

**Assessment of the extent of school bullying and violence,
assessment of the needs for violence prevention, and of the
efficiency of the interventions for the child victims**

This report was prepared by a team of Junction Bulgaria
for the project “Empowering child straights for violence
prevention”

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1. Introduction

The assessment report is developed as a part of the realization of the project „Empowering the child’s strengths for violence prevention“. It is implemented in partnership with the Association for Child and Family Empowerment "Ave Copiii" (Moldova), Social Services Agency (Latvia), First Children's Embassy in the World - Megjashi, (Macedonia), Federatia Organizatiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Copil, (Romania), Network of Organizations for Children of Serbia - MODS, (Serbia), The Association for a better world, (Slovenia) and Tirana Legal aid society(TLAS) (Albania). SAPI is a leading organization of the project.

The project is financed by the Oak Foundation for the period 2016 – 2021.

Key objectives of the project:

- Improvement of the living environment of children by increasing the capacity of the adults around them to understand and respect their needs, to respect their views, and to ensure their rights using the resilience approach.
- Improving the capacity of professionals and parents, as well as the formal and informal structures in the community, to ensure safe and secure family and school environment.
- Assisting adolescents for identifying their competences and resources against violence and failures.

2. Objectives and scope of the assessment

The main aims of the assessment are to study:

- The attitude towards school
- The attitudes toward violence
- The level of child participation
- The efficiency of the interventions for the children victims of violence

This research is conducted in the third year since the start of the project and, in this sense, an analysis is made of the changes of the school situation regarding violence and participation, as a result of the project activities realised.

The types of activities, which were implemented in the countries participants in the project, were the following:

- National trainings of trainers
- Development and meetings of the Project Support Counsel
- Local trainings and supervisions for professionals
- Regular meetings of professionals for exchange of practices and knowledge
- International trainings/conferences/study visits

3. Methodology

3.1.Methods for data collection

The methodology includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods: surveys, focus groups and interviews with the four main groups of students, parents, teachers and professionals. The choice of these methods is due to the complexity of the topic, the different participants and

need to triangulate information. Additionally, the quantitative research is conducted using the same instruments to ensure comparability with the first assessment in the scope of this project.

3.1.1. Quantitative

The quantitative research is conducted through using surveys for self-completion with different groups of respondents. Every questionnaire contains between 20 and 22 statements in indicated areas which respondents have to evaluate in a scale from 0 to 4 (9 means 'I don't know'). The sample size is a maximum of 90 - 100 questionnaires per country, which means 30 from each group (parents, teachers, children), as well as 10 other professionals, depending on project goals and activities. In order to ensure comparability at the country level, the surveys are the same as the first wave with only slight changes in the phrasing of some sentences. All the respondents are from schools, which have participated in the project. The sample type is random. A random selection is ensured by every partner in a different way.

3.1.2. Qualitative

In every country not less than 6 or 8 focus groups/interviews are accomplished (depending on the number of professionals). These focus groups are divided into participants in the project (3 groups with professionals, parents and children) and control groups with non-participants in the project (3 groups with professionals, parents and children). The number of interviewees is 8-10, except for children focus groups – 6- 8 (in some of the partner countries, only interviews were conducted). The criteria for selection of each group:

- Professionals (teachers, speech therapists, physicians, social workers, etc.) working in schools or services, which have participated in the project
- Parents who have participated in project initiatives
- Children from schools which have participated in the project
- Control groups of non-participants (professionals, parents and children)

4. Ethical considerations

In each country, children participants in the research were introduced with the purpose of the questionnaires and the expectations of the research and were asked to confidentially express their opinions. All the ethical standards, regarding confidentiality, free expression of opinion and transparency about the purpose of the research and expected impact, were adhered to in each country. There was a consent form for all children participating in the research developed according to the national legislation.

5. Findings

5.1. Albania

5.1.1. Data collection process

The research in Albania is realized in "Pjeter Budi" secondary school located in Tirana, where questionnaires for children, teachers and parents have been collected. The questionnaires of professionals/ social workers are distributed in 20 different schools around the country. The total number of questionnaires is 120 (30 for children, 40 for teachers, 30 for parents and 20 for professionals), of which 110 were filled and all of them had valid data for the research.

The children selected for the focus groups are pupils of Pjeter Budi secondary school, where the project has been piloted since the beginning. All the data were valid and are recorded in the QNR template. The teachers selected for the research are part of the teaching staff of Pjeter Budi school and 30 of them volunteered to be part of the research and participated in focus groups. The parents

selected for the research participated in the focus groups organized and filled in the questionnaires. The professionals selected for the research have been part of other activities TLAS has organized on behalf of this particular project and other similar projects. They are part of different secondary and high schools all over the country as psychologists or social workers. 20 questionnaires were distributed during the focus groups and all the data gathered were valid and registered in the QNR template.

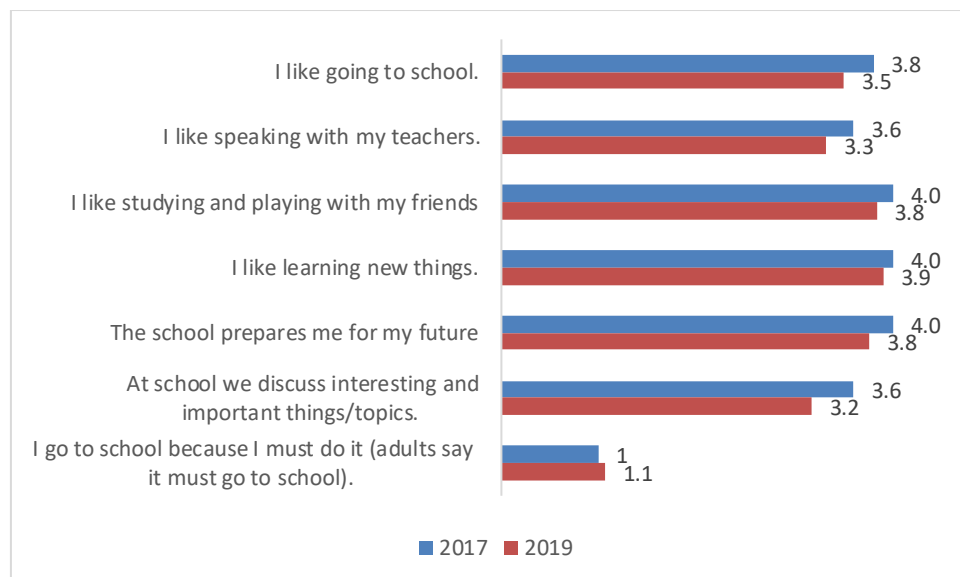
In addition, a focus group with professionals non-participants and an interview with a parent non-participant were conducted.

The data collection procedure went smoothly, especially because the participants were informed during focus groups for the purpose of the research. The parents expressed their willingness and need to have studies which would give them statistic insights on the bullying situation in their children's school. There were some difficulties with the questionnaires filled by the professionals. They work in different schools and were not open to express the problems of children, because the school principals were not willing to make them public.

5.1.2. Attitudes towards school

Figure 1 shows that children have a positive attitude toward school. Most of them respond to have smooth communication with teachers and see school as an institution helping them to build their future, where they can learn new things, discuss interesting topics and study and play with friends. Most of the children have expressed that they go to school because they like it, not because adults oblige them to do so.

Figure 1 Children's attitudes towards school – 2017 and 2019 results



In comparison with the previous research phase, the results are similar with a slight decrease, regarding studying and playing with friends, learning new things and school preparation for the future.

Teachers' attitude towards school is very positive. Their perception is that the children they teach like going to school. Their relationship with children's parents is close and they keep close connections with them to discuss problems, to share achievements and to encourage their participation in solving these problems. Regarding teachers' relationship with children, teachers respond to have a close relationship with children, and they share their problems with teachers.

Figure 2 Teachers' attitudes towards school - 2017 and 2019 results

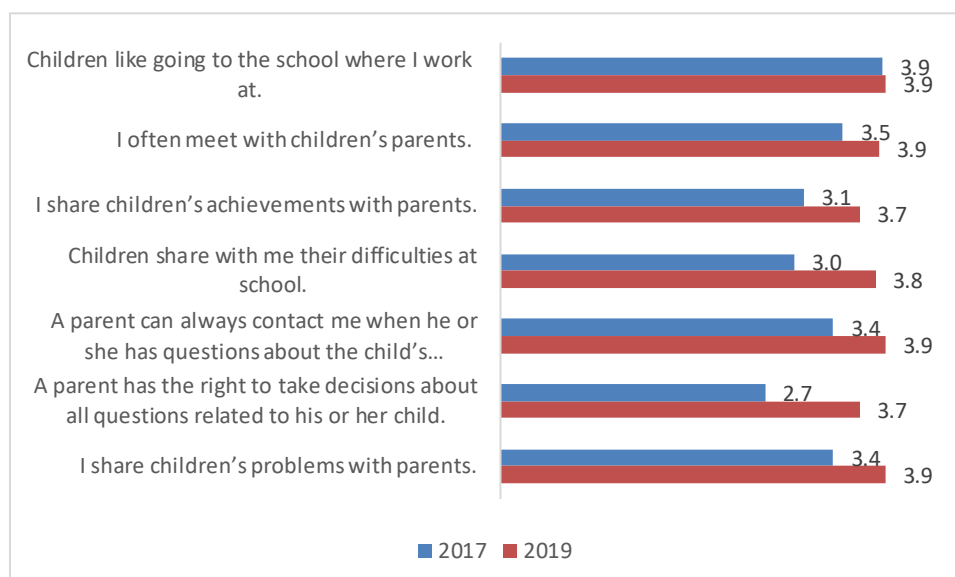
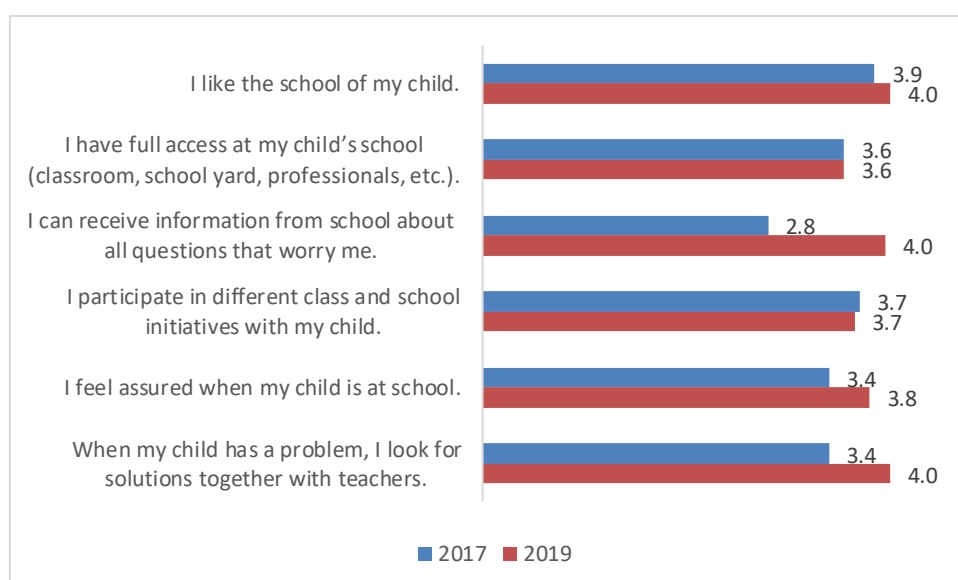


Figure 2 shows a comparison between the results from the first phase and the current phase of the research. The most significant difference is regarding the attitude of the teachers towards parents' rights to take decisions about all questions related to their child. Teachers currently agree up to a higher degree with this statement, which means that the situation at school, related to parents' participation, has changed. In addition, a significant increase can be seen in the share of teachers declaring that children share with them their difficulties at school.

Parents are also very positive regarding their children's school. They like the school of their child, the possibility to express their opinion, to have full access and to receive help and support in case of problems with their child.

Figure 3 Parents' attitudes towards school - 2017 and 2019 results

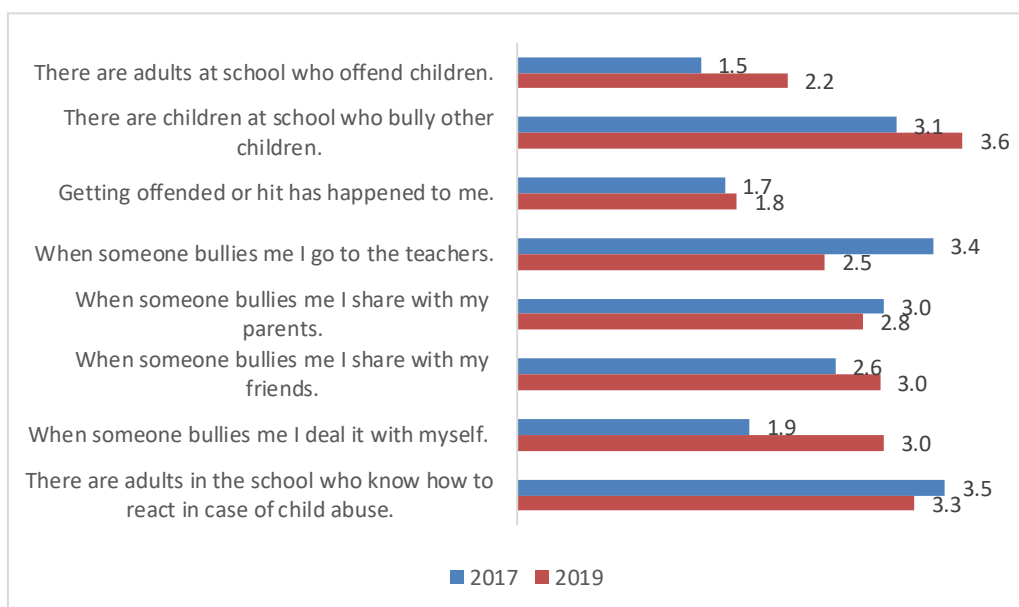


The most significant change, shown on figure 3, is in the increase of the share of parents who claim they can receive information from school about all questions they need. This corresponds to the increase in the share of teachers, responding that parents can always contact them and take decisions.

5.1.3. Attitudes toward violence

The shares of children responding that there are adults at school who offend them and children who bully other children have increased. Some children express that they have been victims of violence or insulting by their peers, but their share hasn't changed significantly. Another difference is that less children are willing to share this with teachers than before, they are more prone to share with parents and friends, which could be due to the projects' interventions. However, they are aware that there are dedicated professionals at school who know how to react in case of child abuse. One of the most significant increases is in the share of students who declare they deal with bullying themselves.

Figure 4 Children's attitudes toward violence – 2017 and 2019 results



According to students who participated in focus groups, there are insecure situations at school and bullying and violence is the most common reason for it (Figure 5), which makes the school environment not particularly safe.

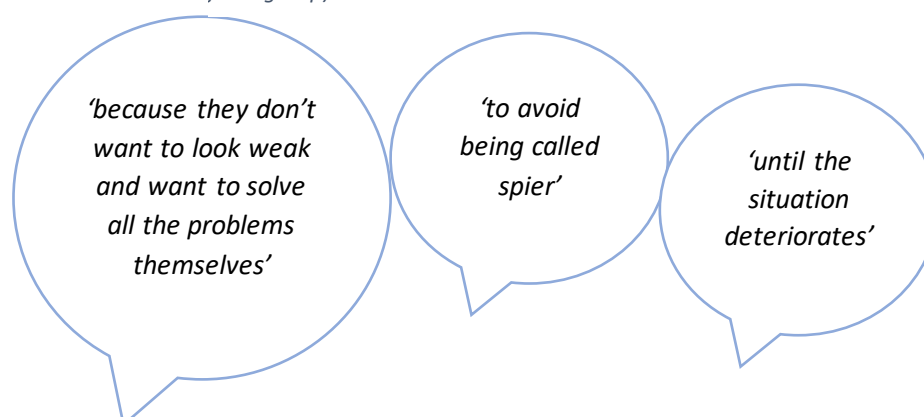
Figure 5 School environment



Children in the focus groups indicate that reasons for bullying include taking it as a joke, feeling superior to the victim, immaturity and physical insecurities of the victim, problems at home, not accepting differences like ethnic minorities, special needs, attention seeking, etc. The role of social media is mentioned as means for bullying others.

The strategies for handling the situation of bullying, shared in the focus groups with children,

Figure 6 Reasons for dealing with the problem themselves (children focus group)

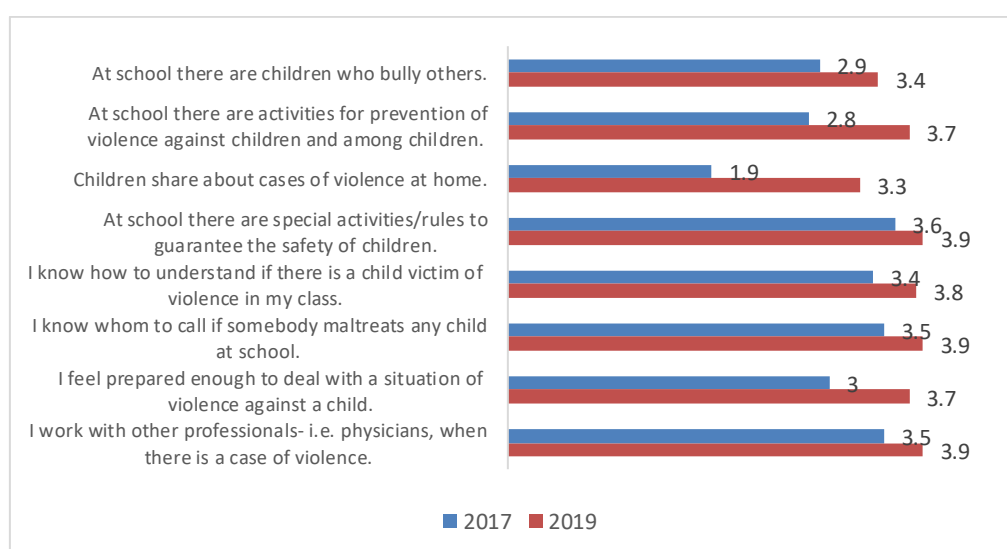


confirm the quantitative results. Some children try to deal with the problem themselves:

However, children also share that they talk to teachers, school psychologists, the principal and their parents.

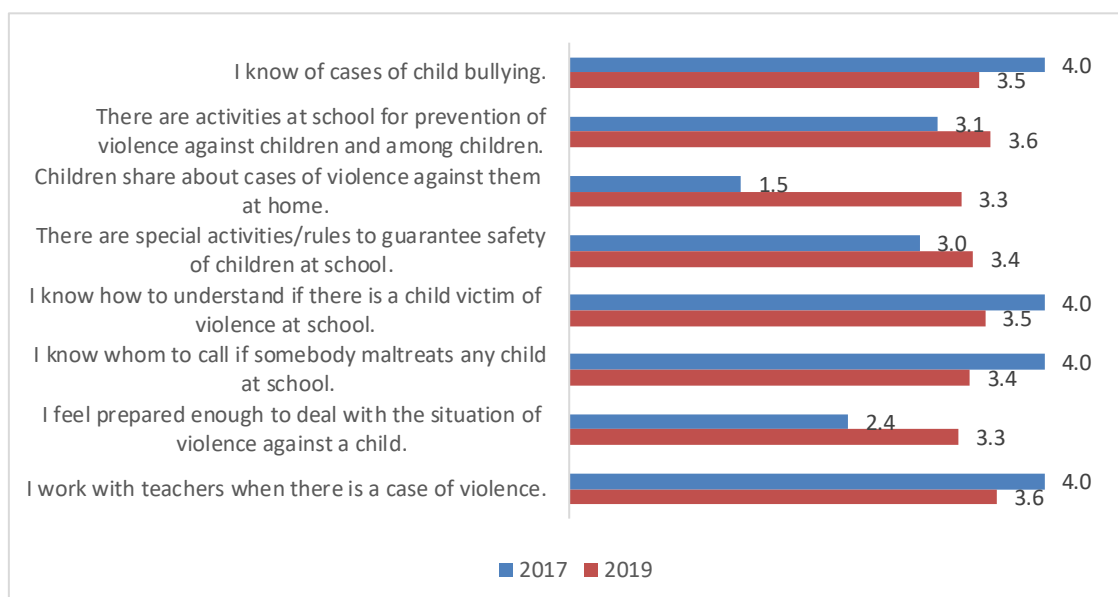
Figure 7 shows that the most significant change is in the decrease of teachers stating that there are activities for prevention of violence at school and that they feel prepared enough to deal with a situation of violence against child. This could be attributed to the project's interventions. Another significant change is in the share of teachers claiming that children share about cases of violence at home.

Figure 7 Teachers' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



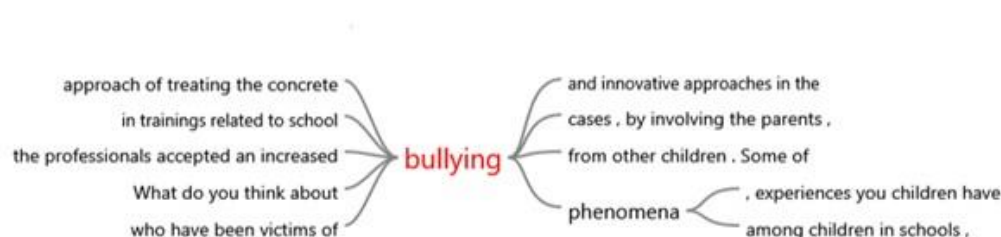
From figure 8 it is evident that a higher share of social workers feel prepared enough to deal with a situation of violence against a child. In addition, significantly more social workers respond that children share about cases of violence at home, similarly to teachers' responses on figure 7. The factors leading to this result could be the development of environment, possibilities and skills of professional to work with children.

Figure 8 Social workers' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



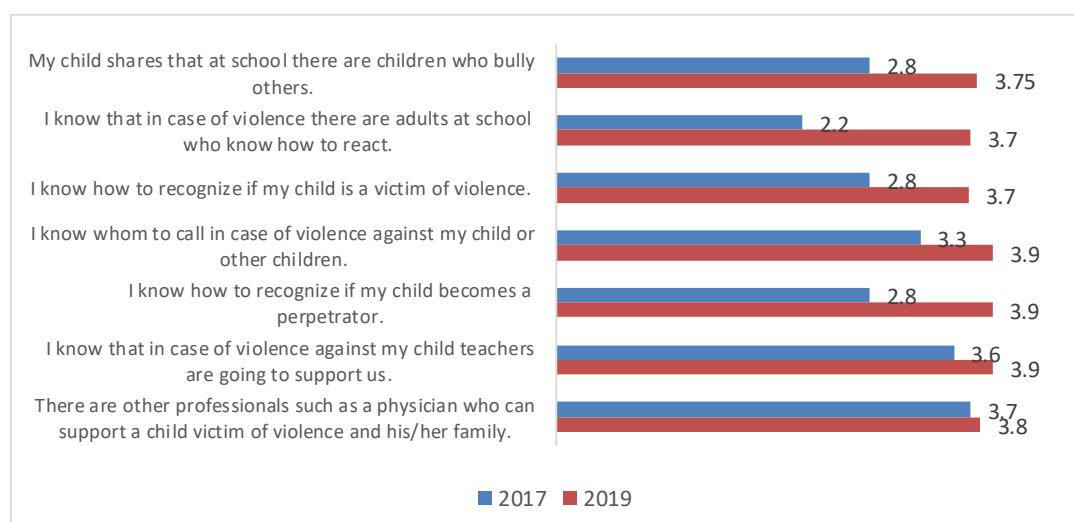
During the focus groups the professionals expressed an improvement of the situation after the project started and an increased awareness of the children for violence prevention. However, they are familiar with reporting bullying instances and their role in case of facing a violent situation in school. Professionals relate bullying to approaches for handling the situations, emphasizing on the innovating and holistic approaches, involving all parties (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Bullying phenomena according to professionals



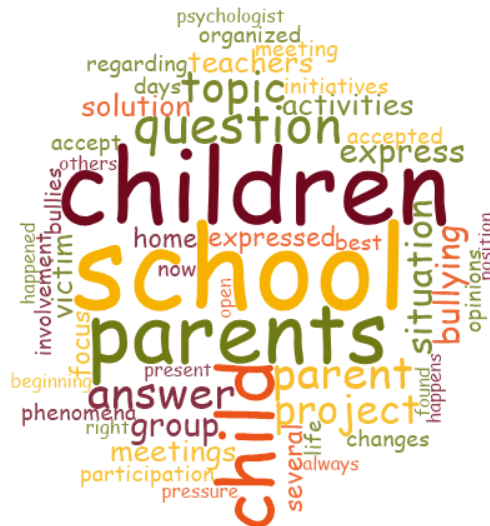
Parents' understanding and attitude toward violence has changed in relation to increased knowledge and skills to recognize violence, both when their child is a victim and a perpetrator. In addition, their trust in the school staff's ability to handle these issues has improved.

Figure 10 Parents' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



The data shows that the connection between children, school and parents has become stronger and communication is now more open. This is a supporting factor for dealing with situations of bullying, children are more prone to share their issues and adults recognize the problem.

Figure 11 Parents' perceptions



Parents declare that the participation in the project leads to strengthening the connection between them and the school and their desire to participate in meetings. At the same time, in the control interview with a non-participant this is expressed as a recommendation.

Figure 12 Focus group with parents participants

'I am now more attached with my child's school, try to participate in every teacher-parent meeting and even in extra-curricular activities.'

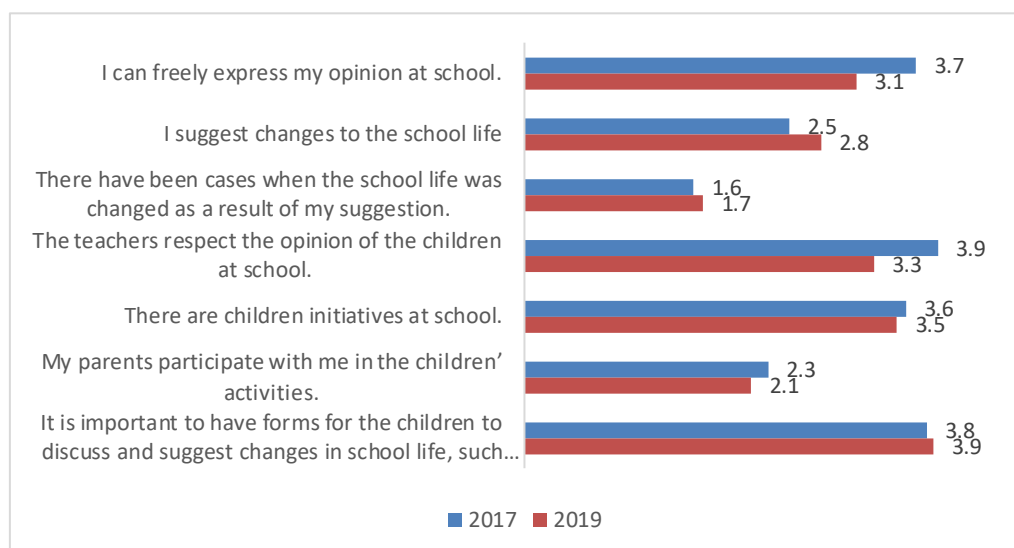
Figure 13 Interview with parent non-participant

'I suggest that more open meetings with parents should be organized and the topic should not be considered a taboo anymore.'

5.1.4. Child participation

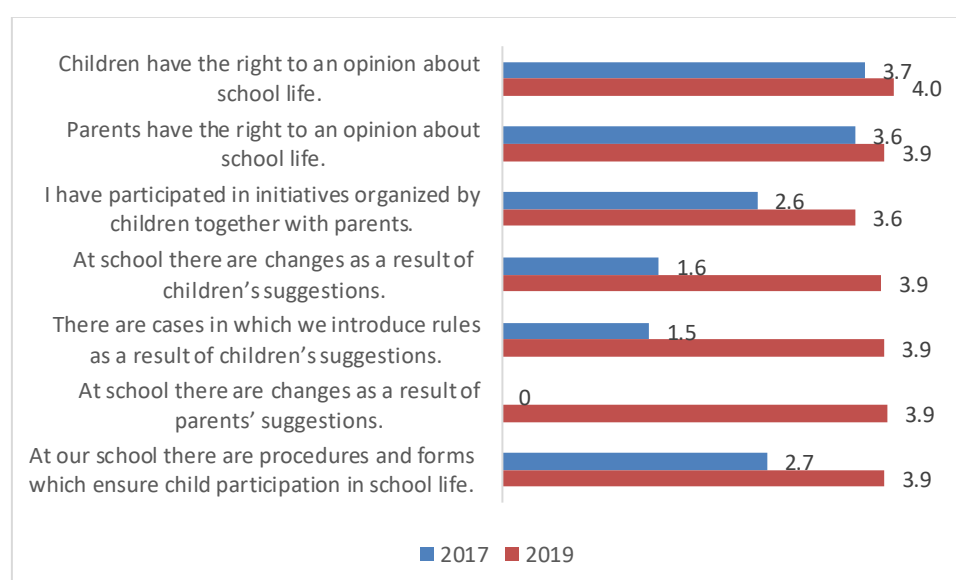
There are no significant changes in the responses of children regarding their participation. In some areas, such as the expression of opinion and respect of children's opinion by teachers, there is a slight decrease in positive responses (Figure 14). The degree to which their suggestions lead to changes in the school life remains low, which means that currently participation is still at the level of expression of opinion. Additionally, parents' level of involvement in these initiatives is low. This data is confirmed by participants in focus groups.

