

OUR VOICE! OUR RIGHTS! OUR POWER!



Our Voice! Our Rights! Our Power!

In 2024, ChildFund Alliance engaged 10,000 children across more than 40 countries, asking them to share their lives, their rights, and their hopes for the future. Their responses are gathered in the ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children, a report that evaluates the status of children's and women's rights worldwide.

The right to the future is a fundamental right that every child deserves—an opportunity to grow, thrive, and shape the world they will inherit. Measuring rights and amplifying children's voices is essential in creating policies that not only respond to their current needs but also actively work toward achieving their right to a better, more just future. Child participation is crucial in this process, ensuring that children are not just subjects of decisions but active contributors to the choices that will define their lives and the world they will live in.

This booklet is a way to acknowledge the children who took part in the consultation and all the others whose voices and perspectives are helping to create a future that reflects their hopes. Their input is a powerful force for change. By giving them the space and platform to participate, we are working toward a future shaped by those who will live it.

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written by Claudia Bellante
Illustrated by Ludovica Sodano

"HI, WE'RE ALI AND VERA!
WE MET AT A RALLY THIS AFTERNOON.
ALONG WITH US, THERE WERE 9,998
OTHER CHILDREN FROM 41 DIFFERENT
COUNTRIES.

WE CARRIED BIG SIGNS AND FILLED
THE STREETS AND SQUARES AROUND
THE WORLD, ASKING ADULTS TO SEE
US, LISTEN TO US, AND RESPECT US—
BECAUSE WITHOUT US...
THERE IS NO FUTURE!"



FAVORITE FOOD:
ICE CREAM



ALI IS FROM LEBANON,
HE'S 8 YEARS OLD AND
HAS TWO SISTERS.
HE LOVES DOING
EXPERIMENTS, SINGING,
PLAYING BASKETBALL,
AND EATING ICE CREAM.



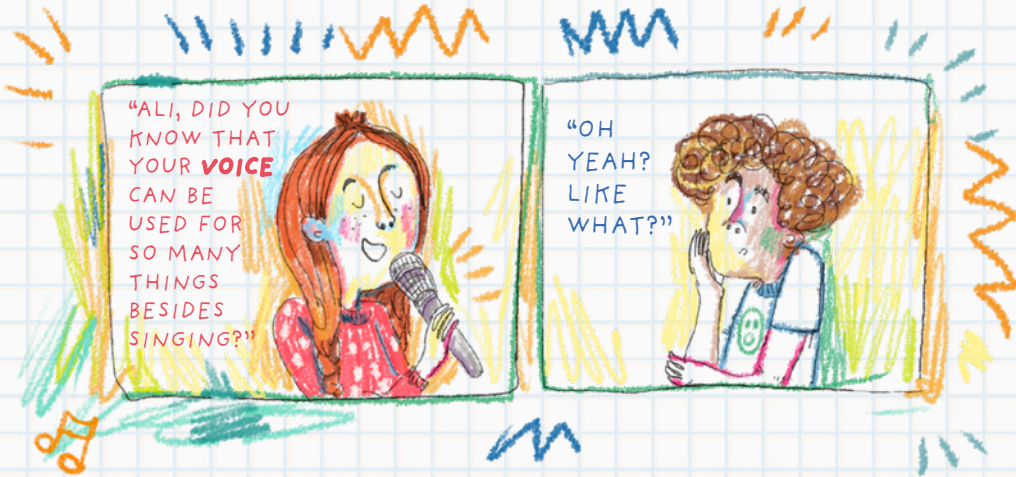
VERA IS 12 YEARS OLD AND
SHE'S FROM SWEDEN.
SHE'S AN ONLY CHILD BUT
HAS FOUR CATS.
SHE LOVES SNAKES,
GEOMETRY, CHERRIES, AND
MAGIC TRICKS.



**FAVORITE
FOOD: CHERRIES**



VOICE



"YOU CAN SHOUT, MAKE ANIMAL SOUNDS, OR EVEN MIMIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, **YOU CAN HAVE A VOICE**—THAT'S WHAT WE CALL IT WHEN YOU USE IT TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS.

IT'S A **POWERFUL TOOL** WE, AS CHILDREN, HAVE TO LET OTHERS—BOTH ADULTS AND OTHER CHILDREN—KNOW WHAT WE LIKE AND WHAT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT TO US."

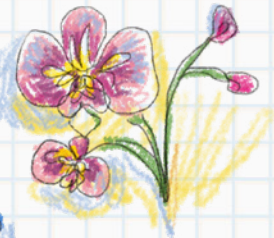


LINDA, 17 YEARS OLD
ECUADOR

"HELLO! I THINK THAT ADULTS SHOULD NOT FORGET HOW THEY THOUGHT WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THEY LISTEN TO US, BECAUSE WE TOO CAN HAVE AN OPINION ABOUT THE WORLD. OUR THOUGHTS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS THEIRS TO MAKE SOCIETY GROW WELL."



FAVORITE FLOWER:
ORCHID AND PALM



FAVORITE ANIMAL: EMERALD HUMMINGBIRD AND GIANT TORTOISE



"LINDA IS RIGHT!
BUT HOW CAN WE 'HAVE A
VOICE,' VERA?"



"I HAVE A
FEW IDEAS!"



3

ASK QUESTIONS: DON'T
BE AFRAID TO ASK.
QUESTIONS HELP YOU
UNDERSTAND WHAT THE
PERSON IN FRONT OF
YOU IS THINKING.



4

1
LISTEN: BEFORE YOU
SPEAK, LISTEN TO WHAT
OTHERS HAVE TO SAY.
THIS WILL HELP YOU
UNDERSTAND HOW
TO MAKE YOUR VOICE
HEARD IN A RESPECTFUL
WAY.



PRACTICE:
THE MORE YOU
PRACTICE SPEAKING
AND SHARING YOUR
IDEAS, THE EASIER
IT WILL BE TO
MAKE YOUR VOICE
HEARD!



5

2
BE KIND: MAKING
YOURSELF HEARD
DOESN'T MEAN RAISING
YOUR VOICE OR BEING
AGGRESSIVE.
USE A KIND BUT FIRM
TONE TO GET PEOPLE
TO LISTEN.



**DON'T BE AFRAID
TO MAKE MISTAKES:**
IF SOMEONE
DOESN'T LISTEN
TO YOU, TAKE A
DEEP BREATH AND
TRY TO EXPLAIN
YOURSELF AGAIN.
DON'T GIVE UP!



"YOU KNOW, I OFTEN FEEL EMBARRASSED TO ASK QUESTIONS. I FEEL STUPID LIKE I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND..."

