

November 20th and students' right to expression



November 20th is a landmark for young people as it is the anniversary of the day when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, and later, in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which ensures young peoples' right to freedom of expression:

"The child has the right to freedom of expression; this right includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice. "

Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

In other words, children and youngsters have the right to have an opinion, to voice it freely and to meet in order to share their viewpoints.

What about us? How can high-school students express themselves at school or in their local community?

THE DEMOCRACY WEEK AT SCHOOL



To start with, an annual "democracy week at school" has recently been created to encourage high-school students to get actively involved in school community and take part in decision making.

During the democracy week, celebrated in all French schools from 6 October to 10 October 2014, different elections take place:

- in each class, we elect 4 student representatives, also called "student reps", who will voice the concerns and interests of their classmates for one year.

- we also vote for members of the Students' Representative Council or SRC (= "Conseil de la Vie Lycéenne" or CVL).

This year, 63,2 % of Jacques Monod's students have voted at the CVL election, which is a lot! But what exactly is the "CVL"?

by Mélanie D. , Cilène L. 2°4

THE “CVL”

The “CVL” or Students’ Representative Council is composed of 20 members including 10 elected high-school students who meet at least three times a year.

Then, every two years, the members of the CVL vote for their representatives at the “*Conseil Académique de la Vie Lycéenne (CAVL)*” and each year, they also appoint a representative and his substitute (“*suppléant*”) at the School Board (“*Conseil d’Administration*”) where school decisions are made. They can also give their opinions on school policies or propose to organize school events such as the high-school prom (“*bal du lycée*”), etc, with the approval of the school administrators. Every year, the school district (“*rectorat*”) examines the projects of the CAVL and helps finance some of them.

This year the “CVL” would like to ask for line barriers for a better management of waiting lines at the school cafeteria and wishes to sell some croissants and chocolatinés at break time.

All in all, the “CVL” plays an important part in schools by voicing students’ ideas, interests and concerns, trying to improve young people’s everyday life and working conditions and taking part in school decision making. Last but not least, it enables its members to take responsibilities while developing speaking and communication skills.

But who are these students and how can we meet them?

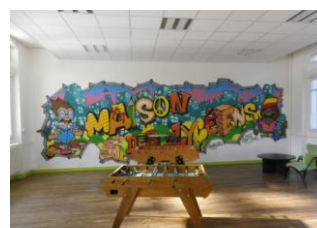
Here is the list of the “CVL” representatives for 2014/2015: Ibrahim Abdellah (T2), Sabine El Alami (T7), Solenn Le Bris (T2), Quentin Muteau (2°2), Gaël Salomon (1°2), Laurent Buffet (T5), Aude Cassaigne (T4), Isabelle Lahargue (T4), Alexia Desperbasque (T3), Mélodie Mongeaud (T3) and their substitutes Pierre Dufau(2°3), Isabelle Carrere (2°3), Bastien

Lakomicki (2°3), Corentin Cambet(2°2) and Elodie Gouraud(1°2).

We met them at their first meeting on November 14th and they told us they definitely encourage other school students to go and speak to them if they want to share ideas, projects or problems with them.

Laura C., Benjamin A. , Thomas F., Paul G. 2°4

A STUDENT ASSOCIATION « LA MAISON DES LYCEENS »



On top of that, we can express ourselves in a student association called “La Maison des Lycéens” or “MDL” which is run by high-school students over 15 years old and promotes sport, cultural, humanitarian, eco-friendly or civics actions in collaboration with the Students’ Representative Council.

Youngsters involved in “La Maison des Lycéens” can decide to organize social events and raise money for community projects, volunteer to support a cause ... Over the last two years, for example, Jacques Monod’s students have collected a significant sum of money by joining a “Rice Bowl” project and have made a donation to a Food Bank association (“*banque alimentaire*”).

La Journée Bol de Riz



by Léo C. and Guillaume B. 2°4

OUTSIDE SCHOOL: LOCAL YOUTH CENTERS

In Pau and Lescar, Youth Centers or Youth Clubs (« *Maison des Jeunes et de la Culture* » or « *MJC* ») are also places where young people can meet, participate in activities, get involved in local community events, voice their opinions and even start their own projects as encouraged by Lescar association "Pl'Asso'Jeunes" or Pau Youth Council ("Conseil Local des Jeunes de Pau")

Pau Youth Council



-It was created in 2009.

-It aims to encourage young people to play an active part in their own town, giving them a voice. The youth meet from twice to three times per month, on Wednesday afternoons at the town hall.

-The representatives are elected by their peers every two years in every public and private middle-school from Pau. Unfortunately, high-school students cannot participate as it is reserved for middle-school students.

-Being members of Pau Youth Council is a serious commitment which requires effort and time. Nevertheless, it must be very gratifying to be able to change things and

to put your ideas into action in your own town...



Brainstorming meeting between youngsters

by Justine L. and Claire T. 2nde4

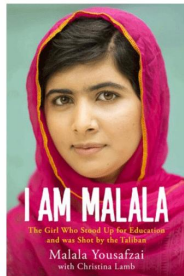
Finally, if we are easily given the opportunity to express ourselves in France, it is not the case everywhere in the world and we cannot deal with young people's right to expression without mentioning Malala Yousafzai.

MALALA YOUSAFSAI, THE SYMBOL OF LIBERTY OF EXPRESSION

Her life story

Malala is a teenager of 17 years old who was born in Pakistan. She was first heard of thanks to her first testimony called "Diaries of a Pakistani schoolgirl" in 2009, as she was only 11 years old. In this testimony she denounced the violence of the Taliban, an Islamic fundamentalist group, who burnt girls' schools in her country. Actually, Pakistan is one of the worst countries for female education.

In 2012, a group of Taliban tried to assassinate her because she advocated the right for all children to go to school. She survived and one year later she wrote a book entitled "I am Malala the girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Talibans ". In that book, she tells us about her life, which was under threat by the Taliban and gives her politic opinion - she believes that we must educate the next generation in order to fight against terrorism and extremism.



Malala today

She is a real feminist and activist for female education. For her security, she and her family have sought refuge in Birmingham, England, where she goes to school. Integration was difficult because it was not the same culture and she had never seen women enjoying so much freedom before. But her dream is still to become a female politician in her native country, Pakistan.

The Nobel Peace Prize

She has won the Nobel Peace Prize this year for all her engagements. And she sees this prize as a motivation to continue her fight for education for all children in the world. That is why she has decided to dedicate this prize to all the kids who can't fight for their rights.

A symbol of the liberty of expression

Malala is a real symbol of the liberty of expression because, whatever the risks, she has always been fighting for it thanks to her committed books about her life and her politic opinion and thanks to all her public speeches.



by Manon D., Claire M., Julie M., Floriane M. and Emilie P. 2nd4