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# ACRONYMS

<b>CAR</b>	Central African Republic
<b>CWD</b>	Child with disabilities
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ECIR</b>	Early Childhood Interdisciplinary Research Group
<b>FGM</b>	Female genital mutilation
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communications technology
<b>IEC</b>	Information, education and communication
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>LGBTIQA+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
<b>USA</b>	United States of America

**01**

# **INTRODUCTION**

*“We believe that these human rights can become a reality for all people. Every human being deserves to have love, fairness, peace, equality, kindness, happiness, a peaceful life, no wars, joy, safety, empathy, and hope.”*

**Children, aged 8-9, USA**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) celebrates its 75th anniversary in December 2023. This significant milestone provides an important opportunity for world leaders to commit to improving the realisation of human rights in their countries and share ideas for a new vision for the future of human rights.

Children’s voices, experiences, and solutions are central to this new vision for human rights. They will help shape the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and the Pact of the Future, as well as contribute to strategic planning at the UN Human Rights Office.

Recent global engagement with children has ensured that children’s views, realities, and recommendations on human rights have been incorporated alongside the recommendations of other key stakeholder groups. Their diverse experiences, influenced by the additional vulnerabilities that many face, provide a rich perspective on the considerable and universal challenges that children and adults encounter in their lives. Their perspectives inform an invaluable shared vision to achieve a safer, fairer, better, and happier life for everyone through the realisation of human rights.

Children issue a call to action to the UN to implement this shared vision and ensure that children are engaged meaningfully in its realisation. To accelerate the realisation of human rights for all, children ask the UN Human Rights Office to:

- Increase collaboration with children at the international, national and local levels with on- and off-line opportunities;
- Expand the UN’s outreach to include more children and ensure the equitable participation of all children;
- Provide human rights information and training, and financial and technical support; and
- Strengthen local human rights knowledge and awareness.

**02**

# **HOW CHILDREN PARTICIPATED**

# Human Rights 75 Global Children's Survey

In 2023, almost 4,000 children shared their opinions on human rights in a global children's survey, facilitated by the United Nations Human Rights Office, Child Rights Connect, and partner organisations. A total of 1,152 children contributed directly to the survey online; and 2,684 children discussed the survey in one of 249 focus group discussions held all around the world. Most participating children were aged between 6-17 years; several children who participated were aged five or younger.

Children who describe themselves as female, male, and other, participated in this survey. Many children chose not to share their gender.

Children participated from 53 geographical locations:

- **Africa:** Cameroon; Central African Republic (CAR); Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); Ghana; Côte d'Ivoire; Nigeria; Zambia.
- **Americas:** Bolivia; Brazil; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Ecuador; El Salvador; Guatemala; Mexico; Nicaragua; Peru; Trinidad and Tobago; United States of America (USA); Venezuela.
- **Asia-Pacific:** Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Fiji; Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China; India; Myanmar; Pakistan; Taiwan, province of China.
- **Europe and Central Asia:** Albania; Andorra; Croatia; France; Germany; Iceland; Ireland; Kosovo\*; Luxembourg; Malta; Moldova; Netherlands; Romania; Slovakia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Türkiye; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK).
- **Middle East and North Africa:** Egypt; Iraq; Libya; Saudi Arabia.

A small number of children chose not to identify their current location.

**The majority (70%) of children who contributed to this survey said they were already familiar with human rights. 65% of these children have learned about human rights at school; 11% have learned about human rights in activities outside of school; 7% from books or the internet; and 9% from people around them. A small minority did not specify how they have learned about human rights. Several children reflected about the low quality of human rights education they have received.**

\*All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

## Other consultations with children

Children's contributions to other recent global human rights consultations also inform this report. These include:

- Global consultations held for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change;
- Global consultations for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2023 Report to the Human Rights Council on the Rights of the Child and Inclusive Social Protection;
- Consultations with 200 hundred children (2-12 years) from 20+ countries for Children's Communication Matters Regardless of Frontiers Article 19), facilitated by the Early Childhood Interdisciplinary Research Group (ECIR).

## Diversity of experience

Every child brings a unique perspective to this vision. Many children's diverse experiences are influenced by the additional vulnerabilities that they are familiar with, including living with a disability; being a member of a minority community; living with foster parents or in a care institution; living in another country than where they were born; experience of fleeing their country (with or without their family); being a member of the LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual) community; and not being in school.

## Thank you

THANK YOU TO EVERY CHILD WHO SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND GUIDANCE FOR THIS REPORT. ALL NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED FOR ANONYMITY.

Children from all over the world have engaged with the Human Rights 75 Initiative. This includes children from the Children's Advisory Team of Child Rights Connect who helped design and analyse the Human Rights 75 Global Children's Survey. Child Rights Connect and their Children's Advisory team have also developed child-friendly resources, including of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and an [information sheet on OHCHR](#).



**03**

# **HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES**

## 3.1 Challenges for Children

*“The biggest violations of human rights, especially child rights, are gender, religion, race and age discrimination, violence, lack of quality education, child labour.”*

*Children, aged 10-16, Myanmar*

*“Disability, discrimination, violence, exploitation, migration, poverty, insecurity, instability.”*

*Fanta, aged 16, Côte d’Ivoire*

**Children shared how their lives are shaped by the extent to which their human rights are realised. There are striking similarities in the human rights violations that they experience, despite the geographic, political, economic, social, and cultural differences within and between the countries where they live.**

Children explained that all the human rights challenges they experience are universal and connected, and compounded by issues including deep-rooted discrimination and inequalities, poverty, conflict, climate change, natural disasters, political instability, and forced displacement. Some of these cross-cutting issues are the ones that concern children the most.

