is written, and hangs the rights poster prepared with colorful visuals in which the rights are written, in the classroom where the application is made.

In case of expanding the children in the second region, a short circle conversation is made for their perception. Chatting "How does it feel to play a game in a group chat?", "What is it like to be friends with someone? How does it feel? How? Why?" the whole group asks. This part also forms the basis for the next production.

Group work is done using five images, each of which depicts a situation of "discrimination based on gender inequality". The implementer gives one



visual to the children, one for each group, which is divided into five groups.

1. The image of a child worker looking at children who cannot go to school because they work, and who play games at school from a distance,
2. The image of a girl who wants to play basketball but is not included in the group,
3. The image of a girl who is not included in the playgroup because her skin color and the language she speaks are different,
4. The image of the boy who makes fun of the boy who likes to do ballet, and the boy who gets angry with the boy who makes fun of him,
5. The image of a girl with glasses who is mocked by taking photos with her phone.¹

The children are asked to examine the image with their groups in different parts of the room and to look for answers to the questions of what happened in the image, what the characters in the image felt and what could have been done instead of the situation, and at the end of each group, they were asked to choose a spokesperson who would tell the other groups the answers to these questions. The implementer



joins the groups in turn to make sure that each group's conversations are moving in the right direction, in this part where the groups discuss it within themselves. The spokespersons of the groups take turns showing their own images to the large group and give the answers they have discussed and agreed with the spokesperson they have chosen.

During the presentations of the groups, the implementer asks questions that will refer to how the whole group should

¹The images are available at "the results".



be treated in each case of “discrimination” and which children’s rights are intended. In the case of “discrimination” in each image, it is reinforced with the exercise that the children say “no” as a group, that they can get support from their trusted family member, relatives, teachers, and that they can stop by saying “no” when they experience an undesirable situation.

Group discussions are the part where the effect of the workshop is heard from the mouths of the children. With the definition of the “discrimination” situation in the images, an idea gymnastics is done about the emotions and feelings

of the character in the image. The analysis of how the characters in the visual should behave according to children’s rights allows each child to hear what they know from their own mouth and to use and reinforce the rights used throughout the workshop and the concept of respecting the different. Finally, at the end of the workshop, to observe what the children remember without working and what are the titles that attract their attention the most, “What did you remember today? What are you going to tell your sister to your parents when you get home?” questions are asked to be answered.

3. Numerical Data

In 2022, the event was implemented with a total of 365 children (185 girls, 180 boys). The activities were carried out with 4th grade students aged 9-11 at Avcılar Leyla Bayram Primary School and four different groups of children aged 7-14 at Fatih Municipality Information House and Semt Mansions.

Leyla Bayram Elementary School				
Date of Birth	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Gender				
Girl	2	60	4	66
Boy	1	55	-	56
TOTAL	3	115	-	122

Fatih Municipality District Mansions									
Date of Birth	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
Gender									
Girl	-	2	3	23	18	27	46	-	119
Boy	1	6	7	16	14	40	39	1	124
TOTAL	1	8	10	39	32	67	85	1	243

4. Outputs of the Program

In this section, the feedback received from the child groups for each picture was noted as it came out of their mouths.

Picture A- Child labor who is watching other children who are playing from distance

This painting was chosen because it emphasizes the right of children to receive education and because the emotions of the working child can be seen while working and playing games of the children at school.

- “She may be an orphan, she may live on the street, the people at school can play and continue their education, but this child is employed and cannot use her right to education.”
- The boy is working to get his school uniform. He is deprived of his right to education because he is a child
- “Those who are in school can play, while the working child will work, earn money and go to school. Children



should be able to go to school, they have the right to education. -They can also be beggars, the child may not have parents, they may not have enough money, they may feel sad.”

- “If the child’s family does not send the child to school, they should send the child to school because it is forbidden to work under the age of 18. Some of his/her rights are taken away, his/her right to education, to have fun, to play.”
- “The child wants to do sports like oth-

er children who play sports at school, but he cannot go to school because he has to work. He has the right to read.”

- “There is a child who cannot go to school because he has to earn money. He feels sad, he can tell his parents that he wants to study, he can go to the police.”
- “While others are playing at school, this child is shining shoes, it is not equal. He should go to school.”
- “Maybe the child seems to be working to buy school supplies, but he feels sad, let his parents buy them for him, let him go to school. Isn't it our right to go to school? The child does not work.”
- “The child is upset because he/she cannot play with others, and he/she is also working, so he/she cannot go to school. The child has no right to both play and school.”

