

The voice of
Children

from CA4 dry corridor



And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."

Genesis 1:29



"We thank all the children and adolescents who agreed to talk to us and give us their opinion. who agreed to talk with us and give us their opinion, We thank all the children and adolescents who agreed to talk with us and give us their opinion on the impact of climate change in the Dry Corridor area of Central America. Their opinions and ideas will be included in the strategy we have designed to contribute to provide them with a dignified and fulfilling life".

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Acronyms

- CDC** *Central American Dry Corridor*
- CA4** *Central America 4*
- GBA** *Girls, Boys and Adolescents*



Introduction



The Central American Dry Corridor (CSC) is a 1,600 km long and 100 to 400 km wide dry tropical forest zone that extends from southern Chiapas, Mexico, to Guanacaste, Costa Rica

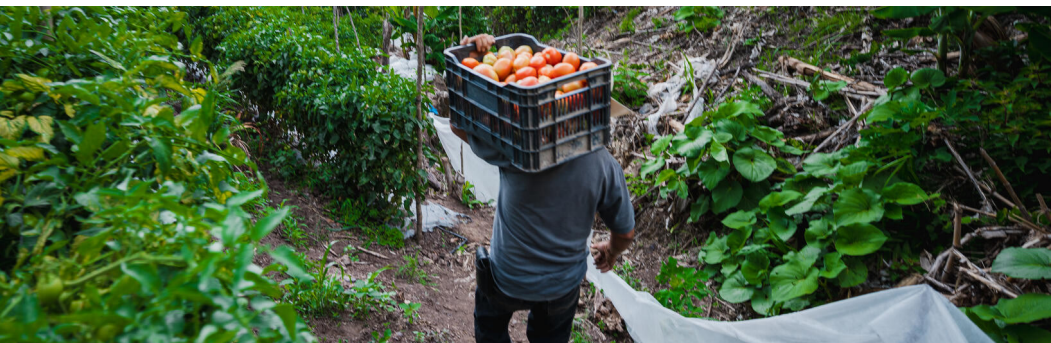
Its climate includes long periods of **torrential rains** followed by prolonged droughts.



More than **22.5 million people**

Other extreme phenomena suffered by this region are mega fires and floods that devastate everything in their path, leaving communities without crops or livestock, as well as floods and disasters in neighborhoods located in urban areas. These events are increasingly recurrent. For this reason, this area is considered highly vulnerable to extreme weather events, which strongly affect the livelihoods and food security of local populations. It is estimated that 25% increase of natural events that have become disasters, during 2016 - 2020.

live in the country, **62%** of whom live in urban areas and **38%** in rural areas. **60%** of the families live in poverty and **30%** in extreme poverty.



This report highlights the voice and opinion of 1,268 children and adolescents (NNA) from 11 to 18 years of age, where they expressed what they think, feel and live in this territory, the effects of climate change on their lives, the consequent environmental degradation and the impact of natural phenomena on their conditions and quality of life.

It is hoped that the information contained in this report will generate advocacy actions and proposals for children and adolescents who, from their organizational platforms, will join efforts to inform and raise awareness among the population of the need to care for their environment.

I. Objective

of the consultation



1.1. To know through consultation the voice of children, their perceptions about climate change, what it has generated in their lives, in their families and community.

1.2. Incorporate the opinions and proposals of children in the strategy "Greening the Dry Corridor of Central America: Restoring hope and livelihoods for children and families, applying the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child article No. 12.



II. Scope

The consultation was conducted in **35 Central American municipalities** located in the Dry Corridor. Specifically, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua; countries where World Vision as CA4 has presence. It was conducted during the months of June and July 2023.



Both groups totaled 1,268 children and adolescents, who raised their voices about the problems and proposed solutions to be promoted from the community's social base.

473
children and adolescents
participated in individual
surveys.

795
children and adolescents
participated in 55 focus
groups.





Analysis of Information

What situation has changed in the last five years?



Sad, because in drought the trees die, there is no water, we suffer from heat, people get heart disease and pressure, respiratory diseases come from the dust.

-Axel, 11 years



"In my community before it was super cool and now it is hotter; there are not many differences between winter and summer, since it rains very little".