### **THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES THAT CHILDREN DESCRIBED ARE:**

- **Legal recognition of a child**
- **Discrimination and exclusion**
- **Denied safe and meaningful participation**
- **Right to education**
- **Poverty and inadequate standard of living**
- **Protection from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation**
- **Right to physical and mental health**
- **Right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment**

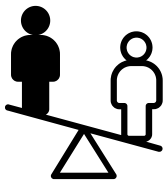


## Legal recognition of a child

Children in some contexts explained how they are not acknowledged as independent rights-holders and civic actors. This includes not being recognised by their families, wider communities, and national decision-makers because they are children. Disregard for children’s rights is embedded further when children are not recognised in government laws and policies. Children believe that a lack of child/human rights awareness prevents them from being recognised, and their rights being fully respected and guaranteed.

*“Some adults in our country express opinions like: ‘Do you know better than me? I’m the parent, and I’ll raise them the way I want,’ and ‘Recently, they’ve given you too many rights; children weren’t as spoiled as they are now with these rights.’”*

**Children, aged 13-17,  
Moldova**



## Discrimination and exclusion

Children in nearly every geographical location emphasised the exclusion and inequalities that children experience because of who they are, where they live or what they believe. They shared examples of how they face discrimination on many grounds, including gender, sexuality, nationality, race, ethnic identity, religion, disability, age, or appearance etc. As a result of discrimination, many of their other rights are not realised. This includes being denied access to school, quality healthcare, and even an identity, amongst many other rights violations.

*“The biggest challenge is discrimination because of the colour of your skin.”*

**Paulo, aged 12, Mexico**

*“The biggest issues? Racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism.”*

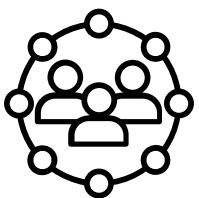
**Rowan, aged 15, UK**

*“Discrimination exists towards indigenous communities. All children experience insecurity.”*

**Segundo, aged 17, Ecuador**

*“It is a small town and unfortunately there is a belief that children and young people do not have an opinion.”*

**Sofia, aged 15, Mexico**



## Denied safe and meaningful participation

Children from all regions spoke about the challenges they encounter in their efforts to influence decisions that concern them, including not being able to vote. Other children were positive about opportunities to be involved in decision-making but felt that their contributions are not heard and not taken into account. (See 7. Child Human Rights Defenders).

*Children cannot participate in decision-making in their country if the government doesn’t let them.”*

**Dachen, aged 17, Myanmar**



## Right to education

Children from all over the world shared concerns about being denied their right to education, and unequal access to education. School fees and additional costs required for school uniforms, equipment, and transport prevent many children from being at school. Children also described how structural inequalities and discrimination prevent children from learning. For example, girls in some countries are not able to join their peers in the classroom because they are forced to stay at home to fulfil household or caring duties get married or are forbidden from accessing education just because they are girls. Schools are also inaccessible or unavailable for many other children, including children with disabilities, asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children, and children living in rural areas or in areas of armed conflict. Children who need to work to support their families are also often denied their right to learn. Other children further shared their experiences of receiving poor-quality or inadequate education, and abuse from their teachers. Several children spoke about their concerns that not receiving a good education will limit work opportunities and future prospects.



## Poverty and inadequate standard of living

Children in all regions shared experiences of living in poverty and economic insecurity. Many children are familiar with inadequate housing, lacking access to adequate, nutritious food resulting in being hungry or malnourished, and not having access to clean water to drink or to wash. The rising cost of living poses a significant challenge for many children, both in developing and developed countries. Some connected poverty and an inadequate standard of living to increased risks of violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and parental neglect.

*“In my country, access to education is the biggest challenge, especially for migrant children and special needs children, those with autism and disabilities.”*

**Jaden, aged 12, Trinidad and Tobago**

*“Denied school for certain children involved in child labour (cattle herding).”*

**Children, aged 13-15, Zambia**

*“Children in our country are forced to leave their studies at a young age, especially girls who face child marriage and childbearing. Many children are forced to work due to their poor financial situation.”*

**Children, aged 14-16, Bangladesh**

*“Without education, many people will be stuck in a cycle of poverty and children can’t make a better future.”*

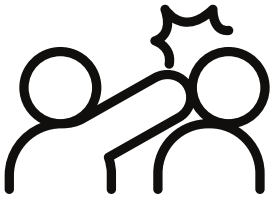
**Miriam, aged 13, Sweden**

*“Not all children have food and clear water, or a roof over their head, and they may also have parents that do not respect them and neglect them.”*

**Sam, 11 years, UK**

*“The greatest challenges are the barriers that hinder opportunities to live a full life, such as poverty, violence, discrimination.”*

**Rafael, 15 years, Colombia**



## Protection from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation

Violence in all contexts and in all its forms affects children in every part of the world. Children highlighted that they or others they know have experienced physical and sexual violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in different locations, including at home, in school, online and in the wider community. Anthony, aged 12, in Trinidad and Tobago, described the high rate of physical and sexual abuse in his community. He shared that although corporal punishment is banned in schools, parents use physical punishment because they were abused this way when they were young, and it is still permissible by law to use reasonable force as punishment.

Globally, children are also concerned about high levels of bullying. Children in the DRC and Albania were amongst children who described the neglect and abuse that they have experienced from their parents, and exploitation they have faced in foster families or institutions. Child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), were among the greatest human rights challenges facing children in their community.

Children in all regions are worried about the impact that violence has on their mental and physical health, and their ability to access other rights.

