



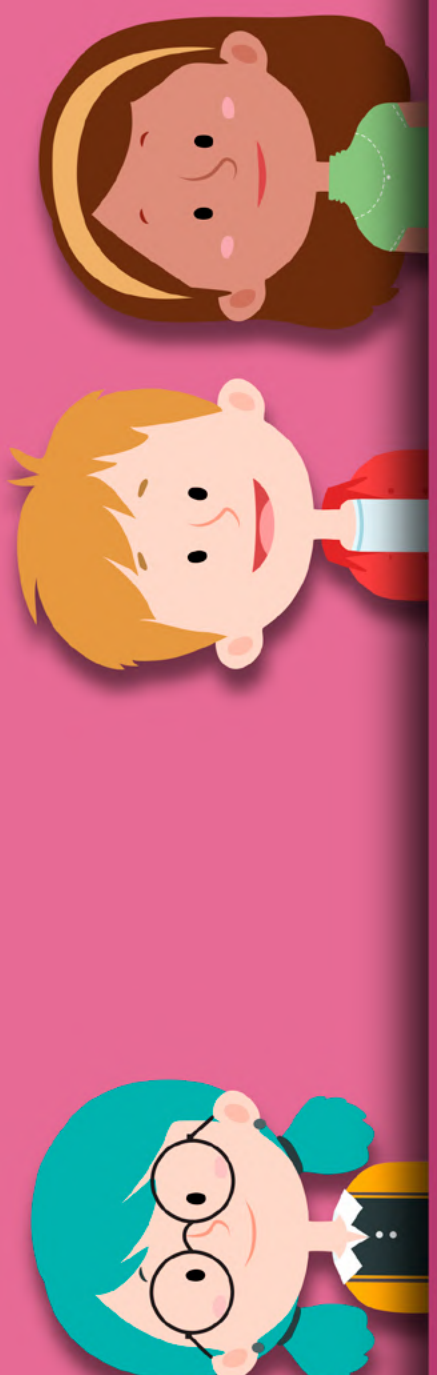
CHILDHOOD AND VIOLENCE: THE CHALLENGE OF ENSURING RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN IN THEIR EVERYDAY SETTINGS

FRIENDLY VERSION
DEVELOPED BY STUDENTS OF SANTA MARIA COLLEGE -
HERMANOS MARISTAS, MDEO. URUGUAY, 2018



HI!
WE HOPE YOU ARE WELL.

