

Educo Global Survey COVID-19

A focus on Bangladesh

At Educo, and also as a member of ChildFund Alliance, we put the voice of children at the centre of our research and all of our intervention projects. In 2019 we published Small Voices Big Dreams, a study which almost 5500 children from 15 different countries participated in, to highlight children's perceptions of violence against children.

The results were more than shocking: "1 in 2 children think that in their country their opinions about the issues that are important to them are not listened to".

When we let them participate, when we empower them, when we listen to them, they are capable of teaching us important lessons and they have demonstrated exactly that in this questionnaire.

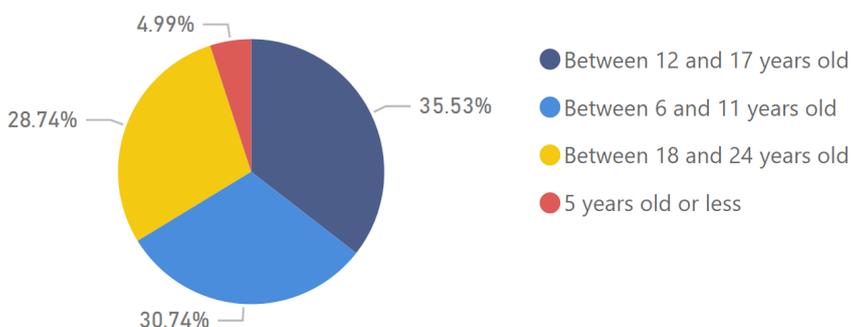
For this global survey, the questionnaire we have carried out has been online and global, and open to all children from across the globe. One of our aims has been to promote child participation, family dialogue and find out how children are experiencing confinement and the crisis caused by COVID-19. By doing so, we want to highlight their perceptions, concerns and expectations in the face of this pandemic, from a wellbeing approach. We also wanted to know about their concerns and expectations for the future after the pandemic is over.

The findings from this questionnaire confirm that children and adolescents are fully aware of the emergency situation and its consequences on their relational, material and subjective wellbeing. On 7th May 2020, the questionnaire was launched globally. By 23rd May it had been filled in by 4476 children and young people aged between 0 and 24 years old in more than 20 countries.

In Bangladesh, Educo and our partners launched an online survey and facilitated phone interviews to reach vulnerable children from our program areas, especially those who have limited to no access to internet. Some of the key features of the survey include:

- A total of 503 Bangladeshi children from different age groups (as young as those below 5 years old) participated in the survey. About 56% of them were girls.

Survey participation by age: Bangladesh

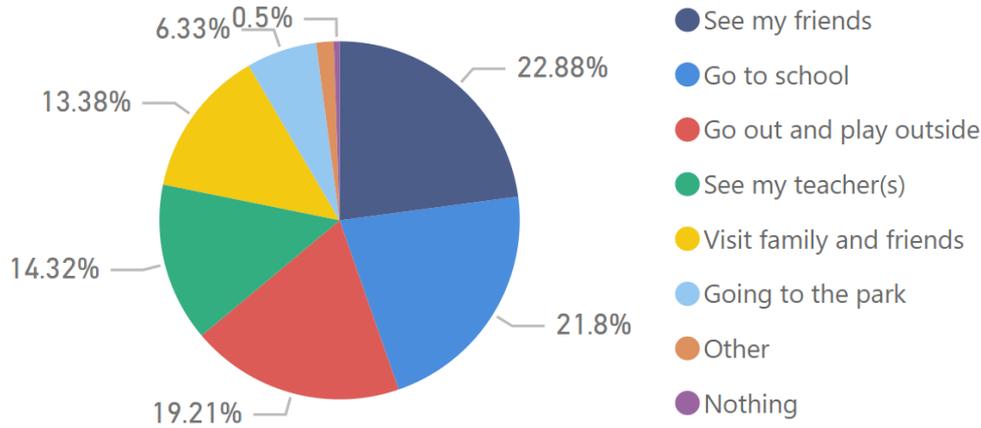


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Responses from children in Bangladesh

Children to see their friends and go back to school

What children in Bangladesh miss most during the lockdown (multiple responses)