*“Our biggest challenges are sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse and torture. Also seeing inappropriate things online - child abuse imagery.”*

**Children, aged 13-15, Ghana**

*“Lots of teachers bully and hurt us. They make me sit outside the room. They insult me. They belittle me. They embarrass me. School is hell. I tried to kill myself to escape it, but I failed.”*

**Kieran, aged 14, UK**

*“Abuse by parents and outside the home with bullying, which causes demotivation to the child to move away and enter into depression.”*

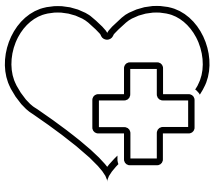
**Julio, aged 10, Nicaragua**

*“In my country, male children face bullying and brutal beating from local punks and the power politicians' children. As for girl kids, they are teased by the people that bully male children, and they throw acid at them, stalk them, give away dirty signs and opinions.”*

**Abdullah, aged 14, Bangladesh**

*“Sexual violence must stop.”*

**Fernando, aged 10, Colombia**



## Right to physical and mental health

Children from all regions shared concerns about their mental and physical health. Children from Brazil and DRC were among those who shared concerns about not being able to access quality and affordable healthcare services. In some contexts, children linked inaccessible healthcare to high rates of child mortality. Globally, children highlighted concerns about not being aware of any mental health support near where they live.

*“No right to a dignified life, or to physical and mental health and personal security.”*

**Catalina, aged 17, Colombia**

*“Education is not free, and neither is medical care. There is no safety.”*

**Victoria, aged 15, DRC**

*“Many children have had their rights to food and public health violated.”*

**Children, aged 10-13, Ecuador**



## Right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment

Children are very concerned about the impact that climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss are having on their lives. Extreme temperatures, heavy rains and storms, droughts, flooding, and forest fires affect a wider range of children in different contexts than ever before. They connect these changes to waste and pollution, deforestation, toxic air, and plastics. Children described how these issues impact their other rights, including their right to education, an adequate standard of living, and their right to play.

*“As climate change is a reality and some underlying countries are in danger of being sunk and already face changed seasonal traits, children's future is being hampered. They are now in need of basic education, shelter, food and pure water as flood strikes often in the Middle East and Eastern countries.”*

**Mishti, aged 16, Bangladesh**

*“We have lost our rights to a safe, healthy environment and future.”*

**Lisa, aged 11, USA**

CHILDREN ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THESE CHALLENGES:



**Poor governance / corruption**

*“Some nations have governments which do not respect some of these rights.”*

**Stephen, aged 15, UK**



**Human trafficking**

*“Corruption.”*

**Children, aged 15-17, Colombia**



**Armed conflict**

*“Poverty, insecurity, instability, disability, discrimination, violence, exploitation, migration.”*

**Girl, aged 16, Côte d’Ivoire**



**Child labour and economic exploitation**

*“Within my country, children belonging to the poorest social class are forced to work on the streets and/or abandon school.”*

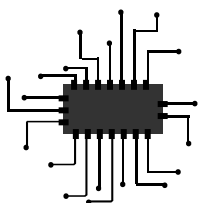
**Rania, aged 17, Ecuador**



**Migration**

*“Violence, human trafficking, poverty, drugs, parental neglect.”*

**Besjana, aged 14, Albania**



**Artificial intelligence**

*“The current human rights landscape is compounded by conflict, discrimination, poverty, shrinking civic spaces, and the emergence of new human rights challenges such as the rise of artificial intelligence and surveillance.”*

**Debjit, aged 16, Bangladesh**



## 3.2 Challenges for Adults

*“Adults in Colombia can face problems regarding human rights in their environment. Some of these problems include discrimination at work or in the community, lack of access to adequate health services, restrictions on freedom of expression or assembly, lack of fair economic opportunities, and gender-based violence. Additionally, adults may also face challenges when trying to exercise their civil and political rights, such as the right to participate in free and fair elections. These issues may vary depending on context and individual circumstances.”*

**Carmen, aged 14, Colombia**

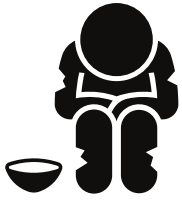
**Children explained that many of the biggest human rights challenge that they face are also experienced by adults, although these issues often impact adults in additional ways.**

The violations that adults experience often have an impact on children’s lives and their human rights. For example, where parents/caregivers are not able to access decent work, they can often struggle to make sure their children have enough good, nutritious food to eat, clean water, and a safe place to live, among other impacts.

### **THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR ADULTS THAT CHILDREN SHARED ARE:**

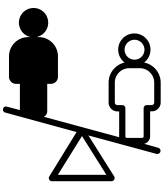
- Poverty and inadequate standard of living
- Discrimination and exclusion
- Protection from any form of violence
- Right to education
- Right to physical and mental health





## Poverty, rising cost of living and inadequate standard of living:

Children described how rising costs of living, unemployment, job insecurity, insufficient income, and inadequate financial support from the State significantly impact adults in their lives. These challenges are significantly exacerbated in contexts affected by poverty, which is already overwhelming and brings significant consequences. In multiple contexts, adults struggle with securing adequate housing, and a lack of food and access to clean water impacts the lives of adults everywhere. Children shared examples of how these challenges increase stress within families and communities, which can result in violence, neglect, and alcohol and substance abuse. These in turn affect children, both physically and mentally. A child, aged 16, from Cameroon shared that because of the challenges parents face, “They usually can’t work without taking drugs, and it’s scary.”



## Discrimination and exclusion

Children in nearly every country explained how deep-rooted inequalities and discrimination prevent adults they know from getting work, receiving equal pay, accessing adequate health services, being able to freely express themselves due to gender, race, religion, or sexuality, and other bases for discrimination.