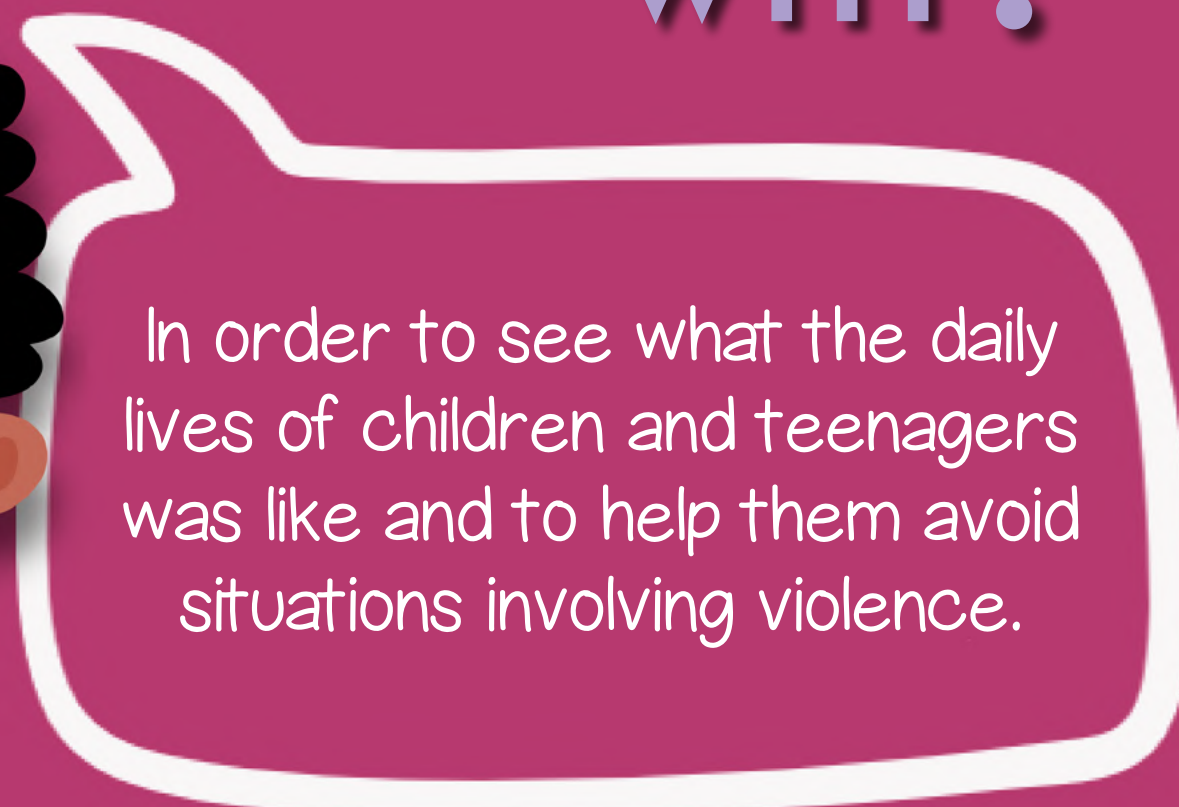

In the next few pages you'll find all of the most important issues relating to the research study on "Ensuring rights in everyday life for children and teenagers: the contributions of programmes developed by the State and by civil society in the international sphere", coordinated by Professor Ana María Eyng.



We'd like to begin by telling you what was done, as well as where and how. Understanding these aspects is a good way to start learning about any research

A study was conducted in the Americas in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

WHY?



In order to see what the daily lives of children and teenagers was like and to help them avoid situations involving violence.

The study was conducted under a working agreement entered into by the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN) and the Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI) who, on the basis of their commitments and organizational missions, joined the Paranaense Cultural Association (APC) and the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUCRPR), in order to make progress in this research.




In which countries?

Brazil
Mexico
Guatemala
Chile



The study was based on the situation in institutions in Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala and Chile. But we can suppose that what takes place there, also occurs in other countries of the continent.

We hope that children may be able to overcome the challenges they face in their daily lives on the basis of the results of this research. We also hope that these results can help shed light on the aspects that contribute to children's protection and the protection of their rights, and to education with a view to promoting these rights.



Would you like to know how the study was conducted?

1

First we planned how, when and where the work would take place.

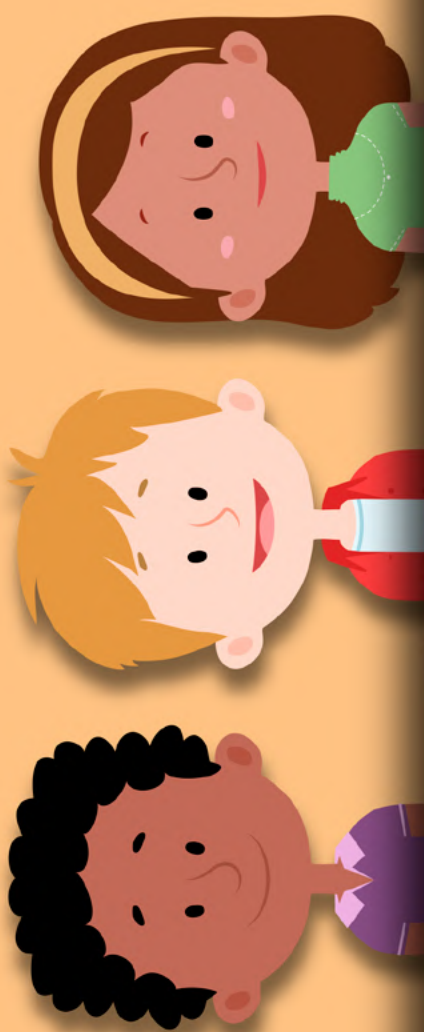
2

At a second stage, we became familiar with the experiences chosen and we held interviews. The people interviewed were children and teenagers, adults responsible for their care; and educators and professional practitioners of the various institutions or programmes involved.