-Jimena, 17 years



"In my family my grandfather is the one who works in agriculture, we only eat beans, tortillas, rice 1 or 2 times a day and very little chicken or meat."

-Ana, 14 years

After these situations, what worries you the most?

Manifested

15 out of 100 children,

girls and adolescents who, due to lack of money, had to stop eating for a time or two a day.

Likewise, **30 out of 100 had to reduce the number of portions served at each time**, the lack of varied intake (chicken, rice, bread or potatoes and vegetables) does not allow children who are babies to grow and develop well, it is for That's why we need to have alternatives that allow us with little money to feed everyone at home, the same portions and varied.



In the last twelve months, has your home
Was it due to some **current of water or flood?**



"Now it rains little, and when it rains the river overflows"
-Samuel, 11 years



"Nowadays you need a lot of money to plant, my parents don't have their own land so they had to rent it, so with the little that is harvested it is difficult to replace everything that is spent."
-Miguel, 14 years

In reference to floods, 60 out of 100 boys and girls

children stated that in their community there are no threats of floods affecting the space where they live; however, **36 out of every 100 said** they live in vulnerable areas that put their lives at risk.

When children survive a natural disaster, their physical, mental and emotional health can be disturbed, especially when they react to the losses they have suffered, even of objects, children experience periods of mourning that they express in different ways.

"In Guatemala and we are sure that in other countries we children have read in humanitarian aid agencies that more than 80% of us who live in the dry corridor have a food crisis and we are very soon to be poorer than we already are. We have seen maps and although we do not understand everything we have wondered why we live so long in drought and then a lot of rains; what we do not understand is why we live so long in drought and then a lot of rain; what we do not understand is why we live so long in drought and then a lot of rains.

We have seen maps and although we do not understand everything we have wondered why we live so much time of drought and then many rains; what we do know because our parents tell us is that agriculture serves as a livelihood for all people, but this is aggravated by these sudden climate changes, so we believe that we children and young people should act as soon as possible".



Does your home have access to piped water either inside the home or no property?



"We have to carry water from about 500 or 600 meters, since the nearest well has dried up."

-Maycol, 11 years



"When it rains we can't come to school, we miss classes and then they give us a lot of homework."

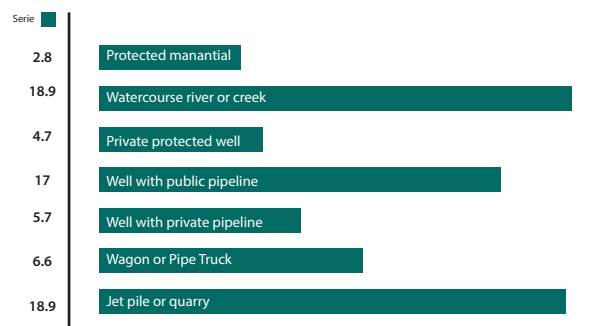
-Darlin, 14 years

In reference to access to drinking water in their homes, **77 out of every 100 children** said that they have limited access, but they do have it; while **22 out of every 100 children** acquire it through different means, for example, a water trough, a public well, a well with a public pipe.

For those who do not have access in their homes, **16 out of 100 indicated** that they spend between 30 to one hour of their time to access the nearest water sources; this generates other types of risks, mainly to their integrity and protection.

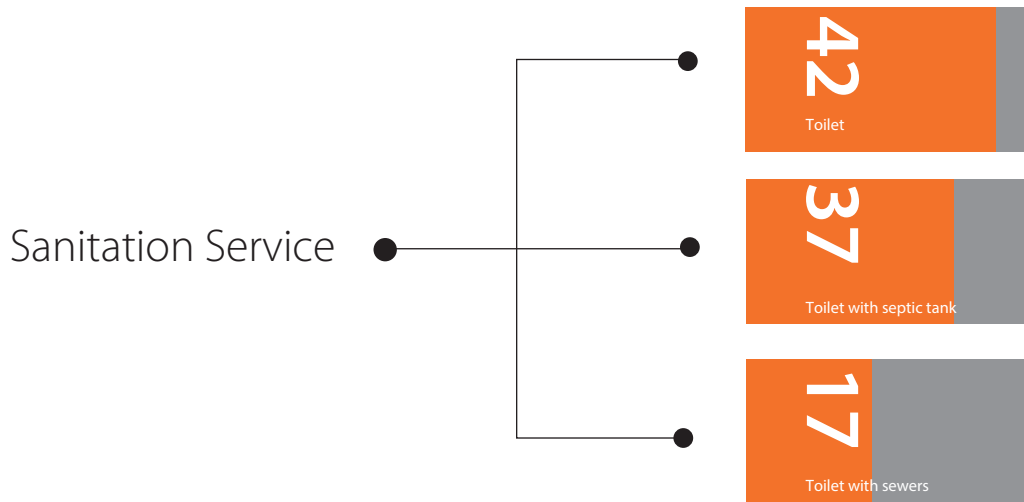
What is the main form of supply?