*“Well, in my city there are adult people who live in the streets under bridges asking for a coin to eat. Not only adults, but also older adults.”*

**Abby, aged 10, Ecuador**

*“Adults can’t feed themselves or their kids. Another example is poor housing, some people have extremely poor shelter and need help.”*

**Agnes, aged 14, Sweden**

*“Adults from low- and middle-income families are suffering fiercely from the uncontrolled price hike in countries like ours. They cannot buy eggs, sugar, salt, onions and other necessary spices, fish, meat, etc.”*

**Arivudai, aged 16, Bangladesh**

*“Practices of discrimination against women, violence against women and young girls, slavery, and forced prostitution.”*

**Mariame, aged 14, Côte d’Ivoire**

*“There is unfairness among men and women in a job. Females don’t always get the same amount of pay as a male for the same job.”*

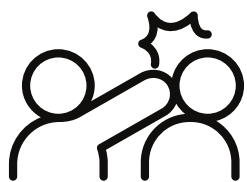
**Naaz, aged 15, Bangladesh**

*“Adults are not allowed to be gay.”*

**Yamen, aged 5, Saudi Arabia**

*“Adults are treated differently due to their race and culture.”*

**Ana, aged 13, Sweden**



## Protection from any form of violence

Children expressed significant concerns about the high levels of violence that adults can experience, including abuse and maltreatment in the home, especially towards women, and gender-based violence in the wider community. Children were further concerned about homicides, gun, and gang violence, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

*“Adults suffer because of war, displacement, murders, disappearances, among others.”*

**Shakira, aged 14, Colombia**

*“I know that in some places women are still being raped, kidnapped.”* **Derya, aged 14, Türkiye**

*“Femicides.”*

**Children, aged 12-15, Peru**



## Right to education

Children are deeply concerned about the additional challenges that adults face if they have not received an education. They explain that when adults are uneducated, they are often denied access to information, decent work, basic services, and other opportunities in life.

*“In my environment many adults have not had an education.”*

**Luis, aged 11, Ecuador**

*“Inadequate housing and education and work opportunities.”*

**Matt, aged 13, UK**

*“Financial rights and rights of education.”*

**Kiran, aged 17, Pakistan**

*“Disabilities and health issues are the most problematic challenges for adults around around me.”*

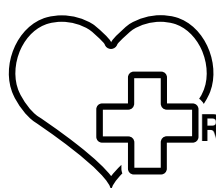
**Noah, aged 11, Sweden**

*“Health problems and lack of work.”*

**Danna, aged 17, Peru**

*“Some adults do not have access to proper healthcare.”*

**Luna, aged 14, Trinidad and Tobago**



## Right to physical and mental health

Children highlighted the challenges that adults face when they are unable to access healthcare because healthcare is either not available in their community, or because they face discrimination when trying to access healthcare.

CHILDREN ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THESE OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES AFFECTING ADULTS:



Poor governance / corruption

*“Corruption is the biggest problem for adults.”*  
**Santos, aged 17, Colombia**



Human trafficking

*“War and fighting.”*  
**Nazebi, aged 11, DRC**



Armed conflict

*“Immigration, money, rights, sexual abuse, alcohol and drugs.”*  
**Fatima, aged 12, Sweden**



Migration

*“The ability to have independence and freedom while going outside and not being discriminated or abused.”*  
**Fatima, aged 12, Sweden**



Denied right to freedom

*“Yes, for example, unpaid work, - arbitrary arrests, language discrimination, expensive medical care, imprisonment without trial; high medical costs.”*  
**Masamba, aged 15, DRC**



Access to justice and lack of a fair trial

*“Yes, adults around the world also face several human rights challenges, including: discrimination; economic inequality; freedom of expression; migration and refugee rights; access to healthcare.”*  
**Tabish, aged 16, Bangladesh**

**04**

# **SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

## CHILDREN FIND THAT KNOWLEDGE, OPINIONS AND PERSPECTIVES ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VARY.

In some communities, there is a strong general awareness that everyone has human rights. Some children and adults who children know act to defend human rights.



*“My friends think it is very important for everyone to have human rights. We participate together in protests to defend people’s rights”*

**Astrid, aged 15, Sweden**



*“We talk in general about rights, and my family is very active. For example, a month ago we donated two boxes of dictionaries and clothing to UNHCR.”*

**Eduardo, aged 14, Mexico**

Other children also described the mixed opinions about human rights in their communities. They mentioned the different views people have about human rights depending on who they are or what they do.



*“People’s opinions about human rights vary widely. Some strongly believe in the importance of human rights as fundamental principles that should be upheld universally, while others may have reservations based on cultural or political factors.”*

**Aabira, aged 16, Bangladesh**



*“Some Colombians may be strong defenders of human rights and actively work to promote equality, justice and the protection of fundamental rights. Others may have diverse opinions due to factors such as the history of armed conflict, socio-economic inequality, and different regional realities.”*

**Magdalena, aged 14, Colombia**

Children from several different countries described very negative attitudes towards human rights. These include human rights providing too much freedom which can result in deviant behaviours, being considered a Western concept that interfere with traditional beliefs and practices, or even considered dangerous.

Boys, aged 14-17, in DRC, described how people think that human rights destroy customs, and that they only exist on paper. They also shared the prevalent view in their community that “human rights are for whites and not for Africans.”

Some children, including Capeka, aged 14, in Croatia, do not know what people around them think about human rights because it is not a subject that they discuss. Others believe that people in their community are not aware of human rights because they are not something they are familiar with.

**THE LACK AND QUALITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IS A SIGNIFICANT CONCERN FOR CHILDREN IN ALL CONTEXTS.**



*“Some people do not recognize human rights, they do not respect them due to lack of information. There is no awareness about compliance with human rights.”*

**Ramon, aged 10, Nicaragua**

Children emphasised that without the right education, knowledge and information about human rights, noone’s rights will ever be fully realised. When people are informed about human rights, they are more likely to defend them.