Figure 14 Children's attitudes towards their participation - 2017 and 2019 results



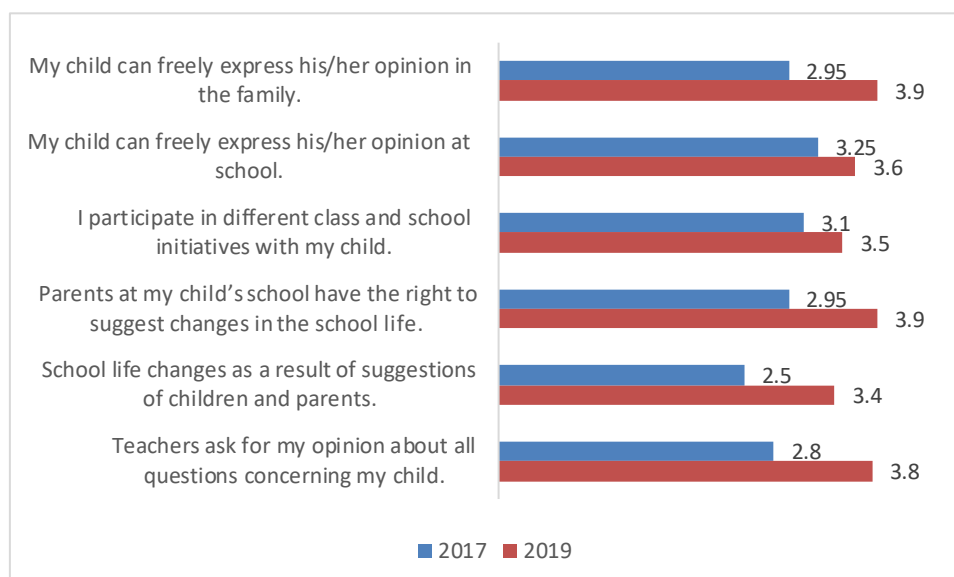
There is a discrepancy between teachers', parents', social workers' opinion and children's opinion regarding child participation in school life (Figures 14, 15, 16, 17). Teachers evaluate highly the possibility for children to express their opinion, as well as the changes that this opinion brings to school life. In addition, their opinion changes significantly after the project.

Figure 15 Teacher's attitude towards child participation - 2017 and 2019 results



Teachers and parents share that there are procedures and forms, which ensure child participation in school life, as well as initiatives organized by children together with parents. Parents share that teachers ask them about their opinions regarding questions concerning their child.

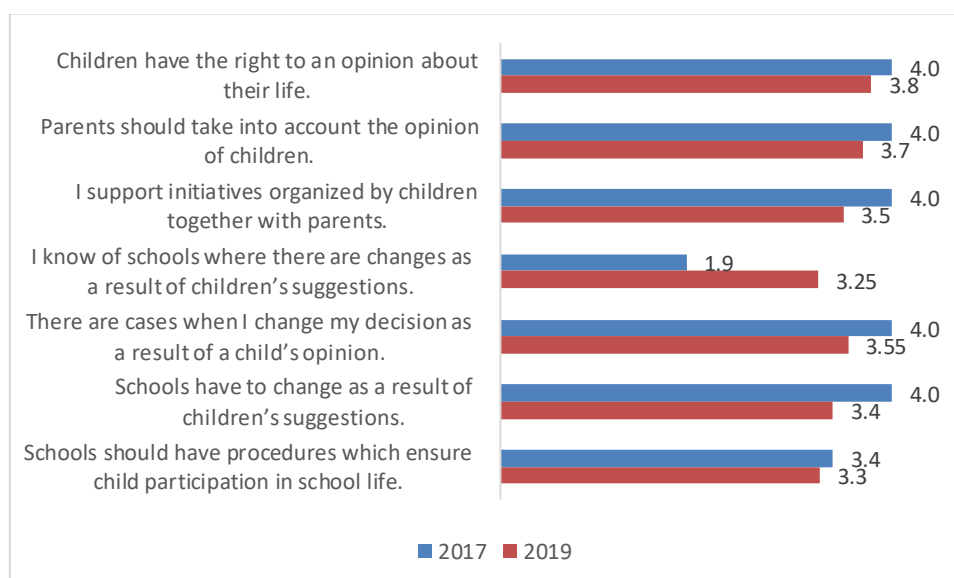
Figure 16 Parents' attitudes towards child participation - 2017 and 2019 results



Regarding parents' support for their children, in the focus groups they share that it is very important to have an open communication, make them feel safe and supported at home and ensure their involvement in extra-curricular activities.

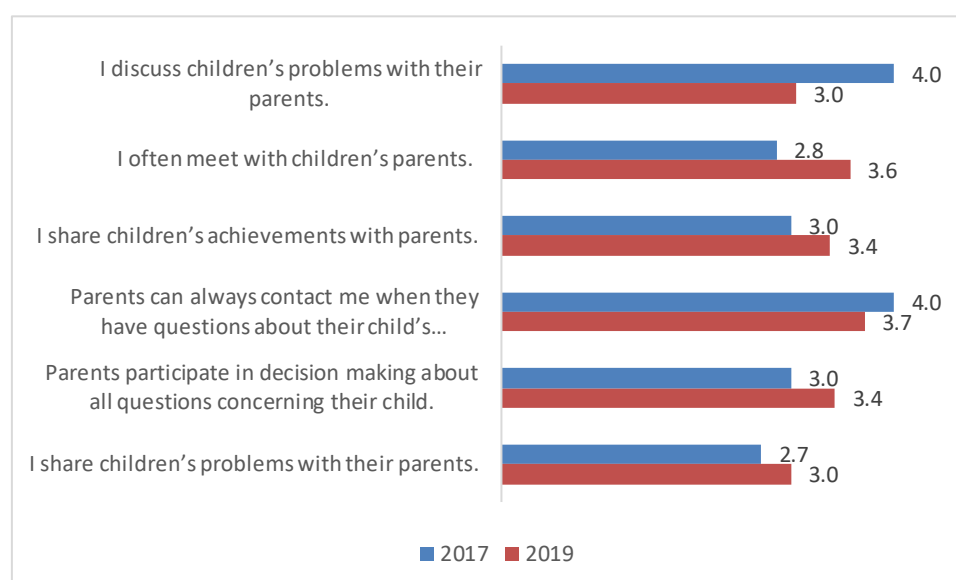
There is a slight decrease in the share of social workers' positive responses to the questions regarding child and parents' participation, although they still think its level is high.

Figure 17 Social workers' attitudes towards child participation -2017 and 2019 results



Results on figure 18 show that there is good communication between social workers and parents, but professional distance is still kept due to the fact that less social workers declare they discuss children's problems with their parents.

Figure 18 Social workers' attitudes toward parents - 2017 and 2019 results



5.1.5. Summary of the situation in Albania

The comparative analysis of the information from all the respondents shows that there is a change in the understanding, attitudes and practices, related to school bullying and violence and the strategies for handling issues of all the groups. The most significant difference is regarding the created space for children to share with parents and adults at school situations of violence and bullying. The discussion is open about the reasons for the bullying phenomena and the ways to deal with it. Although different approaches are used, the children prefer to deal with the problem themselves, until the situation deteriorates. Adults share that the holistic approach is the most effective way to deal with violent behaviour. The change, regarding participation of children and parents in school life is the most debatable. There is a discrepancy between participants' opinions – adults believe participation has increased, while children don't feel so included in school life.

The contribution of the project is probably related to participation in trainings, meeting, events and higher number of initiatives at school. Social workers shared that the project has been useful for them and they would like to have more similar initiatives and foreign trainers involved.

5.2. Macedonia

5.2.1. Data collection process

All activities from the evaluation process were realized in Primary School "Stiv Naumov" in Skopje. Representatives of each group involved in the project activities were given a questionnaire. There were 30 respondents from each group (parents, teachers, children), as well as 10 other professionals (involved in project activities). All the respondents were from schools, which have participated in the project and were also involved in the first wave of project activities. The questionnaire was delivered to 100 respondents in total. They were selected by suggested criteria. All the surveys have been uploaded to excel format.

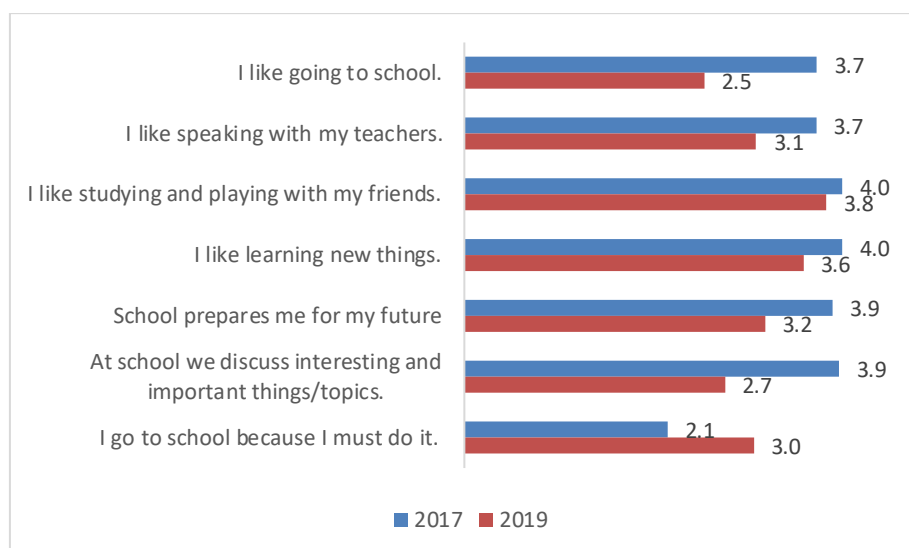
In the period of May 2019 six focus groups were conducted with project participants and control groups (3 groups with professionals, parents and children participants and 3 groups with professionals, parents and children non-participants). The number of interviewees was 10 in each group, except for children focus groups where the number of participants was 7 due to the suggested criteria of children participation. The participants were chosen by random selection from each suggested group.

The main challenge in the data collecting process was the period when the assessment took place, because it was almost at the end of the school year and teachers and students were engaged in lot of activities which are usual for this period.

5.2.2. Attitudes toward school

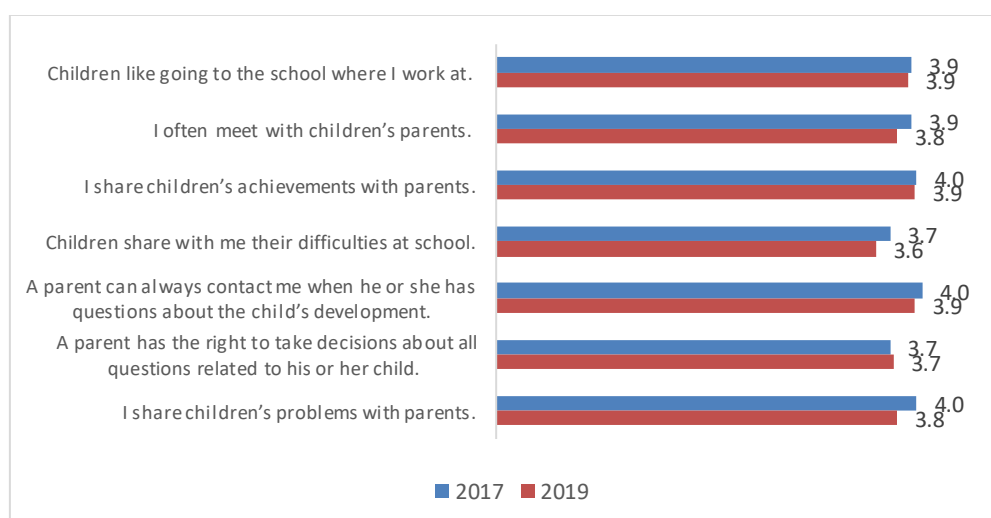
Data shows that children's attitudes towards school have been changed slightly, related to the desire to go to school, probably because they don't discuss so many interesting topics and they don't enjoy speaking with their teachers as much, which could lead to feeling like going to school is an obligation (Figure 19). The reasons for this could be the age of the children, as well as a change in the school environment.

Figure 19 Children's attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



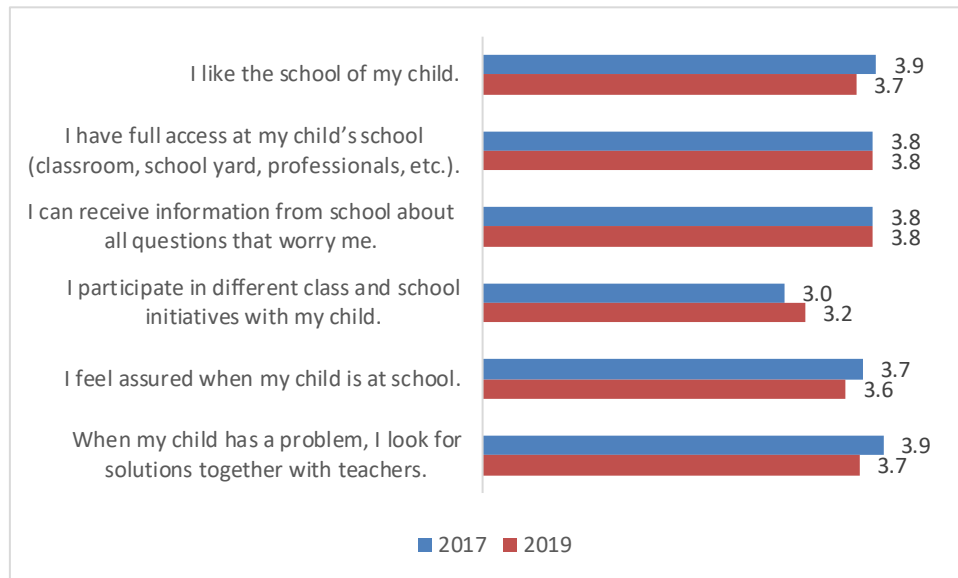
Teachers have responded that children like going to school and they have good communication with parents, related to children's achievements, difficulties and problems. There is no significant change from the previous wave of the research.

Figure 20 Teachers' attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



This situation of good communication, access and participation at school is confirmed by the parents. Similarly to teachers, there are no significant differences in responses from 2017.

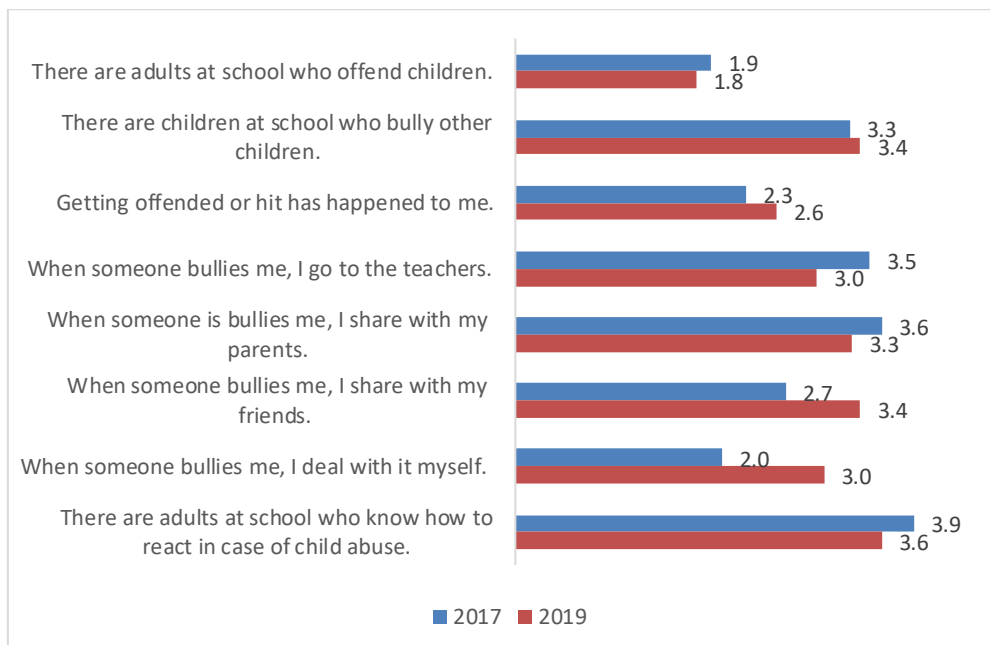
Figure 21 Parents' attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



5.2.3. Attitudes toward violence

Children's responses show that there is violence at school, due to children's actions, rather than adults and being offended or hit has happened to them. The solution to a situation of bullying is sharing with friends and parents, followed by dealing with the problem themselves and going to the teachers. They believe that there are adults at school who know how to react in case of child abuse.

Figure 22 Children's attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



During the focus groups, children confirmed that bullying occurs at school, in addition to fighting and most of them say it happens often. This makes the school environment not particularly safe for them. The forms of bullying are mostly physical and verbal – insults and fighting (Figure 23).

A word cloud visualization of terms related to bullying. The most prominent words are 'bullying', 'school', 'students', 'teacher', 'offending', 'forms', 'behavior', 'victim', 'problem', 'children', 'pulling', 'serious', 'child', 'form', 'lot', 'person', 'almost', 'home', 'psychologist', 'teachers', 'informed', 'day', 'happening', 'also', 'time', 'yes', 'everyday', 'bad', 'talk', 'picking', 'politics', 'kicking', 'learn', 'inform', 'hair', 'one', 'boys', 'know', 'every', 'calling', 'afe', 'offensive', 'stupid', 'cases'.

Figure 24 Children's opinion about solutions – focus groups with participants and non-participants

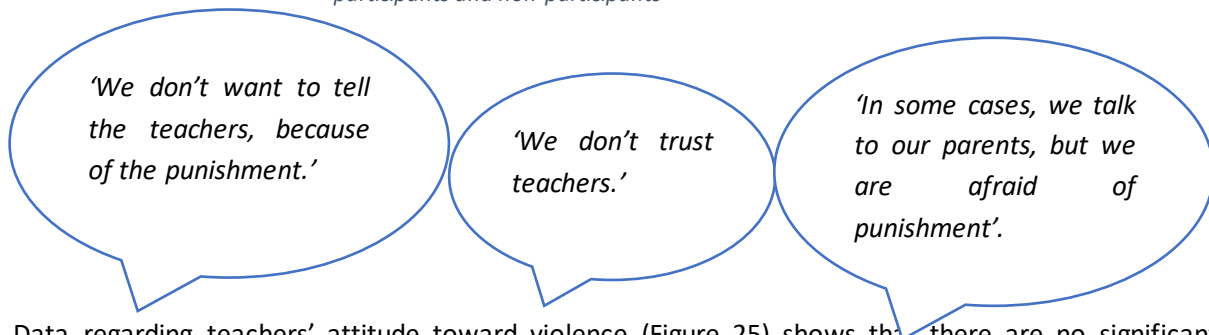
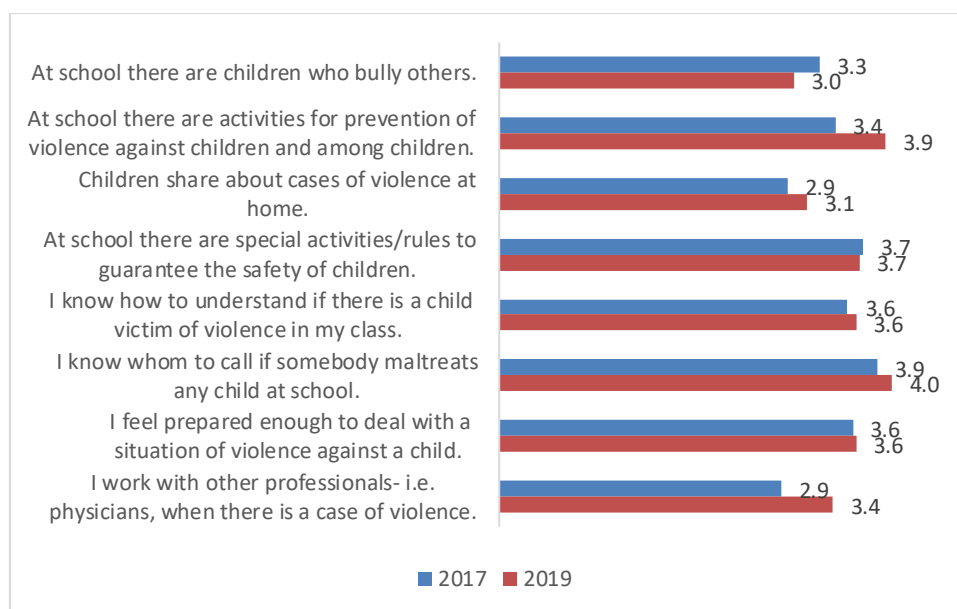


Figure 25 Teachers' attitudes toward violence- 2017 and 2019 results



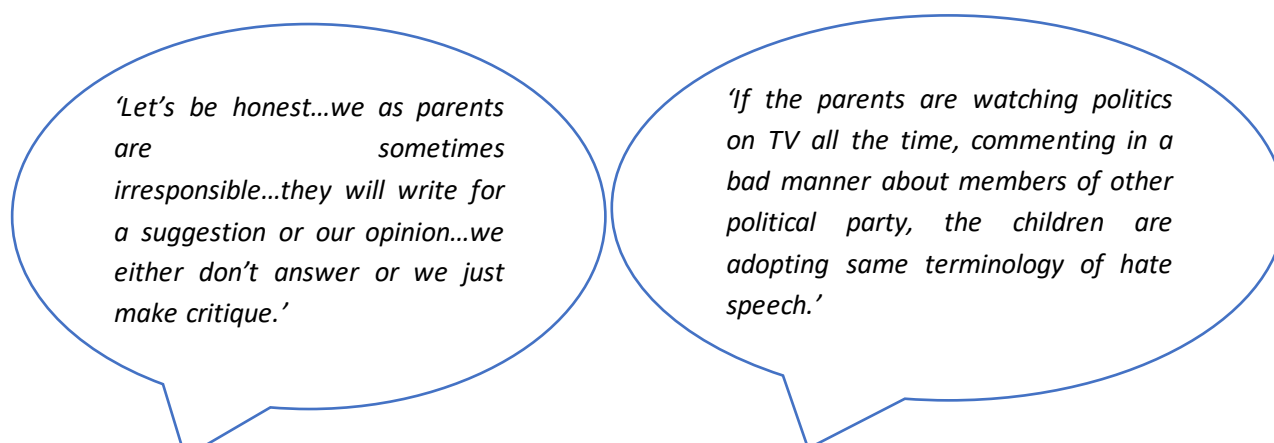
The situation is similar with parents' results (Figure 26). They declare that they know how to react in case of violence against their child, or in case their child becomes a perpetrator and they also know who to turn to for help. There are no significant differences between the results from the previous wave and this one.

Figure 26 Parents' attitude toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



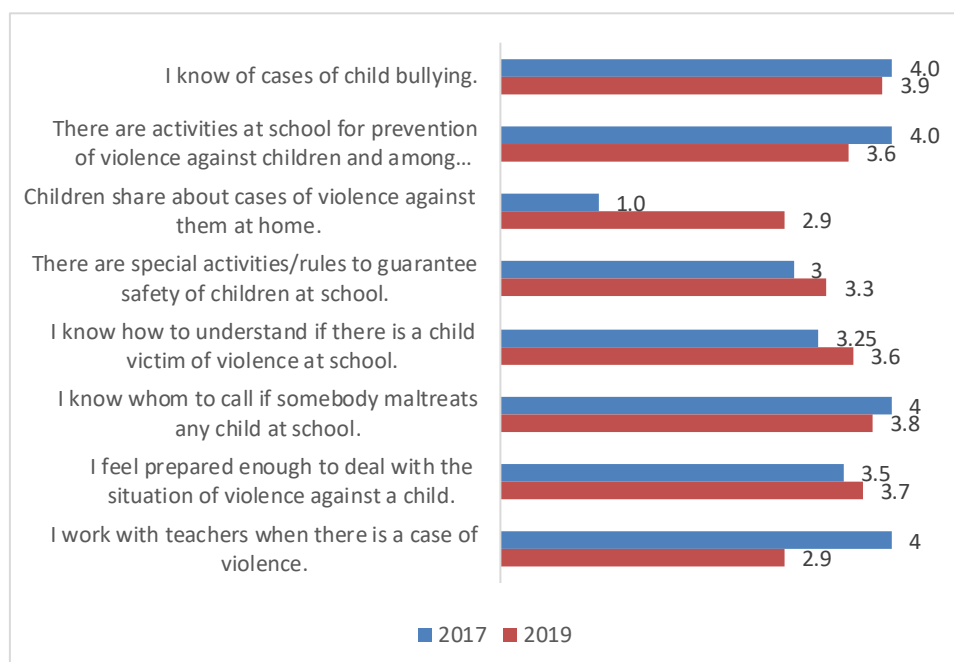
According to data from focus groups with parents, the forms of violence which are most common at school are verbal and physical violence and isolation. In both of the focus groups with parents participants and non-participants the respondents believe that actions should be taken to resolve the issues, but non-participants share a certain level of distrust. Among the reasons leading to bullying, the family environment is indicated as one of the important ones. Some parents mention the influence of the communication at home and the words that are used regarding media and politics – hate speech that is adopted by children. At the same time, they share that they maintain an open relationship and communication with their children at home, support them, involve them in decision-making and encourage them to share any issues they have. In addition, some parents as well as professionals say that other parents do not cooperate when their child is involved in a violent situation.

Figure 27 Parents' attitude toward violence-participants and non-participants



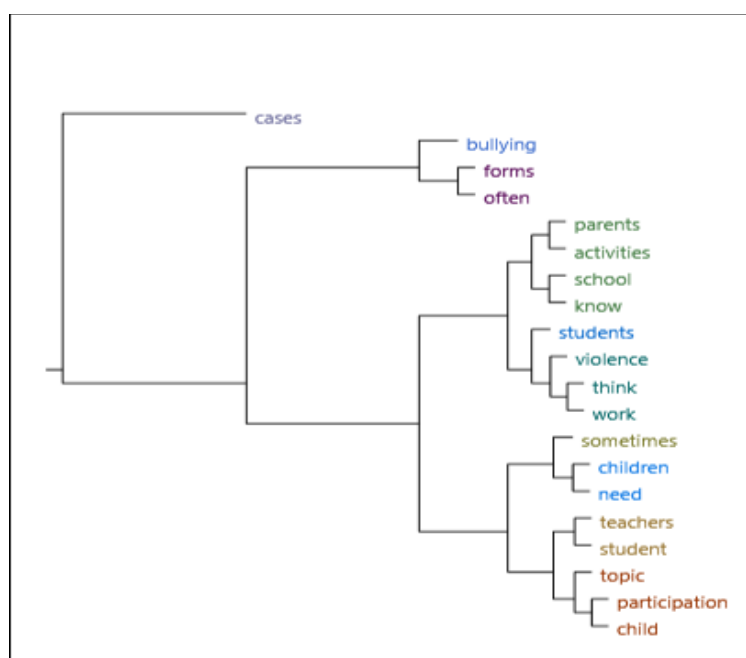
Data regarding social workers attitudes toward violence (Figure 28) shows that a higher share of professionals (compared to 2017) declare that children share about cases of violence against them at home. At the same time, a smaller share have responded that they work with teachers on cases of violence. On the whole, they claim that they know of cases of child bullying and how to deal with them and there are no other significant differences between data from 2017 and 2019.

Figure 28 Social workers' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



According to professionals, bullying happens often and in different forms. They know that there are activities with parents at school. Sometimes it is difficult for them to work with children with special educational needs. They deal with problems with school violence by working together with teachers and students and discuss the topic of child participation (Figure 29).