When the evaluations of 9 groups of children were analyzed, 4 groups of children clearly stated that the emotion of the child who was being worked was sad/unhappy. The fact that children included their emotions in the evaluations showed that they used sympathetic approaches. In group presentations, 7 groups used the concept of “right to education” and 2 groups used the concept of “right to read”. It was observed that 9 groups of children participating in the work characterized the situation that children should go to school as a “must

have” situation. It was observed that 7 of the 9 groups of children tried to explain the reason for the child's employment. This situation clearly showed that children think with empathic processes. In addition to the “right to play”, 5 of the child groups interpreted that the child was deprived of the “right to play” because the child could not go to school. They expressed that the child had the right to go to school, and described in different words that the child who did not go to school was sad. Children were aware of the importance of accessing the right to education and used emotions when expressing differences.

Picture B-A girl who wanted to play basketball but was not allowed to join the group

This picture was chosen for the theme of gender equality. It emphasizes that





both girls and boys can do sports. It was preferred because the emotion of the girl who was not accepted into the group to do the sport, she wanted to do was visible.

- “Two boys are playing basketball and they don’t let the girl play and she gets upset.”
- “We should know our rights; we have the right to play. The girl also has the right to play, but in this picture, they are making racial discrimination, they can empathize. In such a situation, we would include them in the game and play together, and we would warn those who

exclude them.”

- “Basketball is not only for boys, but they also exclude girls from the game and the girl gets upset. We have the right to do sports.”
- “Men who play basketball don’t let girls play because they think basketball is not for girls, but what difference does it make, anyone can play.”
- “Two boys play basketball, and they don’t let the girl play because they think she is not strong, but girls and boys are equal.”
- “The girl wants to play but they ex-

clude her, and she feels sad. She dreams of becoming a basketball player. She cannot use her right to play here. She does not do this sport because she does not believe in herself, she doesn't go to a course to improve herself. It doesn't matter whether it is a boy or a girl, if such a situation happened, I would talk to the basketball players and try to come to an agreement."

- "Two boys play basketball here, but they don't take the girl. Basketball is not only for boys. We have the right to play too."

- "The boys are playing basketball, but they don't take the girl. The girl wants to say she wants to play. We think she should go straight into the game; she should not hesitate."

- "The girl wants to play basketball, she tells the boys, they think she can't play and laugh. The girl gets angry. She is right, we would get angry too. What is wrong if they play with 3 people? But the girl should not get angry there, she should say no, don't do it and leave."

It was observed that children were aware that there should be no gender discrimination in games. 4 out of 9 children who interpreted the picture commented that a girl who wanted to play basketball could be "sad" and "angry" if she was not allowed to play. In addition, 4 groups of children mentioned how they would deal with



such a situation if they were in such a situation and how they would find solutions, as evidenced by their answers such as "we would let them play together, we would talk to the people playing basketball, let them directly enter the game, let them not hesitate, what's wrong if they play with 3 people, let them say no, don't do that". When the answers were examined, it was seen that children gave examples of how they would act to correct discriminatory behavior when they encountered discriminatory behavior in games, which showed their solutionist approach. In connection with this, children said that every child can play any game they want, and that girls and boys are equal. The groups of children who interpreted Picture B used concepts such as "racial discrimination", "empathy", "girls and boys are equal".



Picture C - A girl who was not included in the play group because of her skin color and the language she speaks.

This picture was chosen to talk to groups of children about discrimination. A group of children playing a game. A girl who was not included in their game. The girl was chosen because she speaks a different language and has a different skin color, so her emotions are visible.

- “They tell the child to go away, they chase him away, they exclude him because his appearance is different, but we should not exclude him, we should let that friend into the game.”
- “There is racism in this picture. They

exclude the black girl because she is different. They should let her play without excluding her, children have the same rights.”

- “They don’t let her play, they exclude her because she is ugly, because she is small, because she is dark-skinned, and because she comes from another country and speaks a different language, so they exclude her.”
- “They don’t let the girl in the game because she is Syrian. They are racist. They should include her among themselves. She has the right to play.”
- “I think the friend is from Africa, they make racial discrimination, they exclude them. We are Turkish and they are black.

If I were my friend, I would be sad. It is bad to be deprived of a game.”

