



We, the organizations of 12 Latin American and Caribbean countries who work for the promotion, protection, and defense of the rights of children and adolescents of our continent, recognize that in the 20 years since the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the majority of our countries have succeeded in adapting their internal normative frameworks to the principles of this international legislation. Nevertheless, we note that the reality of everyday life is made of multiple situations of vulnerability for the rights of our children and adolescents.

For this reason, we have summoned the World Appeal to a new Mobilization for Childhood, initiated by Bice (International Catholic Child Bureau). We aim to renew the social pact that our countries made with childhood and adolescence 20 years ago and give it a new impulse to face the realities of today. We want a State that is not only a judicial entity but also and mainly an ethic entity. Rights, in this case the text of the Convention, should not become the means to an end; they should be a tool to guarantee a worthy life to all children and adolescents. In this way, we consider it essential to reinforce multidisciplinary pedagogical work, in local networks, so that each and every child and adolescent can become a real subject of rights and a protagonist in his or her own life.

In our 12 countries, we have carried out mobilization events and have undertaken an analysis of the present situation of childhood and adolescence. A constant factor comes out of this process: the violence that the adult world inflicts on children and adolescents: structural violence, when our States do not follow through on their commitments and marginalize childhood; physical, emotional and sexual violence, when we create situations of ill-treatment and abuse; symbolic violence, when we adults continue to consider children and adolescents as objects needing protection and not as subjects of rights.

This reality pushes us to continue to sensitize all actors responsible for implementing the rights of children and adolescents: our States, our families, communities, the academic and educational bodies, civil and religious society, and the international community. For this reason, we are presenting ten challenges and a collection of related significant practices (see annex) to confront these challenges. Simultaneously, we formulate the following recommendations for families, educational institutions, communities, civil society, public authorities and the international community.

Decalogue for childhood in the XXI century

1. To respect the right to life

TO THE FAMILIES: Respect the dignity and the physical and emotional integrity of children and adolescents, becoming part of a network that works in favor of strengthening the right to life of your children.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: Implement programs dealing with emotions and sexuality, facing situations of teen pregnancy from a constructive and welcoming perspective, demanding the right to life and education.

TO THE COMMUNITIES: Strengthen the organization of the community base to reduce all types of violence and to promote actions in defense of diversity and the dignity of human life.

TO CIVIL SOCIETY: Promote the right to life, claiming its care and respect. Denounce violations against it.

TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Comply with the norms, laws, and contracts in harmony with the necessities and claims of society, promoting higher standards of living.

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: Guarantee the peaceful resolution of conflicts, as children and adolescents are the ones most affected by such conflicts.

2. To fight against poverty

TO THE FAMILIES: Recognize your capacity for transformation, exercising your rights and actively looking for solutions to overcome conditions of poverty.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: Implement politics of inclusive education that are not elitist but of quality for each and every person.

TO THE COMMUNITIES: Respect your identity, strengthen solidarity, and value your capacity to organize yourself to face situations of poverty in unison.

TO CIVIL SOCIETY: Promote and incorporate yourself in the fight against poverty and position the theme of childhood and adolescence in this space.

TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Implement public policies that are not focused but that guarantee the integral development of children, adolescents and their families, lowering the level of inequality through a fair distribution of resources. Guarantee food and security to improve the index of malnutrition.

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: Promote actions that cancel the external debt of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. To fight against violence towards children and adolescents

TO THE FAMILIES: Incorporate elements of respect for the rights of children and adolescents in the education of your children, basing it on good treatment and peaceful resolution of conflict, promoting auto protective conduct, and complying with your role as protector in all aspects of their life.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: Count on human resources and pertinent tools to confront violence, modifying the power relations in the educational community.

TO THE COMMUNITIES: Assume responsibility for children and adolescents. Question stigmas against them. Organize yourselves to contribute and to demand adequate answers to their requests in agreement with each stage of their life, as well as strengthening their cultural roots.

TO CIVIL SOCIETY: Observe that there is compliance with legislation and contribute innovative strategies of application, promoting vigilant civic organization.

TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Promote a culture of non-violence. Strengthen existing legislation, incorporating the explicit prohibition of physical and humiliating punishments in the countries where this prohibition still does not exist, and establish the necessary systems of intervention with specific budgets, human resources and materials.

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: Combat efficiently the international networks linked to trafficking, pornography, sexual exploitation, discrimination of child and adolescent immigrants and their incorporation in military conflict and drug trafficking.

4. To support families in the integral development of children and adolescents

TO THE FAMILIES: Stimulate communication and family emotions, building relationships that respect dignity and the differences of each member of the family.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: Implement programs for fathers and mothers to train them on education based on respect, tenderness and good treatment, promoting the involvement of fathers and mothers in the educational processes.

TO THE COMMUNITIES: Promote social integration and organization that generates a civic culture based on solidarity, collectiveness, generosity and the construction of peace, allowing for the prevention of risk factors and strengthening protective factors.

TO CIVIL SOCIETY: Maintain a listening ear, be attentive to the necessities, and promote a strengthened organization for the demand of rights.

TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Create and implement public policies with support programs (assistance and human promotion) for families so they can fulfill their functions.

5. To take into account the situation of working children and adolescents

TO ALL THE ACTORS: Do not tolerate any form of exploitation of working children and adolescents.