Figure 29 Cluster analysis - professionals

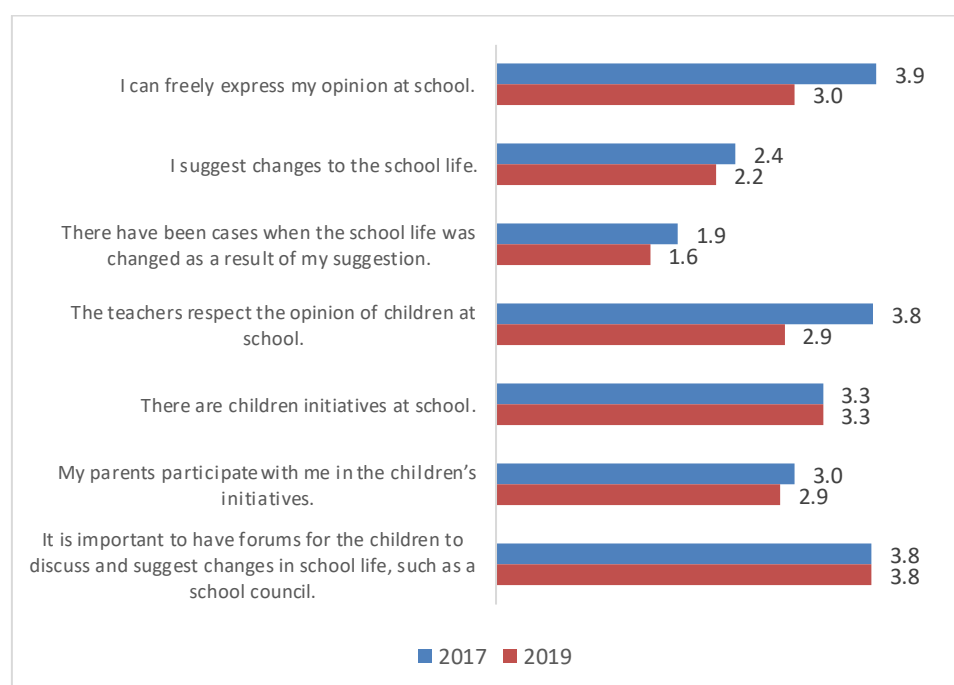


The comparison between data from focus groups with professionals participants in the project and non-participants shows that participants recognize the presence of a system with rules for dealing with cases of violence at school, while non-participants share that such a system is lacking and necessary.

5.2.4. Child participation

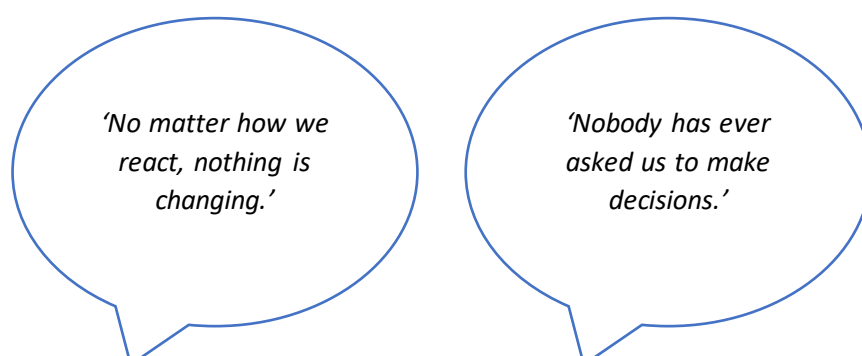
The data on figure 30 shows that less children in comparison with 2017 feel that they can freely express their opinion and that teachers respect it. Additionally, the possibility to suggest changes to the school life or have cases when changes have happened as a result of child suggestions show low levels of agreement. This means that the level of participation, according to children's opinion, is low. However, they state that there are children initiatives at school, in which parents participate. It is important for them to have the possibility to discuss and suggest changes to school life.

Figure 30 Children's attitudes towards their participation - 2017 and 2019 results



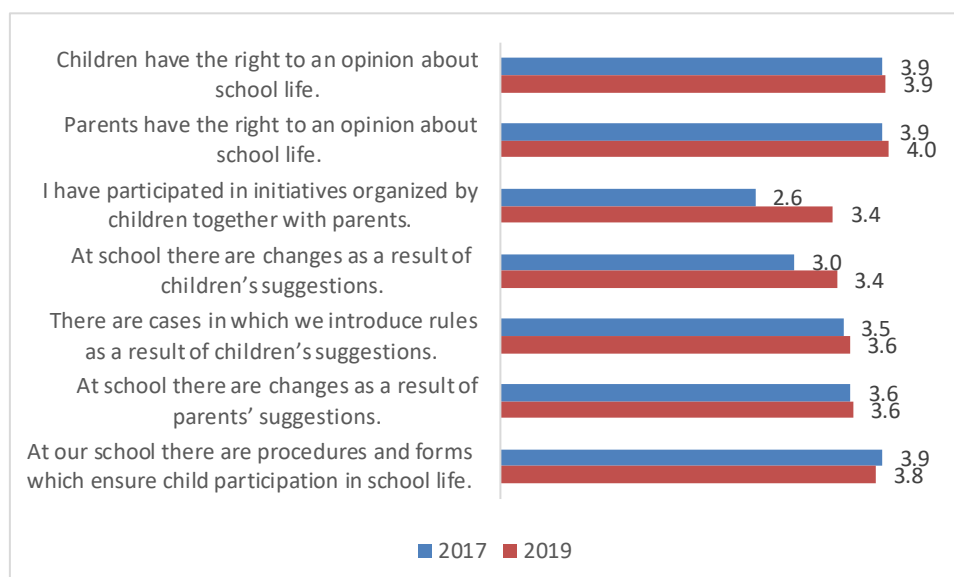
The data from focus groups with children participants and non-participants in the project demonstrates a low level of participation, which confirms the quantitative data above. There are no big differences between the two groups of respondents, there is only some level of participation in minor decisions like school yard lighting, tables and chairs in classrooms and excursions. Besides, both groups say that even if there is a low level of participation, that doesn't lead to changes in the school life.

Figure 31 Child participation



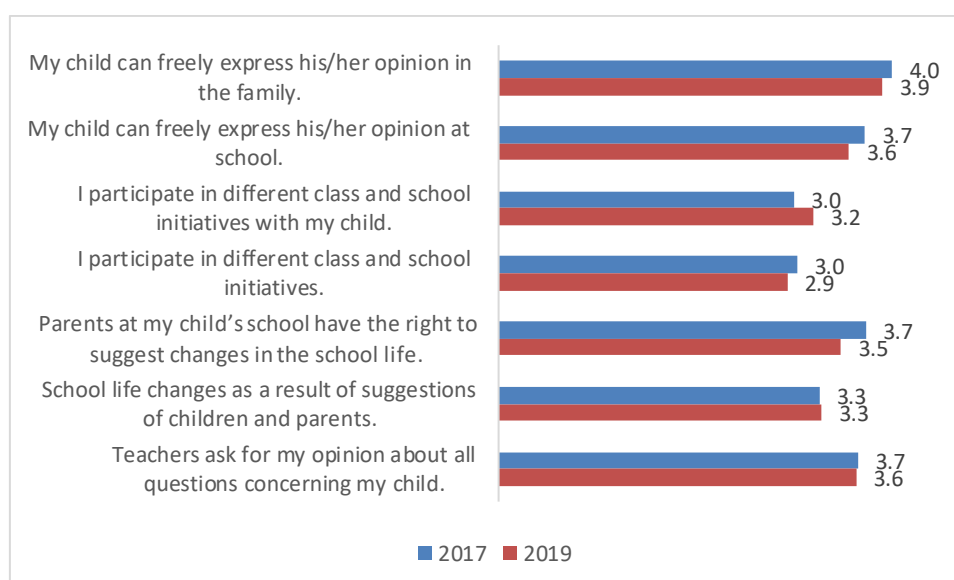
Results on figure 32 suggest a big discrepancy between the opinions of children and teachers regarding child participation. Teachers have responded that there are changes as a result of children's and parents' suggestions, cases in which they introduce rules as a result of children's suggestions, procedures and forms which ensure child participation and that they have participated in initiatives organized by children together with parents. There are no significant differences between results from 2017 and 2019.

Figure 32 Teachers' attitudes toward children's participation - 2017 and 2019 results



Data regarding parents' opinion on the topic is similar (Figure 33). They claim that children can freely express their opinions at school and in the family, they participate in different initiatives, teachers ask their opinion and school life changes as a result of suggestions of children and parents. There are no significant differences from the previous wave of the research.

Figure 33 Parents' attitudes toward children's participation - 2017 and 2019 results



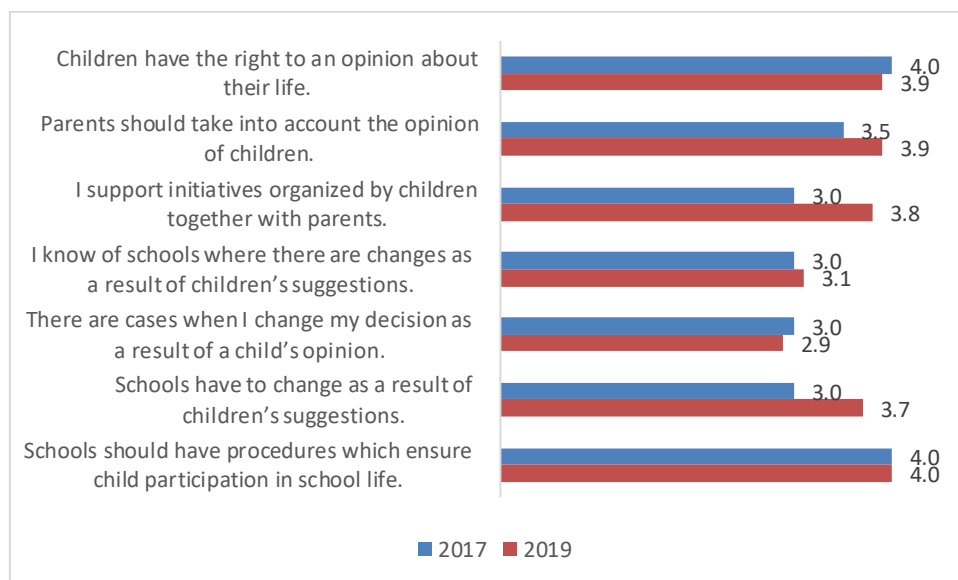
Parents participants and non-participants in the focus groups share that child participation is mainly through different school activities, such as competitions, bazaars, etc. and not connected to decision-making or changes in school life. Participants seem to have a higher level of their own involvement, while non-participants are divided in opinion.

Figure 34 Child participation according to parents focus groups



Social workers' responses regarding child participation are similar to those of teachers and parents without significant differences from 2017 data (Figure 35), except for a higher share saying they support initiatives organized by children together with parents and that schools have to change as a result of children's suggestions. According to their opinion, there are schools, where there are changes as a result of children's suggestions.

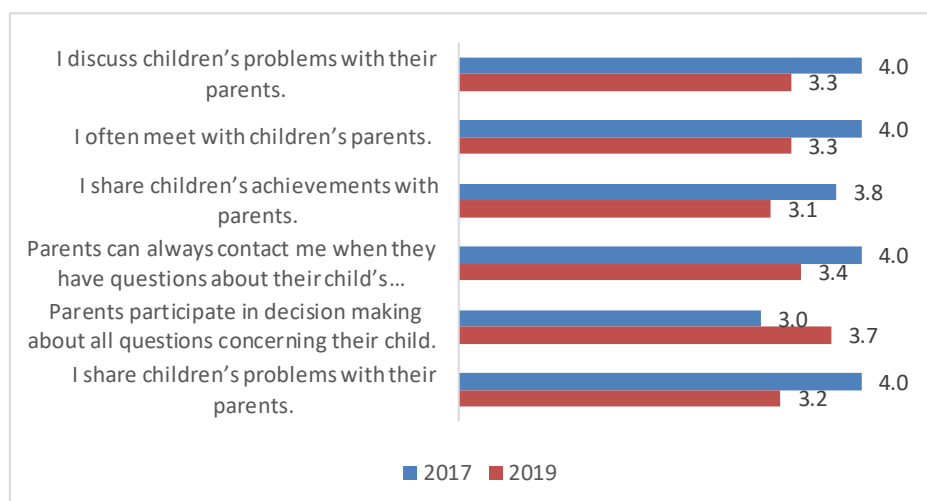
Figure 35 Social workers' attitudes toward children's participation - 2017 and 2019 results



The information from the focus groups points to a low level of child participation according to professionals non-participants, contrary to the quantitative data results. Professionals participants in the project state that child participation is starting to develop, but still more needs to be done. Parent participation is regarded as existent through the parent council. A lot of professionals see participation as involvement in school initiatives, such as cleaning the school yard.

Data on figure 36 shows that there is more hesitation regarding working parents on behalf of social workers, i.e. meeting with parents, sharing achievements and most of the other indicators. However, a bigger share of professionals claim that parents participate in decision-making, which corresponds with data from focus groups.

Figure 36 Social workers' attitudes toward parents - 2017 and 2019 results



5.2.5. Summary of the situation in Macedonia

The comparative analysis of the data between the different sources, waves of research and respondents shows that there are discrepancies between the opinions of adults and children in all the areas, while parents, teachers and social workers have similar opinions, which are not changing from the previous wave of the research. In the meantime, children's responses are changing, and this leads to a bigger discrepancy mostly regarding attitudes toward school and child participation. There are similarities in responses concerning the unsafe school environment and bullying in different forms. Regarding the strategies for handling the situation, children try to deal with it more by themselves or by talking to parents and friends and less to teachers for fear of punishment.

The comparison between participants and non-participants does not show significant differences, except for the attitude of social workers towards the level of participation of children and parents, which participants consider slightly higher.

The project results are satisfactory for the participants. They have learned new things about prevention and dealing with school violence and would like to have more training from foreign and external trainers under supervision, make trainings more regular, include new methodologies and system approach.

5.3.Slovenia

5.3.1. Data collection process

The research was conducted in the same two schools as the first year of the project 'Empowering child's strengths for violence prevention'.

The questionnaires were filled out by children in seventh grade. Random selection was ensured, and 36 student surveys were filled out.

33 surveys were filled out by the parents of these students and 27 by teachers at the schools. 12 social workers, pedagogues and psychologists filled out surveys, making a total sample size of 108 participants in the quantitative part of the research.

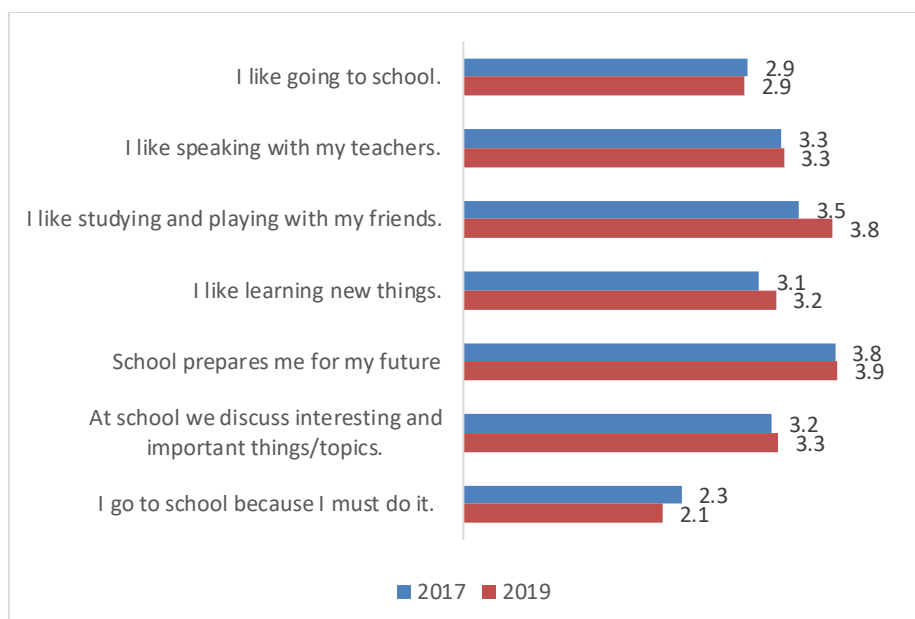
In addition, focus groups were conducted with children participants and non-participants in the project, as well as parents participants. In-depth interviews were conducted with a parent non-participant, professional participant and professional non-participant (both of them were teachers) in the project.

Challenges in the data collection process were to get enough surveys filled out by parents and the lack of time during the focus groups for everyone to share their opinion.

5.3.2. Attitudes towards school

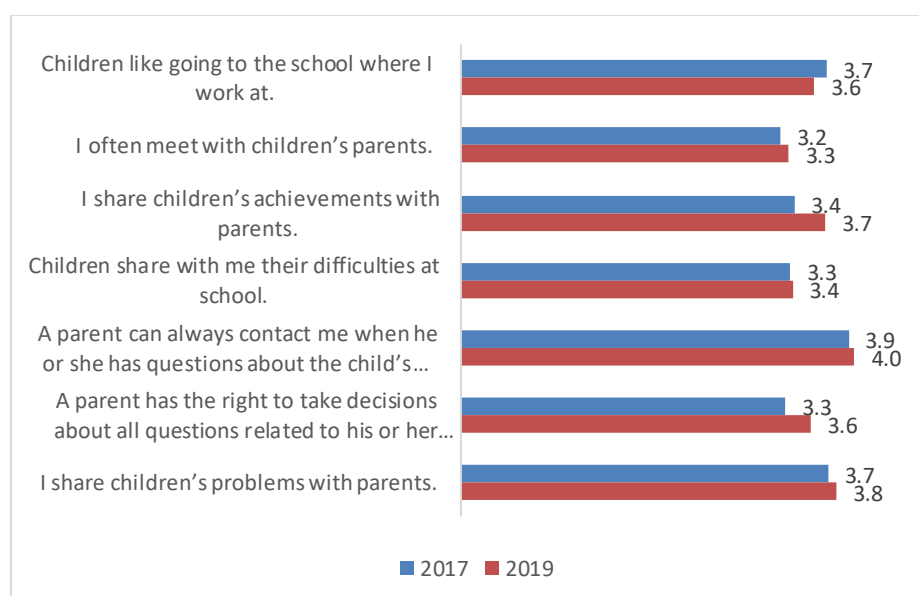
Results on figure 37 demonstrate a desire by children to go to school, to speak with teachers, learn new things and discuss interesting topics. They don't perceive going to school as an obligation and they believe it prepares them for their future. There are no significant differences from 2017 results.

Figure 37 Children's attitude towards school - 2017 and 2019 results



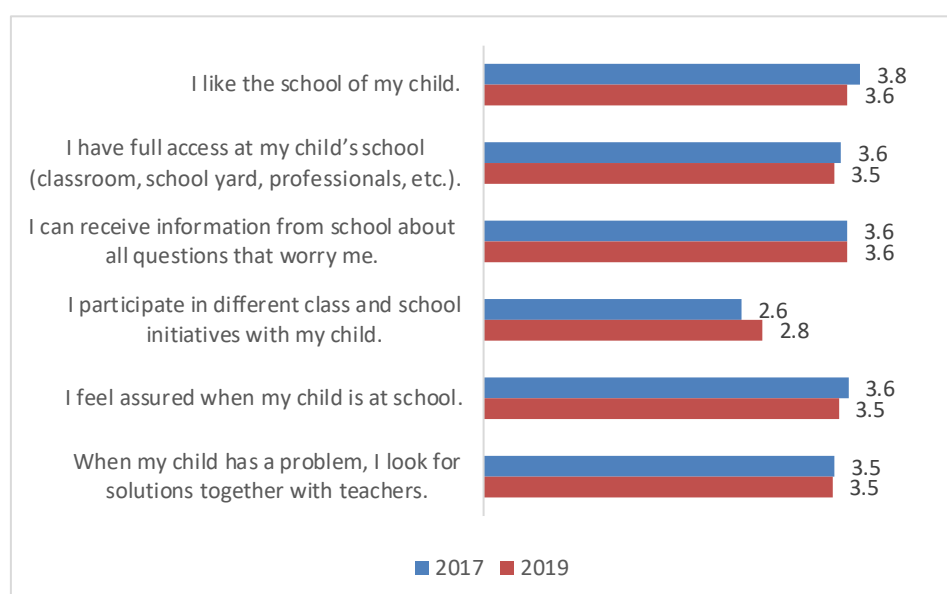
Teachers also have a positive attitude towards school (Figure 38). They confirm that children like going to school and they have a good communication with parents and students. There are no significant differences with results from 2017.

Figure 38 Teachers' attitude toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



Parents' attitude toward school, shown on figure 39, is also positive. They like the school of their child, they have full access and receive information, feel assured when their child is at school and look for solutions of problems together with parents. A smaller share has responded that they participate in class and school initiatives with their child, which will be explored from the qualitative data as well. There are no significant differences in results from the previous wave of the research.

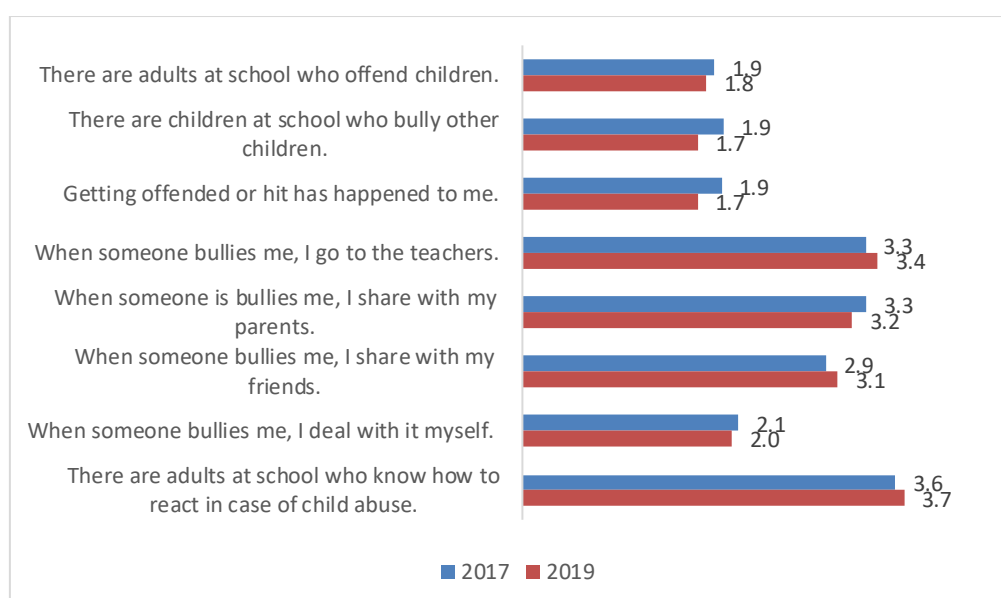
Figure 39 Parents' attitude towards school - 2017 and 2019 results



5.3.3. Attitudes toward violence

Results on figure 40 demonstrate a low level of acts of violence at school on behalf of adults and children alike. At the same time, it appears that children rely on adults to help them in such situations, rather than trying to deal with them themselves. These results could be attributed to the school community and environment in addition to the project. There are no significant differences from 2017 data.

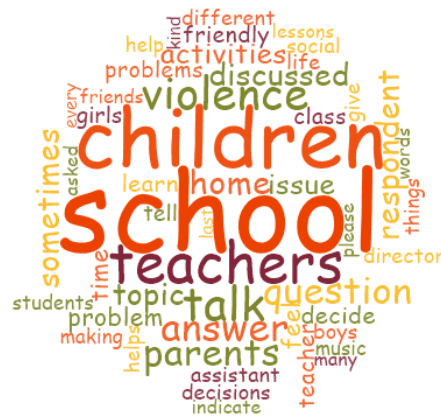
Figure 40 Children's attitude towards violence - 2017 and 2019 results



During the focus groups children shared that there are situations of school bullying, mainly in the form of verbal and physical violence. They deal with them by seeking help from teachers and the vice principal. Children non-participants share that there are some teachers, whom they don't trust and are not supportive, while children participants talk about project activities, meetings and discussions, as well as peer to peer learning and they seem to have a higher level of trust in adults on the whole. Children share that there are frequent situations of bullying, but in the last years they are decreasing, which could be attributed to the project results and corresponds with quantitative data

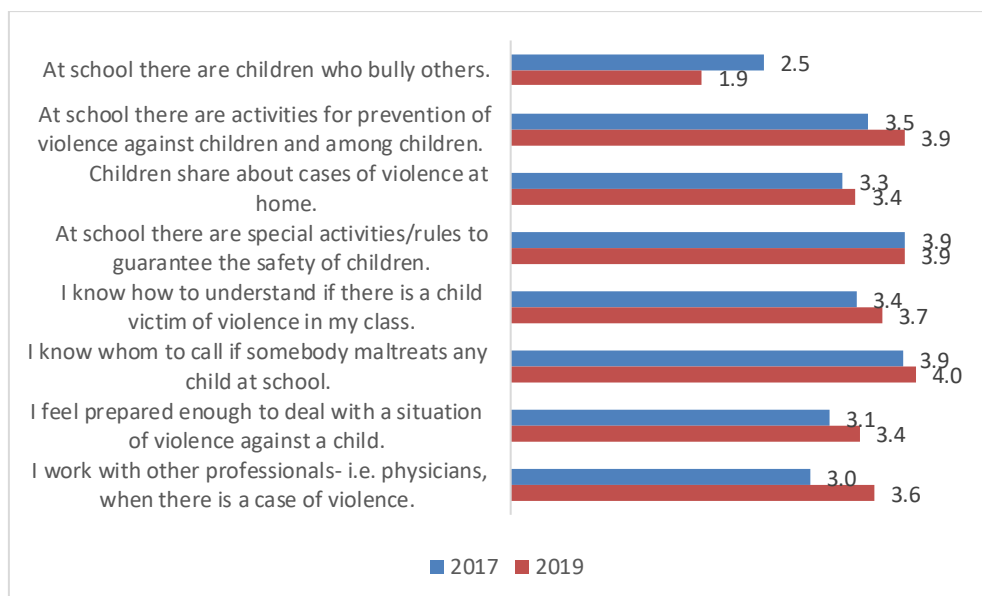
results. The trust in adults by children participants is confirmed. Figure 41 shows that violence at school is dealt with talking, discussions and activities together with teachers and parents.

Figure 41 Environment at school - focus groups with children participants and non-participants



Teachers' responses regarding violence (Figure 42) correspond to those of children. Less of them state that there are children who bully others in comparison with 2017 and they claim there are activities for prevention and knowledge how to deal with issues of violence. A higher share work with other professionals.

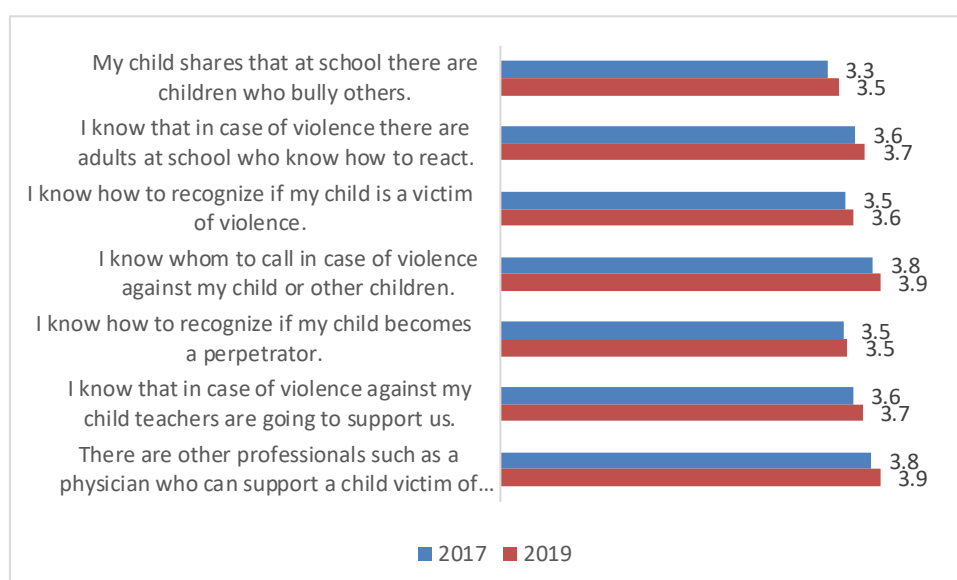
Figure 42 Teachers' attitude toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



In the two interviews with teachers participant and non-participant in the project they share cases of violent behaviour by children with special needs and their difficulties in dealing with the situation. They also point out the reasons for bullying by children in the family environment and computer games they play. The teacher participant says that there are less cases of bullying at school in the last years, which confirms quantitative results.

Parents' attitudes toward violence show few differences from other respondents (Figure 43). They claim they know how to recognize if their child is a victim or perpetrator, how to react, they feel supported by teachers and other professionals. A notable difference is that parents say their children share there are children who bully others at school, unlike teachers and children.

Figure 43 Parents' attitude towards violence - 2017 and 2019 results



According to qualitative data results, parents non-participants share that school is not very effective in dealing with bullying, while participants talk about different actions that are being taken and school initiatives. At home, parents share that they support their children to express themselves and make decisions about different things. They maintain an open communication and children share with them when they have problems with bullying at school.