Main form of supply



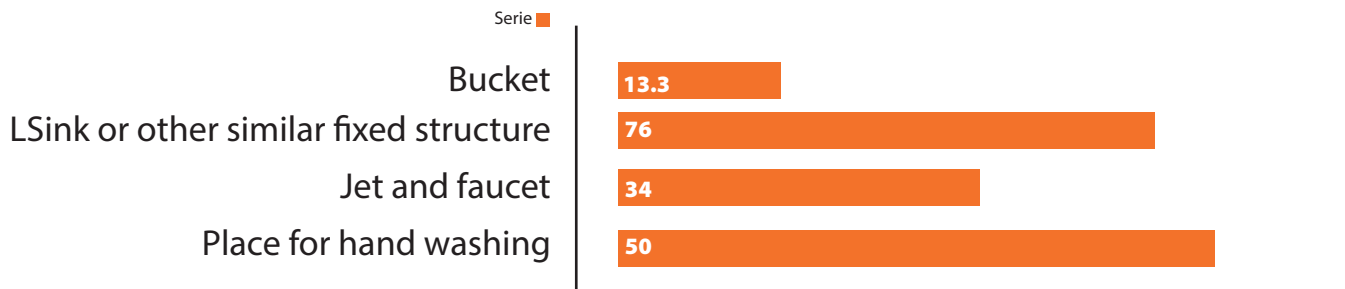
What types of services do you have in your home, such as toilet a place to wash your hands?

97% of the children interviewed indicate that they have toilets in their homes



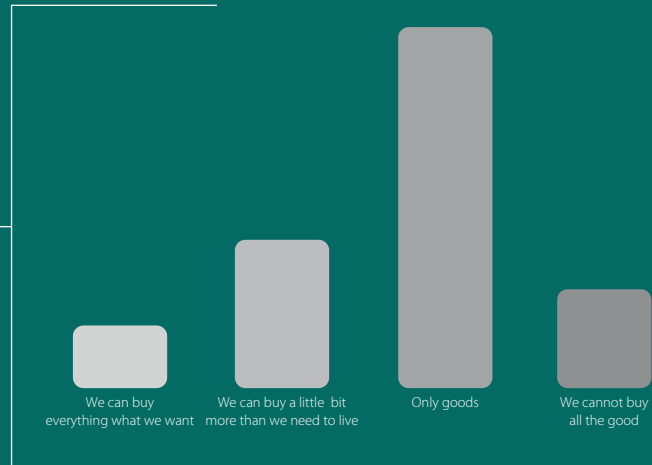
42% indicate that they have a latrine, 37% have a toilet with a septic tank and 17% have a sewage toilet. It is important to relate this data to the morbidity rates of each municipality according to the Ministry of Public Health.

Also, **76 out of every 100 children indicate that they have a place to wash their hands**, stating that they are close to the toilets.



Which of the following statements best describes your household's financial situation?

Economic situation families



21 out of every 100 said that their parents can buy a little more than they need to live, while **13 out of every 100** said that their parents cannot buy everything their families need to live.



"Sharing food when there is none, with families that have less."

-Stefany, 9 years

Of the children and adolescents who participated, **59 out of every 100** said that their parents can only buy what they need to live, for example, food, medicine, clothing.



In the last five years anyone?
left **home to migrate to another country**
Looking for improvements and other opportunities?