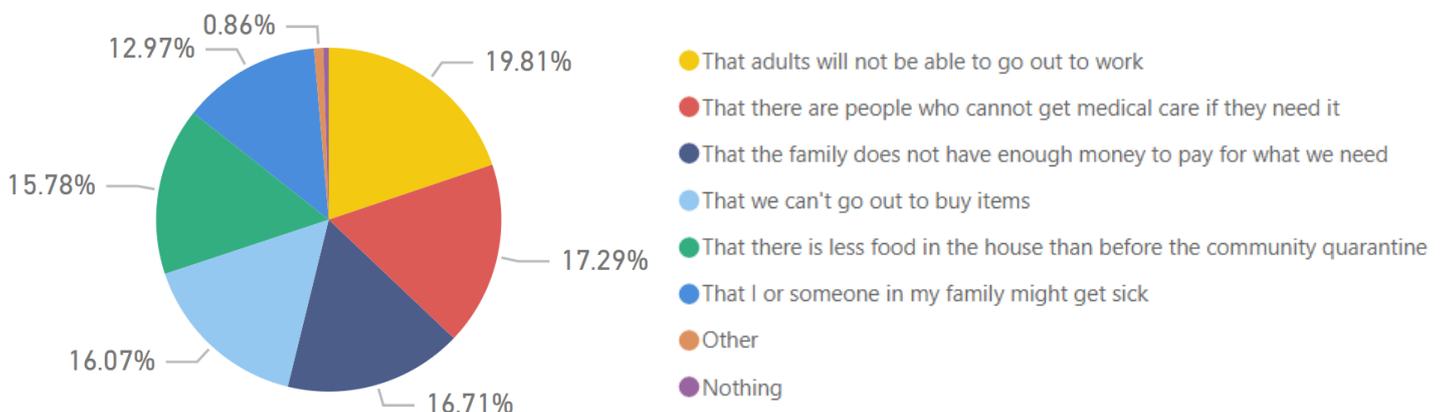


According to the report, what the surveyed children miss the most are a) seeing my friends (22.88%) b) going to school (21.8%) and c) going out and playing outside (19.21%) and d) seeing my teachers (14.32%). Responses related to education and the family appear to have a strong presence in the lives of children.

For many children, school is not just the place where children go to learn their lessons. It is also a place where they develop as people, mature and relate to others, discover new realities and access new opportunities.

Children worry about their family's finances

What children are worried most about during the lockdown (multiple responses)

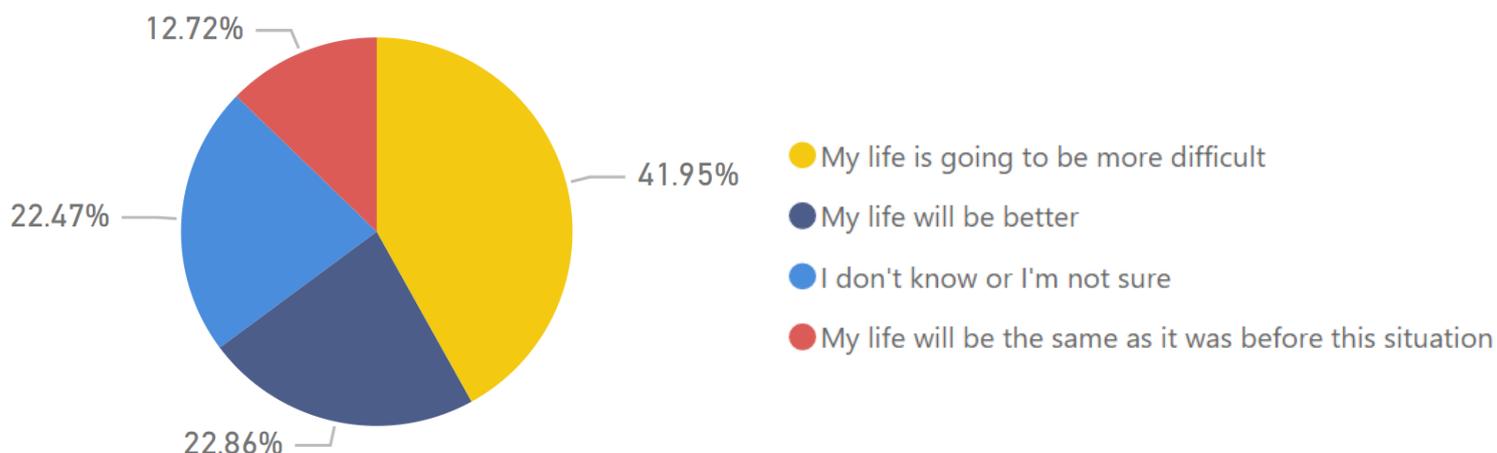


Looking at the results, we see that half of the responses given by children are related to economic problems that may have occurred in their families, like adults not being able to go out to work or not enough money to pay for needs.