Figure 45 Focus group parents participants

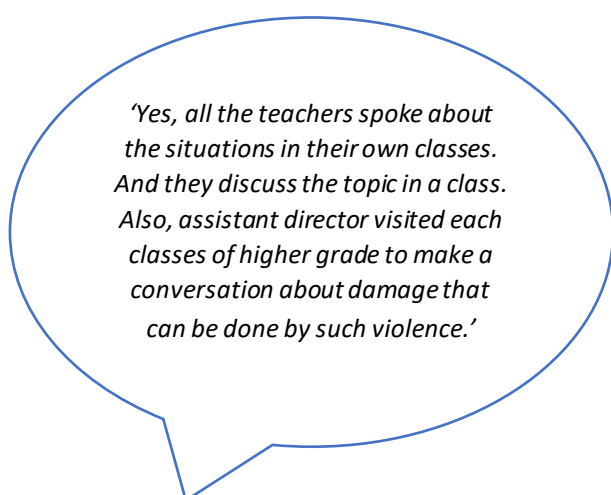
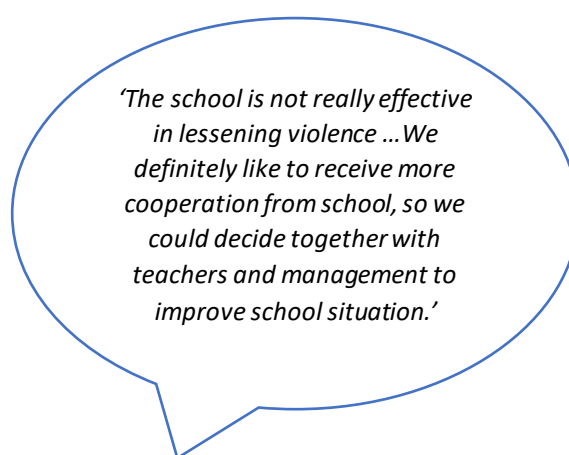


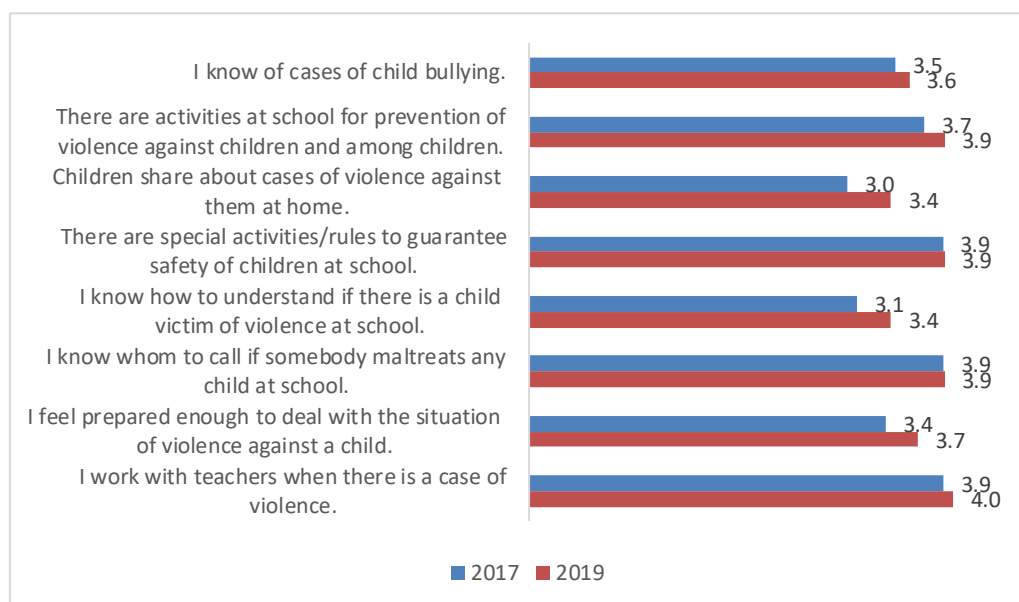
Figure 44 Interview parent non-participant



Parents think that the reasons for violence could be the family environment or internet use. The most common forms are physical and verbal violence.

Social workers confirm parents' opinion that there are cases of child bullying at school and at home, although there are activities for prevention (Figure 46). They feel prepared enough to deal with violent situations, know how to react and work with teachers. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

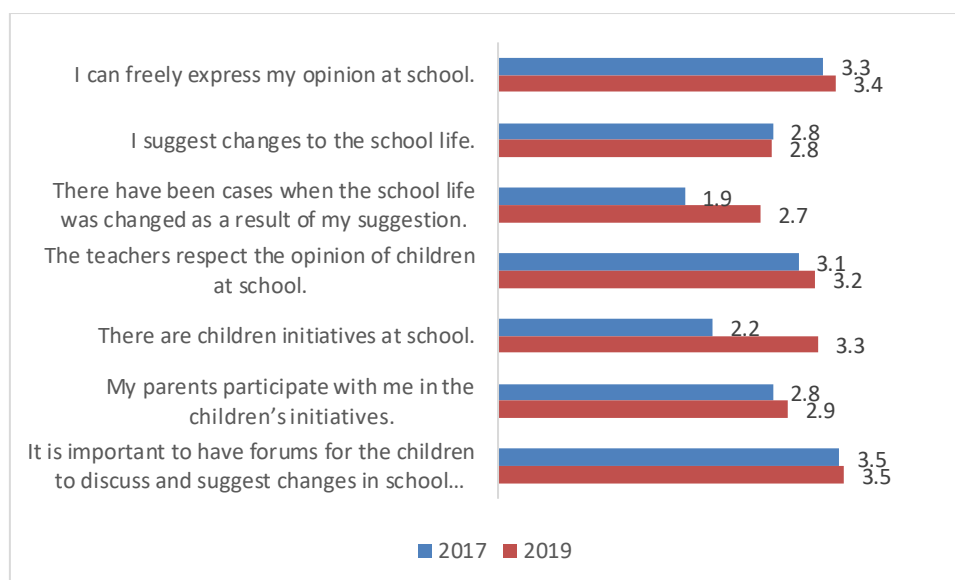
Figure 46 Social workers' attitude toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



5.3.4. Child participation

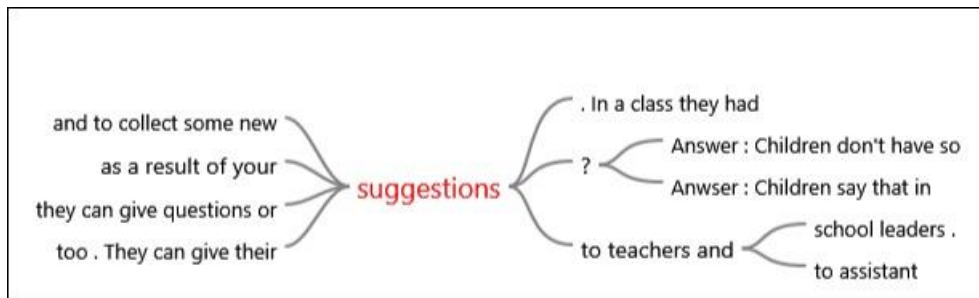
Results regarding child participation show that children feel they can suggest changes and express their opinion, which is respected by teachers and there are also initiatives in which parents participate with them (Figure 47). In comparison with 2017, there is a higher share of children who say that there are children initiatives at school and cases when the school life was changed as a result of their suggestion.

Figure 47 Children's attitude toward their participation - 2017 and 2019 results



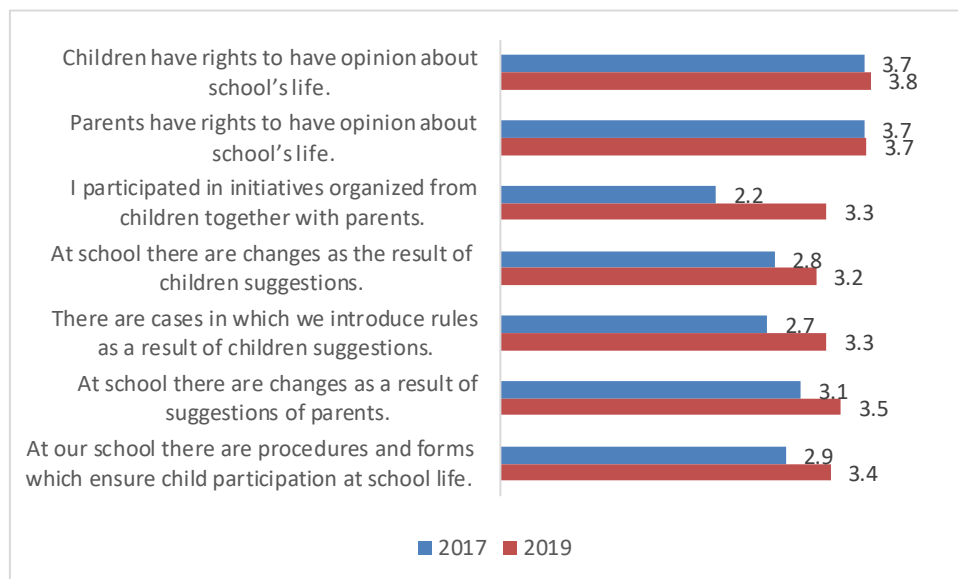
There is a difference between what children participants and non-participants in the project say regarding their participation in school life – participants talk about different possibilities to express their opinion and influence decisions, while non-participants don't feel involved in decision-making or even can't share their opinion.

Figure 48 Child participation - focus groups with children participants and non-participants



Regarding teachers' opinion about child participation (Figure 49), they feel that children and parents have right to an opinion about school life and there are cases in which school changes as a result of children's and parents' suggestions and procedures and forms, which ensure their participation (with higher average scores than in 2017). A significantly higher share in comparison with 2017 results respond that they have participated in initiatives organized by children together with parents. This could be attributed to the project interventions.

Figure 49 Teachers' attitude toward child participation - 2017 and 2019 results



During the interview the teacher participant shared school activities in which children are involved and they believe they can make suggestions and changes to school life. On the other hand, the non-participant doesn't think that children have much of a say or any possibility to make changes. Both respondents think that parents are not involved, mostly due to lack of desire.

Figure 50 Interview with teacher participant

Figure 51 Interview with teacher non-participant

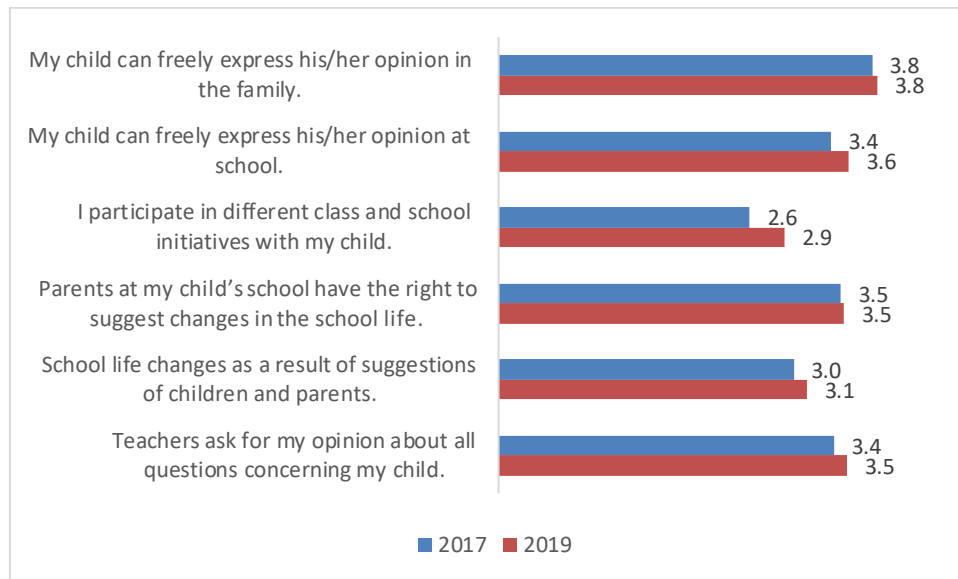
'At the moment all children at school can express their opinions, problems and suggestions to the management of the school. We have a box, in which they can put paper with their saying written on.'

'Children do not influence school life, management is responsible for that.'

Results on figure 52 show that parents think their child can express his/her opinion in the family and at school, they themselves have the right to suggest changes and teachers ask them for their opinion regarding all matters concerning their child. The statement that they participate in school initiatives

with their child and that school life changes as a result of parents and children's suggestions have a bit lower average scores, although still most of parents agree with them. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

Figure 52 Parents' attitude toward child participation - 2017 and 2019 results



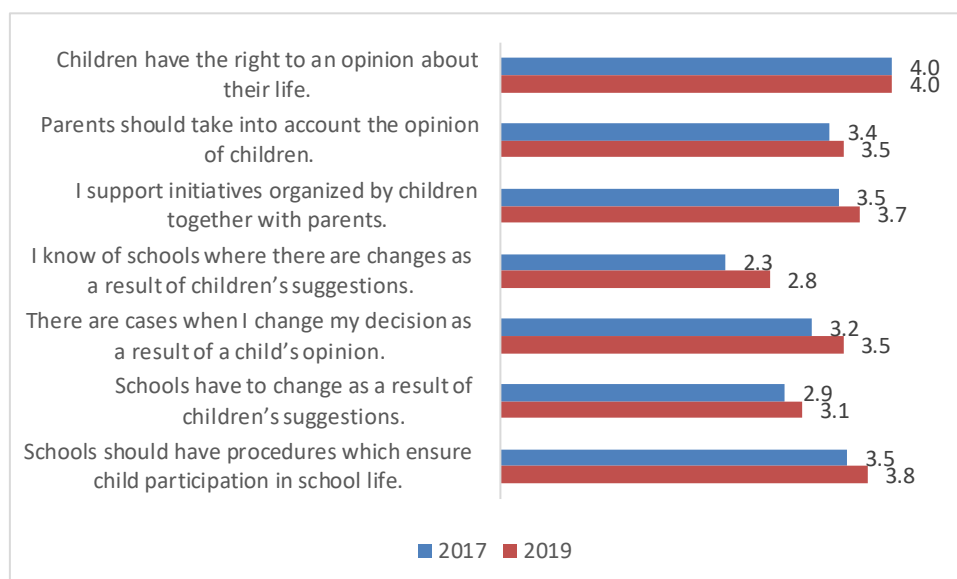
The qualitative data from the focus group with parents participants and the interview with a parent non-participant is similar to the teachers' and children's opinions expressed in interviews. The non-participant feels that a lot more needs to be done, regarding children and parents' participation in school life, while participants are satisfied with their children's and their own involvement.

Figure 53 Participation - focus group with parents' participants



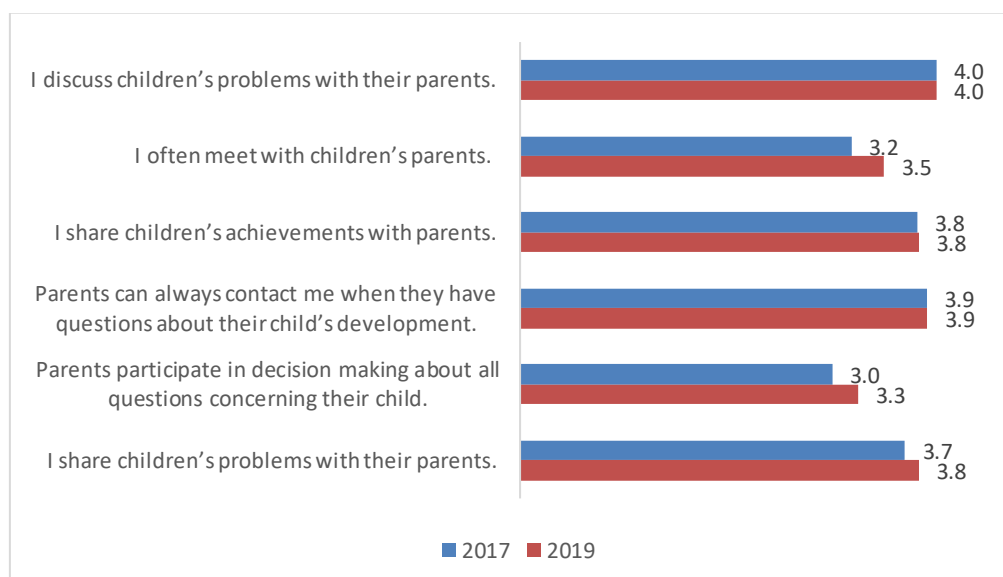
Social workers think that children have the right to an opinion about their life and parents should take into account that opinion (Figure 54). They support initiatives organized by children and think schools have to change as a result of children's suggestions and procedures which ensure participation. They have also responded that there are cases when they changed their decision as a result of a child's opinion. The only statement with a lower level of agreement is that they know of schools where there are changes as a result of children's suggestions. There are no significant differences from 2017 results.

Figure 54 Social workers' attitude towards child participation - 2017 and 2019 results



When it comes to social workers' attitudes toward parents, they totally agree with the statement that they discuss children's problems with their parents (Figure 55). On the whole, they have a good communication with parents with a little lower average score regarding parents' participation in decision making and meeting with parents often. There are no significant differences between results from the two waves of the research.

Figure 55 Social workers' attitude toward parents - 2017 and 2019 results



5.3.5. Summary of the situation in Slovenia

The comparative analysis of all the data shows that there is clear influence of the project interventions and differences between the control groups of non-participants and the participants' opinions. On the whole, children like going to school, discussing interesting topics and playing with their friends. They rely on adults in cases of bullying and share that these situations happen less often in the last years. This is also confirmed by teachers, who claim they have a good communication with parents and other professionals. Bullying is mostly in the form of verbal and physical violence and minor cases happen more often. Children feel involved and able to participate and make changes as a result of their suggestions. Some parents are also involved in school life. All the groups of participants are satisfied with the project interventions and activities and believe they

were useful to create a safer environment at school, work on prevention and know how to react in cases of violence, children are involved and the whole school community is working as a team, including parents.

At the same time, the non-participants share about more cases of violence, low level of participation of children and parents and less awareness to recognize cases of bullying at school. Teachers say that parents don't cooperate, children don't trust some teachers to share with them their problems. All the groups of participants say there is room for improvement.

5.4.Serbia

5.4.1. Data collection process

The surveys were administered in a primary school in Serbia, which has participated in the project and the respondents were chosen from the same school as the first wave of the project. The research sample is the following: 22 teachers working at the school, 27 children in 7th grade, 27 parents of children who took part in the survey and 10 professionals - pedagogue and psychologist who work at the school; other professionals and practitioners who are members of a local network of professionals and experts for children who have collaborated with the school, as well as experts and professionals from other sectors: education, health and social protection.

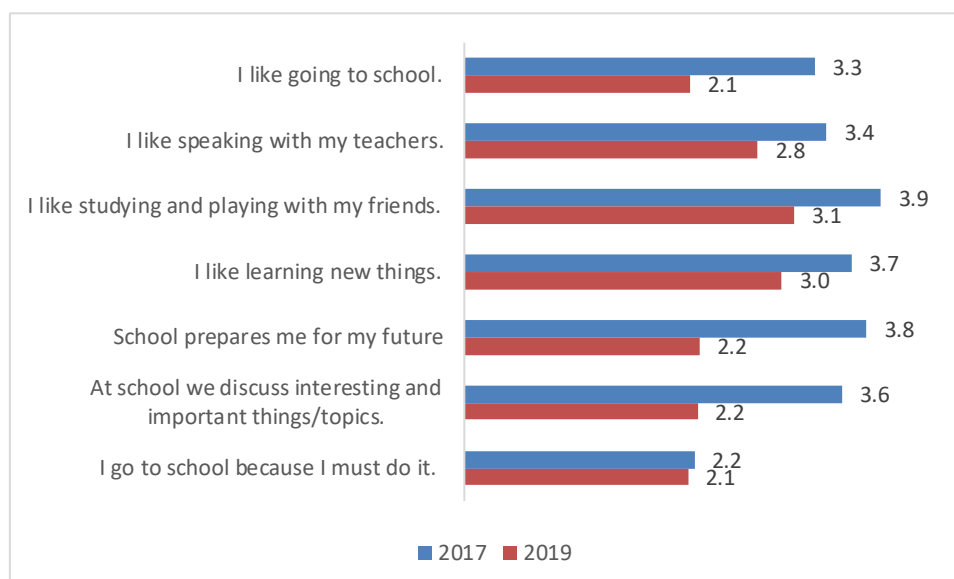
Three interviews and three focus groups were conducted: interviews with professional participant and non-participant and with a parent non-participant; focus groups with children participants and non-participants and with parents participants.

The challenges in the data collection process included motivating parents to complete the questionnaire, as well as motivating professionals to take the time to complete the questionnaire in addition to their work. The children were very interested in completing the questionnaire. During the focus groups it was a great challenge to motivate parents to respond, especially parents whose children had inappropriate behaviour at school towards their peers. It was also a great challenge to find an adequate focus group time for conduction, because during the morning parents mostly work, and in the late afternoon and evening hours, they prefer to spend time with family and rest, rather than to engage in school activities.

5.4.2. Attitudes toward school

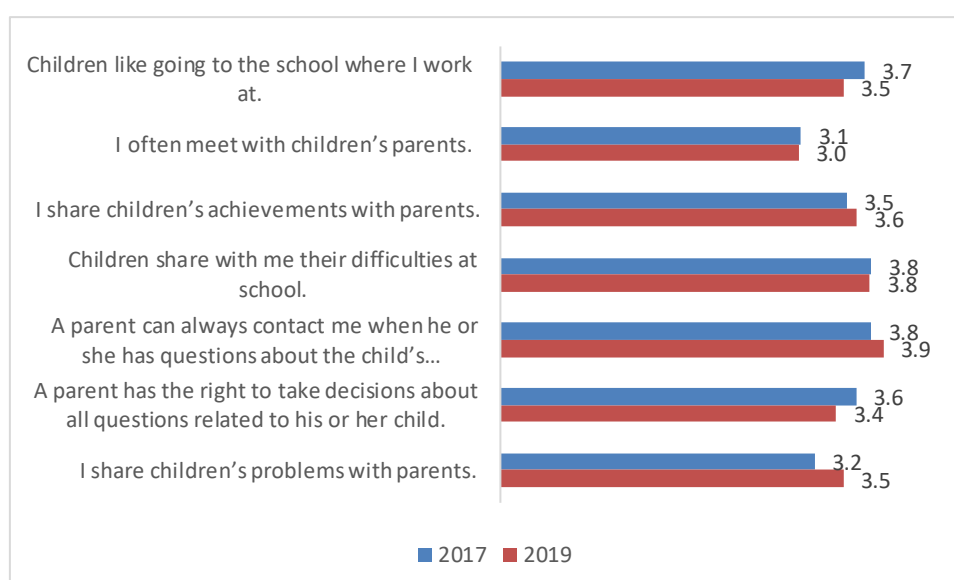
Children's attitudes toward school, shown on figure 56, demonstrate a smaller share of students, in comparison with 2017 results, who respond positively to statements such as whether they like going to school, speaking with their teachers, studying and playing with friends, whether school prepares them for their future or they discuss interesting topics. Responses are divided between rather yes and rather no. The sole exception is the statement that they go to school because they must do it. These differences in responses could be attributed to the difference in age of respondents between the first and second wave of the research (5th grade in 2017 and 7th grade in 2019), the possibility for children to share or changes in the school environment.

Figure 56 Children's attitudes toward school – 2017 and 2019 results



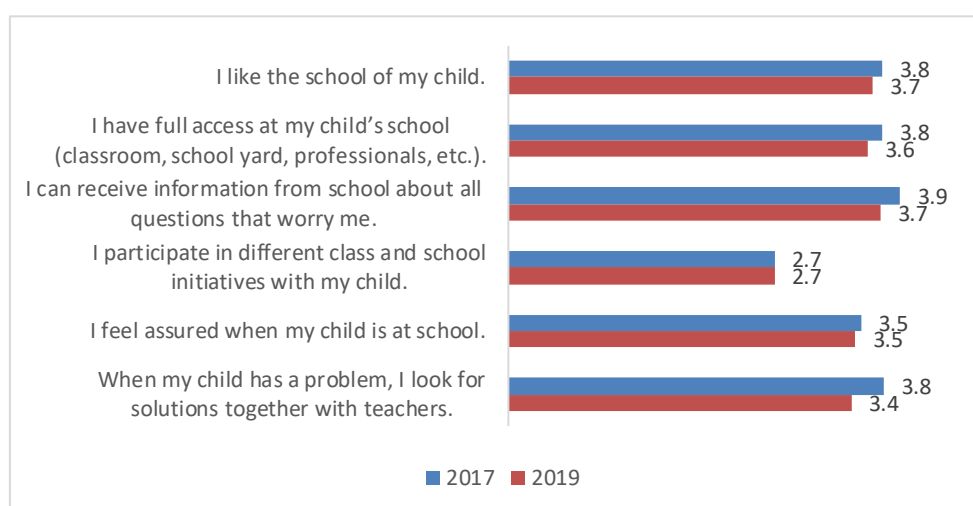
Unlike results regarding children, teachers' attitudes toward school haven't changed significantly from 2017 and they remain quite positive (Figure 57). They believe that school is a pleasant place for students to go and there is good cooperation between them and parents.

Figure 57 Teachers' attitudes towards school - 2017 and 2019 results



The situation is similar with parents (Figure 58) – there are no significant differences between the two waves of the research and answers are mostly positive. Parents consider that collaboration between them and the school is good, that they have access to information they need about their child development and that they feel assured when their child is at school.

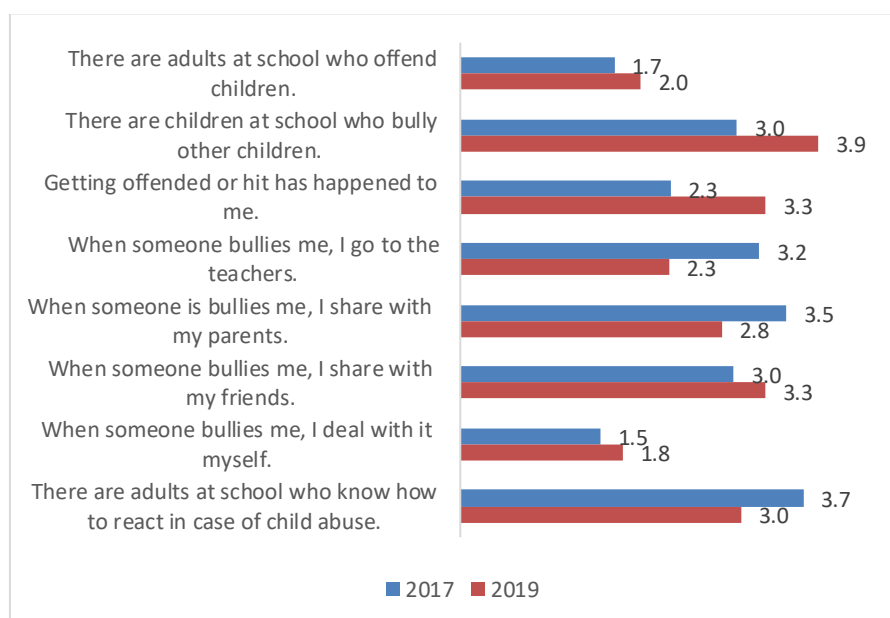
Figure 58 Parents' attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



5.4.3. Attitudes toward violence

Results on figure 59, regarding children's attitudes toward violence, show that more children than in 2017 share that they have been offended or hit and that there are children at school who bully others. At the same time, less children go to their teachers and parents when someone bullies them, they rather share with their friends. They are also reluctant to deal with problems themselves. A smaller share, though still with positive answers have said that there are adults at school who know how to react in case of child abuse. It appears that bullying happens more often and adults are trusted less. This could be due to changes in the school environment or a possibility for children to express themselves more.

Figure 59 Children's attitudes toward violence – 2017 and 2019 results



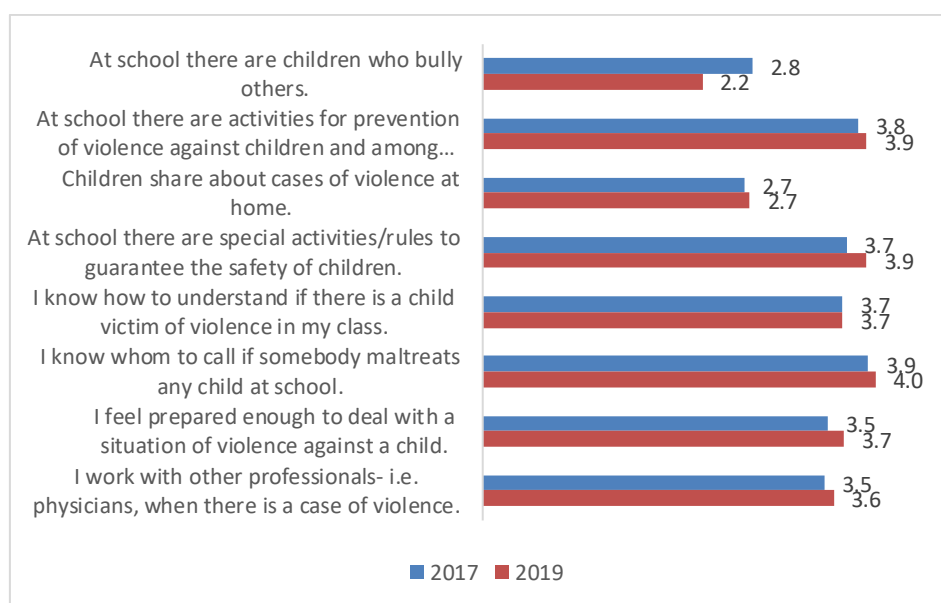
According to qualitative data, children feel safe at school, although they share about some cases of bullying during breaks (Figure 60). They decide whether to share with adults, depending on the severity of the case, but sometimes they prefer not to do anything. Mostly, they count on their friends, but they would talk to parents and teachers if there is a serious case of bullying. They see reasons for school violence in the influence of parents, joking and differences between children, usually weaker children are getting attacked. If they ask teachers for help, children believe they will be supported. There are no significant differences between participants and non-participants.