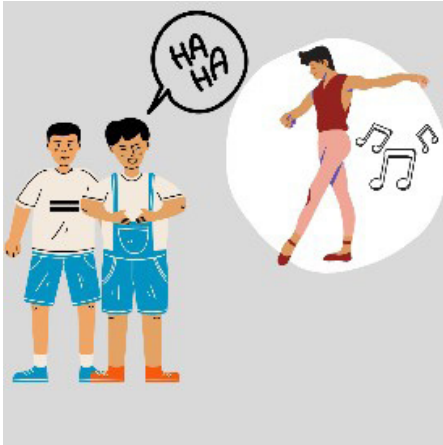
- “They make fun of them because they don’t understand what they are saying. But he has learned it. We are not born knowing the language we want. Maybe one day others will make fun of them.”
- “She wants to play hopscotch, but they don’t understand what she says or speaks. They make fun of her. Everyone speaks a different language; we shouldn’t make fun of them.”
- “They make fun of her because she has dark skin, and they don’t let her play. Maybe they thought about how to talk, but they do not need to laugh. The girl was upset. We shouldn’t upset anyone.”
- “Obviously the girl came from somewhere else, they are making fun of her. But they must be making fun of their own friends too. They are like that. They should not do that. She wants to play games too.”

In this section, the fact that the children used definitions such as racism, black, racial discrimination while describing the pictures showed that they frequently encountered these words in their lives. While describing the situation in the picture, they put themselves in the shoes of the child who was discriminated against and said that the situation would be sad for them as well. 4 out of 9 children said that they would be “sad”

and “angry” if they were in the girl’s shoes. This showed that they could understand that the behavior was wrong by empathizing. The fact that they described the exclusion of the child who wanted to play with the words, “deprivation”, “racism”, “racial discrimination”, “exclusion”, “ridicule”, “mockery” and “mocking” showed that they made a connection between their rights and good and bad behavior. Another striking observation is that while describing the situation in the picture, the children said, “they exclude the black child”, “they exclude the child because he is ugly, small and dark”, “they exclude him because he speaks a different language”, “they don’t let him play because he is Syrian”, “we think he is from Africa, they exclude him. We are Turkish, they are black”, “they don’t understand what she is talking about”, “they make fun of her because she has dark skin”, “they make fun of her because she is obviously from somewhere else”. From these statements, it was determined that the children had heard stereotypes about “exclusion” in their minds in their current lives.

Picture D-A boy who loves ballet and his friends who make fun of him

This picture was chosen to talk to groups of children about sexism. It shows a boy who wants to do ballet and



another boy making fun of him. There is another boy in the picture who is angry with the boy who is making fun of him. This picture was chosen because it is a clear example of not allowing misbehavior.

- “Because the boy is doing ballet, his friend laughs and his other friend gets angry because they make fun of him.”
- “They make fun of the boy because he dances, and his other friend reacts and gets angry with him because he laughs at the dancing boy. In such a situation, we should warn our friends who make fun of us.”
- “They think that ballet dance is only for girls, but boys can dance ballet too, and his other friend gets angry at him for laughing at the boy. This mockery is wrong.”
- “The child sings and dances, the other child makes fun of him, and his friend

warns him not to make fun of him. It doesn't matter if it's a boy or a girl, we should never make fun of them.”

- “She laughs at the child for dancing, but children have the right to dance, and they use that right. Her friend laughs because the child is doing ballet and her other friend reacts, we may have different dreams from each other.”
- “They laugh because the boy dances, but we like dancing too. One may like it and the other may not, we have the right to do so.”
- “They dance at weddings, but we don't understand why they make fun of us here. It's good that everyone can dance.”
- “There are two friends here and another child who wants to do ballet. One of them makes fun of the boy who wants to do ballet and the other one gets angry with him. Yes, you should be angry, he should not make fun. We can all like different things.”
- “The boy told the others that he wants to do ballet. One of them makes fun of him, but the other one tells him not to make fun. This is the right behavior. If we don't want to be made fun of, we shouldn't do it either.”
- “They make fun of the child dancing ballet. But someone says they should not make fun of him. Everyone can do whatever dance they want.”

In this section, children understood and

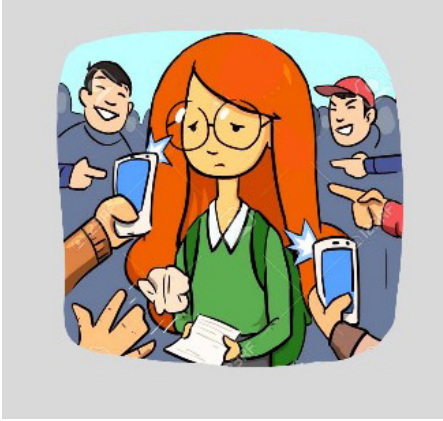
expressed that discriminatory behavior is wrong by using examples and experiences from their own lives. They said that dancing is fun and that everyone has the right to dance. Children defined ballet as a type of dance. In this section, where children stated that they have the right to choose and not to choose, the common answers were “a boy can dance ballet, it is wrong to make fun of, we should not make fun of, someone likes it, someone does not like it, we have the right to do so, we can all like other things”. These answers of the children clearly show that they were able to identify the wrong behavior. In this section, children mostly mentioned the theme “we can love different things”. In this theme, groups of children used the following statements: “boys can dance too, they think that ballet is only for girls, girls and boys don't matter, we can have different dreams from each other, one can like one thing while the other doesn't, we can all like different things”. The children expressed that it was wrong to laugh at other people's different choices, reacted and used expressions in favor of accepting differences. This indicates that children have an attitude of respecting differences.