"I GET REALLY ANGRY WHEN PEOPLE DON'T LISTEN TO ME. ONCE, I KICKED A WALL OUT OF FRUSTRATION AND ENDED UP HURTING MYSELF BADLY!"



WHAT ABOUT YOU?

ARE YOU SOMEONE WHO ASKS A LOT OF QUESTIONS, OR DO YOU FEEL SHY?

AND HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN PEOPLE IGNORE YOU? WANT TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US?

OPINION

"VERA, DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD DO HOMEWORK ON HOLIDAYS?"

"WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT, ALI? ABSOLUTELY NOT!"



"I THINK SO TOO! WE SHOULD JUST PLAY AND RELAX. BUT MY SISTERS SAY I HAVE TO STUDY ALL THE TIME!"

"WELL, THAT'S JUST THEIR **OPINION**, ALI. OURS IS JUST AS VALID... DOWN WITH HOMEWORK! HAHAAH!"



"AND WHAT'S AN 'OPINION'?"



"WELL, AN 'OPINION' IS AN IDEA OR A THOUGHT THAT EACH OF US HAS ABOUT SOMETHING. **OPINIONS CAN BE DIFFERENT**, AND THAT HELPS US SEE THINGS IN MANY WAYS, BUT ALL OPINIONS ARE IMPORTANT. LISTENING TO THEM HELPS US **GROW TOGETHER.**"

"I SEE. DO THEY ALWAYS
LISTEN TO YOUR OPINIONS
AT HOME?"

"MOST OF THE TIME... BUT
SOMETIMES THEY DON'T,
AND I FEEL INVISIBLE."

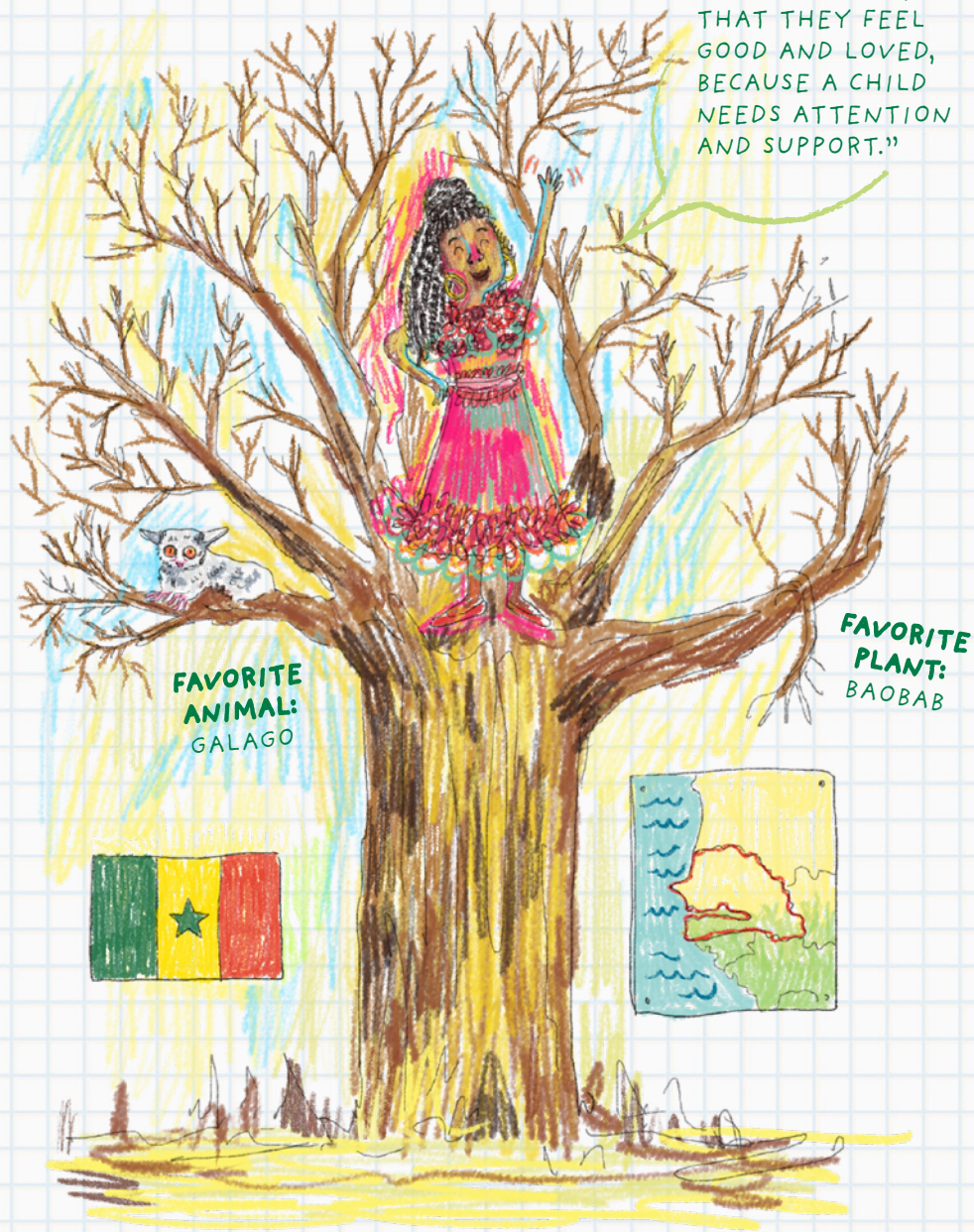
"FOR ME, IT JUST GIVES
ME A STOMACHACHE."



ABOUT 1 IN 3 CHILDREN SAY
THAT ADULTS DON'T ASK FOR
THEIR OPINION.

AYA, 18 YEARS OLD
SENEGAL

"I THINK ADULTS
SHOULD LET
CHILDREN EXPRESS
THEIR OPINION, SO
THAT THEY FEEL
GOOD AND LOVED,
BECAUSE A CHILD
NEEDS ATTENTION
AND SUPPORT."