Figure 60 Environment at school - focus groups with children participants and non-participants



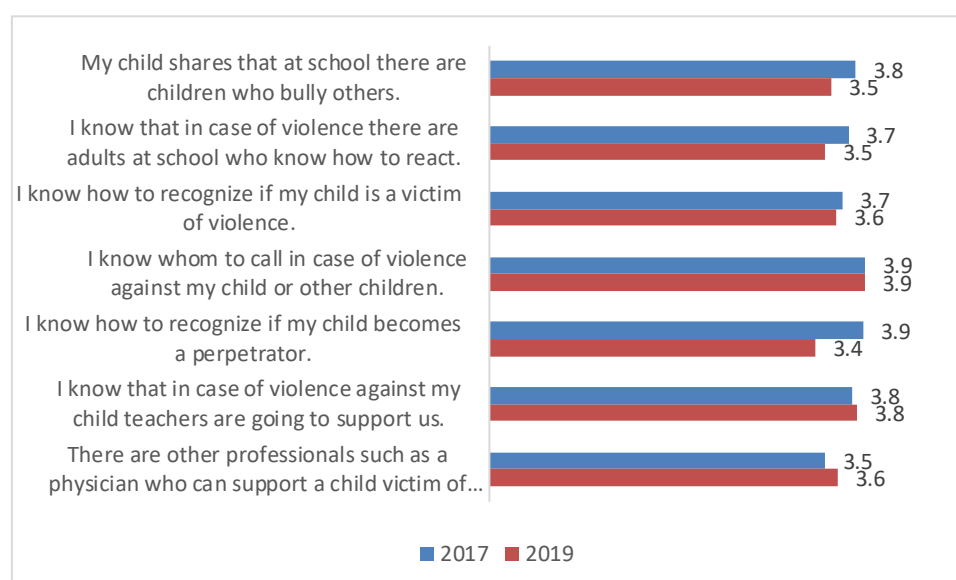
When it comes to teachers' attitudes toward violence (Figure 61), they are rather positive. It seems that teachers are familiar with cases of bullying in their school. On the other hand, it seems that they are quite confident in their own knowledge and ability to handle such situations. There are no significant differences between results from the two waves of research.

Figure 61 Teachers' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



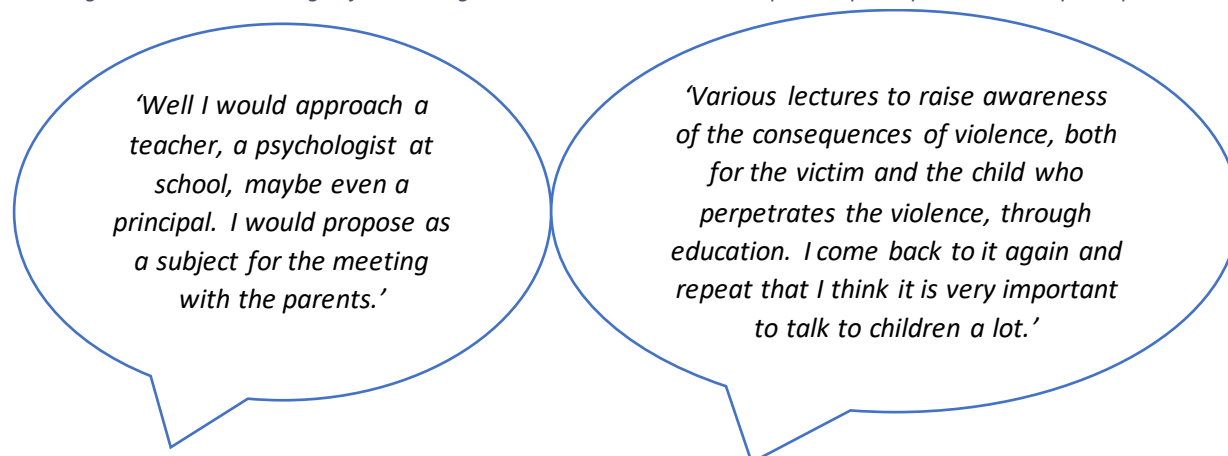
The situation with parents is similar – they know of cases of bullying at school, but they also share that they count on professionals in the school community and they feel prepared to react themselves (Figure 62). There are no significant differences from results from 2017.

Figure 62 Parents' attitudes toward violence – 2017 and 2019 results



In the interview with a parent non-participant and the focus group with parents participants they shared that they know of child bullying mostly in the formal of verbal or physical violence, often through the use of social media (Figure 63). They confirm the quantitative results by showing they trust adults at school and they would turn to them for help. In addition, parents expressed the opinion it is important to talk to children and allow them to express themselves, instead of punishing them. There are no notable differences between opinions of parents participants and non-participants.

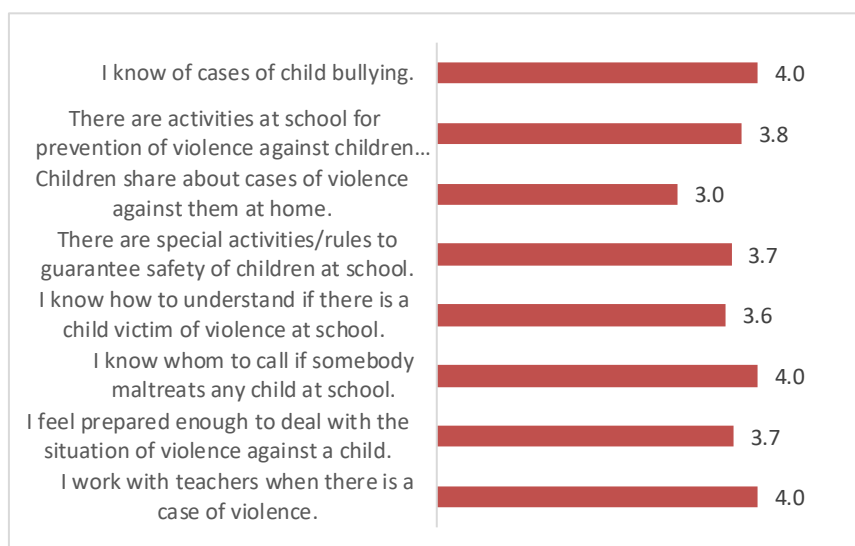
Figure 63 Parents' strategies for handling the situation - interviews with parents participants and non-participants



Parents share that they support their children to express themselves and tell them about problems and school and participate in decision-making. Children feel safe at home. However, professionals think that parents are not familiar with approaches to positive parenting and some of them use traditional methods, such as punishment.

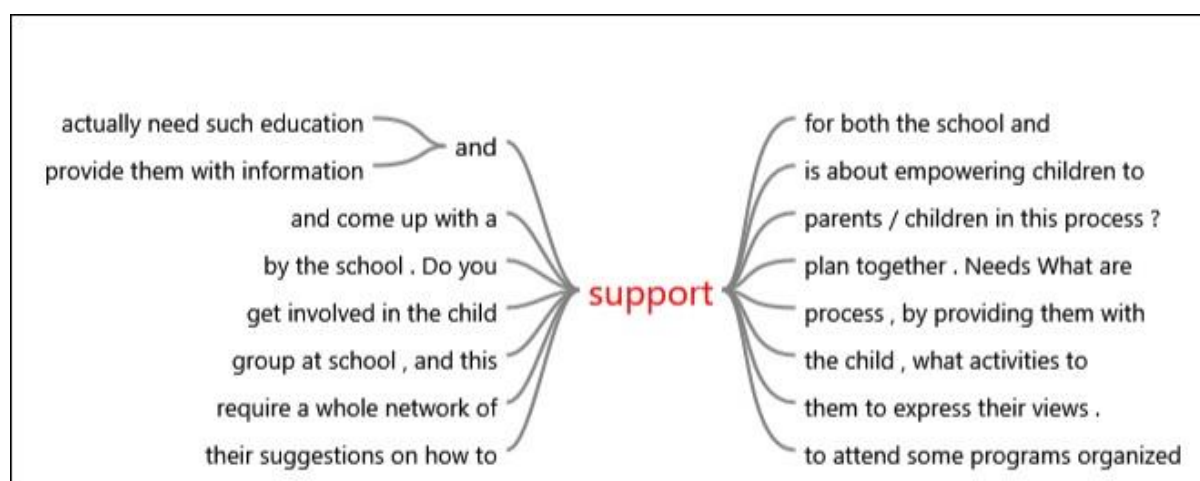
When it comes to violence issues, professionals think that there are cases of violence between children, but they believe in their ability to handle all situations and knowledge of the necessary steps that should be taken, as well as their cooperation with parents and the whole school community. It should be noted that results from the previous wave of research and the current one are identical, therefore omitted from figure 64.

Figure 64 Social workers' attitudes toward violence – 2019 results



Qualitative data results show that professionals believe supporting children and parents is an important part of dealing with the problem of school violence and they emphasize the work on prevention, the need for trainings and the possibility for all parties involved to express their views (Figure 65).

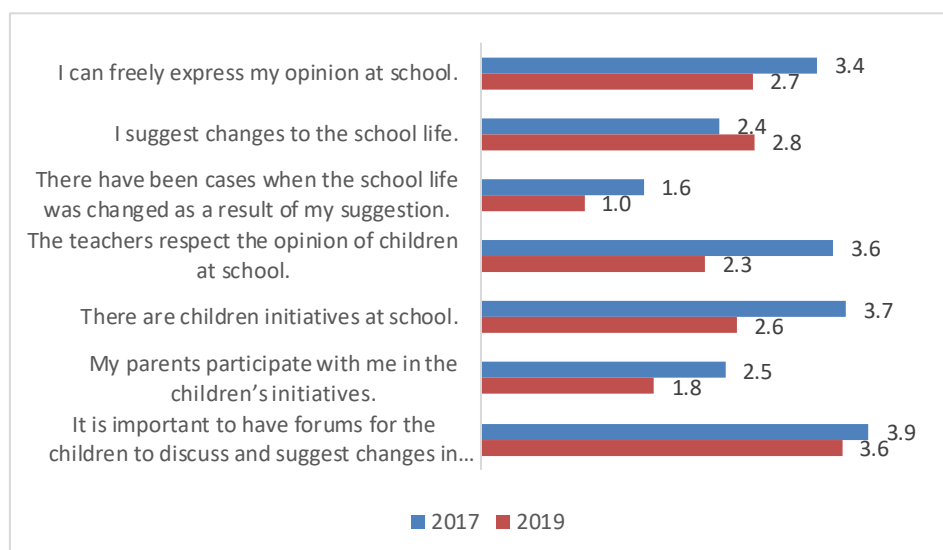
Figure 65 Supporting according to professionals



5.4.4. Child participation

On figure 66 it is observed that there is a decrease in the share of children responding that teachers respect their opinion at school, there are children initiatives and they can freely express their opinion in comparison with 2017 results. Most of them, even a bit less than the previous wave of research, think that there have been cases when the school life was changed as a result of their suggestions. The majority of them think that it will be important to have school council, in which the children can discuss and suggest changes. These results correspond with children's responses on the other two components and could be attributed to changes in the school environment, age of the students or other external factors.

Figure 66 Children's attitudes toward their participation - 2017 and 2019 results



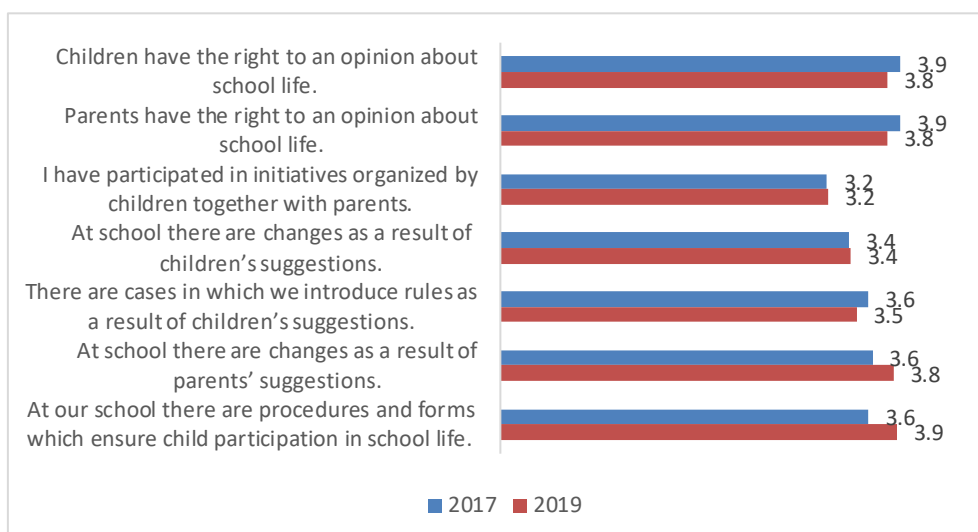
Qualitative results (Figure 67) confirm the responses on figure 66 – both children participants in the project and non-participants feel that their voice should be heard and they should be able to make suggestions and to actually influence school life, but this is not currently happening.

Figure 67 Children's opinions regarding participation - participants and non-participants



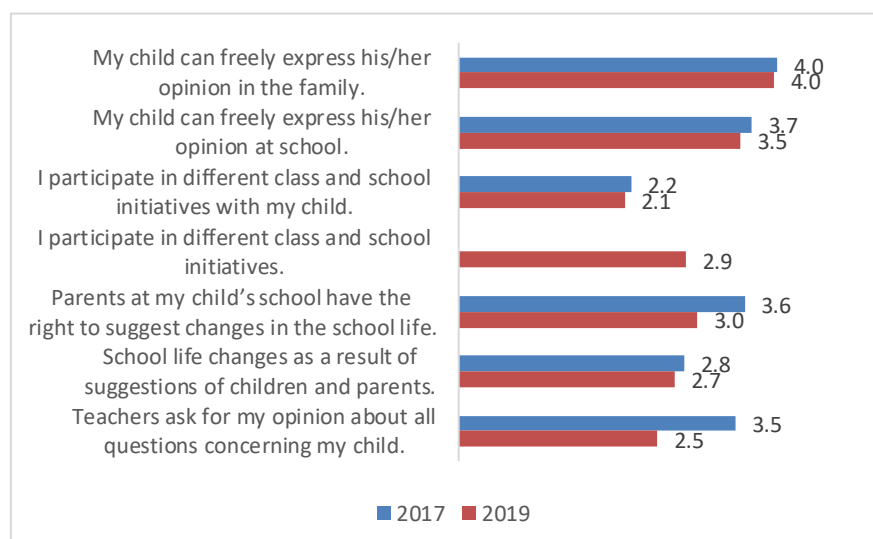
Teachers' attitudes towards child participation (Figure 68) are far more positive than children's. The majority of teachers consider that children and parents have the right to an opinion about school life and that there are changes as a result of student and parent suggestions. Also, teachers believe that they respect children's point of view and as result of that they make changes in their own practice. There are no significant differences from 2017 results.

Figure 68 Teachers' attitudes toward child participation - 2017 and 2019 results



Regarding child participation, most of the parents think that children can freely express their opinion in family and in school (Figure 69). They also believe that school respects children's opinion when it comes to decision about school life. There are no significant differences from 2017 results, except for a smaller share of parents responding that teachers ask for their opinion about questions concerning their child. Overall, parents' attitudes toward child participation correspond to teachers' attitudes.

Figure 69 Parents' attitudes toward child participation – 2017 and 2019 results



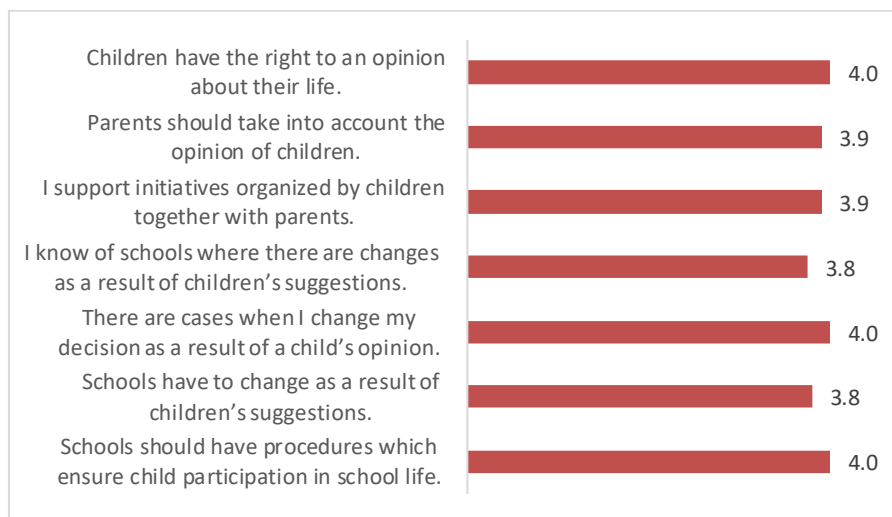
Parents believe that children should be involved, their opinion should be asked and they should be able to influence school life (Figure 70). Some of them understand child participation as involvement in extra-curricular activities. At the same time, they see their own participation as mostly formal, through a Parent Council and think that some parents are not sufficiently involved in school life due to lack of time.

Figure 70 Parents' opinions on child participation - participants and non-participants



Regarding child participation professionals think that children have right to their own opinion and also they state that are ready to change things as a result of children's initiative (Figure 71). It should be noted that results from 2017 and 2019 are identical, therefore omitted from the figure below. Professionals' attitudes toward child participation correspond with parents and teachers' views on the same topic.

Figure 71 Social workers' attitudes toward child participation – 2019 results



According to the opinions of professionals' participants in the project, expressed in interviews, there is an opportunity for parents and children to participate in school life, express their views and actually cause changes to the school environment. Non-participants, however, think that participation is important, but it is not yet achieved (Figures 72 and 73).

Figure 73 Interview with professional participant

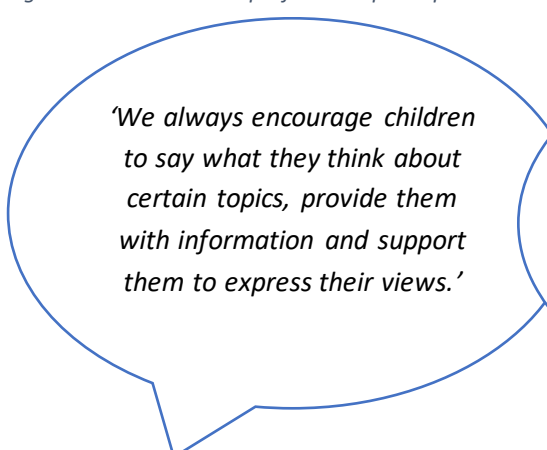
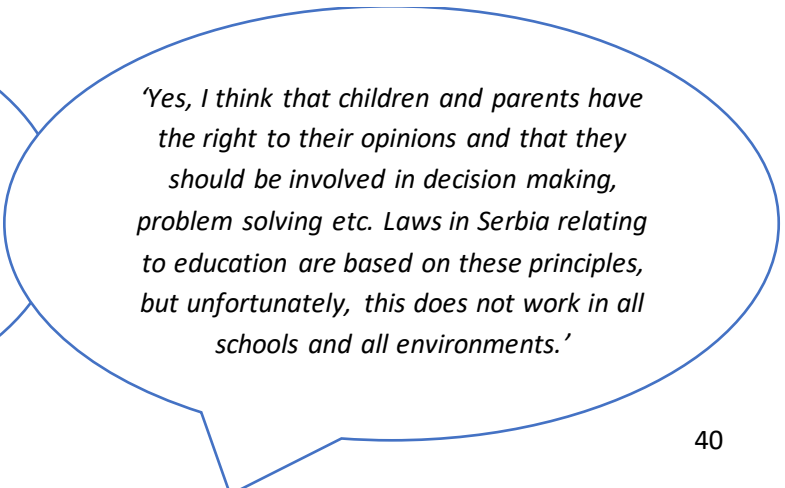
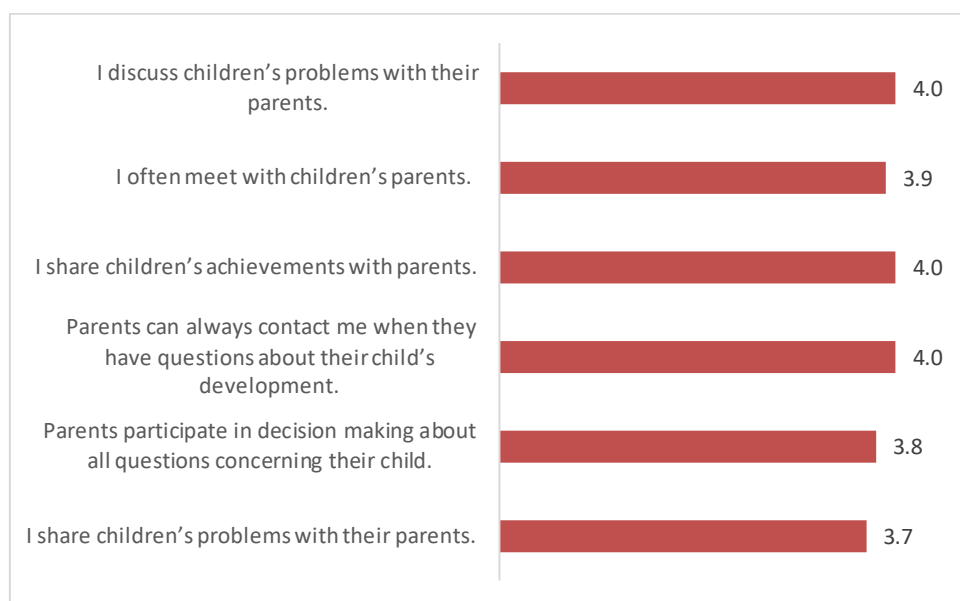


Figure 72 Interview with professional non-participant



Professionals share that they have a good cooperation with parents and involve them in decision making (Figure 74). As in the previous figures regarding social workers' responses, results from 2017 are not included, because they are identical.

Figure 74 Social workers' attitudes toward parents



5.4.5. Summary of the situation in Serbia

The comparative analysis of all the data shows that there is no significant difference between opinions of participants and non-participants in the project, expressed in focus groups and interviews, except for opinions of professionals, regarding child participation. All the participants are satisfied with the project results and activities and consider them useful and especially important for increasing knowledge and awareness on school violence and working on prevention. A smaller share of children like going to school or consider it helpful or their future. Parents feel assured when their children are in school and think that they have good collaboration with teachers. Teachers also think that collaboration with parents is satisfactory.

Regarding the subject of violence, all participants consider that there are cases of violence in school. While children believe prefer to turn to friends, adults (teachers, professionals and parents) are confident that they know how to handle such a situation. When it comes to child participation in decisions of school life, the results show that children and adults have opposite points of view. While adults believe that children can freely express their opinion in family and school and that there are examples that things changed as a result of children's initiative, children don't feel involved.

5.5. Bulgaria

5.5.1. Data collection process

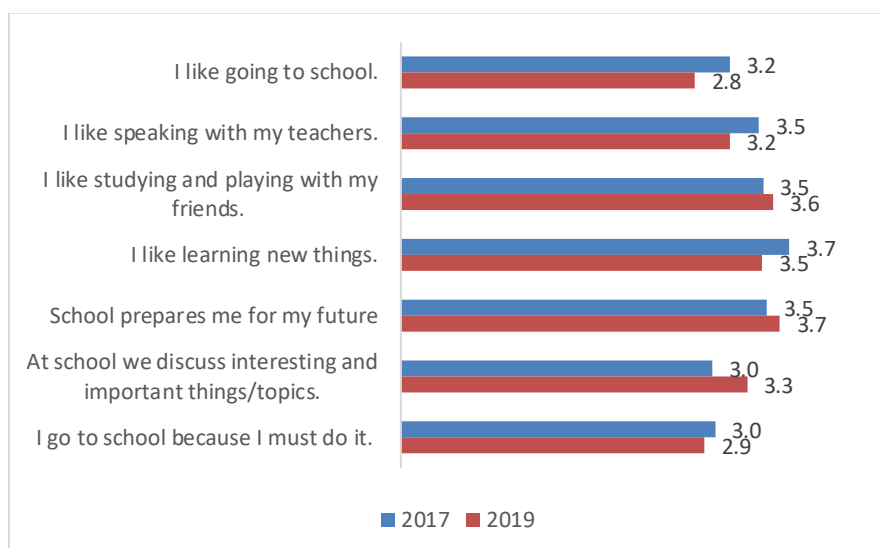
Qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to achieve the goals of the research – surveys, focus groups and interviews with children, parents, professionals and teachers. 110 respondents filled out the questionnaires. The interviews and focus groups included participants and control groups of non-participants in the project.

The challenges in the data collection process include a difficult to reach parents through the school, the reasons for which should be researched further. The model of 'School as a safe environment' supposes an organisation and management by the school, which has not yet been achieved. For this reason, the school in Sofia was not included in the project activities, which further hindered the inclusion of all groups of respondents.

5.5.2. Attitudes toward school

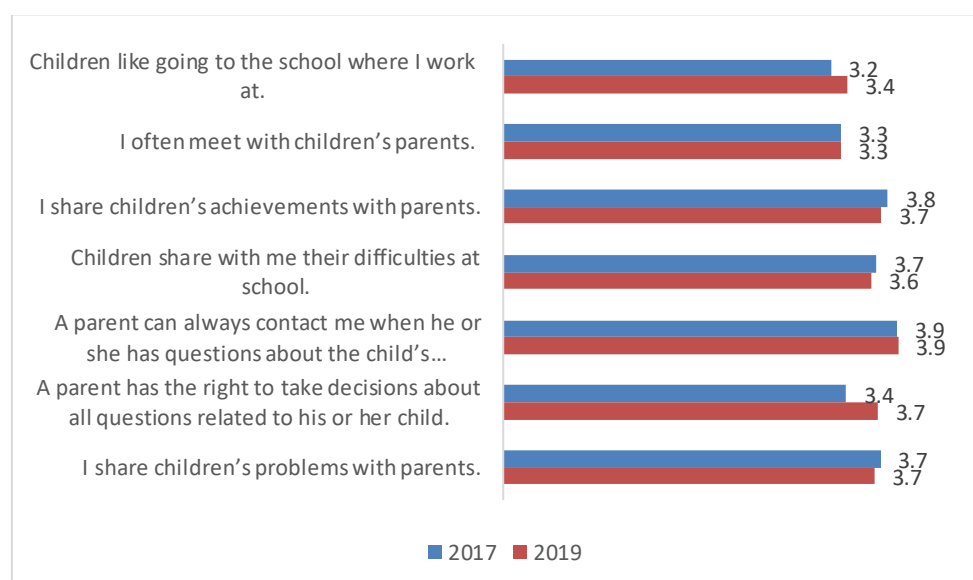
As it could be seen from figure 75, children like going to school and have an overall positive attitude towards it – they think school prepares them for their future, they consider the topics discussed at school interesting, they like speaking with their teachers and playing with their friends. At the same time, they have also responded they go to school because they must do it. There are no significant differences from 2017 results.

Figure 75 Children's attitudes toward school – 2017 and 2019 results



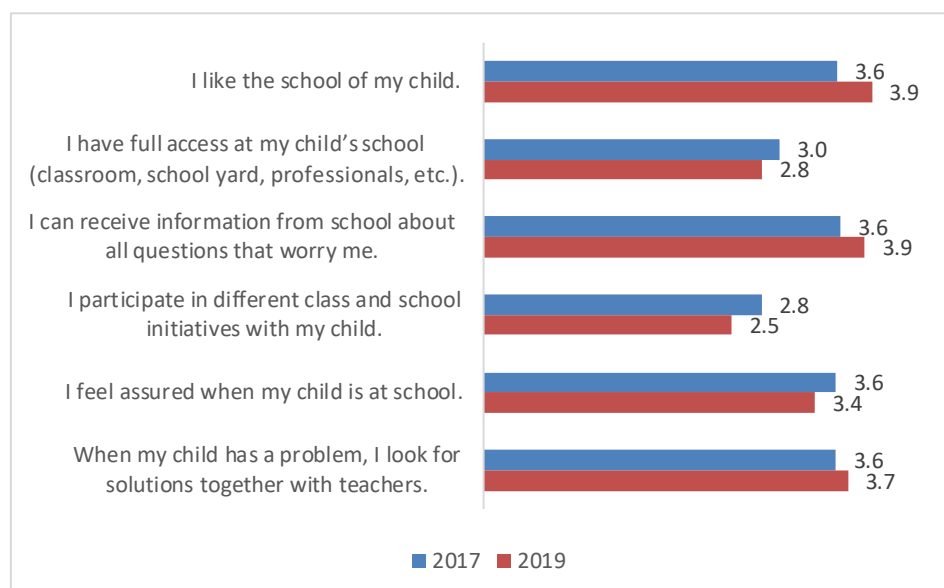
Teachers also have a positive attitude regarding children's desire to go to school (Figure 76). They believe children like going to school and they maintain a good communication with parents. There are no significant differences with results from the previous wave of research.