6. To guarantee a quality education to every child and adolescent without discrimination

TO THE FAMILIES: Value school education for your children and adolescents, become familiar with the international norms and advances which regulate the educational system, while being responsible with schools, for its rendition, learning and for the vigilance of educational management.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: Continuously reflect on your pedagogical practices to offer an inclusive, pertinent, and contextualized education which responds to the interests and the preoccupations of children and adolescents, and which transforms itself into a significant learning experience in their lives.

TO THE COMMUNITIES: Become involved with educational institutions and families in school management. Fight for inclusive quality education based on models of good treatment and monitor the attendance and continuation of children and adolescents in school.

TO CIVIL SOCIETY: Promote changes in personal and institutional practices that attempt to increase the quality and dignity of life, articulating strengths and learning. Demand accountability from the State, promoting spaces for discussion and mobilization. Promote society's critical knowledge of public policies and of the legal framework of the country.

TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Fulfill your international agreements in the area of education. Guarantee the necessary economic resources for inclusive education, free and of quality at all levels. Value educational labor; guarantee training and good working conditions.

7. To guarantee the right to health

TO THE FAMILIES: Become involved in informational programs and training on integral preventive health care, making sure that children and adolescents are taken care of.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: Incorporate integral health in the curriculum according to the stage of development of children and adolescents (self care, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, prevention against drug use, HIV/Aids, environmental health amongst others). Promote an attractive, harmonious, and favorable environment to guarantee positive education and cognitive development, eradicating all forms of mass piling, ill treatment and exclusion.

TO THE COMMUNITIES: Strengthen community networks for prevention and attention to integral health with the participation of all members of the community through care of the environment, civil security, recreational spaces, and respect of community life.

TO CIVIL SOCIETY: Demand access to systems of public health for children and adolescents, becoming promoters of integral health and of quality of life, and defenders of the environment.

TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Implement public policies that guarantee the satisfaction of vital necessities and access to systems of public health, through the assignment of budgets and human resources.

8. To humanize justice for children and adolescents

TO THE FAMILIES: Become stronger inclusive agents, promoting the integral development and wellbeing of children and adolescents in conflict with the law or child and adolescent victims in judicial procedures.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: Fulfill the established norms of each country in relation to access to education, converting schools into scenes of public participation for children and adolescents. Eradicate practices of expulsion and offer services according to the situations of the vulnerable and at risk educational actors.

TO THE COMMUNITIES: Construct a positive vision of children and adolescents as social and rights subjects, promoting spaces for participation, reflection and analysis that enable socio-family reinsertion.

TO CIVIL SOCIETY: Articulate efforts to impact on public policies that guarantee the right to due process of each child and adolescent involved in judicial proceedings. Denounce violations of these rights, demanding the allocation of human and economic resources to protect and attend to them.

TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Respect legislation ratified at the national and international level. Promote public policies of prevention and humanization of juvenile justice, facilitating human and economic resources while creating spaces for maintained monitoring.

9. To put technology to work at the service of children and adolescents

TO THE FAMILIES: Guarantee the critical, responsible, and the balanced use of technologies making sure that these are at the service of the integral development of children and adolescents, are respecting cultural identity and do not limit other forms of expression and communication.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: Facilitate access and responsible use.

TO THE COMMUNITIES: Promote norms which guarantee the responsible use of technology to protect children and adolescents, recognizing their capacity of autonomy in the use of technology.

TO CIVIL SOCIETY: Observe the fulfillment of legislation and participate in the innovation of application strategies, promoting vigilant civil organization.

TO THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Adapt the legal framework and provide the resources to guarantee universal access to new technologies for children and adolescents, guaranteeing their secure use.

10. To guarantee the participation of children and adolescents

TO ALL THE ACTORS:

- Recognize children and adolescents as social subjects and subjects of rights with the capacity to participate as protagonists in an organized matter in the transformation of their realities.
- Strengthen the capacity of autonomy and of a critical sense in children and adolescents, generating spaces for listening and opinion sharing that enable their active presence.
- Construct strategies according to particular and cultural characteristics, respecting their ability to elect their own means of expression.

General recommendation to the international community in regards to the above 10 challenges:

- Monitor the fulfillment of international accords on human rights for children and adolescents, taking into account the reports of civil society.
- Promote the exchange of innovative experiences.
- Strengthen cooperative equitable relations, taking into account the realities of each country.

COOPERACION DE RELIGIOSOS FEMINOS
 CAPUCHINAS PROVINCIA SAN JOSE
 Bice
 M. Migeotte E. PERAZO
 FUNDACION AVANZADA
 Gloria Guzman
 OBSERVATORIO PRISIONES ARMADAS
 OPS - PERU
 ROBERTO CERVANTES R.
 JUVENTUD PARA CRISTO URUGUAY
 Maria Clara Garcia
 CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS SOCIALES Y PUBLICACIONES
 CESIP - PERU
 RITA LIBALLOS
 Centro Cultural Percha
 Republica Dominicana
 Nelly C. Pineda A.
 INBRADESE - BRASIL
 Loreto Rebolledo R.
 VICEREA PASTORAL
 CEINDES - Red Social Por la Defensa de los
 Derechos del Niño, Niña y Adolescente
 Bolivia
 Guillermo A. Cumbi C.
 Asociacion Afecto con el metodo Montessori
 Colombia