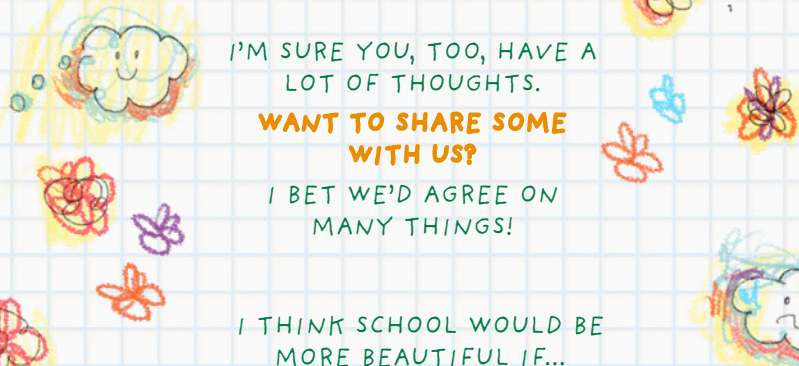
FAVORITE
ANIMAL:
GALAGO

FAVORITE
PLANT:
BAOBAB

"YOU KNOW, ALI, I
BELIEVE THAT EVEN
THOUGH EXPRESSING
AN OPINION CAN SEEM
HARD, EVEN WHEN IT
MAKES US FEEL BAD
AND WE'D RATHER
STAY SILENT, **IT'S
IMPORTANT TO MAKE
OUR VOICES HEARD!**"

"THAT'S TRUE,
ESPECIALLY BECAUSE
I HAVE SO MANY
THINGS I WANT TO
SAY—ABOUT SCHOOL,
ABOUT WHAT SEEMS
WRONG TO ME, ABOUT
WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE
DIFFERENTLY..."



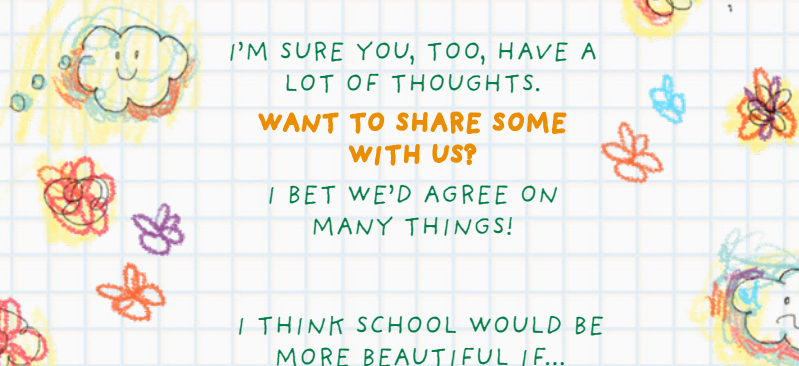


I'M SURE YOU, TOO, HAVE A
LOT OF THOUGHTS.

**WANT TO SHARE SOME
WITH US?**

I BET WE'D AGREE ON
MANY THINGS!

I THINK SCHOOL WOULD BE
MORE BEAUTIFUL IF...

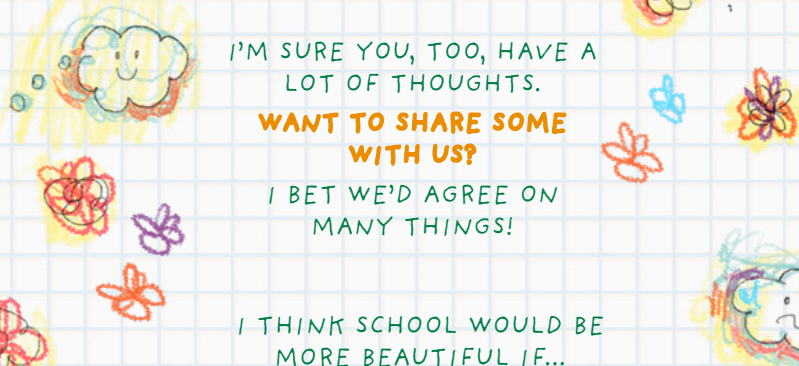


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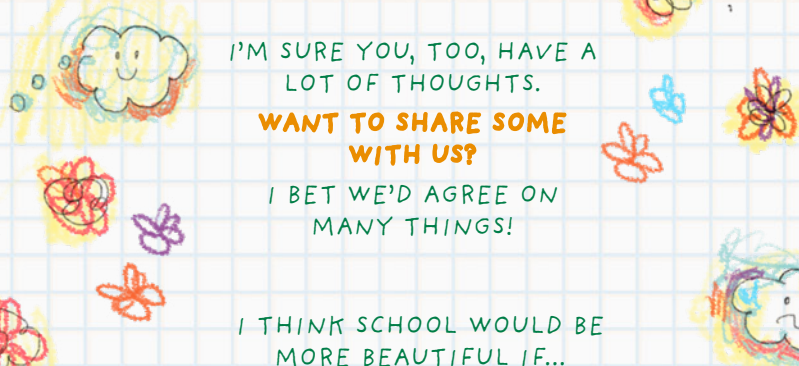


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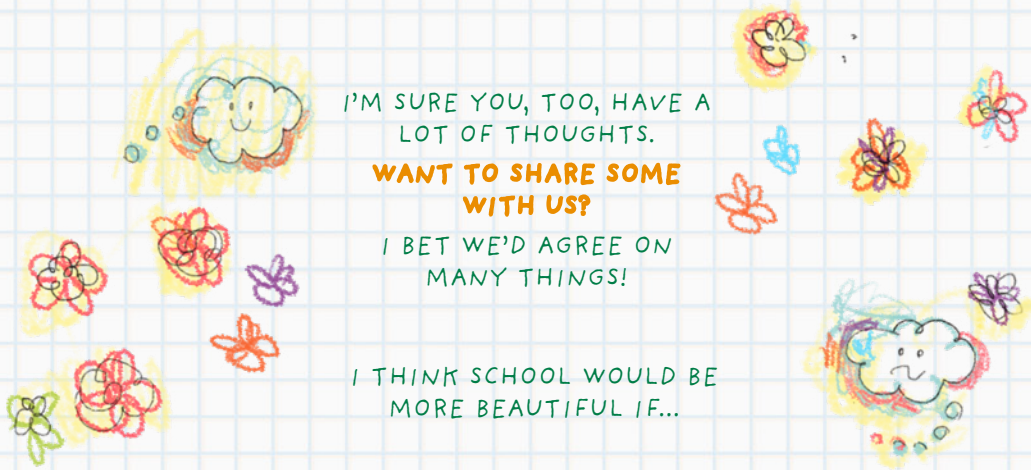