Figure 76 Teachers' attitudes toward school – 2017 and 2019 results



Parents' attitudes toward school are ambiguous – they like the school and feel assured when their child is there (Figure 77). At the same time a smaller share have replied that they have full access and participate in different class and school initiatives. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

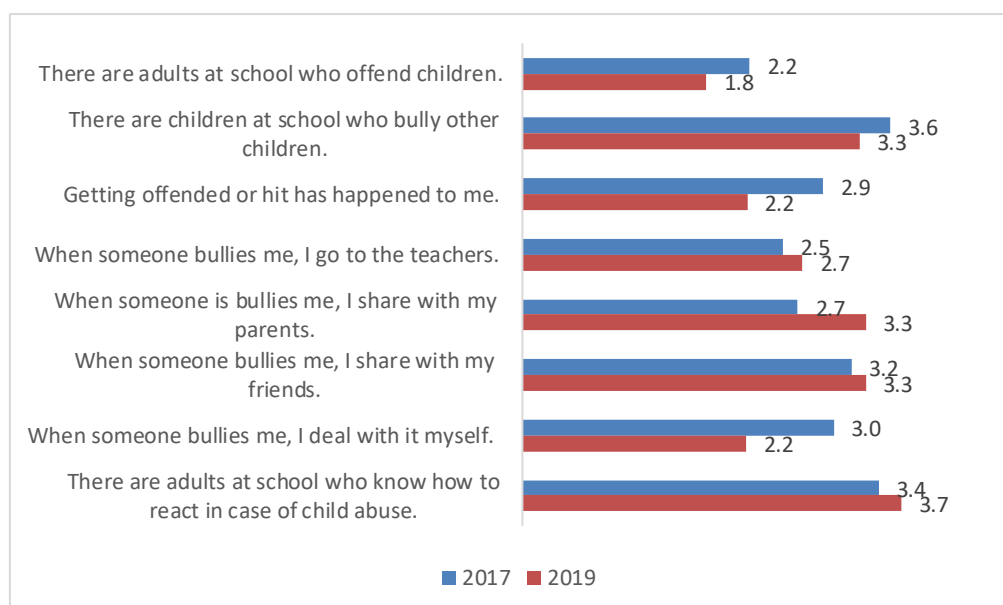
Figure 77 Parents' attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



5.5.3. Attitudes toward violence

Regarding the attitudes toward violence, children don't think there are adults at school who offend children, but there are children who bully others (Figure 78). In comparison with 2017 results, less of them respond that getting offended or hit has happened to them. They are more inclined to share problems with bullying with their parents, but also with friends and teachers, less of them deal with it themselves. They rely on adults to deal with problems with school violence.

Figure 78 Children's attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



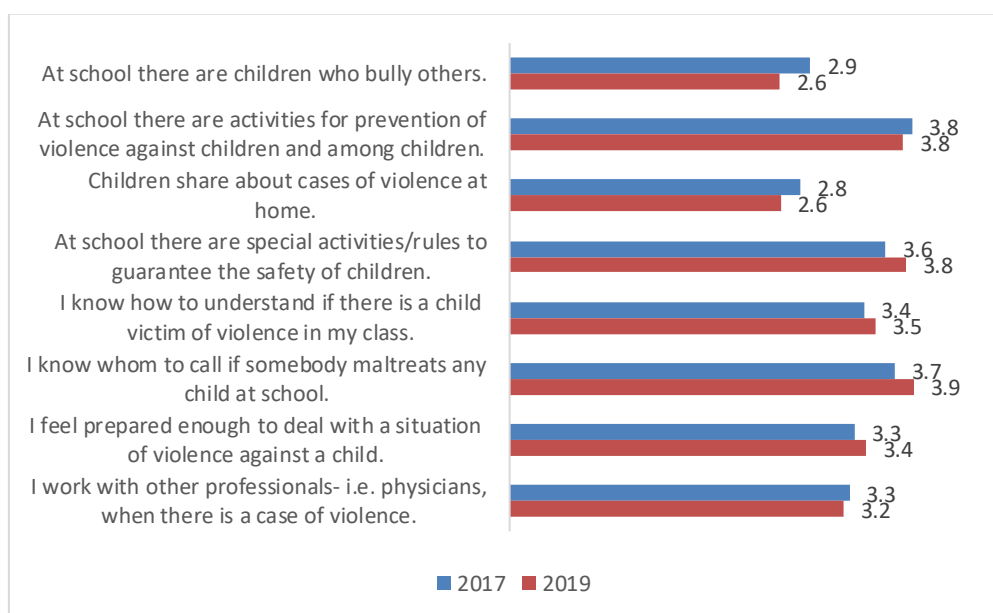
According to interview and focus group with children participants in the project, they are inclined to talk to adults when there is a problem, but generally feel safe at school (Figure 79). Bullying is mostly in the form of verbal and physical violence and also through social media. The main cause for the issues of school of violence are seen in differences between children – in social status, race ethnicity, etc. In addition, students share that a reason can be the inability of teachers to capture their attention.

Figure 79 Children's perceptions of violence



Teachers share that they feel prepared to deal with cases of violence and there are activities at school for prevention. A bit less, but still many of them say that there are children who bully others at school and that children share about cases of violence at home. There is no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

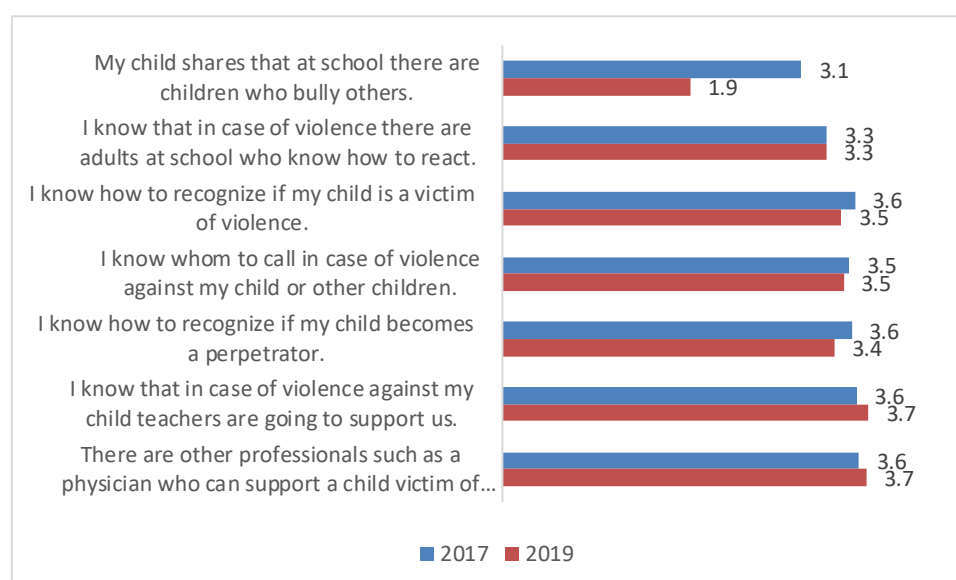
Figure 80 Teachers' attitudes toward violence – 2017 and 2019 results



The opinion shared by a teacher in an interview is that the school environment is safe because there are good professionals working there.

Parents' attitudes toward violence are quite positive (Figure 81) – they share the opinion that there are adults at school who know how to deal with cases of violence and parents themselves have a high level of awareness and know how to recognize if their child becomes a perpetrator or victim. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results, except for the smaller share of parents who say that their children share there are cases of child bullying at school. This could be attributed to changes in the school environment due to project results or other external factors.

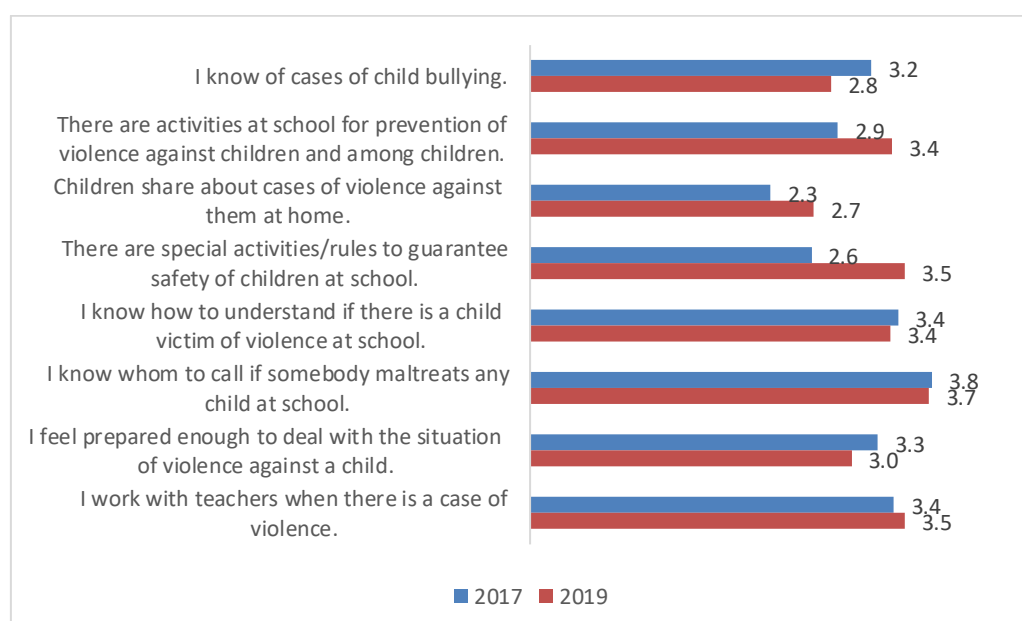
Figure 81 Parents' attitudes toward violence – 2017 and 2019 results



The opinion of the parent non-participant in the project is that the school environment is safe and there are no cases of violence, but if there are, the school community knows how to deal with them. Parents say that they encourage their children to share at home, but at the same time professionals and teachers believe they could need to learn more about positive parenting.

Social workers' attitudes toward violence are also positive (Figure 82). A significantly higher share than in 2017 have responded that there are special activities to guarantee children's safety at school and activities for prevention as well. Professionals also feel prepared enough to deal with cases of violence at school and work together with teachers. A bit less share that they know of cases of child bullying. However, a little bit bigger share of social workers claim that children share about cases of violence at home. This could be due to a bigger inclination of children to share on the whole.

Figure 82 Social workers' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



According to a professional participant in the project, prevention and individual work on cases is very important to deal with the issue of school bullying (Figure 83). It is also necessary to have good cooperation with parents and follow protocols.

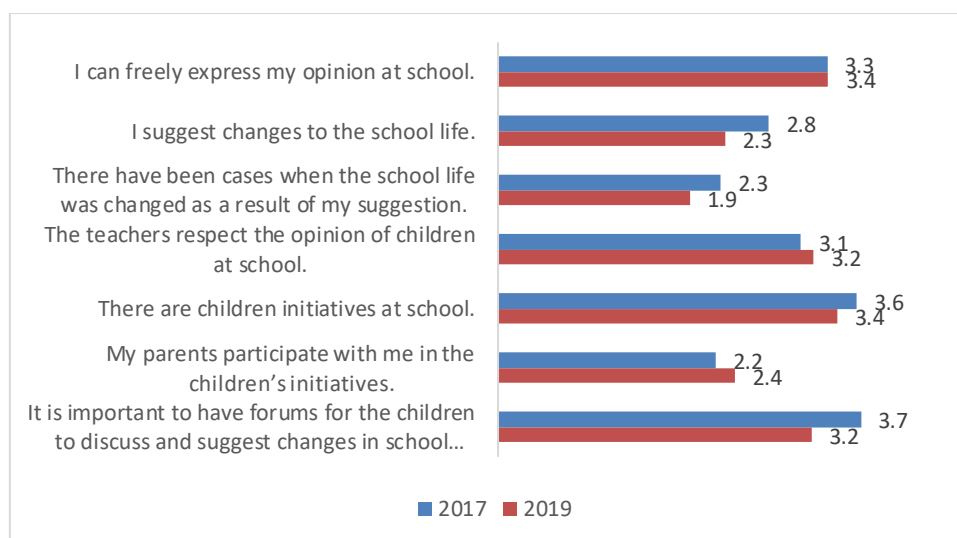
Figure 83 Professionals' opinions on violence - interview with professional participant



5.5.4. Child participation

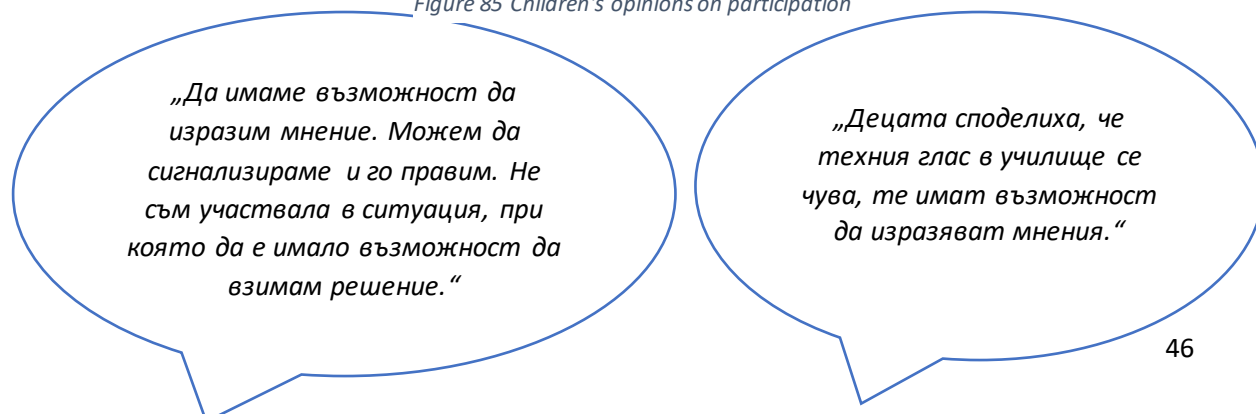
Children say that they can express their opinion at school and suggest changes to school life, but mostly don't think that there have been cases when school life was changed as a result of their suggestions. The teachers respect students' opinions and there are student initiatives at school, but not so much together with parents. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results, shown on figure 84.

Figure 84 Children's attitudes toward their participation – 2017 and 2019 results



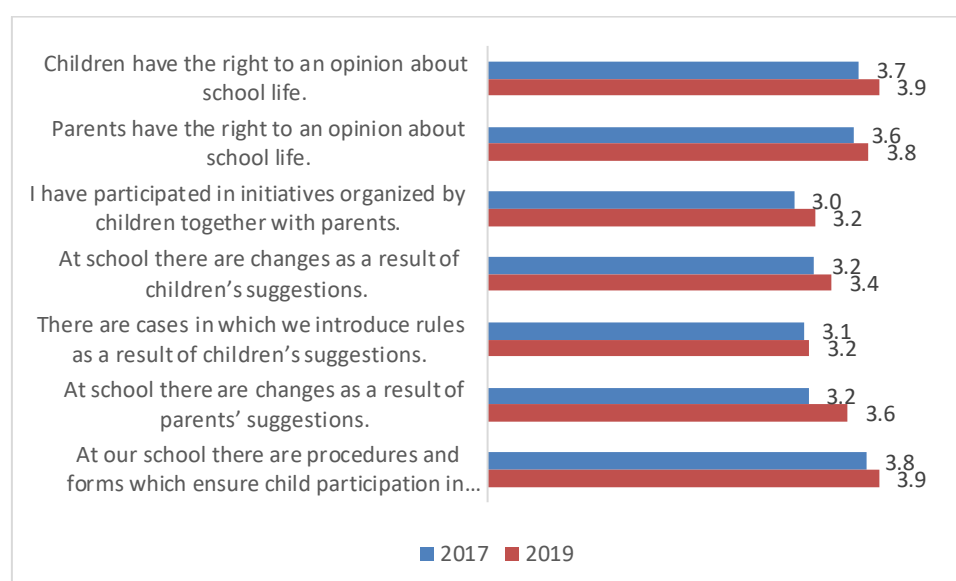
The qualitative data confirms quantitative results that students can express their opinions at school, but not make decisions or influence school life up to the degree of making changes to it (Figure 85).

Figure 85 Children's opinions on participation



Teachers have a positive attitude toward child participation, shown by results on figure 86 – they think that there are changes as a result of student and parent suggestions, new rules that are introduced, procedures and forms ensuring participation and school initiatives organized by children and parents.

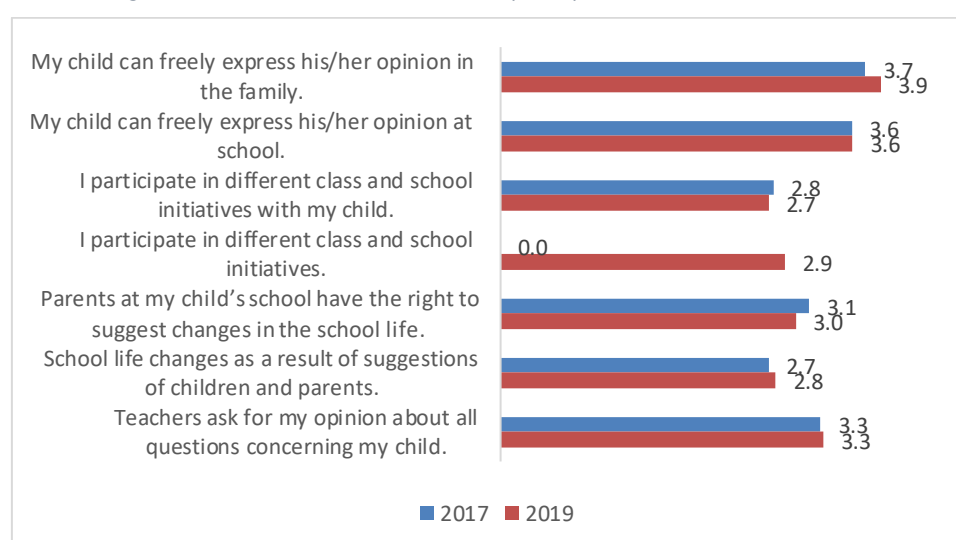
Figure 86 Teachers' attitudes toward child participation - 2017 and 2019 results



The interview with a teacher confirms quantitative results – students can express their opinion and there are forms ensuring their participation.

According to parents' opinions, shown on figure 87, children can also freely express themselves at school and in the family. A smaller share say that they participate in class and school initiatives and that school life changes as a result of suggestions of children and parents. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

Figure 87 Parents' attitudes toward child participation - 2017 and 2019 results

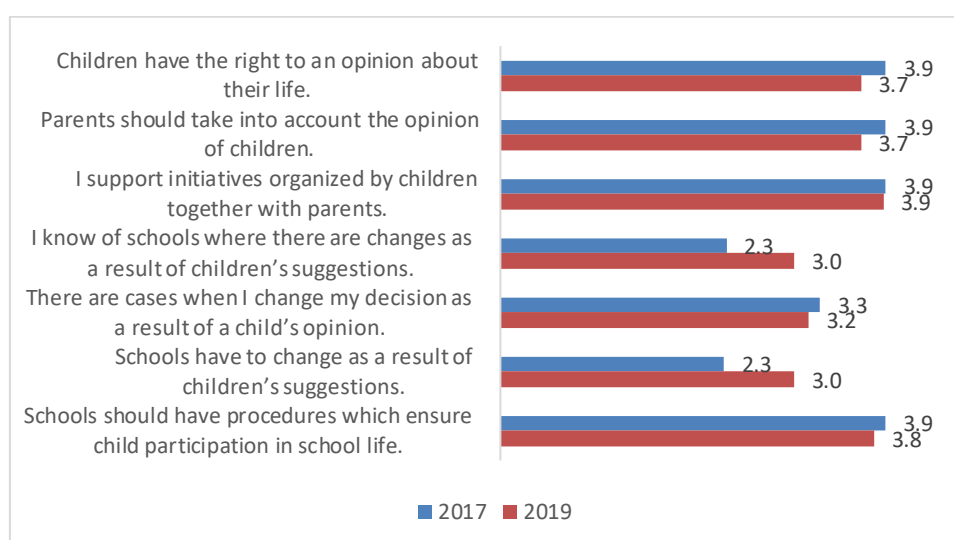


According to the parent non participant who took part in an interview, there are no significant changes as a result of student suggestions and parent participation is ensured mostly through the inclusion I a parent council only for some parents, it's mostly formal.

Social workers' attitudes toward child participation are positive (Figure 88)– they think children have the right to an opinion about their life, parents should take into account their opinion and they

support initiatives organized by children together with parents. In comparison with 2017, there are more professionals who know of schools where there are changes as a result of children's suggestions and that schools have to change as a result of their suggestions.

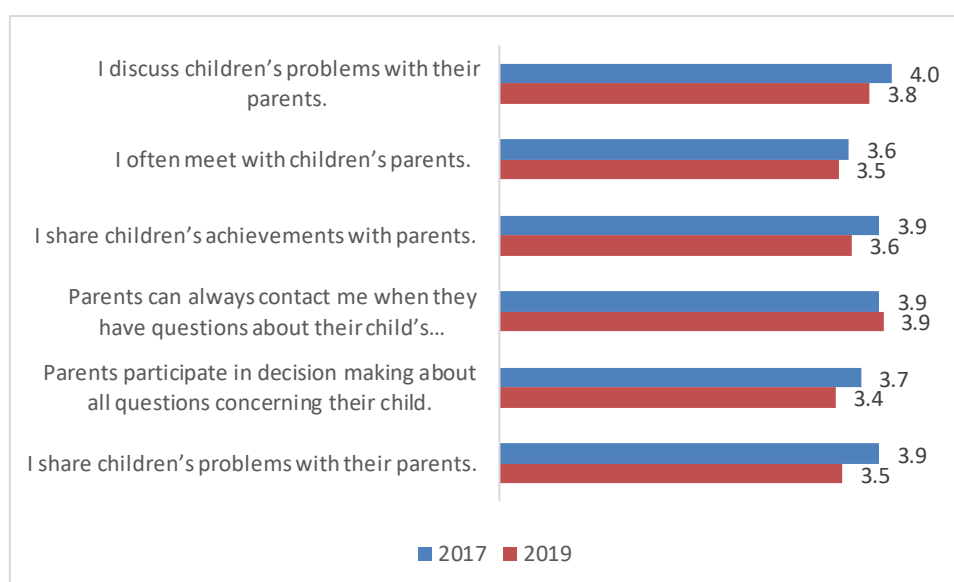
Figure 88 Social workers' attitudes toward child participation – 2017 and 2019 results



According to the professional respondent in an interview, parents and students should have opportunities to express their views and there are different procedures and mechanisms at schools, which ensure it.

Social workers say that they have good cooperation with parents by discussing their problems and reaching out to them, whenever necessary. There are no significant differences with 2017 results (Figure 89).

Figure 89 Social workers attitudes toward parents - 2017 and 2019 results



5.5.5. Summary of the situation in Bulgaria

The comparative analysis between all the sources of information shows that there are cases of violence at school, but children and teachers believe that the environment at school is mostly safe. School bullying is mostly due to differences between children based on ethnicity, age, character and other. All participants believe that school community can deal with issues of school violence and

there are protocols in place. Child participation according to students is mostly limited to expressing their opinions, but adults believe they can also make changes to school life.

Professionals and parents believe that project initiatives have been useful, and they have accumulated knowledge on how to recognize violence and deal with it.

5.6.Moldova

5.6.1. Data collection process

The data collection process includes conduction of survey with 5 children, 5 parents and 3-4 teachers (other than the reference people and teachers participating in the training) in each institution. In one school 10 children, 10 parents and 8 teachers were questioned. Other questioned professionals were community social workers and police officers.

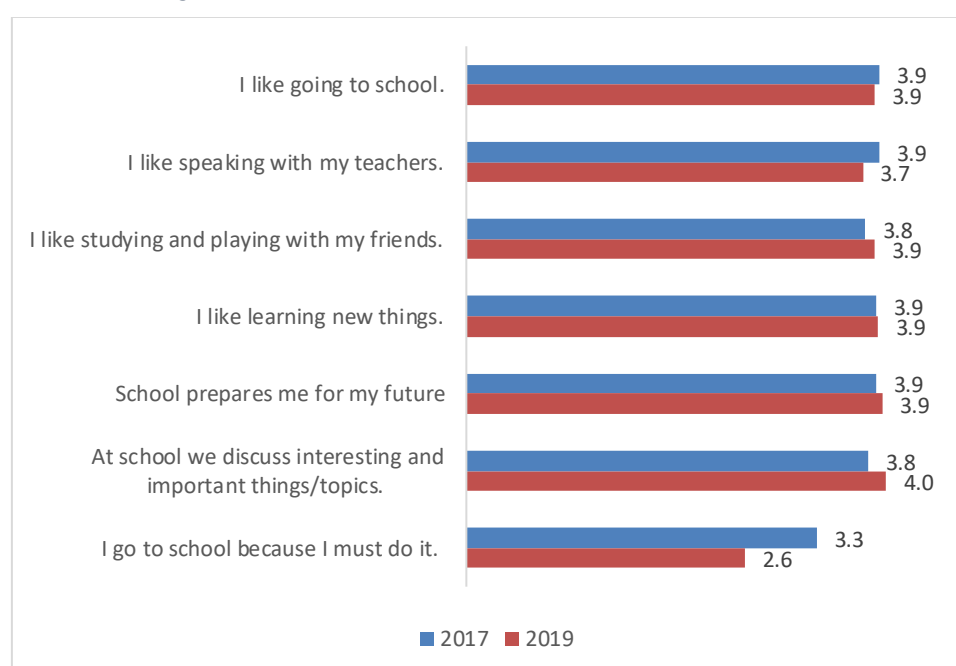
Qualitative research involved 28 participants, including 10 children, 10 parents and 8 professionals, including teachers, social assistants, police officers and specialists from child protection directorates. All 3 groups of participants were equally divided in participants and non-participants.

Challenges in the data collection process included children who changed their school, therefore excluded from the initial list of respondents; professionals' participants of the research who quit their jobs; instability of the schedule of social assistants and police officers.

5.6.2. Attitudes toward school

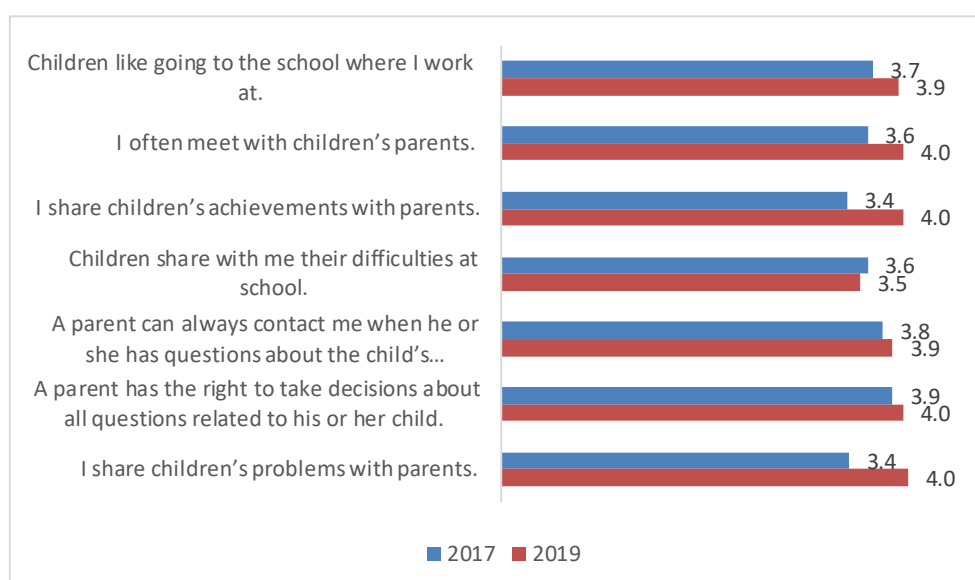
Children in Moldova are very positive about their school – they like going to school, speaking with their teachers, studying and playing with friends, learning new things. They believe that school prepares them for their future and the topics they discuss are interesting and important to them. Less children than in 2017 say that they go to school because they must do it, other than that there are no significant differences with 2017 results (Figure 90).