*“I don't know how I'm supposed to enforce my rights and I don't know anyone who does.”*

**Marie, aged 17, UK**

**05**

# **CHILDREN'S VISION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Globally, children call for the full realisation of all human rights for all people. They express what the world will be like when human rights are implemented for all.**

*“People would send their girls to school and make them educated, and self-dependent.”*

**Gagana, aged 16, Bangladesh**

*“We would all have the same opportunities.”*

**Mateo, aged 12, Colombia**

*“There would be less poverty and more happy faces.”*

**Marta, aged 12, Croatia**

*“All people would have money, a home and enough food.”*

**Sara, aged 12, Sweden**

*“Access to healthcare and clean environments would lead to healthier lives and reduced mortality rates.”*

**Tanvi, aged 16, Bangladesh**

*“People might not be hated anymore and there would be less suicide.”*

**Alex, aged 14, UK**

**THERE WILL BE NO  
DISCRIMINATION, AND  
EVERYONE WILL BE  
TREATED EQUALLY**

**CHILDREN AND ADULTS  
WILL CONTRIBUTE  
MEANINGFULLY TO  
DECISION-MAKING  
PROCESSES**

**PEOPLE WILL LIVE FREE  
FROM POVERTY AND  
HAVE A BETTER  
STANDARD OF LIVING**

**PEOPLE WILL BE  
HEALTHIER, HAPPIER  
AND FEEL MORE  
COMFORTABLE BEING  
THEMSELVES**

*“It will be an ideal world.”*

**Sabrena, aged 16, Nicaragua**

*“It would be amazing. No one would suffer or be left behind. People wouldn’t care about backgrounds and stuff.”*

**Boys, aged 9 and 15, UK**

*“We could all live on an equal basis and enjoy our rights.”*

**John, aged 17, Zambia**

*“We would finally get a say.”*

**Claire, aged 10, UK**

*“There would be fair wages, job security, and reduced poverty rates.”*

**Paarvai, aged 16, Bangladesh**

*“Everyone would be happy.”*

**Malik, aged 12, Egypt**

*“If everyone’s rights were respected, their lives would change in all ways, and for all.”*

**Gloria, aged 17, DRC**



*“We would live in a completely democratic country.”*

**Saemira, aged 14,  
Albania**

*“There would be better tolerance, respect and appreciation for others, in this way we would have a space where we would not have conflicts and mistreatment with others and we would enjoy healthy environments at all times and in all places.”*

**Isabella, aged 16,  
Colombia**

*“There wouldn't be so many problems or conflicts.”*

**Marina, aged 16,  
Guatemala**

*“There would be 100% literacy rate.”*

**William, aged 11, Sweden**

*“People would all have potential to strive for their chosen opportunities.”*

**Fred, aged 16, UK**

**THERE WILL BE BETTER  
GOVERNANCE, WITH  
LESS CRIME AND  
CORRUPTION, AND  
STRONGER  
ACCOUNTABILITY**

**THE WORLD WILL BE  
SAFER, AND EVERYONE  
WILL BE AT PEACE**

**PEOPLE WILL BE MORE  
RESPECTFUL TOWARDS  
EACH OTHER**

**EVERYONE WILL BE ABLE  
TO REALISE THEIR  
POTENTIAL AND  
AMBITIONS**

*“Many people would be able to pass job exams without bribing government workers.*

*Crime rate would be relatively low. Perpetrators would be held to account.”*

**Chevy, aged 17, CAR**

*“There would be enough confidence to walk on the streets without any fear. If all their rights were respected, people could go anywhere without having to care about what will happen.”*