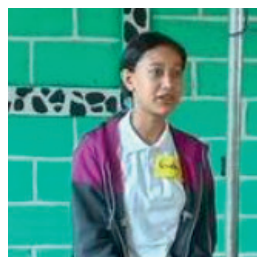
This second part of the consultation aims to make visible the participation of children and adolescents in actions that prevent environmental deterioration at the individual, family and community levels. They **also give** us their vision of those who could participate in this work and share with us concrete ideas on how to achieve it. The following is a breakdown of this analysis through the questions asked.



Of the
473 children and adolescents
consulted, 59.6% said no and 40% indicated that they had migrated

especially their parents, stating that their main motivation for **migrating had been lack of economic** resources and employment opportunities and to have money to plant crops or do another business.

Is migration an option for you to counteract the effects of **climate change**?



No, "For me it would be worse to leave because sometimes they are deported and lose more, because they have to pay what

-Gaby, 14 years



Maybe "It could be if my family had a need, but always thinking about helping them."

-Elvin, 15 yearst

We recognize that migration promotes family disintegration, puts our homes, land and other assets at risk in order to pay travel debts.

The children expressed that they do not see themselves outside the country, emphasizing that they are rooted in their families, friends, schoolmates and because they are afraid to do so.

Undoubtedly, the information they have learned about the risk of traveling makes them feel more secure in their places of origin.



III. Methodology

The methodology of the consultation was mixed, using two approaches, one qualitative by applying individual surveys and the other qualitative through focus groups.

For the survey, Kobocollect was used as a digital data collection tool and SPSS was used for statistical analysis. The survey was applied by means of multiple-choice questions, carried out by the field teams, who sampled each selected municipality.

The focus groups were divided into children and adolescents with a minimum of

15 participants

An inclusive and representative approach was sought, with the participation of **4 children with disabilities and 57 children from indigenous communities**. The information was categorized by group of questions and group of answers and processed and entered according to their frequency through the Mentimeter platform and reflected through a word cloud.

The sample universe was

285,120

children and adolescents between 8 and 18 years of age living in the 35 selected municipalities.

Once the information was validated, we proceeded to the statistical analysis of the data and the qualitative analysis, finding similarities and complementarities that allowed the construction of this report.

The focus groups were facilitated through dynamics and generative questions, **9 questions for children and 12 for adolescents**.

Before applying and developing the survey and focus group exercise, each child and adolescent was asked voluntarily for their consent; their authorization to take their opinions through textual quotations and photographs. Also, as a child protection measure, only the first name and age are detailed.

V. What do children and adolescents propose?



"With my mother we have plants and flowers that help to have a good environment."

-Rodrigo, 16 years



"Simple things, like saving water and not wasting it"

-Rebeca, 14 years



"In my school we don't use disposable plates, we use reusable ones"

-Wilmer, 17 years



"In my community there is a protected area, almost 500 trees are planted every year. We take 10 to 20 trees per family to plant."

A total of 73 children and adolescents gave us their opinion on what they are doing to prevent environmental deterioration, most of them expressed that they are **"planting trees"**, "throwing garbage in its place" and actively participate in "clean-up days". It is worth mentioning that these three main activities are carried out at an individual, family and community level. They also shared with us actions that they do at home and school, among which are "having a garden", "taking care of animals", **"saving water"**, **"recycling"** and "taking care not to burn garbage".

It is important to emphasize that **children and adolescents are aware** that they are active subjects and that they can take small, big actions that influence their immediate environment and beyond.

It also shares its opinion on what the community as a whole can do to prevent the deterioration of the environment.

2. What could the communities do?



A total of
116 responses
were received.

4 major acations stand out

One related to reforestation	two related to water management	One to environmental awareness
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Another area is risk management and support to affected people, including the reinforcement of houses in the event of disasters and the sharing of seeds for planting with people whose livelihoods were affected.

Other actions related to good practices and some opinions that invite us to reflect on how to move from theory to practice are mentioned.

These last opinions show us that children and adolescents know that there are alternatives, but they need to put them into practice in different areas.

We also value their perception that there is a **spiritual dimension** in relation to nature and they know that the challenge requires an equally great company.



"Partnering with other organizations so they can pursue environmental solutions."

-Gustavo, 16 years



"Give containers or bins where they can throw the garbage, so people don't throw it in rivers or burn it."