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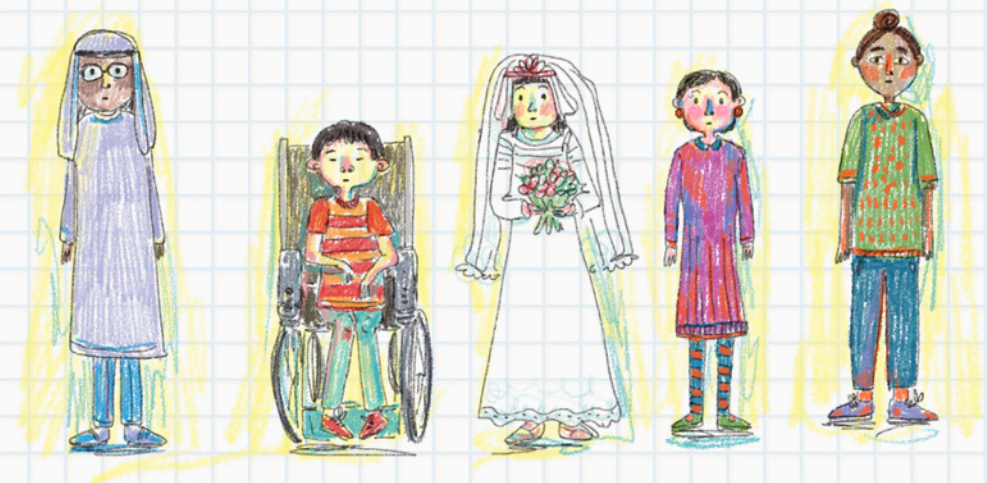
AGENCY

"BUT VERA, DO YOU THINK IF ALL OF US CHILDREN AGREE ON SOMETHING, WE CAN REALLY CHANGE THINGS?"

"I BELIEVE SO. AT THE RALLY, I HEARD THE WORD: '**AGENCY**,' WHICH MEANS BEING ABLE TO TAKE ACTION TO CHANGE THINGS AROUND US.

EVERYONE, EVEN US CHILDREN, CAN HAVE **AGENCY** WHEN WE'RE LISTENED TO AND RESPECTED.

THE PROBLEM IS, UNFORTUNATELY, THIS DOESN'T ALWAYS HAPPEN, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO IMPORTANT DECISIONS."



3 OUT OF 10 CHILDREN BELIEVE THAT IN THE FUTURE, THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO FREELY DECIDE WHETHER TO GET MARRIED OR HAVE CHILDREN.

SHREYA, 17 YEARS OLD
INDIA



FAVORITE PLANT:
BOUGAINVILLEA



"I THINK I SHOULDN'T GET MARRIED RIGHT AWAY, EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD HELP ME GET A GOOD JOB AFTER I FINISH COLLEGE."



FAVORITE ANIMAL:
TIGER

"YOU KNOW, ALI, TO FEEL CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO EXPRESS AN OPINION, WE NEED TO HAVE TRUST IN OURSELVES. AND THAT TRUST CAN COME FROM MANY THINGS. FROM OUR ABILITIES, OR EVEN FROM THE PEOPLE AROUND US WHO HELP AND SUPPORT US."



I ALWAYS HAVE MY OLDER SISTERS TO DEFEND ME!
AND **YOU**, THE ONE READING THIS, CAN YOU DRAW OR WRITE ABOUT SOMETHING OR SOMEONE THAT MAKES YOU FEEL CONFIDENT?

A large orange decorative frame containing five horizontal green lines for writing or drawing.

POWER

"SO, IF WE CAN CHOOSE AND CHANGE THINGS, DOES THAT MEAN WE HAVE **POWER**? LIKE SUPERHEROES?"

"EXACTLY! BUT THERE ARE GOOD AND BAD SUPERHEROES. IF WE WANT TO BE ON THE GOOD SIDE, WE HAVE TO **USE OUR POWER CAREFULLY AND WITH RESPECT** FOR OTHERS. FOR EXAMPLE, ADULTS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE CARE OF CHILDREN AND MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS FOR THEM, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY CAN DO WHATEVER THEY WANT!"



1 IN 4 CHILDREN SAY THAT ADULTS SAY OR DO THINGS THAT MAKE THEM FEEL BAD.

"HAVING POWER ALSO MEANS THAT YOU CAN DECIDE HOW TO BEHAVE WITH YOUR FRIENDS, CLASSMATES, AND THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.

YOU CAN CHOOSE WHETHER TO BE KIND, HELP SOMEONE IN NEED, OR STAND UP FOR SOMEONE FACING INJUSTICE.

POWER CAN BE USED FOR GOOD OR BAD, AND IT'S UP TO EACH OF US TO DECIDE HOW TO USE IT!"



HOW WOULD YOU USE IT?

CAN YOU GIVE US AN EXAMPLE?

DULCE, 12 YEARS OLD
MEXICO

"I BELIEVE THAT ADULTS SHOULD SUPPORT US AND MAKE SURE THAT THE AUTHORITIES DO WHAT THEY PROMISED.

FOR EXAMPLE, SOMETIMES ADULTS SAY THAT THEY WILL BUILD FREE SPACES TO PLAY, BUT THEY NEVER DO IT."



FAVORITE FOOD:

SOP, A CORN TORTILLA FRIED IN BUTTER, TOPPED WITH BEANS, MEAT, CHEESE, VEGETABLES AND SPICY SAUCES.

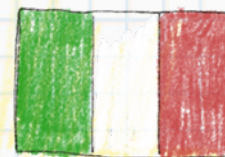


FAVORITE ANIMAL:
XOLOITZCUINTLE

PIERO, 12 YEARS OLD
ITALY

"FOR ME, ADULTS SHOULD HELP US BELIEVE IN OUR DREAMS.

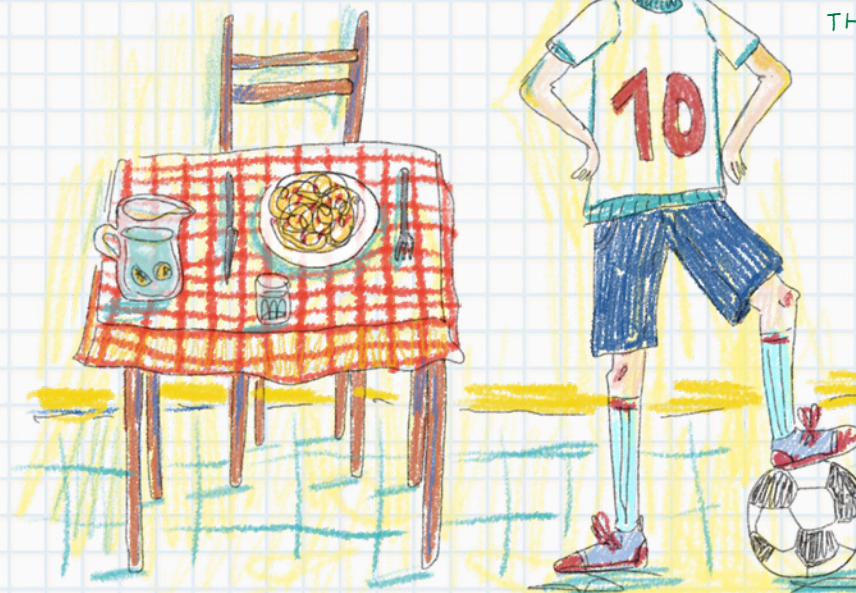
EVEN IF SOMETIMES WE CAN'T MAKE THEM COME TRUE, THEY CAN STILL GIVE US A HAND."