**Farha, aged 13, Bangladesh**

*“Everyone would be valued.”*

**Bora, 13 years, Albania**

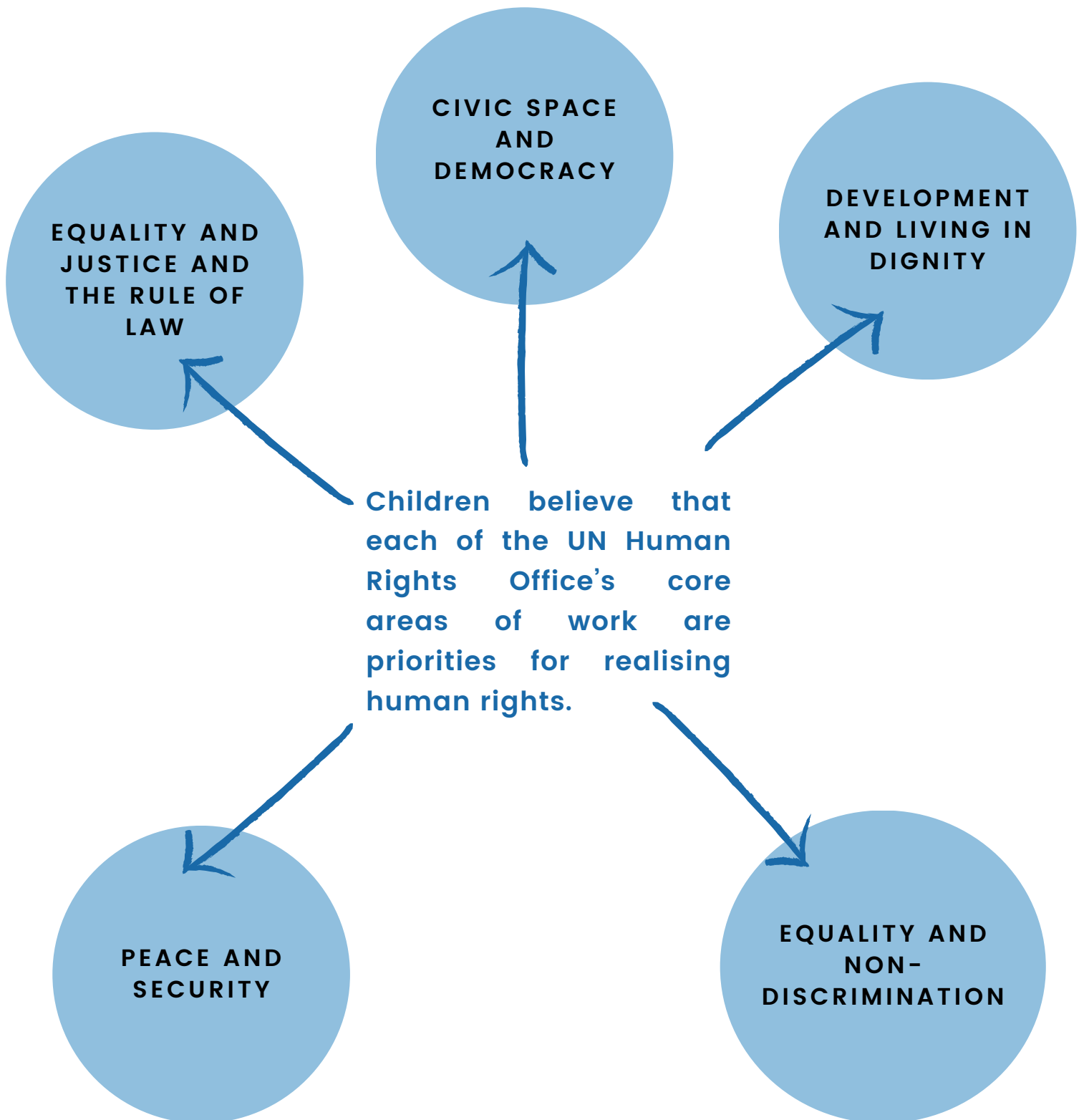
*“We would all treat each other with more respect without violating our rights.”*

**José, aged 12, Peru**

*“Children would have more opportunities.”*

**Rosa, 15 years, Mexico**

# UN PRIORITY AREAS



**06**

**PERSUADING PEOPLE TO  
SUPPORT  
HUMAN RIGHTS**

## CHILDREN WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW THAT...

- Human rights are shared values that relate to everybody's lives.
- Governments have responsibilities to protect everyone's rights.
- Realising human rights benefits everyone.
- Everyone is affected when human rights are not realised.

*“Teach people that thanks to human rights we have medical centres.”*

**Dalena, aged 11, Nicaragua**

*“Tell people how one declined right means many others can get declined.”*

**David, aged 12, UK**

### **Empowering people to stand up for human rights:**

Children request that people take greater efforts to raise knowledge and awareness about human rights in their communities and increase understanding about human rights at home, in schools and, especially, in rural and marginalised areas.

To achieve this, they ask that:

- Human rights education be included on school curricula and made mandatory in all schools, supported by teachers who have been trained in human rights.
- There is more information about human rights in public places, including on websites and social media.
- Human rights public awareness campaigns are conducted and reach everyone in society – not just children – especially the most marginalised, using a variety of media including newspapers, television, radio, films, and online social media campaigns.
- People are always safe to engage in peaceful public protests and demonstrations about human rights.
- People learn about human rights in formal settings, including in specific human rights programmes, talks and conferences, workshops, and trainings.
- Decision-makers promote public education and awareness on human rights.

*“Show data and facts on how it can affect other's lives. We can't fight using violence because it just causes more violence. We need to stand up together and really believe and make others around us believe too.”*

**Erik, 13 years, Sweden**

### **Techniques for persuasion:**

Children advise that positive examples and personal stories, discussions and dialogue, facts and data and official UN documentation are used to persuade people to support the implementation of human rights.

Children are worried that human rights can be too theoretical sometimes and suggest that people are more likely to be persuaded if the information is communicated in a fun way, using games and drama, especially to younger children. They call for participatory approaches, where children share their own experiences.

Akina, aged 12, in Taiwan, province of China, was one of many children who suggest that empathy is needed to persuade people to support human rights.

*“It can be challenging to change someone's mind, but you can try by having open and respectful conversations. Share personal stories, provide facts and statistics, and highlight the positive impact that human rights have on individuals and society. Encourage empathy and understanding and emphasize the importance of treating others with respect and dignity.”*

**Rohaam, aged 16, Pakistan**

*“I could try to change their minds by talking about several situations in different parts of the world; I could try to explain to them how the lack of basic human rights can affect a person and how much of a necessity it is.”*

**Ivana, aged 15, Croatia**

**07**

# **CHILD HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

Children are entitled to promote and protect human rights guaranteed in international human rights law and guidance, including the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), and the [Declaration on Human Rights Defenders](#).

## How children defend human rights:

Children defend human rights in many ways. This includes participating in child-led organisations; taking part in children's councils; raising human rights awareness in on- and off-line environments, including at home, school, in their community; and the wider world; joining peaceful public demonstrations and protests; participating in child/human rights monitoring and reporting; and advocating directly with decision-makers.