3

Finally, we analysed what these people said and drew certain conclusions.

OK. Now we know how and why it was done. But before we get into what this research study shows, we should touch upon some of the issues related to the situation of children in the world today.

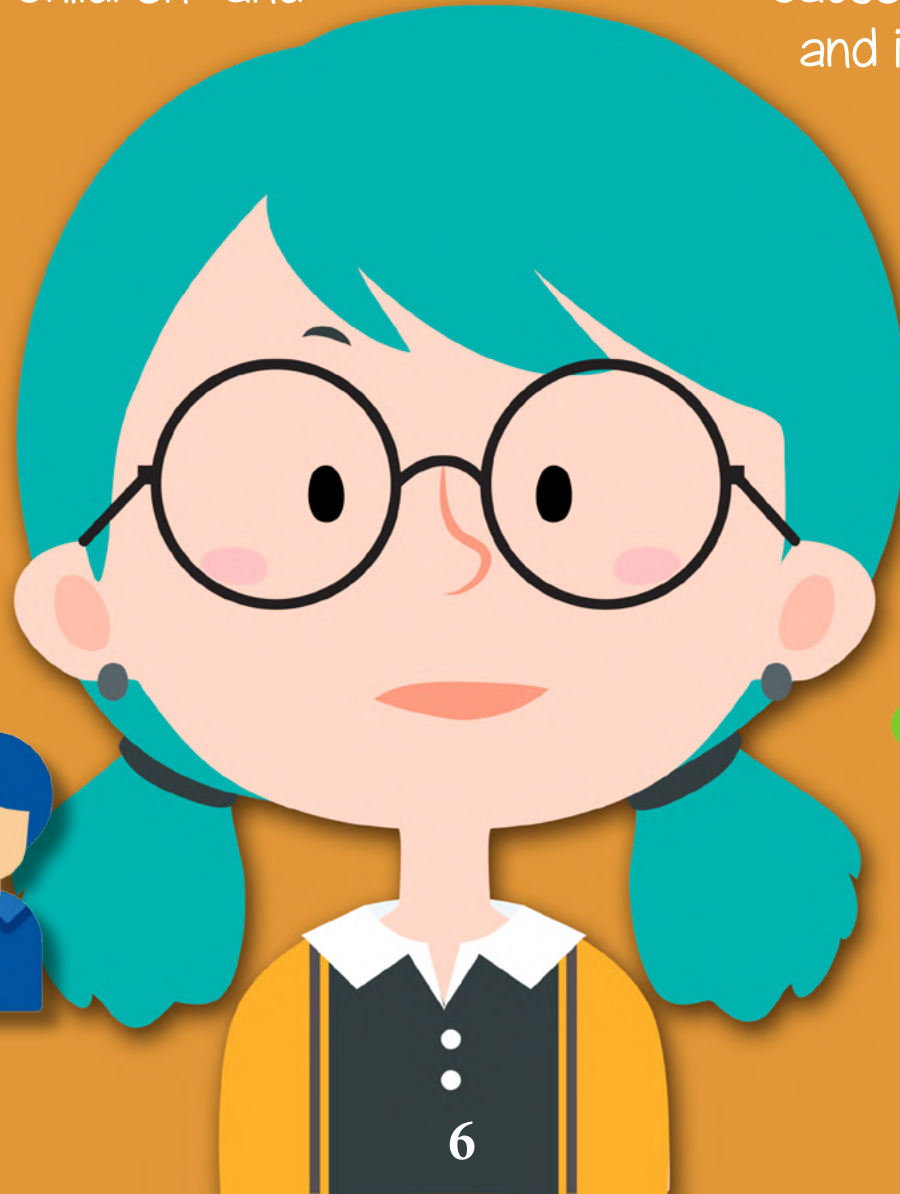
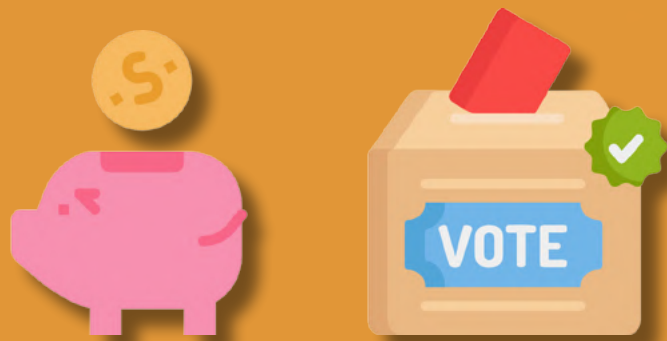