On top of their concerns is that adults will not be able to go to work (19.81%). In Bangladesh, 87 per cent of the labour force is employed in the informal economy according to the 2010 Labour Force Survey. Another of their major concerns is that if there are people who will cannot get medical care, when needed (17.29%). This worry may be due to a number of factors, including the fact that many of the health facilities are now overwhelmed with the increase in coronavirus cases and that many of these children's families are already unable to afford care to begin with.

What will my life be like after COVID-19?

What do you think will happen when we come out of this situation
(multiple responses)

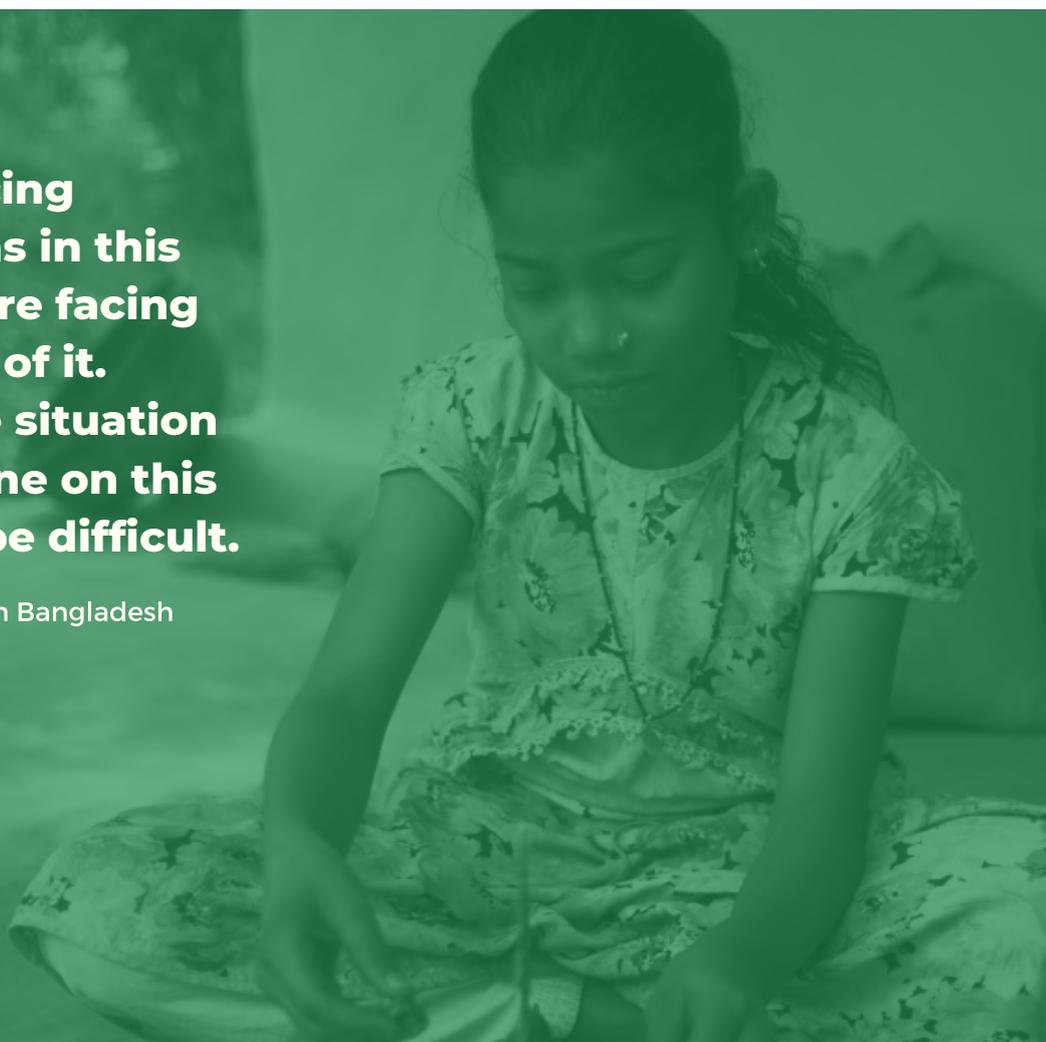


The study reveals that close to half (41.5%) of surveyed children in Bangladesh said that their life will be more difficult after the lockdown (higher than the global results at 30.52%), while 22.47% said that they are uncertain of the future. Moreover, 22.86% of children said that life will be better, while only 12.72% said that their life will be the same as it was before.