*"I am a member of a child club, working to end child marriage by cooperating with police to arrest the people who are involved in child marriage."*

**Sang, aged 17, Nepal**

*"I am in a program called Ambassadors 2030 where we try to ensure that all the objectives are met, not only for children. For example, I have been a volunteer for two years in a free book exchange to spread culture and a sense of community."*

**Francisco, aged 15, Mexico**

*"I am contributing by taking part in a child-led organisation. There I speak about children's rights and raise awareness."*

**Gulzara, aged 16, Bangladesh**

*"I belong to an advisory board and want to help all children and vulnerable people."*

**Jorge, aged 9, Ecuador**

In many contexts, opportunities and methodologies are increasing for children to defend human rights. Advances in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), for example, have enabled increasing numbers of children to actively speak out about issues of concern to them and take actions to influence positive change. However, despite strong progress, children have shared valuable insights into the considerable barriers that continue to prevent many children from defending child/human rights:

Children are often not able to access opportunities to participate and to express themselves freely in decision-making processes that affect them, and when they are involved, their views are often not given due weight.

**TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS,  
CHILDREN NEED TO BE  
HEARD AND PARTICIPATE.**

Children are often excluded from defending human rights because they are children and considered too immature to influence decision-making. Children are also excluded because they are discriminated against because of who they are, where they are from, or because of their gender, disability, sexuality, nationality, religion, race, ethnicity, what they look like, or other reasons.

**TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS,  
CHILDREN NEED TO BE  
INCLUDED.**

*“We need to have more possibilities to share our views, especially when we are not listened to so many times.”*

**Children, aged 11-16, Moldova**

*“Children need to be more representative in decision-making areas.”*

**Aminata, aged 16, Côte d’Ivoire**

*“There needs to be need a mindset shift, so that children are recognised, and listened to.”*

**Emma, aged 17, Venezuela**

*“We need recognition as child human rights defenders.”*

**Maria, aged 16, Moldova**

*“Boys and girls have the right to express themselves anywhere and at any time. Do not criticise children with disabilities. People with disabilities can also help.”*

**Children, aged 10-17, Colombia**

*“Children must always be included in decisions.”*

**Emmanuel, aged 16, DRC**



Children are prevented, punished, or even persecuted by their families, communities, authorities, or governments for defending human rights. Children need an enabling environment where they can access support from their friends and peers, and adults in their community including parents, teachers, and religious leaders, as well as decision-makers at all levels, including local authorities and governments.

**TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS,  
CHILDREN NEED TO BE SAFE  
AND SUPPORTED.**

Children lack the information, knowledge, skills, and resources they need to defend human rights.

**TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS,  
CHILDREN NEED TO BE  
EMPOWERED AND EQUIPPED.**

*“We need support from our caregivers and greater education on children's rights.”*

**Children, aged 14, Colombia**

*“We need safe places and mental health support.”*

**Boys, aged 11 and 15, UK**

*“We need support from international organisations and the State.”*

**Children, aged 8-16, Colombia**

*“Sometimes we need security, including police support to defend human rights.”*

**Kapil, aged 14, Nepal**

*“We need support and recognition of children's organisations, not only youth-led NGOs.”*

**Ilaria, aged 17, Moldova**

*“We need guidance about how to act upon human rights issues.”*

**Tom, aged 16, UK**

*Hardware to share Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and funding for the child and youth led organizations.”*

**Children, aged 10-16, Myanmar**

*“We need branded t-shirts promoting human rights for children; translated materials; radio programs for other children and awareness-raising for others including parents.”*

**Children, aged 13-15, Zambia**

**08**

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To accelerate the realisation of human rights for all, children ask the UN Human Rights Office to:

## 1) INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH CHILDREN AT THE INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS WITH ON- AND OFF-LINE OPPORTUNITIES.

- Proactively seek children's views using surveys, safe and moderated online platforms, in-person meetings, and with other appropriate methodologies.
- Increase the recognition of children as equal UN stakeholders by involving them in UN events and UN decision-making processes. Establish and maintain existing UN Child Advisory Panels and Councils at the national, regional, and global levels, and appoint Child UN Representatives.
- Guarantee child-friendly reporting mechanisms where children can report human rights violations confidentially and receive appropriate support if needed.
- Incorporate children's contributions in UN policies, reports, and recommendations, and demonstrate accountability for other decisions that are taken by following up with children who have participated.
- Urge countries to develop and effectively implement national laws and policies that make children's safe participation mandatory.

*“Ensure children's opinions are consulted and heard in the UN documents you produce and initiatives you have. Develop a consultative participatory structure of children, along with the UN offices, in each country. Involve children as speakers when you have big activities. Don't be afraid to do this. Please avoid fake participation. We are not furniture or clowns.”*

**Girls, aged 11-16, Moldova**

## 2) EXPAND THE UN'S OUTREACH TO INCLUDE MORE CHILDREN AND ENSURE THE EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION OF ALL CHILDREN.

- Expand the UN's geographic presence, to increase awareness, reach and impact of its operations.
- Involve larger numbers of children in the UN's work, rather on focusing on the participation of a few, and ensure that UN initiatives are accessible to all children, including younger children, children with disabilities and children who are not online.
- Strengthen collaboration with civil society and other key stakeholders to reach and amplify the voices of more children and support the safe use of social media to maximise the advantage of children's own social networks.
- Allocate a UN printing budget for child-friendly materials which can be distributed widely, reaching children who are offline and children in rural areas.

*“This cannot be done from the head office. All the offices in countries and cities and municipalities and villages need volunteers. It sounds huge but this is huge. If we don't walk the downtown and find out the darkest corners, we'll never be able to include every one of them.”*

**Madhu, aged 16, Bangladesh**

### 3) PROVIDE HUMAN RIGHTS INFORMATION AND TRAINING, AND FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT.

- Develop and disseminate child/human rights training, programmes, and resources for children, including relevant UN policies, guidelines, and reports, to support children with the knowledge and skills to defend child/human rights. Ensure that all information is provided in age-appropriate and accessible languages and formats, and in languages understood by children and adults.
- Allocate sufficient budget to enable children's engagement in defending human rights, for necessary expenses including translation, ICT and media, travel costs, including adult chaperones, and additional support needed to enable children's equitable participation.
- Support States to increase online access in areas where people are not able to connect online, and strengthen digital literacy.