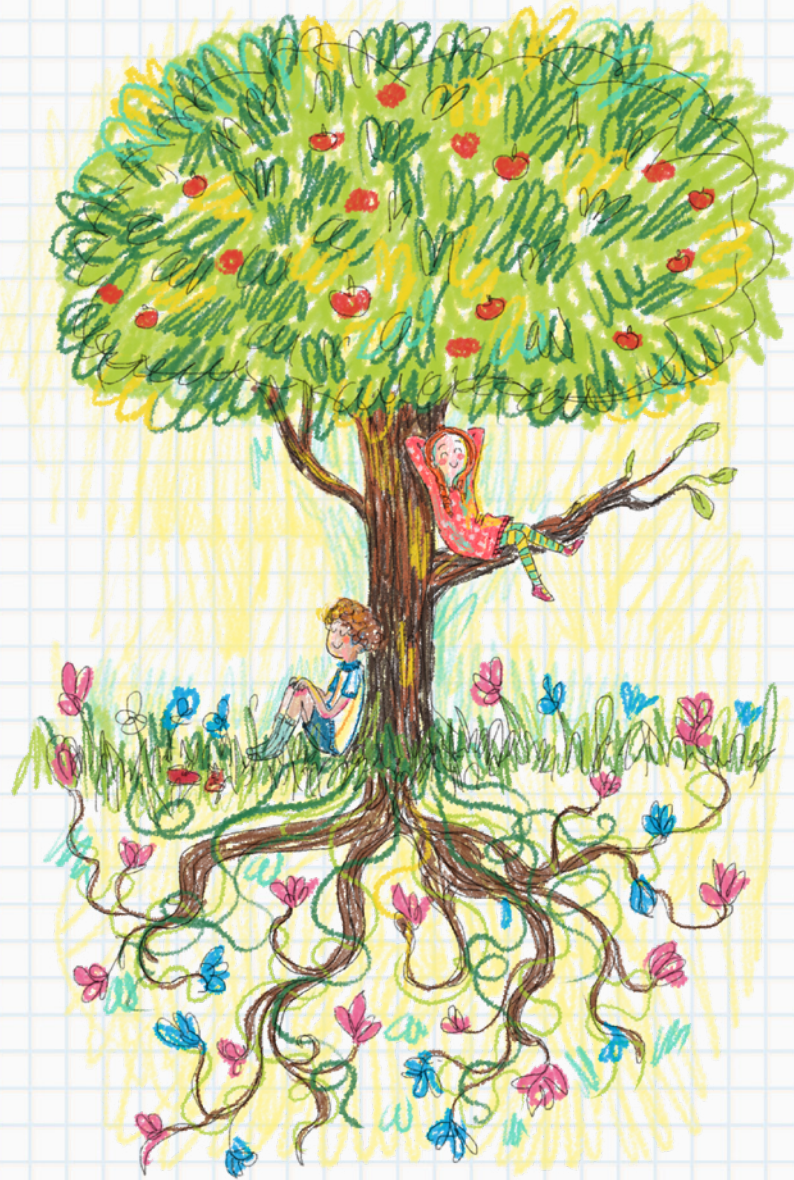
FAVORITE DISH: PASTA ALLA CARBONARA, WITH EGG AND BACON



FAVORITE ANIMAL:
THE WOLF



"YOU KNOW, VERA, I THINK **POWER SHOULD BE LIKE A TREE.** FROM THE OUTSIDE, PEOPLE MIGHT ONLY SEE THE FRUITS OR FLOWERS, BUT IN REALITY, THERE ARE BRANCHES, ROOTS... EVERY PART HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE. **NO ONE COULD STAY UP HIGH IN THE TREETOPS WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE ROOTS.**"



"THAT'S SUCH A BEAUTIFUL IMAGE, ALI! I LOVE IT! SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A LITTLE LEAF ABOUT TO FALL, BUT **I KNOW I HAVE THE STRENGTH AND ENERGY TO GROW INTO A STRONG BRANCH!**"

AND IN YOUR TREE OF POWER, WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

WHO IS HIGHER UP? AND WHO IS LOWER DOWN?
HERE'S YOUR TREE—TRY TO PLACE YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS,
TEACHERS, FRIENDS, AND EVERYONE WHO IS PART OF YOUR
WORLD. AND DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE YOURSELF!



HUMAN RIGHTS

"VERA, I ALSO HEARD ANOTHER WORD AT THE RALLY: **HUMAN RIGHTS**. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?"

"HUMAN RIGHTS ARE THE THINGS THAT ALLOW US TO DO IMPORTANT THINGS IN OUR LIVES, LIKE **EXPRESSING OUR THOUGHTS, PLAYING, STUDYING, AND HAVING JUSTICE**. EVERYONE, BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN, HAS HUMAN RIGHTS THAT MUST BE RESPECTED."



"YES! YES! YES! YES! AND YES! THEY ARE ALL OUR RIGHTS!!!"

"SO, LIVING IN PEACE IS A RIGHT? AND HAVING FOOD? AND GOING TO SCHOOL? AND LIVING IN A WORLD THAT'S NOT POLLUTED? AND FEELING HAPPY?"



"BUT THEN, WHY..."

MORE THAN **1 IN 7** CHILDREN SUFFER FROM HUNGER?



MORE THAN **1 IN 4** CHILDREN SAY THEY DON'T ALWAYS HAVE THE CHANCE TO GO TO SCHOOL?



MORE THAN **1 IN 3** CHILDREN FEEL UNSAFE BECAUSE OF WARS AND CRIME?



MORE THAN **1 IN 2** CHILDREN ARE WORRIED ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

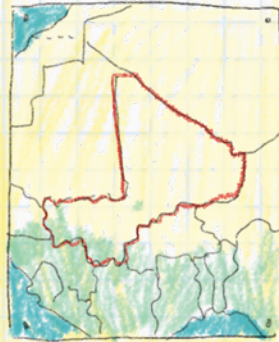


MORE THAN **1 IN 10** CHILDREN DON'T USUALLY FEEL HAPPY?"



MOUSSA, 11 YEARS OLD
MALI

"I ONLY ASK YOU TO
RESPECT OUR RIGHTS AND
PUT AN END TO THE WAR,
SO WE CAN GO HOME
AND HAVE A BETTER LIFE
THAN THE ONE WE ARE
LIVING NOW."



FAVORITE ANIMAL:
FENNEC FOX



FAVORITE FOOD:
YASSA, A SAUCE
MADE WITH CARROTS,
POTATOES AND MEAT.