-Ana, 17 years



"To carry out cleaning and reforestation campaigns in the community."

-Noel, 16 years

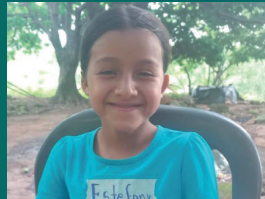


"Garbage collection initiatives, creating awareness in every person of the communities."



"To make trainings to families about the care of the environment."

-Keneth, 15 years



"Sharing food when there is none, with families who have less."

-Stefany, 9 years



"Keep clean where we live so that the swallows don't get clogged."

-David, 13 years



"We should plant trees to give us shade and strengthen the water."

-Yesica, 13 years



"To make ditches so that the rainwater is impounded."

-Bianka, 8 years



"Don't waste water, don't vote garbage and take care of the environment."

The importance of partnership and collaboration to confront these situations and achieve changes that benefit everyone is emphasized. Children and adolescents are aware that promoting care and actions in favor of the environment is also to build community, it is to make communion with others and with nature.

The younger ones mentioned actions such as providing **"food to families affected by climatic events"**, good practices such as **"keeping drains clean"**, **"not wasting water"**, "making ditches so that water can soak in and infiltrate", etc.



Among the actors that children and adolescents visualize that they can get involved are, first and foremost, their families, which reflects that they know that this task begins at home. They also suggest formal actors such as municipal mayors' offices, ministries of environment, agriculture and health that mandate and make programs and projects possible. They highlight organized groups such as water committees, churches, leaders, firefighters, civil society actors such as NGOs, youth groups and sports groups. The fact of saying "we ourselves" denotes the enthusiasm of knowing that we are active actors that influence the transformation of the community.

3. In what ways could community organizations contribute to **improve the environmental situation**?

The answers denote a clarity in the roles and actions that can be taken by each actor and group of actors. The children and adolescents proposed that these actors should give "environmental talks, help those affected," promote reforestation campaigns, and encourage families to plant trees. They also mentioned actions such as promoting compliance with the law, promoting recycling and related aspects, such as generating employment and improving roads.

It is important to highlight that the children and adolescents emphasized education as a pillar in the environmental solutions, focusing on garbage management, that these are not deposited in rivers, sanitation in homes, planting trees, caring for water sources, stop using plastic bags, using reusable ones, promoting campaigns where the population is informed and sensitized.



Another key actor is business and its relevance in the culture of consumption and this is linked to the forms of production, land use, resources such as land and water, energy sources, among others.



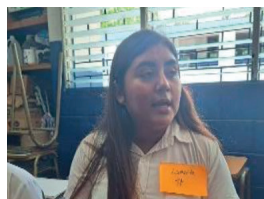
4. What actions could companies take to contribute to improving the quality of life of people and the environment?

A total of 69 comments were generated regarding this question. As part of their responsibility to society, children and adolescents mentioned promoting environmental care campaigns, avoiding the disposal of toxins and chemicals that pollute the soil, fresh water and seas.

They propose good practices such as using biodegradable materials, reducing the use of fumes that pollute the air, reforesting surrounding areas or others and not using heavy machinery.

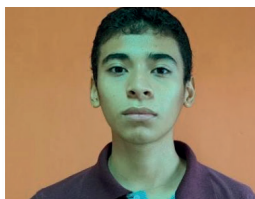


They highlighted helping families affected by some climatic phenomenon, financing socio-environmental projects in neighboring communities and neighborhoods. The following are comments from the voice of children and adolescents.



"Supermarkets should not use plastic bags. Companies that use nature to their advantage to make nature reserves to recover what was lost"

-Ismenia, 17 Years



"Awareness campaigns on the issue of the environment, because many people do not, they can support us by giving resources."

-Ezequiel, 15 Years



"Reforestation, cleaning up forests and oceans"

-Kervin, 14 Years



"You can avoid throwing waste into rivers or the sea."

-Ana, 17 Years



"Make recycling, iron plastic to make new utensils, so we avoid pollution in the seas."

-Bryan, 16 years



"Companies can help with food."