A 2019 report carried out by Educo Bangladesh highlighted that there around 3.5 million children are engaged in child labor in Bangladesh, with about 2.8 million of the total child labor force involved in hazardous work. With the pandemic affecting millions of subsistence wage earners, Educo warns that the economic crisis brought about by the coronavirus will create a spike in the incidence of child labor cases in Bangladesh.

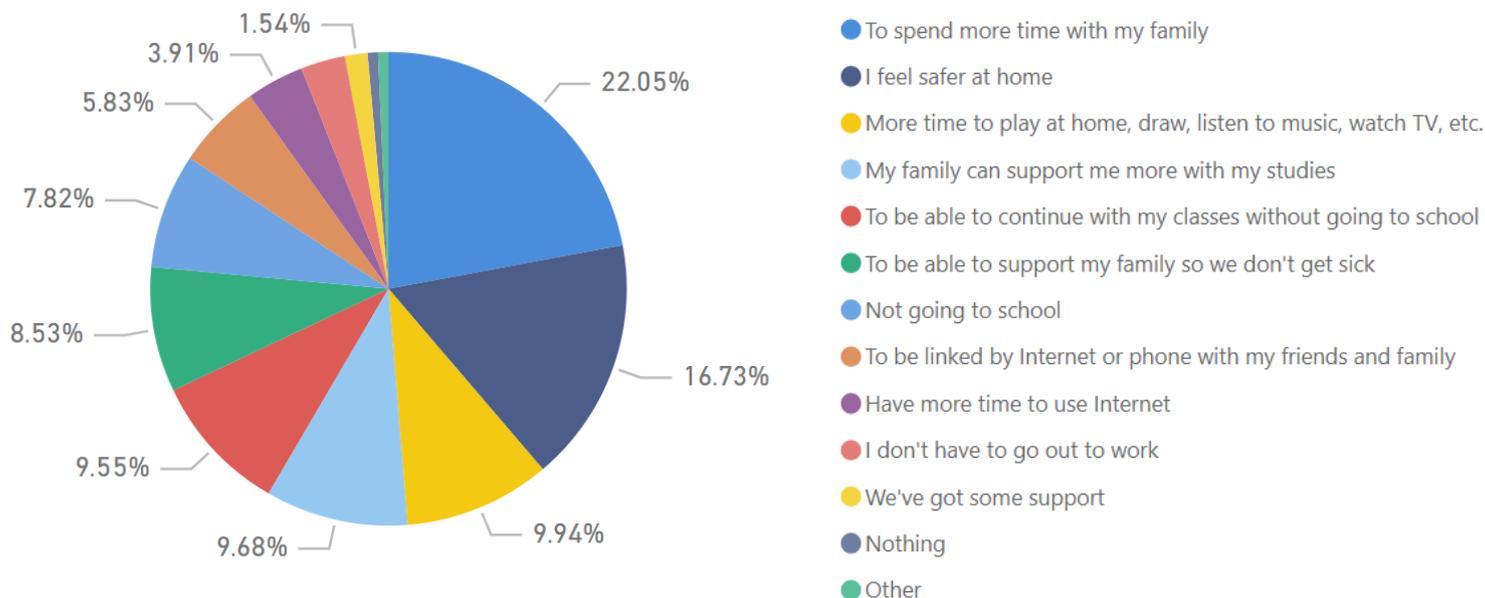
"Our country is facing economic problems in this situation and we are facing the consequences of it. So I think after the situation ends, I and everyone on this country's life will be difficult.

- A girl child from Bangladesh



We value time with our families

What do you value about this situation? (multiple responses)



Clearly, the children we asked told us that what they appreciate most about this situation is being able to **spend more time with their families (22.05%)**. This information should make us think as a society about the time we spend bringing up our children and the quality of that time. In their opinion, it seems that perhaps we are not giving them the time they deserve.

The second response that has received the most votes reveals that children perceive their **homes as places they feel safe in (16.73%)**. This implies that the context in which many of them live is perceived, at the very least, as insecure. Therefore, it is important to remember that children's development will never be complete unless a series of conditions are in place that allow them to develop their lives calmly and safely.

Overall, these answers demonstrate that children are very aware of what is going on around them. An adult-centred outlook makes us think that children, including the youngest ones, do not understand what is happening. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Children are part of our society and therefore must be listened to and taken into account, because the context we live in and the decisions that that are taken affect their lives directly.

"School will be open and every children will be go to school. Maintain social distance and wash your hands frequently."

- A girl child from Bangladesh