AND WHAT OTHER RIGHTS DO YOU THINK WE CHILDREN HAVE?

WRITE THEM DOWN HERE SO WE CAN STICK THEM
IN THE CLASSROOM OR AT HOME, AND NEVER
FORGET THEM! AND MAYBE THEY'LL HELP REMIND
THE ADULTS TOO ;)



"DO YOU REMEMBER, ALI, WHEN
WE TALKED ABOUT WHAT AN
OPINION IS?

BEING ABLE TO EXPRESS IT IS
OUR RIGHT! AND IT'S NOT JUST
ME SAYING IT—IT'S WRITTEN
IN AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT
THAT APPLIES TO ALL CHILDREN
AROUND THE WORLD.

IT'S CALLED THE **CONVENTION
ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD!**"



FUTURE

"ALI, DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE?"

"WELL, YEAH, I DO."

"AND WHAT DO YOU THINK?"

"I DON'T KNOW."



WHAT ABOUT YOU?

HOW DO YOU IMAGINE YOUR FUTURE?
IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WORRIES YOU?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO DAYDREAM A BIT AND
SHARE IT WITH US?



"FUTURE" IS A BIG WORD BECAUSE NONE OF US CAN TRULY KNOW WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE, AND BECAUSE IT HAS TO BE BUILT, BRICK BY BRICK.



WE, THE CHILDREN, MUST BUILD IT, MAKING THE **RIGHT CHOICES FOR OURSELVES AND FOR THOSE WHO WILL BE BORN TOMORROW.**

AND WE MUST BUILD IT TOGETHER WITH OTHERS, INCLUDING ADULTS, OR ELSE IT WILL BE HARD TO CHANGE THINGS.



THE FUTURE IS A HUMAN RIGHT, JUST LIKE EATING, PLAYING, BEING WELL, AND HAVING SOMEONE WHO TAKES CARE OF US—ONLY IT HASN'T BEEN WRITTEN IN THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS YET.



HAVING THE RIGHT TO THE FUTURE MEANS **BEING ABLE TO LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE WE CAN GROW, LEARN, AND MAKE OUR DREAMS COME TRUE.**

CARMEN, 16 YEARS OLD
MEXICO

"I THINK ADULTS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORLD TODAY IS DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE THEY LIVED IN WHEN THEY WERE OUR AGE"



FAVORITE HOLIDAY:
DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS



FAVORITE ANIMAL: BLACK HARE

AJOBA, 15 YEARS OLD
GHANA

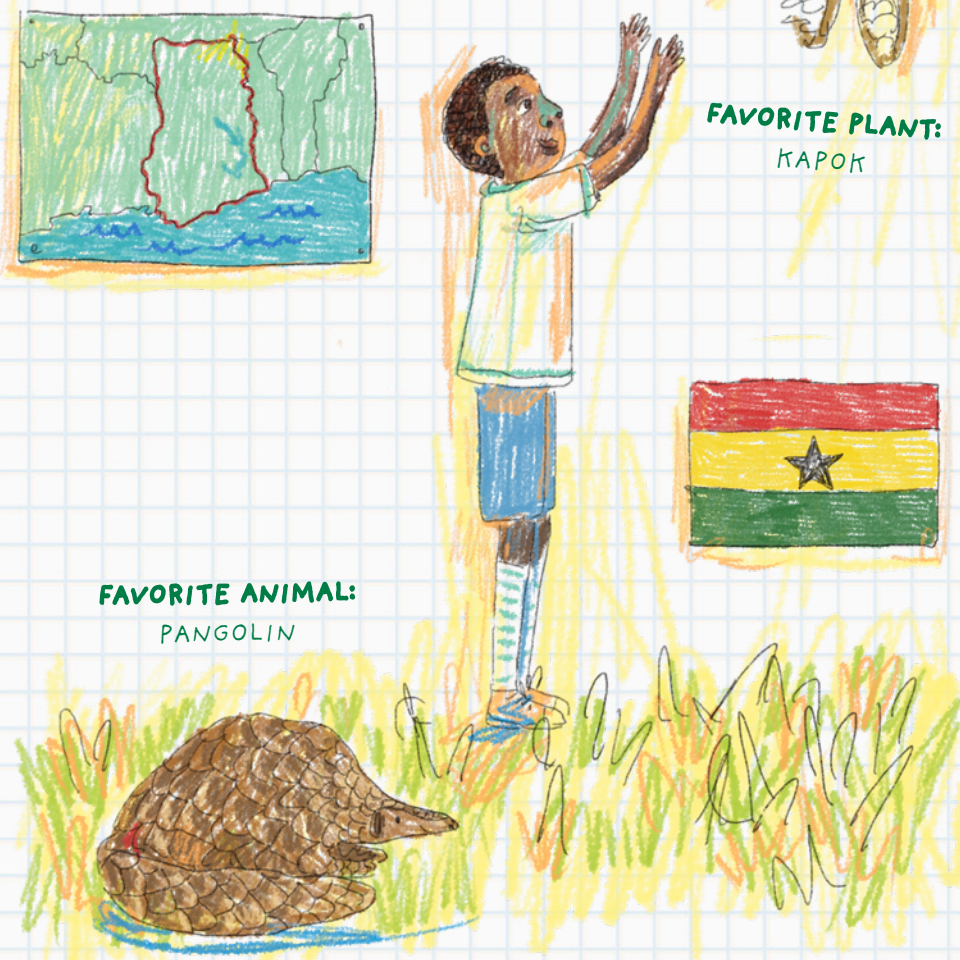
"I ALSO BELIEVE THAT ADULTS SHOULD TEACH US WHAT LIES AHEAD AND HOW TO GET THERE, IN THE FUTURE."