Figure 90 Children's attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



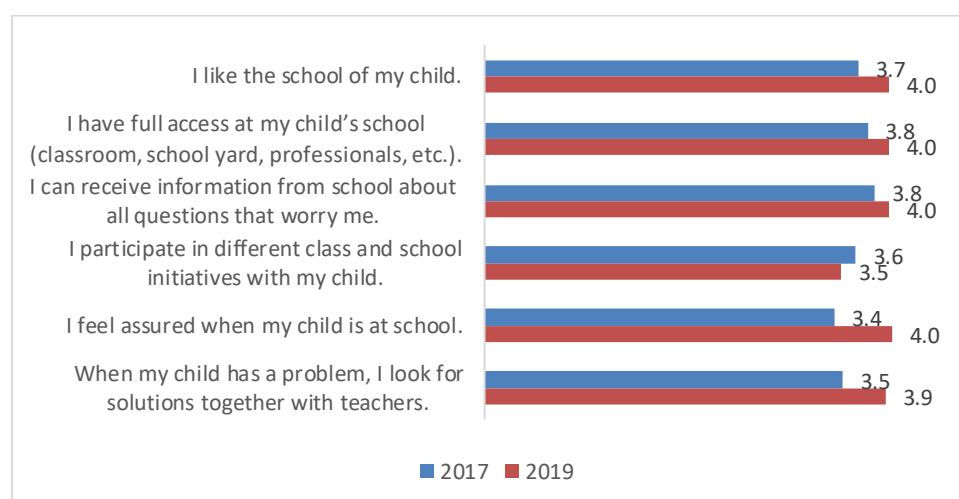
Teachers' attitudes toward school are also positive – they believe that children like going to school, they have good communication with parents and children (Figure 91). There are no significant differences from 2017 results.

Figure 91 Teachers' attitudes toward school – 2017 and 2019 results



Parents' attitudes are no different from those of the previous two groups – they like the school of their child, have full access and can receive information on all matters that concern them. They say they participate in different class and school initiatives with their child, feel assured when their child is at school. They also claim they have a good cooperation with teachers (Figure 92). There are no significant differences from 2017 except for a bigger share of parents responding that they feel assured when their child is at school.

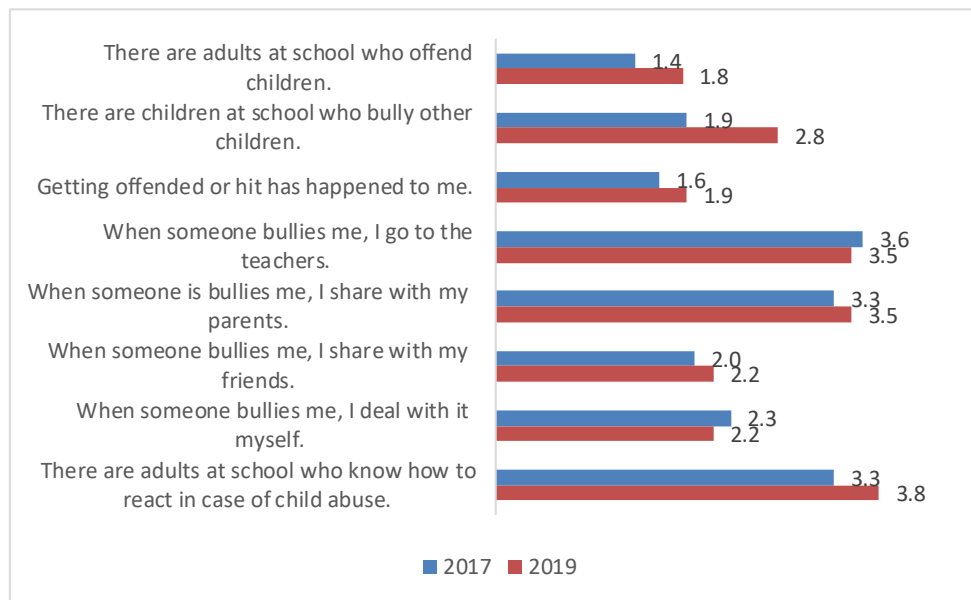
Figure 92 Parents' attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



5.6.3. Attitudes toward violence

According to children's opinions shown on figure 93, there aren't adults at school who offend children, but more than in 2017 they have responded there are children at school who bully other children. The reason for this could be change in the school environment or a tendency for students to share more. Children trust adults to help them if they are bullied and say they know how to react in case of abuse– teachers and parents more than friends or just counting on themselves. Getting offended or hit hasn't happened to many of them.

Figure 93 Children's attitudes toward violence – 2017 and 2019 results



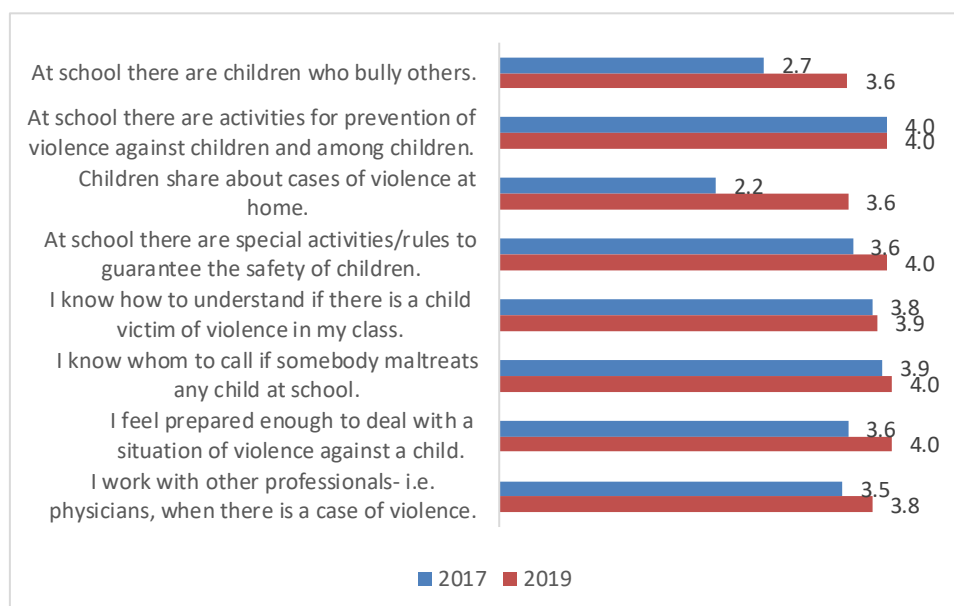
Students' opinions shared in the interviews confirm the answers of the questionnaires (Figure 94). They say that the environment at school is mostly safe and they trust adults to help them in cases of violence, especially teachers they can turn to. The reasons for school bullying according to students are in unresolved conflicts and differences between children.

Figure 94 Environment at school - interviews with children



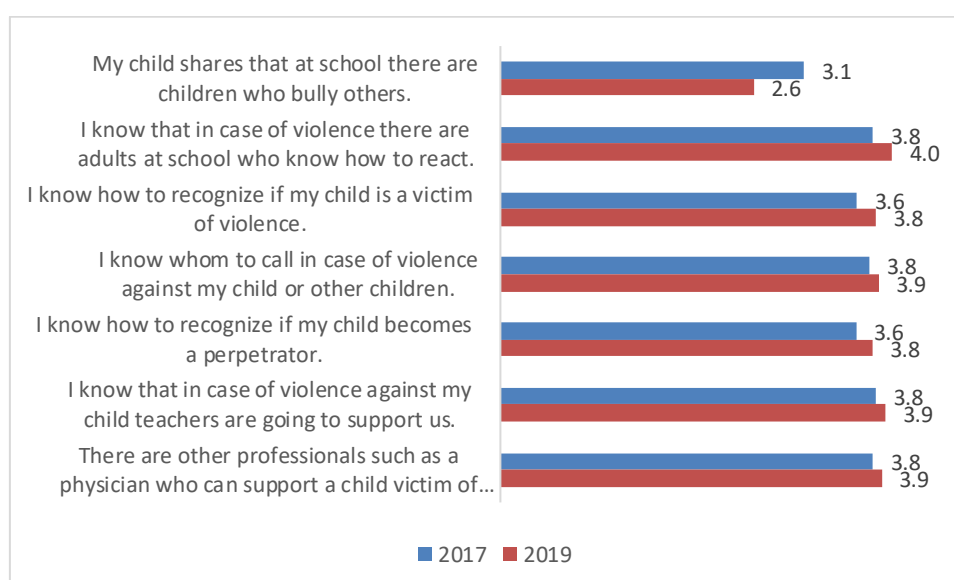
According to teachers' opinions there are children who bully others and children share about cases of violence at home with higher scores than in 2017, as it is shown on figure 95. The rest of the results are similar to those of the previous wave of the research – teachers feel prepared enough to deal with cases of violence and work with other professionals.

Figure 95 Teachers' attitudes toward violence – 2017 and 2019 results



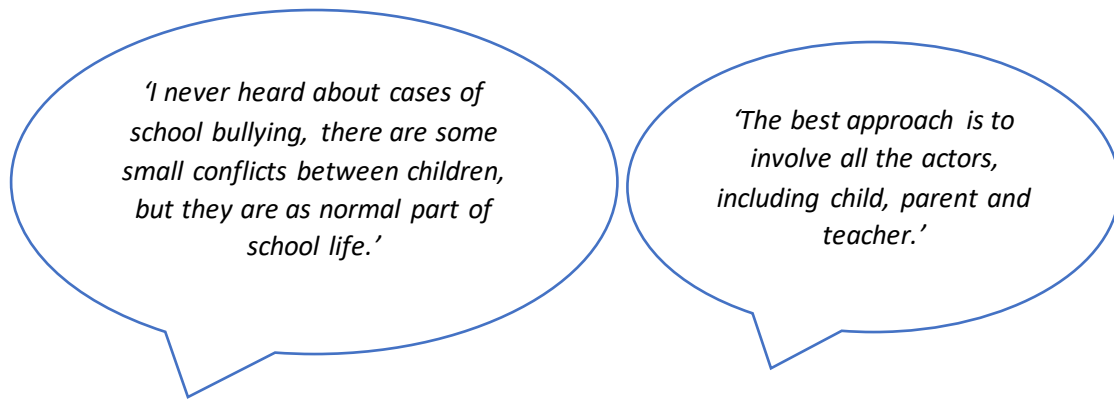
Parents' attitudes toward violence, which could be seen on figure 96, are similar to those of teachers, with no significant differences from 2017 results. There are cases of children sharing that there are bullies at school, a little bit less than before, there are adults at school who know how to react in case of abuse and parents are sure of teachers' support in such cases as well as that of other professionals. Parents feel prepared to react in such a case themselves.

Figure 96 Parents' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



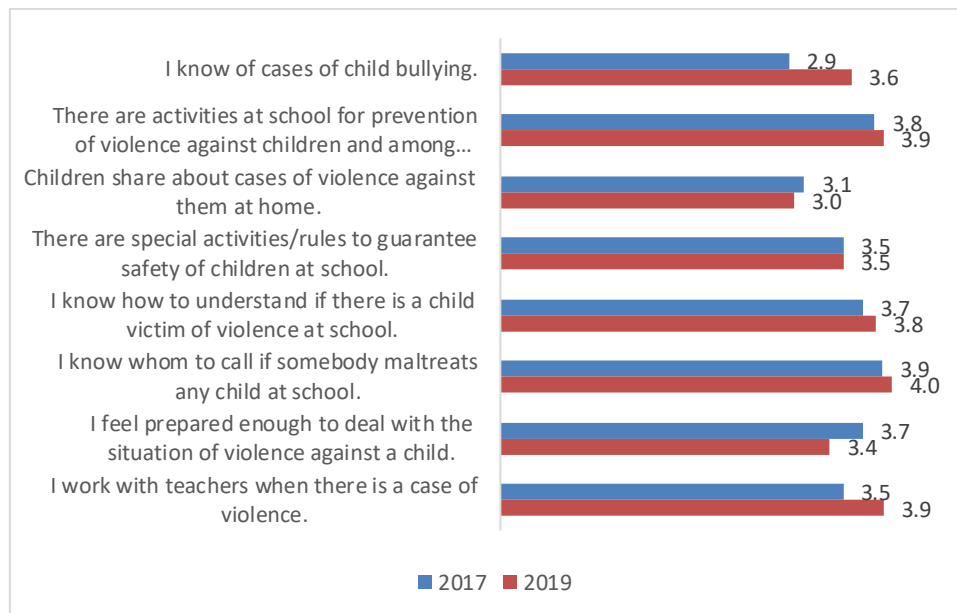
Parents shared in the interviews that there are only minor cases of violence at school and they feel confident that their children would share with them if such a thing occurs. They also trust teachers to handle the situation. There are no significant differences between participants and non-participants. They think the best approach to handling such issues is to involve all actors. Quotes are shown in figure 97. Parents say that they support children in all extra-curricular activities and initiatives, they make them feel free and safe at home and encourage them to share all problems they have at school. Professionals say that still more needs to be done in order to introduce approaches to positive parenting to parents.

Figure 97 Parents' opinions on violence - interviews with parents participants and non-participants



Social workers' attitudes toward violence are not very different from those of the other groups of respondents – they know of cases of child bullying at home and at school and say there are activities at school for prevention of violence and guarantying children's safety. They feel prepared enough to deal with such issues and work together with teachers. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results (Figure 98).

Figure 98 Social workers' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



In the interviews professionals share about cases of school bullying, but they are aware of the specific steps that need to be taken and are taken whenever such a case occurs (Figure 99). They say that all actors know how to react, and the right approach is to involve all parties. Working on prevention is really important. Police officers and social workers don't have to deal with cases of school violence often, because they are solved by the school community. A primary reason for bullying according to professionals are the differences between children. There are no significant differences between participants and control groups of non-participants.

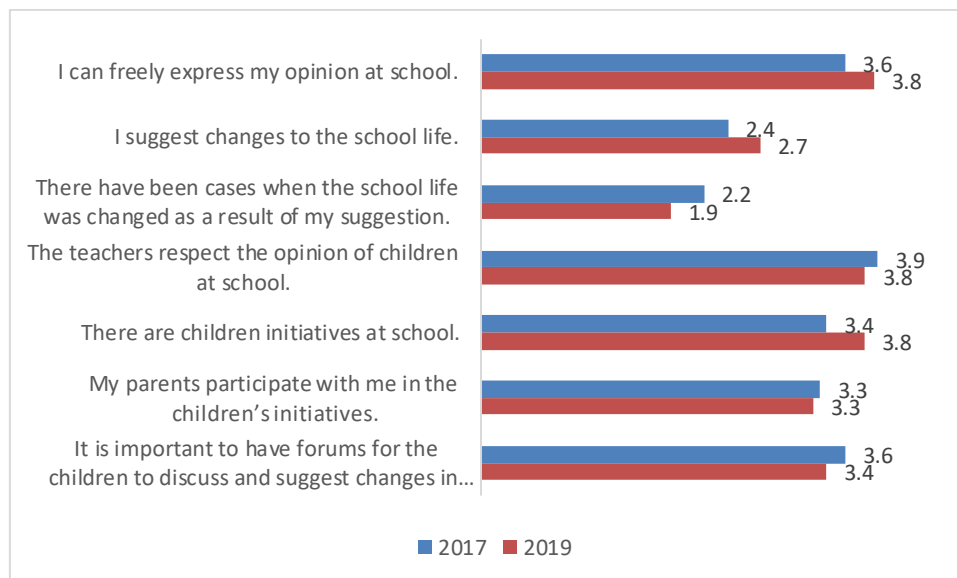
Figure 99 Social workers' opinions on violence - interviews with participants and non-participants



5.6.4. Child participation

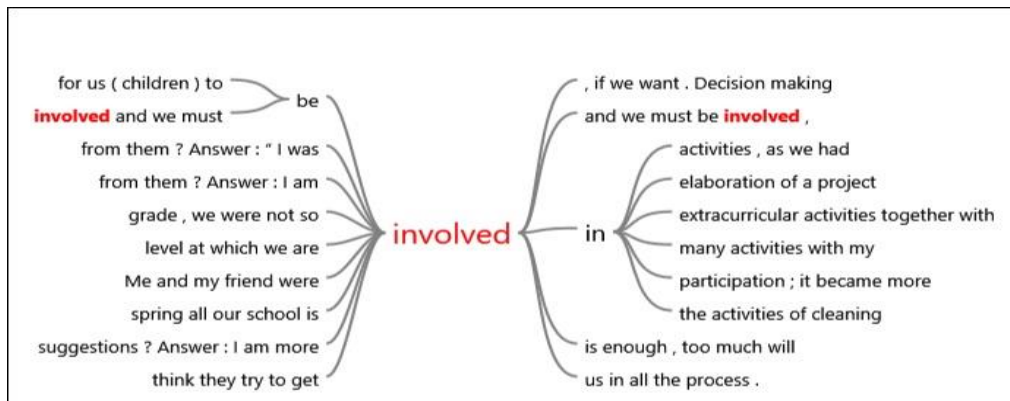
According to children's responses, shown on figure 100, they can freely express their opinion at school and the teachers respect it, there are children initiatives in which parents participate as well and it is important to have forums for children to discuss and suggest changes. However, they don't suggest changes to school life so much and not many respond that there have been cases when the school life was changed as a result of their suggestion, so participation is at the level of expression of opinion. There are no significant changes from 2017 results.

Figure 100 Children's attitudes toward their participation – 2017 and 2019 results



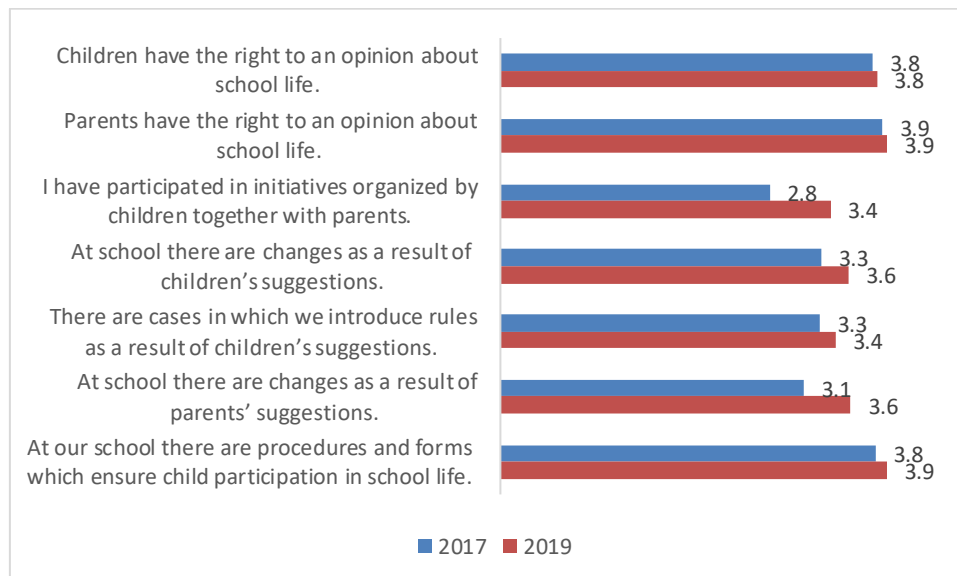
As figure 101 shows, children's level of involvement as a free expression of opinion, is confirmed. They talk about extracurricular activities they are involved in and the possibility to say what they think. There are no significant differences between participants and non-participants. As far as decision-making goes, children don't share about cases they had caused changes themselves and some of them think that this level of involvement in school life is enough. Therefore, qualitative data confirms quantitative results.

Figure 101 Children's level of participation - interviews with participants and non-participants



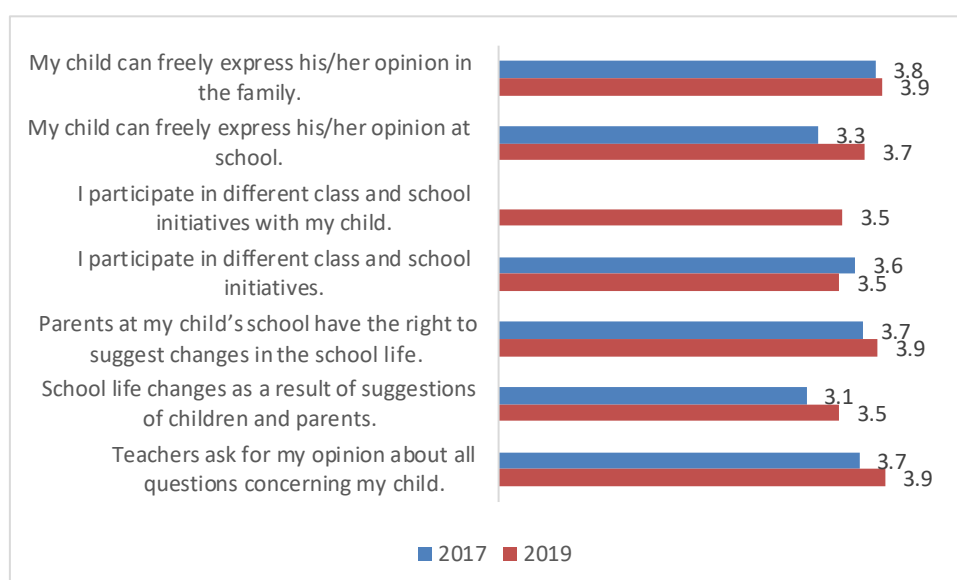
Teachers think that children and parents have the right to an opinion about school life and that there are changes as a result of parents' and students' suggestions (a little bit higher shares than in 2017) (Figure 102). They have participated in initiatives organized by children together with parents, also with higher average score than in 2017. They are also convinced that there are rules and procedures which ensure child participation.

Figure 102 Teachers' attitudes toward child participation – 2017 and 2019 results



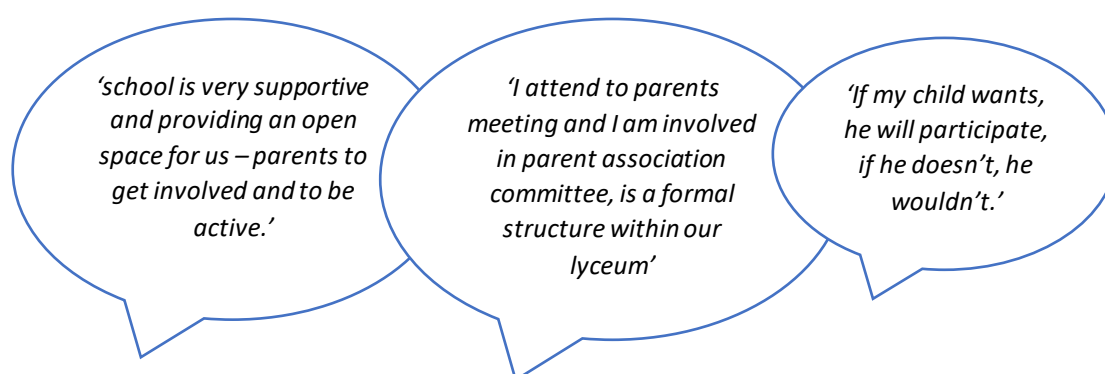
As it is shown on figure 103, parents, similarly to teachers, think that their child can freely express their opinion at school and in the family, they participate in different class and school initiatives and have the right to suggest changes in the school life and teachers ask for their opinion about all questions concerning their child. Even more, they think that school life changes as a result of their suggestions and those of their children. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

Figure 103 Parents' attitudes toward child participation – 2017 and 2019 results



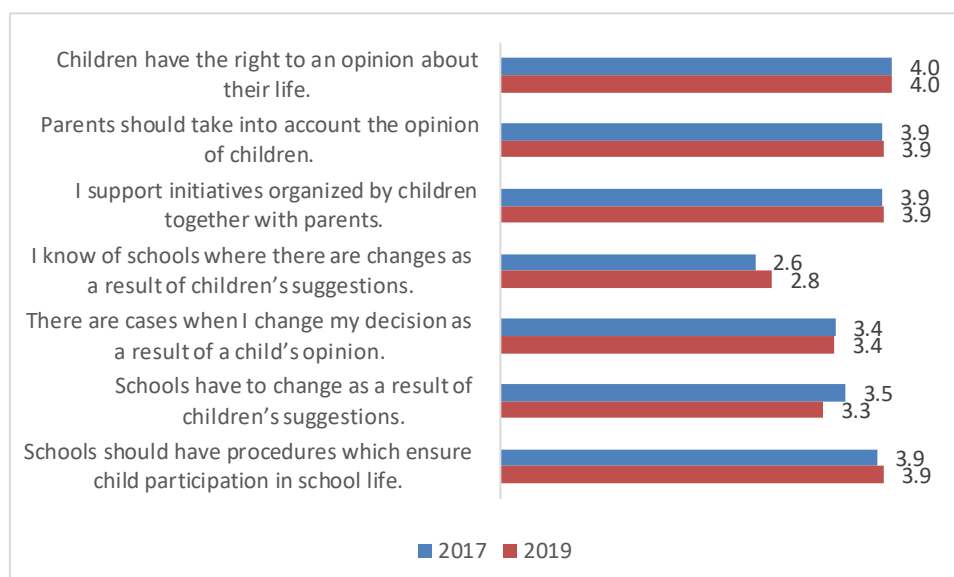
During the interviews, parents shared that they participate and feel involved in school life, including influencing the process of change (Figure 104). Some of them are not so active as others. They have a parent council as a formal body, which allows their participation. They think that children also participate, as much as they want to. There are no significant differences between parents participants and non-participants. Parents also say that they have good cooperation with teachers and can count on them.

Figure 104 Opinions on participation - interviews with parents



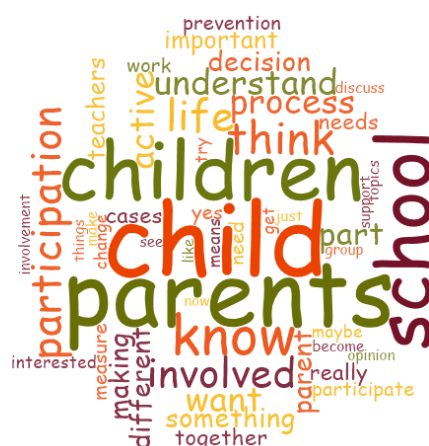
Social workers' opinions on child participation are similar to those of parents and teachers (Figure 105). They believe children have the right to an opinion and parents should take it into account. They support initiatives organized by children together with parents, there are cases when they change their opinion as a result of children's suggestions and schools have to change as a result of them. A somewhat smaller share say that they know of schools where there are changes as a result of children's suggestions. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

Figure 105 Social workers' attitudes toward child participation – 2017 and 2019 results



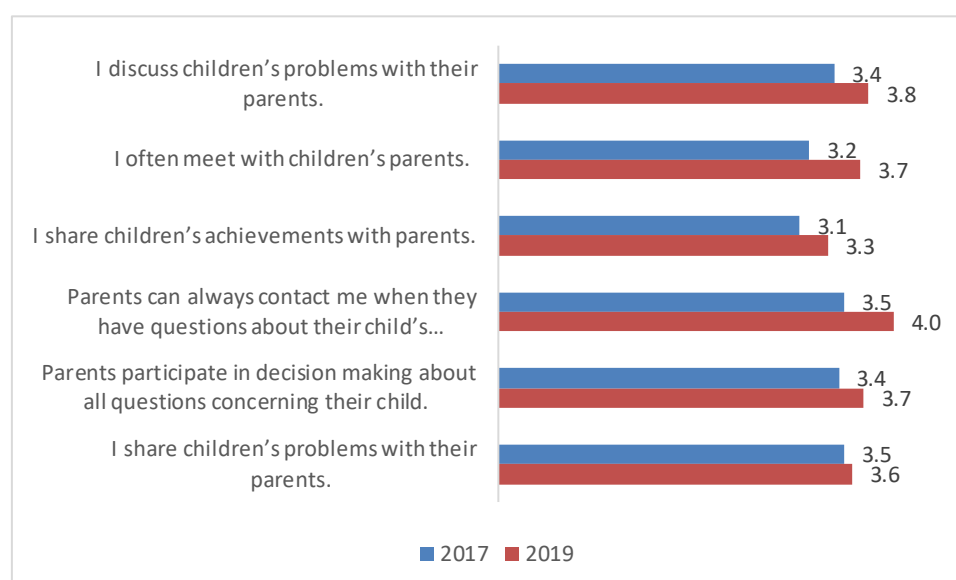
Professionals say that there is a high level of child and parent participation, including involvement in decision-making, but only if they want to, especially regarding parents (Figure 106). They express the opinion that some parents are not involved, because they don't consider it necessary or don't have the time. They believe there are mechanisms in place, which ensure child and parent involvement, but it depends on them to make use of these mechanisms. There are no significant differences in opinion between participants and non-participants.

