



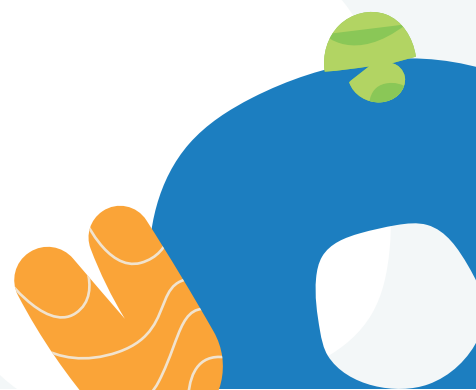
It's not a favor, it's our rights!

A letter from the children and adolescents of the Inter-American region.

We write this letter with love, commitment and hope. It is aimed at all people who have the conscience and heart to talk to us.

They say that we are the generation with the most opportunities. However, there are many realities that we live in, which hurt us and make it difficult for us to live our rights. In today's world, in our countries and in our communities, there are abuses against us that seem normal, and we do not agree with that. It will never be normal for our rights to be violated.

There are situations that seem unfair to us. It is unfair that protection is more difficult in the countryside. It is unfair for some people to believe that protection from abuse is a favor or a privilege. It is unfair to think that protecting is responding when our rights have already been violated, instead of preventing. It is unfair that in our families situations that affect us are considered "normal". It is unfair that we are victims of this silent epidemic that steals our joy.





And what do we mean by abuse? To all the situations that do not allow us to live well: recruitment and use by criminal groups; physical, psychological and sexual abuse; child labour and poverty, cyber abuse, bullying, racism, gender violence, censorship of complaints, abandonment and loneliness.

And the latter breaks our hearts. We don't deserve to grow up alone! Sometimes we prefer to keep quiet about what we live because adults keep saying that we are a crystal generation and that we have to endure because "that's life".

The pain experienced by a child or adolescent is the wound of all humanity. Our lives matter! Our voices are changing history. We are breaking the silence about what harms us and is not normal. That is why we demand actions from States and not speeches. It is their duty!

You may have already realized that we are not asking for a favor, we are claiming our rights. The pains we live through, we do NOT deserve them and they are not our destiny. Living our rights is a step towards the life we want and dream of.

It is necessary that, on a daily basis, families, teachers, communities and States stop thinking that everything that violates our rights is normal and lead actions that transform these realities. We are the future and above all the present of our communities, that is why we deserve to grow up being truly happy.

The greatest act of love is to take care of ourselves unconditionally. We want you to listen to us and take care of us, so that we can transform everything that can consider normal an abuse against us.



That is why we have some proposals that we need to share with you, with the States and institutions that lead the systems for the promotion and comprehensive protection of the rights of children and adolescents.

We propose that States provide constant and safe accompaniment that allows us to know our rights, appropriate them and defend them. That there are strategies that strengthen families and listen to us without stigma.

We propose that, from the systems of promotion and comprehensive protection of the rights of children and adolescents, experiences and content be carried out that allow us to identify abuses or situations of risk, and how to prevent them. Participation meetings, sports and arts in public spaces are some ideas of places where we could talk or play with others.

We propose that States implement actions to build a culture of peace, overcome differences and return to the fundamentals. Care is collective, it is everyone's responsibility.

We propose fairer laws; clearer and more effective protocols, channels and reporting routes in all the environments where we live (such as educational, family, community or digital) that strengthen promotion and protection systems, working hand in hand with families and communities.



We propose actions that allow migrant children and adolescents to have their rights protected in any country in the region.

We propose that immediate response mechanisms be designed and implemented in the event of disappearances of children and adolescents, and that they be shared by all countries in the region.

We propose to think about the protection of our rights from a sense of community. Everyone can be a protector of our rights with actions such as community workshops, schools for mothers and fathers, awareness campaigns and support groups. We imagine community collectives of professionals in law, psychology and medicine that act immediately, activate care routes and promote the recognition of our rights.

We propose that families spend more time with us. Hugging our grandmothers and grandfathers, playing with our cousins. Living with a family. Actions like these allow us to take care of our mental health and that of other people.

Protecting our rights is also protecting the land. That is why we propose actions to take care of all forms of life and recover the environment.





It is also important to accompany, without any stigmatization, children and adolescents who have suffered or are suffering from abuse; that they feel confident to be able to denounce what does not do them good and have the opportunity to heal and live their dreams.

Today we come together to strengthen our protagonism and claim our rights. We want a society in which we can play, learn, dream freely and without fear. We raise our voices for the realities that hurt us, but also for the opportunities that can lead us to transform them. To take care of ourselves is to take care of the root of all hope.



With appreciation and commitment,

**Children and adolescents in the
Inter-American region.**