While there are many things we could say about the lives of children and teenagers today, the word VIOLENCE appears to be a key to understanding the research we are dealing with.



There are economic, political, social and cultural aspects that generate violence and inequality, violating the human rights of children and adolescents.

The worst part of this is that some of these situations come to be seen as “normal”. This causes them to be constantly repeated and it becomes increasingly difficult to overcome them.



THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THINGS THAT ARE DONE TO COMBAT THESE EVENTS, BUT, GENERALLY, POLICIES TO “FIGHT AGAINST” VIOLENCE ARE DESIGNED WITH ONLY THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE IN MIND.

THAT IS, ACTION IS TAKEN ONCE A VIOLENT ACT HAS BEEN COMMITTED.



In addition, there are some other important elements that can help us understand how violence is generated:



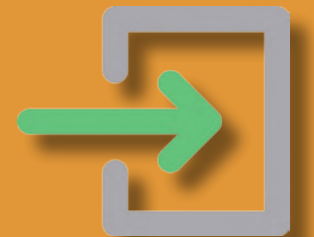
Through its words and actions, society makes the person suffering the violence (the victim) feel guilty about what is happening.

Poverty is often seen as a feature that is part of a person. As if people “are poor”, rather than “undergoing poverty”.



This results in discrimination: designing actions for the long-term improvement of the living conditions of children is not perceived as a possibility.

Right! After laying the groundwork for the subject, we’re now ready to show you the results of the research study...





After reading all of the interviews conducted with children and teenagers, the adults who live with them and the teachers in the institutions and/or programmes they attend, we found that there are 11 elements that “generate” discrimination and violence.



These 11 elements are taken from the accounts provided by the people interviewed.






The first setting in which violence may be experienced is the family. Many of the accounts we analysed show that verbal, psychological and physical abuse may occur within a family.



There is also violence in the community. Many children and teenagers are homeless and living in the street or undergoing extreme poverty and neglect. This reproduces violence and causes children to get caught up in illegal situations (such as crime or drug abuse).

The accounts analysed also show that, in general, there is little participation by the State in the improvement and maintenance of public spaces. As a result, there aren't very many "suitable" places where children can spend their free time.





At the same time, these accounts show that many of the situations involving the violation of child rights are linked to a lack of financial resources (often related to the lack of steady work of the adults with whom they live).



It also appears that educational systems have serious flaws, leading to large numbers of drop-outs in many countries.





The accounts we analysed also show that our societies “accept” violence and abuse. Children and adolescents are viewed as objects regarding whom action can be taken.

Public safety is a problem for children and teenagers. High rates of street crime make it difficult for them to lead their lives under appropriate conditions.

In addition to all of this, many children and teenagers are born and grow up in settings where they often experience situations involving drug and weapon trafficking, aggression, gang fighting, kidnapping and corruption. This makes this way of life appear to be normal to them.





All of which has a great impact on their health, causing them physical and emotional harm. At the same time, children and teenagers who experience these situations are at risk of falling into drug and alcohol abuse, as well as depression.



When people with low self-esteem live in close proximity to crime and drug abuse, they often become involved themselves, seeking protection and visibility.

The rights of children and teenagers are violated on a daily basis in many different ways. Any kind of rights violation implies that violence is committed against them.