*“Involve us in everything, we really want to be involved. To make sure all can participate you need to be accessible. The most effective ways of doing this is to provide online and in person ways for young people to share. Provide transport- most of us can't afford it on our own; translations; and sign language. Make it accessible to all abilities and cultures. Let us know these opportunities exist online and off-line. Not everyone has internet, and it can be hard to reach them. Also, not all of us are in school so when looking to include children look out for all of us. Be flexible. We all need different things. Remember we change our minds, we're young, we're learning, we change our minds when we get new information just like you. I'm sure it's frustrating sometimes keeping up with our opinions but we really don't mean to be confusing, please be patient and don't give up on us, we're trying too.”*

**Kiara, aged 17, UK**

## 4) STRENGTHEN LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS.

- Develop child/human rights awareness-raising resources for adults and children at community level.
- Strengthen collaboration with civil society to raise human rights awareness at local levels, including by promoting human rights education in schools.
- Promote guidelines on child participation to ensure children's safety and well-being in decision-making processes.
- Urge States to adopt laws protecting human rights defenders that fully integrate children's rights.

*“Have Member States implement mandatory courses of study and educational programs for primary to university students, charities, and missionaries, even in developed countries. Most times, rights are not [considered] important because the people do not know they have rights because they were never told, and they do things that the last generation did. The behaviour is inherited and only when that behaviour is stopped do we see some change in their thinking. It's the kids in rural and remote areas that are affected most.”*

**Joseph, aged 12, Trinidad and Tobago**

## Additional quotes from children:

### Recommendation 1:

- *“Make us part of your groups!”* **Boys, aged 10 and 11, Peru**
- *“Let children complete surveys and collaborate with children from provinces in every country.”* **Paul, aged 15, DRC**
- *“Create virtual or face-to-face events for discussion about the rights with children in different areas/region to include their thoughts and opinions.”* **Champo, aged 17, Myanmar**
- *“Create children's parliaments and include children who are in informal education.”* **Victoria, aged 17, DRC**
- *“Allow children to speak at UN conferences.”* **Jack, aged 13, UK**
- *“Create local UN organizations that listen to the voices of children. Invite children more often to the UN assemblies.”* **Children, aged 15-17, India**
- *“Have children's councils.”* **Charles, aged 17, Zambia**
- *“Have opportunities for children to become UN Ambassadors and represent their countries.”* **Camila, aged 14, Trinidad and Tobago**
- *“Create a big group of children from every country. This body can represent children at global level.”* **Children, aged 13-17, India**
- *“Make it a law to involve children.”* **Jamila, aged 12, Sweden**
- *“Force governments to involve children in the laws they make.”* **Zoe, aged 17, Peru**
- *“Constantly monitor what is done, about what has been promised.”* **Alessia, aged 16, Peru**

### Recommendation 2:

- *“Provide accessible information, promote child-friendly spaces, and collaborate with child-focused organisations. Let children know their voices matter.”* **Ali, aged 16, Pakistan**
- *“Do not focus on where you are based in Geneva but go all over the world.”* **Robbie, aged 11, UK**
- *“Always check if someone is left behind and help them out.”* **Elena, aged 12, Croatia**
- *“Engage with young children.”* **Fred, aged 11, UK**
- *“Go to rural areas.”* **Mohammed, aged 14, Bangladesh**
- *“Send these surveys to all phones in many languages.”* **Lucia, aged 10, Spain**
- *“Provide relevant and age-appropriate materials to help children understand issues and participate and use the internet to publicise information to enable young people's participation.”* **Children, aged 13-15, Ghana**
- *“Not every child has technological devices. Maybe we could find another way to get to them. Maybe some paper surveys?”* **Zahab, aged 12, Sweden**

### **Recommendation 3:**

- *“Provide adequate support to human rights promoters and supervision of all organisations.”* **Fenna, aged 12, Nicaragua**
- *“Provide financial support for more participation activities.”* **Children, aged 15-17, Romania**
- *“There should be one coordinator for each child to ensure child participation.”* **Ahmed, aged 16, Bangladesh**
- *“Give them an administrative and emotional follow-up, so that we can work as a team.”* **Alana, aged 17, Costa Rica**
- *“Connect the children from lowest families and provide them with information about rights and empower them to participate. Then if they are not able to participate due to financial issues, support them.”* **Kan, aged 17, Myanmar**
- *“Create documents that accredit participation together with local and national governments so that together they can fight to enforce all the rights of children and adolescents.”* **Marcelo, aged 17, Ecuador**
- *“Provide budget and training to children. Provide training to governments on Child Rights.”* **Children, aged 6-15, Cambodia**
- *“Help form and support different child lead organisations.”* **Mitu, aged 11, Bangladesh**

### **Recommendation 4:**

- *“Start with education and teacher training.”* **Antonio, aged 16, Ecuador**
- *“Teach members of the family.”* **Cristela, aged 11, Nicaragua**
- *“Hold informative sessions in schools.”* **Lindita, aged 13, Albania**
- *“Make schools teach about human rights and send letters to the people who can't get an education.”* **Max, aged 11, UK**
- *“Support families and churches to raise awareness on human rights.”* **Leon, aged 17, DRC**
- *“The UN Human Rights Office can raise more awareness, explain why it is important to respect human rights, and encourage people to volunteer.”* **Hesther, aged 13, Sweden**