FAVORITE PLANT:
KAPOK



FAVORITE ANIMAL:
PANGOLIN

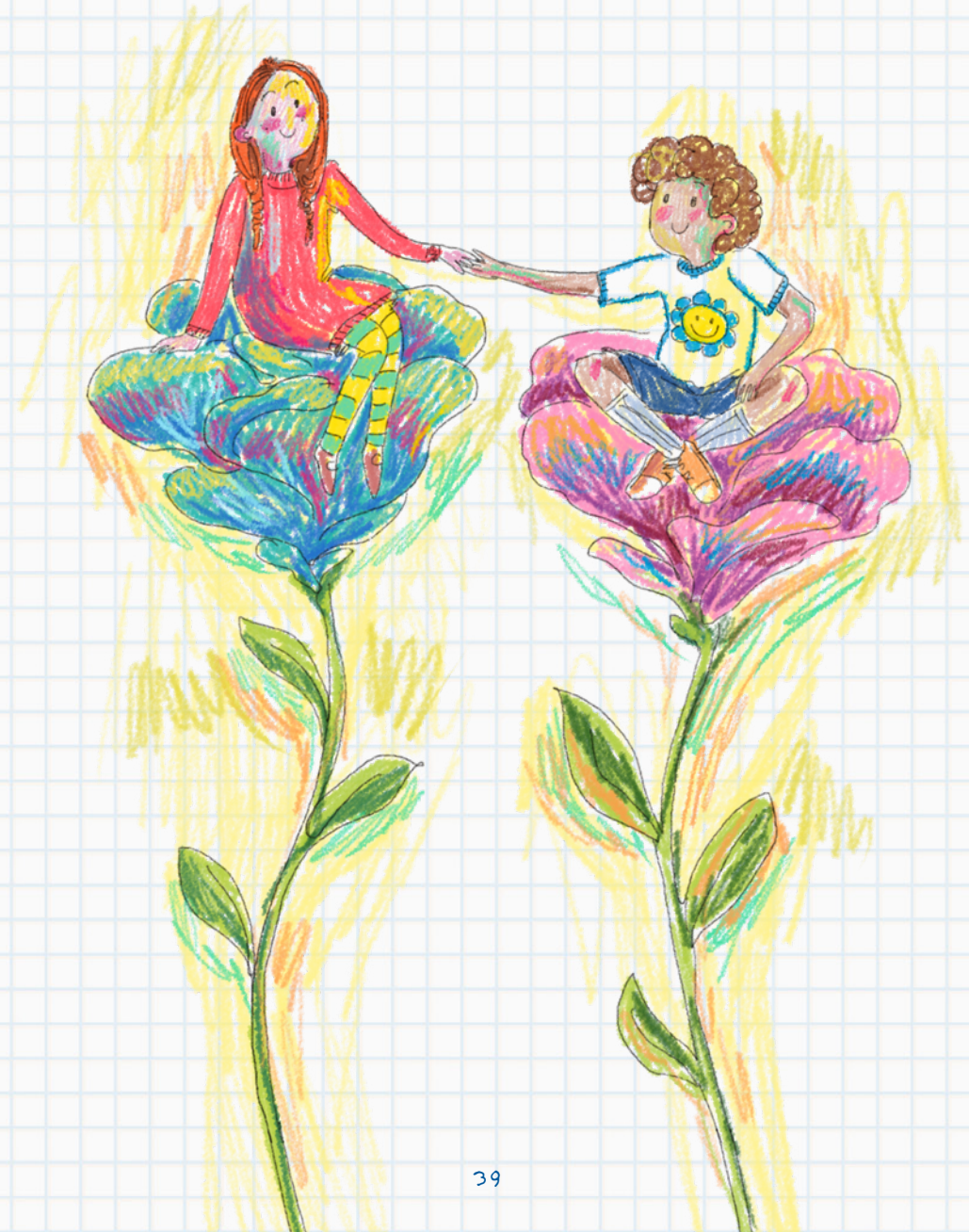


"YOU KNOW, VERA, I'VE REALIZED THAT IF WE WANT A BETTER WORLD AND A BETTER FUTURE, **EVERYONE HAS TO DO THEIR PART.** EVEN IF IT SEEMS SMALL, IT'S STILL IMPORTANT!"

"AND I'VE REALIZED THAT **WE DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID BECAUSE THINGS CAN CHANGE,** AND WE CAN KEEP GAINING MORE RIGHTS!"



THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE CAN BE SCARY, BUT YOU'RE NOT ALONE! YOUR FRIENDS ARE WITH YOU! WE, ALONG WITH THE OTHER 9,998 KIDS WHO JOINED US HERE, HAVE WRITTEN DOWN **THE FIVE THINGS WE WANT TO ASK ADULTS,** THINGS THAT ARE **IMPORTANT AND NON-NEGOTIABLE** FOR US.



LET US
STUDY TO
ACHIEVE OUR
DREAMS

PROTECT US
FROM VIOLENCE,
INJUSTICE AND
DISCRIMINATION

LISTEN TO US
AND ASK US OUR
OPINION

UNDERSTAND
US AND
RESPECT US

ENCOURAGE US,
GUIDE US AND
SUPPORT US



YI-JUN, 11 YEARS OLD
SOUTH KOREA

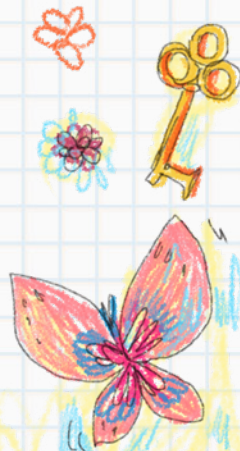
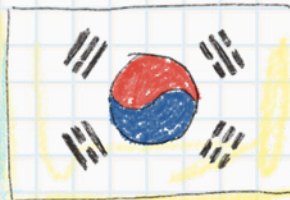
"I SAY TO ADULTS: LOVE
CHILDREN MORE, GIVE THEM
YOUR HEART AND A PAT ON
THE SHOULDER."



FAVORITE FOOD: KIMBAP:
SEAWEED ROLL WITH
STEAMED RICE, MEAT, FISH,
VEGETABLES INSIDE.



FAVORITE HOLIDAY:
CHILDREN'S DAY ON
MAY 5TH!