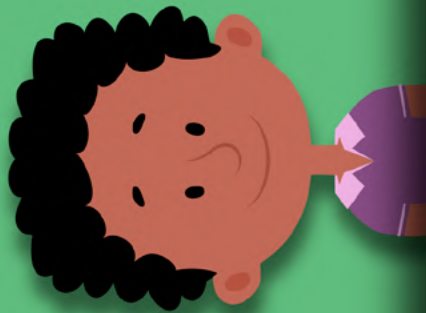
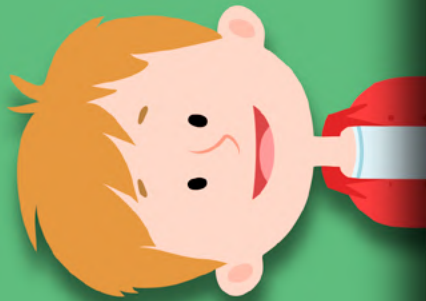


But there are also some factors we call “FACTORS OF PROTECTION”. That is, there are a number of elements to be found in the environment, which enable children to become stronger, so that they can safeguard their rights.



These factors of protection are directly linked to the same aspects that could pose certain risks. However, in order to ensure that these factors can protect children and adolescents effectively, certain conditions need to be generated.

Below you will find a summary of some of the principal thoughts regarding the factors of protection that were recognized by the people we spoke to.