Picture-E A girl with glasses, was photographed and mocked with a phone

This picture was chosen to discuss vi-

olence with groups of children. It was preferred that the emotions of the child in the picture were observable, as the child in the picture was photographed by other people pointing fingers without permission.

- “They make fun of her because she has glasses, she must have felt bad. If someone takes our photo without permission, we should tell our elders.”
- “They are taking her photo; this is a bad thing. Social media violence, I mean, I would feel sad. I would ask for help from my friends and teachers.”
- “This is digital bullying; they take her photo without her permission and throw papers at her.”
- “She got a low grade in the exam and her friends made fun of her; people who take photos cannot take photos without her permission. Sharing it on the internet is disrespectful. In such a case, we should tell our elders and inform our parents.”
- “They make fun of her because she is ugly. They take her photo and share it on social media without permission and the girl gets very upset.”
- “They make fun of her because she wears glasses, they post her photo on social media. The girl must have felt bad. They cannot take her photo and share it on social media without permission, we should complain to our elders.”



●“They ostracize her because she got a low score in the exam, they take photos and post them on social media. But no one can share our photos without permission. If such a situation happens, we should report it to the police, we complain to our teachers.”

●“Her picture is taken, and she gets upset. She should say “no,” but she is crying. It is obvious that she does not want to, others are laughing. It is very shameful.”

In this section, it was observed that children were aware of both stereotypes about appearance and digital violence. In their own lives, when they were exposed to a situation such as digital violence, they said what they could do and whom they could ask for help as “we should tell our elders, I would ask my teachers for help, we should inform our parents, we should complain to our elders, we should report to the police, we should say no”. At the same time, it was observed that the children knew that it was wrong to do a behavior without the permission and approval of a person.

5. Results

The “Children’s Rights and Respect for Differences Workshop” gave children the opportunity to distinguish between right and wrong behaviors by supporting them to use their empathy skills. Children’s expressing their feelings with sympathetic approaches instead of discriminatory behaviors and language showed that they can make room for positive attitudes and language in their minds. As an important outcome of this work, it showed that children know how to say “no” and “stop” in the face of unwanted behavior. For future works, conducting works to strengthen their reflexes to say “no, stop” will support them to put their knowledge into behavior.

In the presentation sections where children interpreted the visuals, they gave answers such as “Children have the right to play and entertainment, the right to nutrition and shelter, the right to health-the right to go to the hospital, that living creatures and children have rights, that we have children’s rights and that we should respect others, that 16–17-year-old children should not work

in heavy labor”. Regarding good behavior patterns, they frequently said “There should be no social media bullying, we should not exclude any living creature, not to discriminate, no one should be excluded, children under the age of 18 should not sell things, we should not make fun of them”.

In this work, children interpreted two images on the theme of gender equality, two images on having different characteristics and one image on the theme of children’s rights.

In the images with the theme of gender equality, children’s interpretations of “everyone can do the dance and sport they like” were predominant. In addition, “I would be sad if they did not let me in the game” showed that they were prone to empathize with the character in the picture. The tendency to empathize showed that children said no to discriminatory behavior when they evaluated it with the thought reflex “how would I feel if that behavior was done to me?”.

In the visuals of excluding children with different characteristics (appearance, language, etc.) from games, it was observed that children mostly interpreted the visuals with the approach that “everyone can have different characteristics, and these are not wrong”. Children gave examples from their own lives about being different and their answers and approaches such as “why shouldn’t they be in the game because they are different?” brought them closer to positive behavior and their interpretations were in this way.

It was noteworthy that the children who interpreted the child labor visual said that a child who cannot go to school is deprived of the right to play as well as the right to education. At this point, it was understood that children are nou-

rished by their schools in two important areas such as learning and playing.

At the end of our activities, when the children were asked the question “what is remained in your mind?”, it was seen that children’s rights and good behavior patterns were the most memorable ones. Especially when we look at the sentences in which they used these phrases, we see that each sentence was an empathic approach in which they put themselves in the other character’s shoes and talked about their feelings. It was seen that it would be supportive to implement these workshops, which enable children to reinforce positive behavior and positive language, with the same group of children with a certain frequency. ■

Add your color to life!