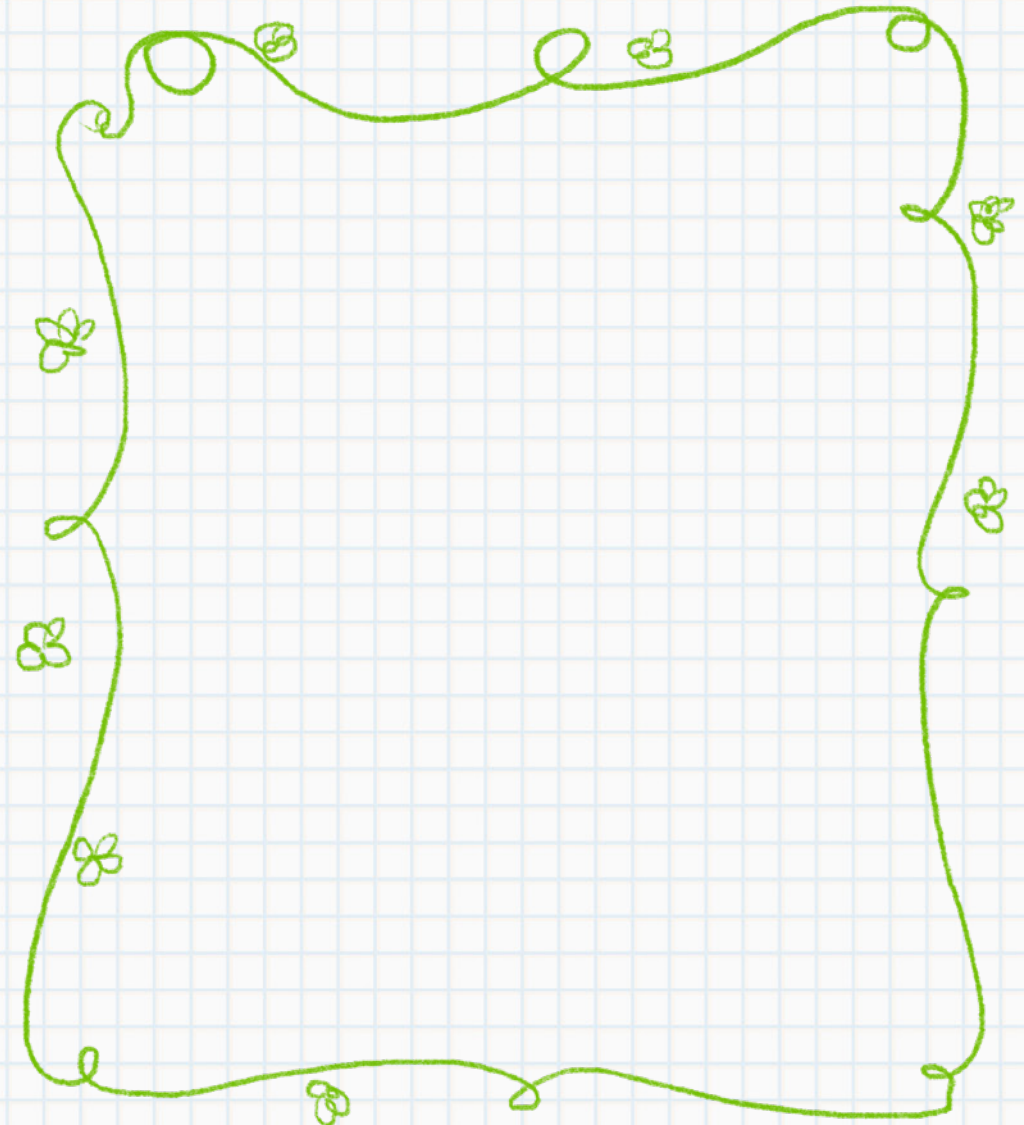


WHAT ABOUT YOU?

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE, WHAT WOULD YOU
LIKE TO ASK ADULTS FOR YOURSELF?

AND WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK
FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

YOU CAN WRITE OR DRAW IT, HOWEVER YOU PREFER!



PARTICIPATION

"VERA, CAN WE REALLY PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISIONS ADULTS MAKE ABOUT THINGS THAT AFFECT US?"



"OF COURSE, EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY, TO MAKE THEIR VOICE HEARD AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMON GOOD."

NAKIMERA, 13 YEARS
UGANDA

"I THINK THAT THE ADULTS AROUND ME SHOULD CONSULT ME AND USE MY IDEAS."



FAVORITE ANIMAL:
MOUNTAIN GORILLA



FAVORITE PLANT:
LANTANA

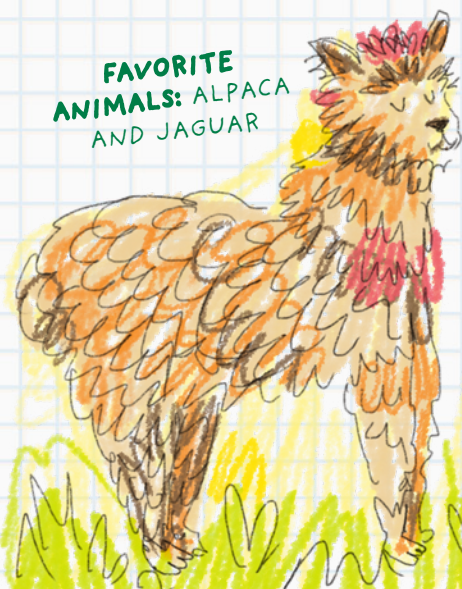


VERONICA, 16 YEARS OLD
BOLIVIA

"I THINK THAT AS CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS, EACH OF US NEEDS THE ATTENTION OF ADULTS, AS WELL AS THEIR SUPPORT. ADULTS MUST CONSIDER US, NOT ONLY AS CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN OR SIBLINGS. THEY MUST LISTEN TO OUR OPINIONS BECAUSE OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON THEM, AND KNOWING THAT THEY WANT THE BEST FOR US, EVERY ADULT SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO WHAT WE SAY."



FAVORITE ANIMALS: ALPACA AND JAGUAR



FAVORITE FOOD:
SOPA DI MANI
(PEANUT SOUP)



"BUT YOU DON'T JUST HAVE TO ASK FOR PARTICIPATION, YOU ALSO HAVE TO PRACTICE IT. **WE TOO ARE PART OF THE CHANGE** AND WE HAVE TO SET AN EXAMPLE. IF YOU WANT YOUR SCHOOL TO BE CLEAN AND TIDY, YOU HAVE TO TIDY UP THE DESKS AND THROW THE PAPERS IN THE BIN!"



“COME ON, GIVE US
A HAND TOO!!!”

TRACE THE OUTLINE OF YOUR HAND IN THE
NEXT PAGE AND WRITE ON EACH FINGER
THE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PARTICIPATE IN
CHANGE AND BUILD THE FUTURE YOU WANT FOR
YOURSELF AND FOR OTHERS.

YOU’LL SEE, FIVE FINGERS WON’T BE ENOUGH
BECAUSE YOU CAN DO SO MUCH!





ChildFund Alliance is a global network of 11 child-focused development and humanitarian organizations reaching nearly 30 million children and family members in more than 70 countries. Members work to end violence and exploitation against children; provide expertise in emergencies and disasters to ease the harmful impact on children and their communities; and engage children, families and communities to create lasting change.

With more than 80 years of collective experience, our commitment, resources, innovation, and expertise serve as a powerful force to help children and families around the world transform their lives.

MISSION

We work in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting change, and the participation of children themselves is a key component of our approach. Our commitment, resources, innovation, knowledge and expertise serve as a powerful force to transform the lives of children. Annually, our investment in children is more than \$500M USD.

ChildFund's **VISION** is for a world in which all children enjoy their rights and achieve their full potential. Our mission focuses on working together with children to create sustainable solutions that protect and advance their rights and well-being. The collective strength of our members helps us serve as a global voice with and for children, to highlight the issues children care about, and to mobilize effectively to address threats to their lives, safety and well-being.