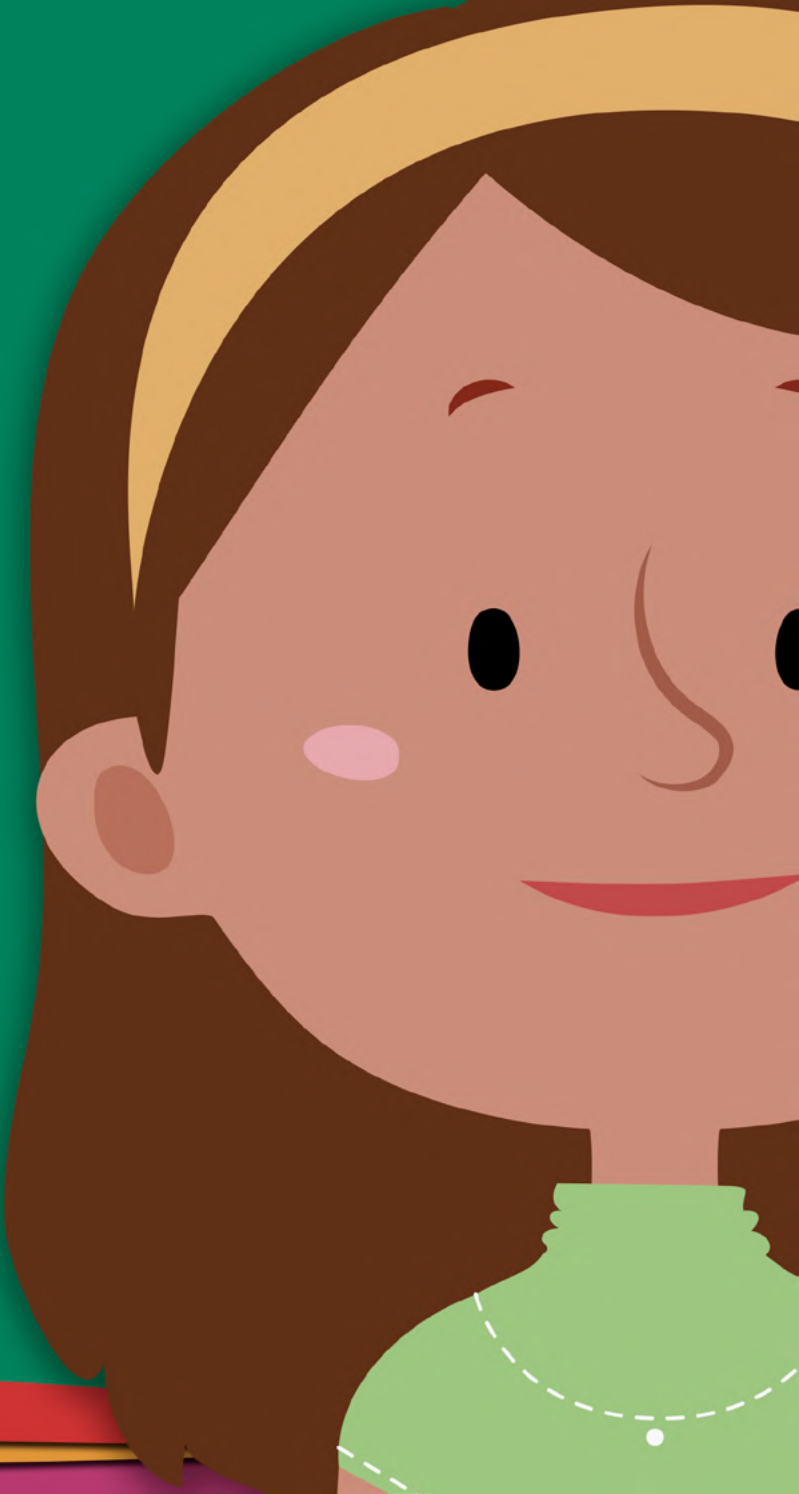


Families can educate and empower children and adolescents so long as they can ensure the provision of care and affection. To this end, “family re-education” should be provided, in order to help families find new and better ways to bond.

Communities can also protect and strengthen children and teenagers. To achieve this, public awareness must be raised and actions must be generated that involve as many people as possible.

Governments can also design policies that foster child care and protection, so long as they are based on children’s rights.

Decent employment with decent wages makes it possible to provide children and teenagers with better care. And, of course, it is essential to eliminate child labour.





As we are aware of the importance of education, we know that it is necessary to increase the number of schools, providing access to information and education on human rights. We also see that it is necessary to change the way we teach; we must find ways to make learning more meaningful in response to vital needs.


As regards the culture prevailing in our societies, we need to improve the way people treat each other, get rid of discrimination and reverse the “normalization” of violence in their relationships.



To the extent that we are able to increase street safety, we shall see a reduction of the different forms of violence that can affect children and teenagers, both directly and in their ways of seeing and understanding the world in which they live.

Access to justice should be more frequent. If the habit of reporting violence is promoted, it will be possible to reduce the violence that children and teenagers experience.

In relation to health, it is essential to increase the number of medical centres, as well as to provide free psychological care, both for individuals and for families.



Strengthening ties in families,
schools and communities,
promoting the participation of
all young people on equal terms,
will lead to the improvement of
children's social and emotional
dimensions, strengthening them
in their daily lives.