Figure 106 Social workers' opinions on child participation - interviews with professionals



Social workers say that they have good cooperation with parents – they discuss children's problems with them, often meet with them, share children's problems and achievements (Figure 107). Parents participate in decision-making regarding their child and can always contact professionals if they need to. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

Figure 107 Social workers' attitudes toward parents - 2017 and 2019 results



5.6.5. Summary of the situation in Moldova

The comparative analysis of all data sources shows that all groups of respondents are positive towards school – children like it and enjoy the studying, playing with friends and discussing important and interesting topics, while adults confirm this and say there is good cooperation between them. The environment at school is mostly safe, there are some minor cases of bullying, but the school community knows how to deal with them. Children prefer to share with adults, then try to deal with issues themselves or only by sharing with friends. Reasons for bullying are mostly in the differences between children. Parents support their children to feel free and communicate openly with them, but according to professionals they are not familiar with approaches to positive parenting. Children feel they can express their opinion, maybe less so make changes to the school environment. Teachers and parents are even more positive toward child and parent participation, they think there are many initiatives and there are changes as a result of their suggestions. Professionals think that children are involved in school life, but some parents are not, because they don't want to be. They also say that they have good cooperation with parents.

According to parents and professionals, the most significant changes as a result of the project, are the higher level of involvement of parents and the presence of the topic of school violence in discussions led by teachers. They found project activities useful and would like to have more regular trainings. Professionals such as social workers and police officers would also like to benefit from trainings the way that teachers do.

5.7. Latvia

5.7.1. Data collection process

5.7.2. Attitudes toward school

5.7.3. Attitudes toward violence

5.7.4. Child participation

5.7.5. Summary of the situation in Latvia

5.8. Romania

5.8.1. Data collection process

Surveys were conducted with 33 children, 30 teachers and 30 parents, altogether a sample of 93 respondents. The same questions were used as in the previous wave of research and anonymity was ensured.

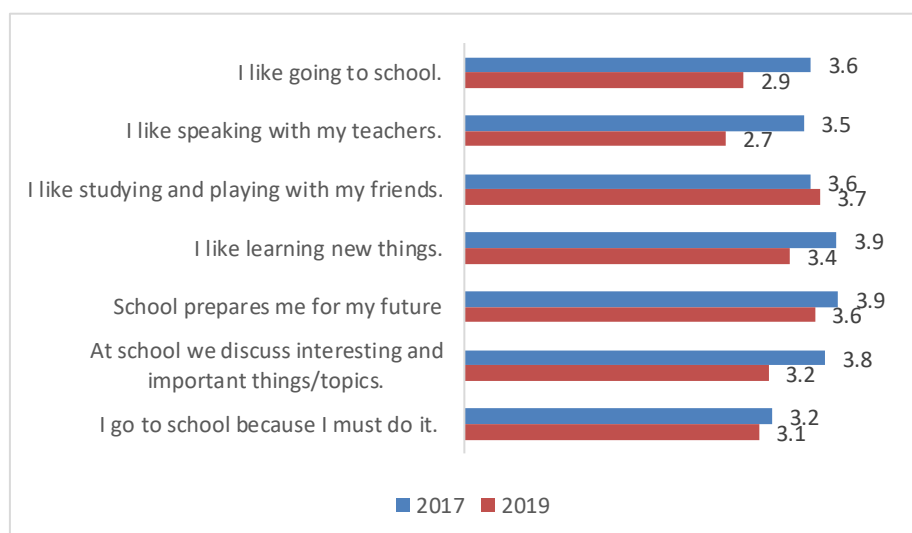
In addition, focus groups with participants and non-participants were conducted. For children -16 participants for the 2 focus-groups, there were 8 children – participants in the project and for the focus-group with children – non-participants, there were also 8 children. For the focus group with parents – 16 participants. For the focus group with parents – participants, there were 7 parents and for the focus-group with parents – non-participants, there were also 9 parents. For the focus group with teachers- 18 participants. For the focus group with parents – participants, there were 8 teachers and for the focus-group with teachers – non-participants, there were 10 teachers.

Challenges in the data collection process included difficulties with conducting the research in a new school due to some changes in the school that was involved in the project in the past years, in the sense that there were restructurings within the school, and the number of classes was reduced and some students were transferred to other schools. There were some refusals on behalf of teachers due to lack of available time due to classes, also some participants were late or had to leave early. There was a very high rate of refusals on behalf of parents.

5.8.2. Attitudes toward school

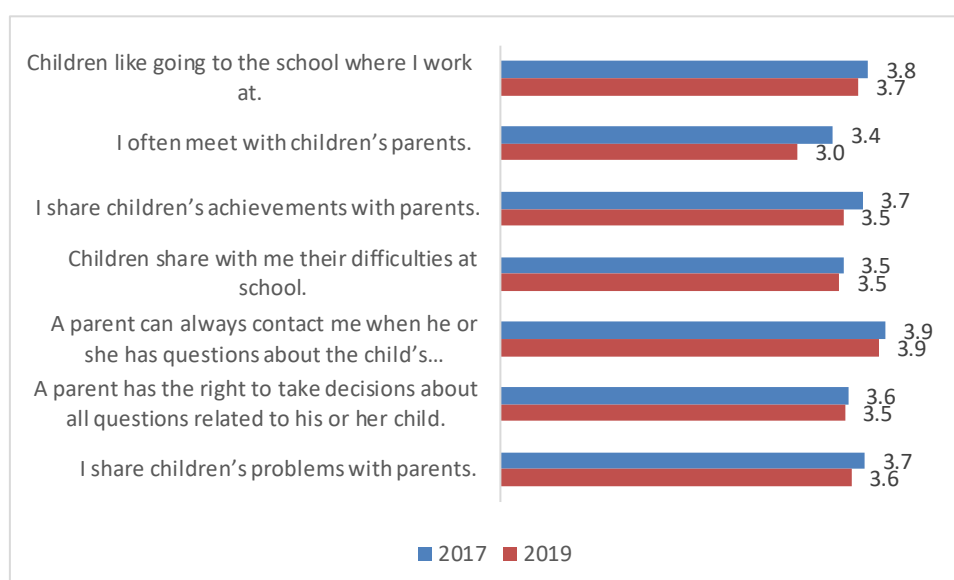
Children's attitudes toward school haven't changed very significantly in comparison with 2017 (Figure 108). A bit less of them say that they like going to school and speaking with their teachers, but, overall, they are positive toward school. They like learning new things, playing with friends, discussing interesting topics. Students feel that school prepares them for their future, but also many of them go because they must do it.

Figure 108 Children's attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



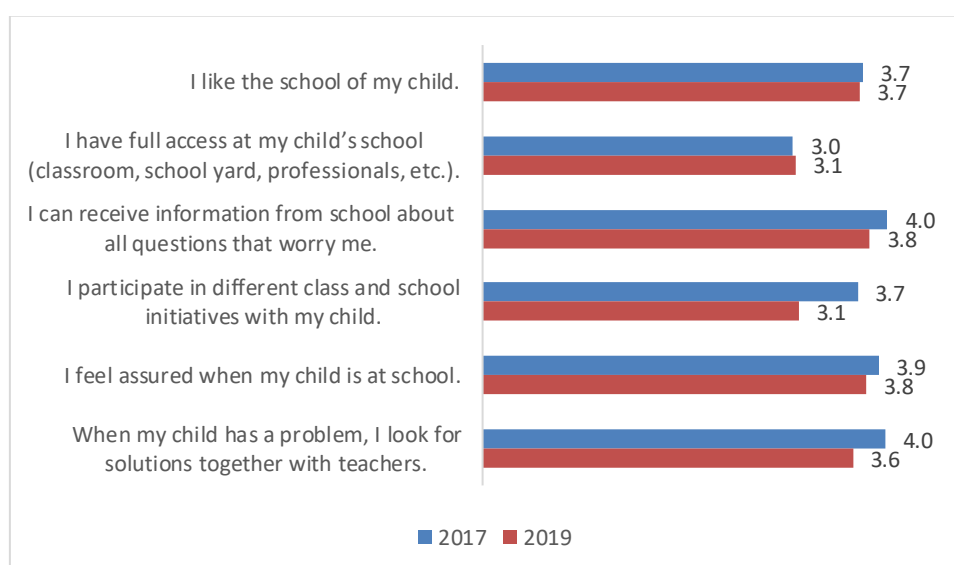
Teachers are also quite positive regarding school (Figure 109). They believe that children like going to the school where they work at and they share about good communication with parents – they meet often, share children's achievements and problems with parents and parents can always contact them if they need to. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results.

Figure 109 Teachers' attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



As it could be seen on figure 110, parents have responded that they like the school of their child, a bit less of them, but still most have full access at the school, they can receive information and participate in different initiatives, although a bit less have answered positively than in 2017. Most of them feel assured when their child is at school and look for solutions together with teachers if there is a problem.

Figure 110 Parents' attitudes toward school - 2017 and 2019 results



5.8.3. Attitudes toward violence

According to children's opinions, there aren't adults at school who offend children, but there are children bullies (Figure 111). Getting offended or hit hasn't happened to many of them. When they are bullied, they prefer to handle the situation by sharing with their parents or teachers, rather than their friends or dealing with it themselves. They trust there are adults at school who know how to handle cases of bullying. There are no significant differences between 2017 and 2019 results, except for a bit less children being inclined to deal with problems themselves, but also go to the teachers.

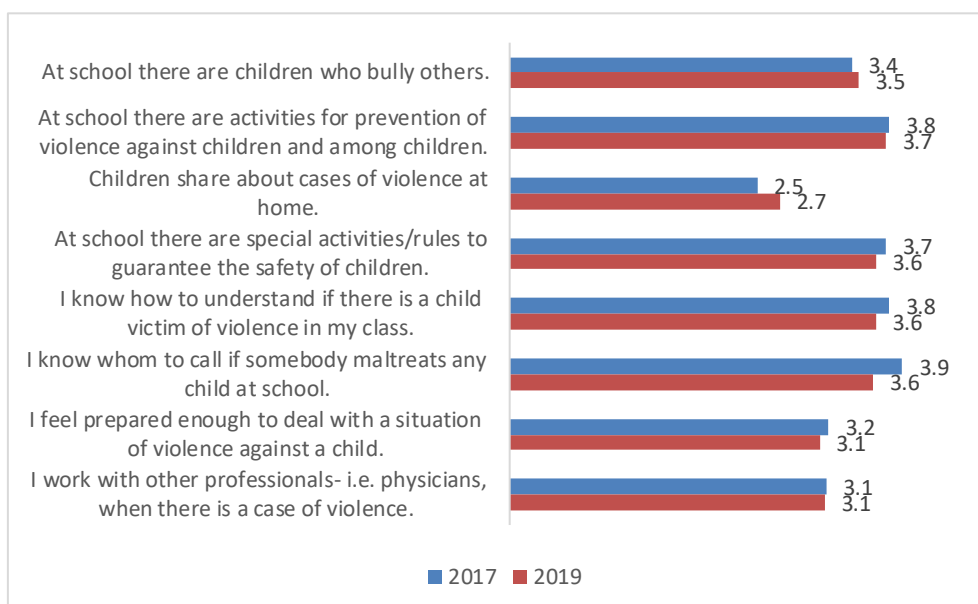
Statement	2017 (%)	2019 (%)
There are adults at school who offend children.	1.7	1.7
There are children at school who bully other children.	3.4	3.2
Getting offended or hit has happened to me.	2.3	2.1
When someone bullies me, I go to the teachers.	3.5	3.0
When someone bullies me, I share with my parents.	3.3	3.4
When someone bullies me, I share with my friends.	2.5	2.4
When someone bullies me, I deal with it myself.	2.5	1.9
There are adults at school who know how to react in case of child abuse.	3.4	3.2

Figure 112 Children's opinions on violence – focus groups with participants and non-participants



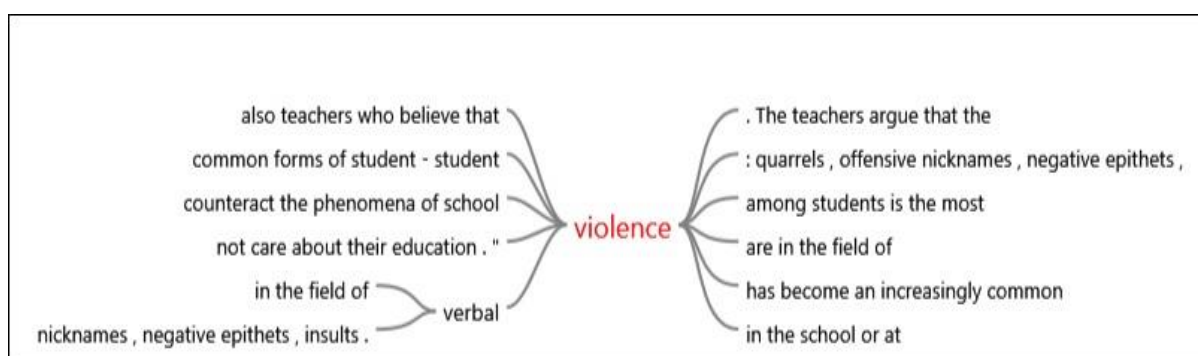
61

Figure 113 Teachers' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



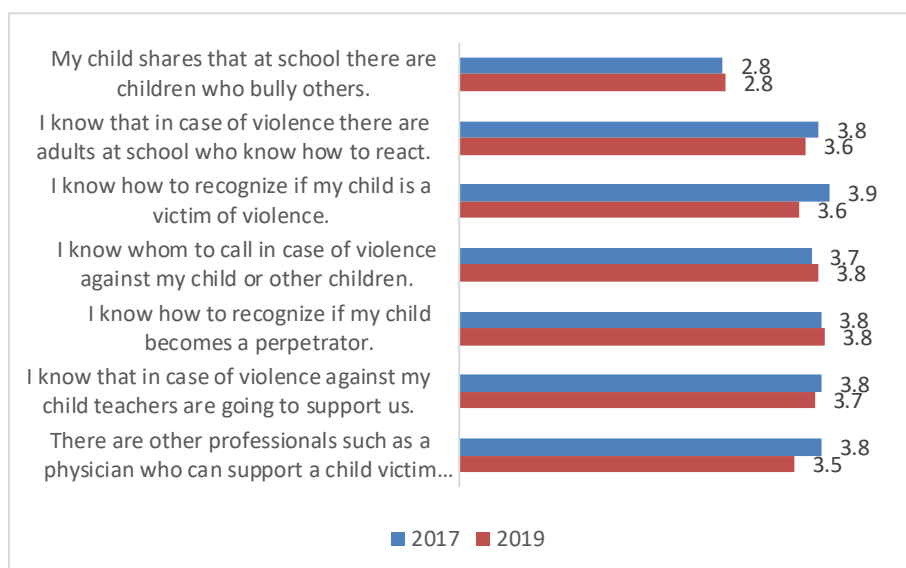
In the focus groups, teachers share that verbal violence is the most common form of violence at school (Figure 114). They see most of the problems they have with children's behaviour as stemming from parents' actions. They are either way too involved and don't allow children to make decisions on their own or expect the school to deal with all the issues, without getting involved. Their bad influence is what could lead to children's aggression. Teachers even believe that a way to deal with violent student behaviour is to penalize their parents for it. This is quite a different result in comparison with opinions shared in the survey, shown on figure 109, that teachers have good cooperation with parents.

Figure 114 Teachers' opinions on violence - focus groups with participants



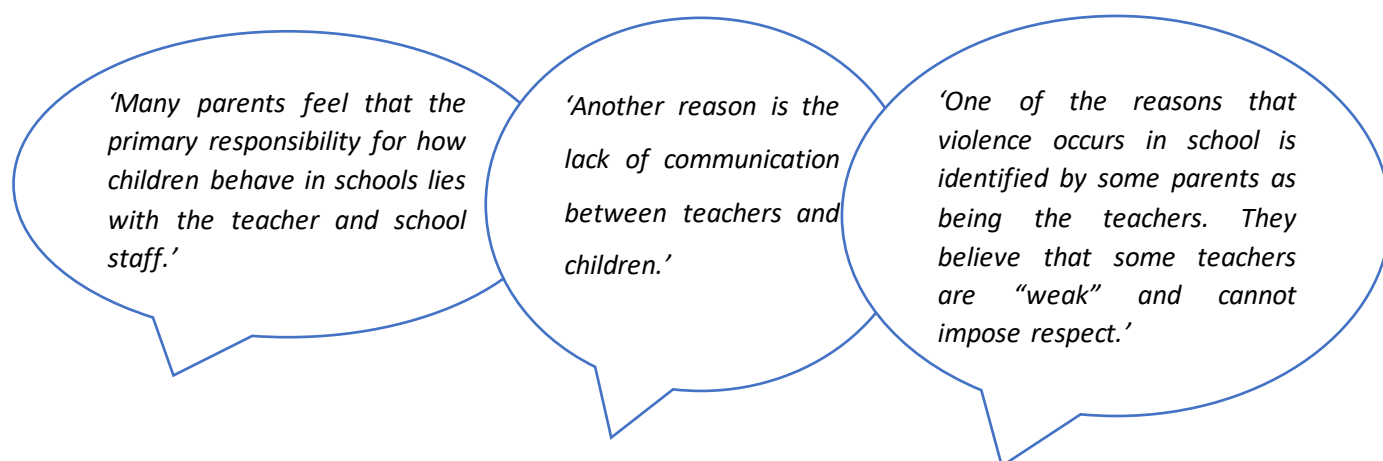
On figure 115 are demonstrated parents' responses on the survey, regarding violence. Not many of them say that their children share about cases of school bullying. They trust that there are adults – teachers and other professionals at school, who know how to react in such situations, how to recognise them. Parents themselves know what to do and how to recognise if their child is a perpetrator or victim of bullying.

Figure 115 Parents' attitudes toward violence - 2017 and 2019 results



In the focus groups, parents share that they know of cases of school bullying, but not so much personally against their own children. They believe this is a very important issue in the whole country, which should be dealt with by teachers and the problem lies with teachers' actions – they either don't communicate with children effectively or are weak and can't make children respect them (Figure 116). Some of them also share that the problem is in parents actions - similarly to teachers, they also share that sanctioning parents could be an effective measure against bullying. In addition, parents suggest involving children in activities against school bullying and introducing the topic in the school curriculum.

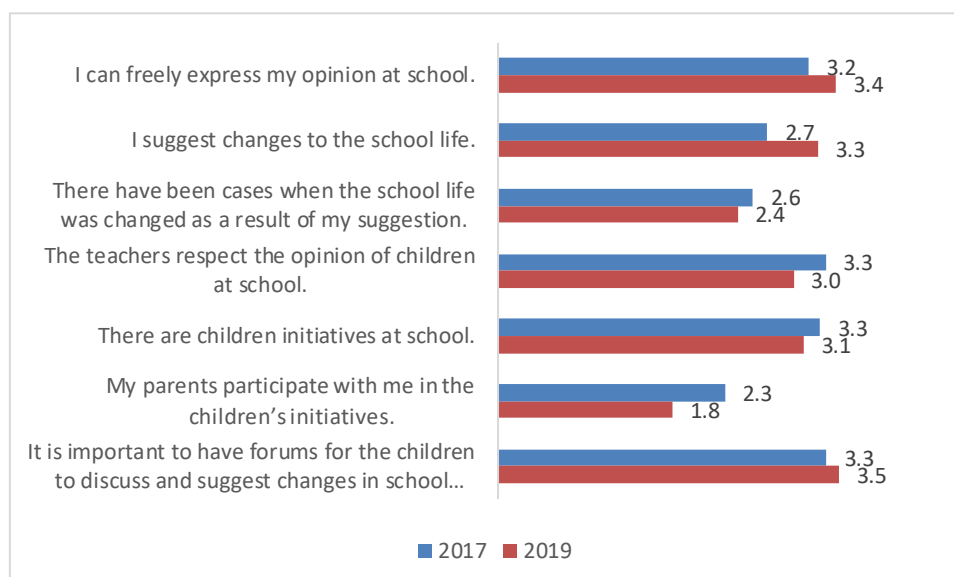
Figure 116 Parents' opinions on violence - focus groups with participants and non-participants



5.8.4. Child participation

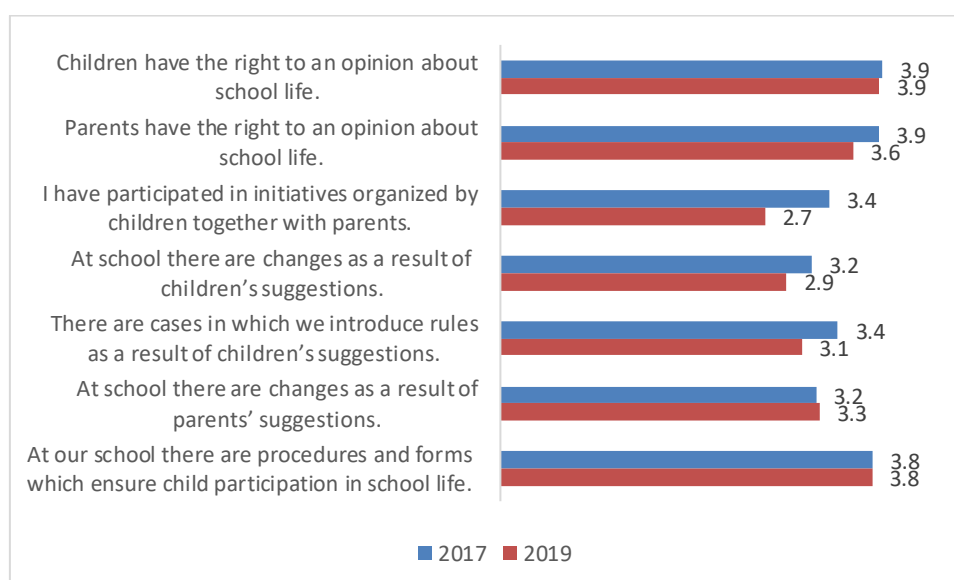
Children respond that they can freely express their opinion at school, and they suggest changes to school life more than in 2017. There are children initiatives at school, teachers respect their opinion and it is important to have such forums (Figure 117). However, parents don't participate with them in such initiatives and not many of them say there have been cases when the school life was changed as a result of their suggestion. There are no other significant differences from the previous wave of research.

Figure 117 Children's attitudes toward their participation - 2017 and 2019 results



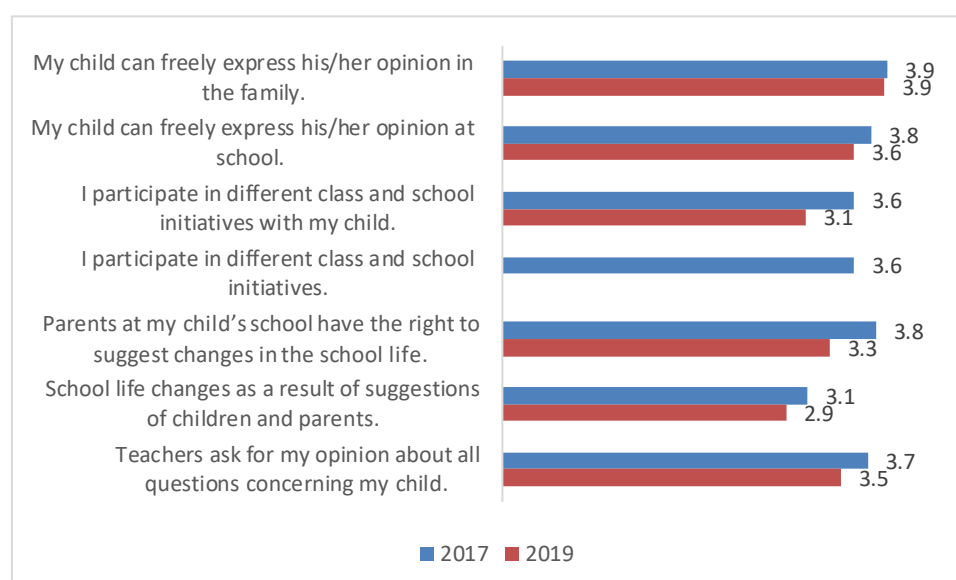
Teachers' attitudes toward child participation are more positive – a bit more teachers than children say there are changes as a result of student suggestions, new rules introduced and that they have participated in school initiatives of children together with parents (however, less than in 2017), as well as that there are procedures and forms which ensure child participation in school life. – figure 118 Teachers also say, naturally, that children and parents have the right to an opinion about school life. There are no other significant changes from the previous wave of research.

Figure 118 Teachers' attitudes toward child participation - 2017 and 2019 results



Parents say that their child can express his/her opinion freely at school and in the family (Figure 119). Less of them than in 2017 respond that they participate in different initiative with their child and they themselves have the right to suggest changes to school life or it actually changes as a result of these suggestions. Most of them reply that teachers ask about their opinion about all questions concerning their child. There are no other significant differences from 2017 results.

Figure 119 Parents' attitudes toward child participation – 2017 and 2019 results



5.8.5. Summary of the situation in Romania

The comparative analysis of all the data sources shows that all groups of respondents are positive toward the school environment. There are cases of school violence, mainly in the form of verbal insults. According to quantitative results, children, parents and teachers all trust that adults know how to handle situations with school violence. However, the analysis of focus groups shows that parents and teachers blame each other for issues with children's aggression and each group believes that the other is responsible. Child and parent participation is at the level of expression of opinion. Parents believe children should be involved in anti-bullying campaigns. There were no comments regarding projects results or participation in initiatives from the focus groups.

It is important to point out that there is no information regarding child participation from the focus groups. Additionally, social workers were not respondents in the survey, unlike in 2017, nor participated in focus groups.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The analysis of all the data collected in the countries participants in the project „Empowering the child's strengths for violence prevention" in 2017 and 2019, leads to several overall conclusions regarding the topics of attitudes toward school, bullying and participation.

The first conclusions are regarding attitudes toward school of students, teachers and parents. Some students like going to school, find it worthwhile and feel safe there. Teachers and parents have the same perception that students like going to school. However, there are also countries in which students have less of a desire to go to school than in 2017 and do it out of obligation (Serbia and Macedonia). They don't find the topics so interesting or feel that school will prepare them for their future. At the same time, teachers and parents in these countries also believe that students enjoy going to school and find it interesting and meaningful. Most teachers report that they have good cooperation with parents, with the exception of some countries (Romania), where qualitative data shows the opposite. On the whole, all respondents like school and this should be used as an opportunity to increase participation and prevent bullying.

It is recommended that the different activities related to cooperation between teachers and parents should be developed and implemented and they should be oriented towards child's interests and age, which would potentially increase their positive attitudes toward school.

The second area of conclusions concerns attitudes toward violence. School violence still exists in all the schools which participated in the project according to the opinion of participants and non-participants in the project activities. Respondents either know about it from personal experience or have heard of or witnessed such situations. Mostly, it is in the form of verbal or psychological abuse, as well as physical fights. Lighter conflicts happen the most often, but on the whole, school bullying is a common occurrence in schools. Students prefer to share with friends and family about situations of violence, which confirms data from 2017. However, there is also an increase in their trust in teachers and other professionals at school, with the exception of some countries (Albania), in which they are afraid they will be punished by teachers. Comparative data from the quantitative study is supported by the opinions of respondents. Students' decision whom to turn to often depends on the gravity of the situation. A major cause for school bullying is the difference between children based on characteristics such as ethnicity, social status, character, presence of special needs, age, etc. Another reason for school violence is the influence of the family environment or the desire for attention and to appear as a dominant figure in other students' minds. The most common strategies for dealing with bullying at school are meetings and consultations with perpetrators and victims, talking to the family, teachers, witnesses, involving all parties, including the school principal and psychologist. Teachers and parents share that work on prevention and presentations in the classroom, as well as peer to peer projects are important steps toward solving the issues. Additionally, they say that the project has led to a higher level of recognition of violence, children's desire to share more about their problems and the parents' and children's involvement in activities. Parents share that they provide a safe environment for their children at home and encourage them to feel free and make decisions, but according to professionals they need to learn more about approaches to positive parenting. Although the project contributes to the recognition of violence, the presence of situations of abuse at school shows that the project activities are not enough.

Therefore, it is recommended that activities should be oriented toward working more with students towards acceptance of the differences between them and to increase the possibility to deal with lighter conflicts.

It is recommended that the training activities should continue and become regular, as well as involve external and/or foreign trainers. Activities should address parents' need for learning new approaches to positive parenting which could ultimately lead to less aggression among children.

The third area of conclusions is regarding child participation which leads to divided opinions in almost all the countries participants in the project. According to children's opinions, they can express their opinion and it will be respected, but would rarely lead to changes of the school life. There are student initiatives at school, mostly due to student councils, but parents rarely take part in them. Students feel the need to be more involved. At the same time, teachers and parents believe that children's opinion is not only heard, but their suggestions lead to changes in the school environment. This means that the level of participation is low, it is limited only to informing and consulting and doesn't lead to real changes. Meanwhile, it seems as though parents and teachers don't have a clear vision, knowledge and skills regarding child participation, which is reflected in their different opinion.

This disparity should be addressed, by creating possibilities for children to be heard more and participate more, not just at the level of expression of opinion. Their participation is often understood as taking part in extra-curricular activities, so what child participation means should be a topic of conversation and trainings for parents and teachers. Additionally, a lot of teachers share that parents need to be more involved in school life and to have better cooperation with them, so this is a topic that should be included in future activities and projects.