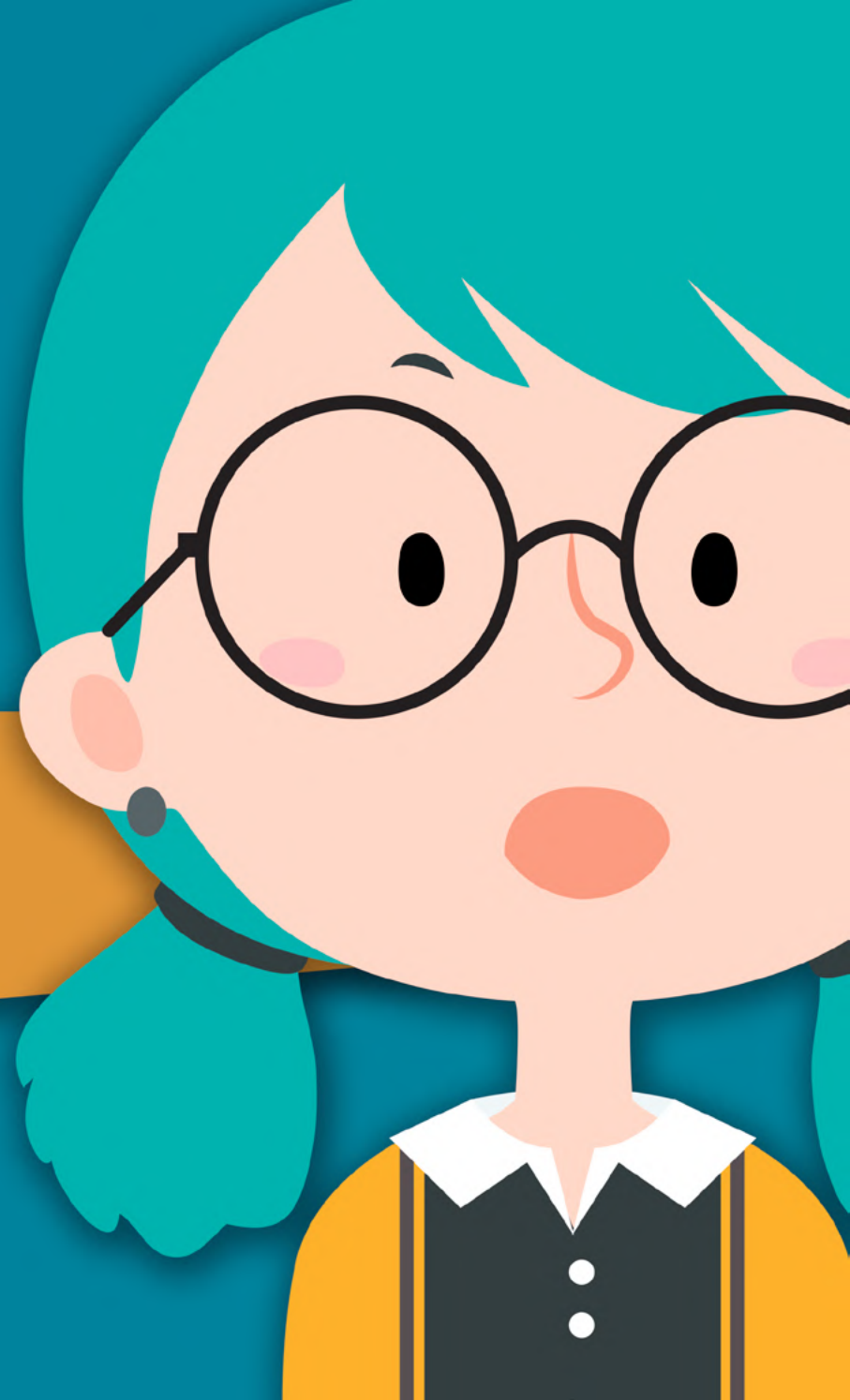
Rights must be safeguarded
by means of proposals that
prevent violence. To this
end, we must work together
with families in support of
education, health, culture and
sports.

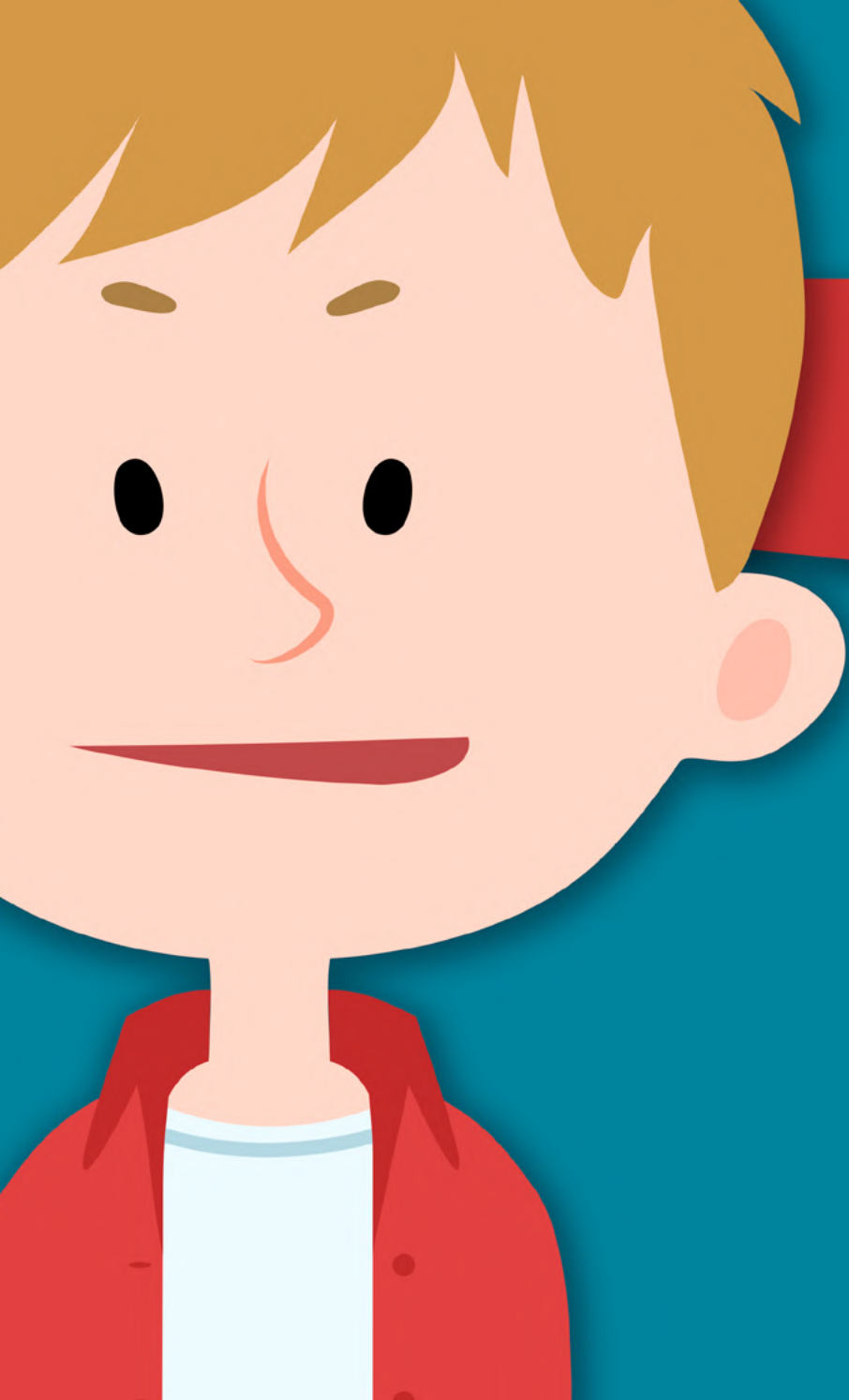


AND TO CONCLUDE...

MANY EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO SAFEGUARD THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, BUT MUCH WORK REMAINS TO BE DONE. AS WELL AS MEETING OBJECTIVES, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT FACTORS OF PROTECTION CAN MULTIPLY AND BE MAINTAINED OVER TIME.

THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT EVERY CHILD OR TEENAGER CAN DO. WHENEVER YOU ENCOUNTER A VIOLENT SITUATION, IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO FIND AN ADULT YOU TRUST AND TELL THEM ABOUT IT.

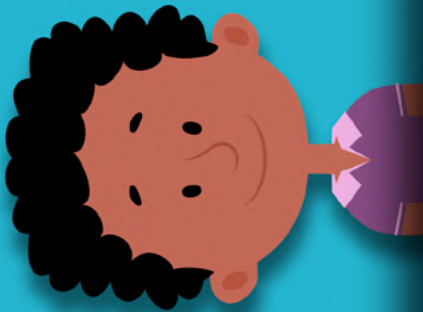
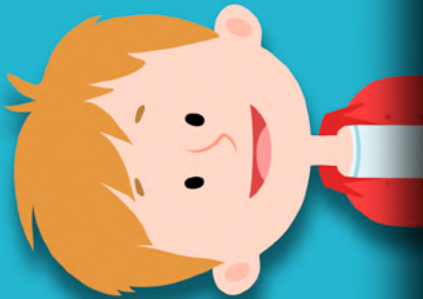




BUT THAT ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH. IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE STATE TO PROVIDE SOME ANSWERS. WE NEED POLICIES FOCUSING ON PREVENTING VIOLENCE. IT IS THE STATE ITSELF THAT MUST REGULATE THEM AND ENSURE THAT THEY ARE ACCESSIBLE TO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

WE MUST PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS, EXERCISING THEIR RIGHT TO FREE EXPRESSION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES. WE MUST GUARANTEE THE POSSIBILITY OF PERSONAL GROWTH, STRENGTHENING GOOD POINTS AND APPRECIATING DIVERSITY.





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