-Maycol, 16 years

5. How could the governments of the Dry Corridor countries help to improve people's lives?

The topics of water protection projects, food security and social projects for the rehabilitation of people affected by disasters, and the strengthening and surveillance of protected areas continue to be addressed. The importance of community organization was mentioned.

Another group of opinions was the generation of new laws to regulate environmental resources and prices, such as the one of seed for planting. Also other actions associated with employment generation, expansion of health services, and road repair.



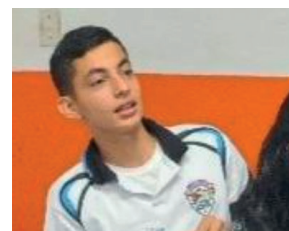
"Implement laws that prohibit certain things, like not littering. They also unite with organizations to carry out cleaning campaigns on the beaches... Distributing agricultural supplies to families".

-Claudia



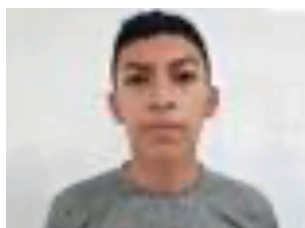
"Donate plants and trees to plant on the banks of rivers, streams, wells and everywhere and put garbage barrels."

-Yansi, 14 years



"Prohibit the felling of trees, provide inputs to have reservoirs that serve to accumulate water for the summer".

-Manuel, 16 years



Reforestation and laws that prevent deforestation, pollution, somehow we should also abide by the laws to be able to change and change the culture, "To think that when we carve a tree, we take away a year of life"

-Nelson



"Campaigns and training in schools, colleges, communities so that people learn to preserve the environment."

-Marcela, 14 years

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Another group of opinions was the generation of new laws to regulate environmental resources and prices, such as that of seeds for planting. Other associated actions such as employment generation, expansion of health services and road repair were also mentioned.



Conclusions



- More than half of the children and adolescents said that their parents can only buy what they need to live, mainly food.
- A little more than 380 children and adolescents stated that they live in places that are highly vulnerable to disasters caused by climate change such as floods and landslides.
- Almost half stated that in the last 5 years a member of their household migrated.
- Children and adolescents are very aware of the changes in climate, its effects on their lives and communities and recognize the urgency of making changes in their practices in their daily lives.
- Children and adolescents recognize that climate change has caused droughts, damage to their crops, drying up their wells and water sources, making water scarcer, affecting access to food, decreasing the amount of consumption and diversity of what they eat at home.
- They are aware of the actions that can be taken to prevent environmental degradation. They are also aware that there is a gap in the actions that should be taken and what is being done. They know that it is a task for everyone to achieve change, identifying key actors and what they can do to achieve it.
- The opinions and expressions of the children and adolescents of the CA4 member countries in the exercise of the "voice of children" have many similarities regarding the impact that climate change has had on their communities.
- Emphasis is placed on the opportunity to reinforce the importance of empowering children and adolescents as drivers of social development at the local or community level.
- It was possible to read in their opinions the emotions of concern and anguish in the face of the situations they live and perceive an uncertain future in the face of the climatic onslaughts.
- Some of the proposals they present seem obvious or perhaps not new to adults, but in expressing them they reveal large gaps and the work that is needed to realize living in a harmonious environment that can sustainably provide for the human beings of today and those of tomorrow.
- This consultation and listening to children and adolescents reaffirms our commitment to see them in this initiative as active subjects of their development and wellbeing and as key actors in transforming and greening the dry corridor in a sustainable manner.



Recommendations

- Identify areas of action in programs and projects where the participation and protagonism of children and adolescents is promoted in order to lead actions of the initiative.
- To carry out processes where children, adolescents and young people can investigate and make innovative environmental proposals from different sectors.
- To deepen the inclusion in environmental actions so that everyone has the same opportunities to express their opinion and participate.
- Promote spaces for children and adolescents such as schools, clubs, churches, sports teams to explore their interests and proposals for action in favor of actions to care for and improve their environment.
- Integrate the spiritual approach to the relationship with nature into the biblical reflections and amplify it with the churches and other expressions of faith.
- To address the emotional dimension, physical and mental health in children who have lived or are living stressful situations caused by adverse climatic events in the dry corridor.
- Promote the care, value and enjoyment of nature through the promotion of activities such as hiking, artistic and sports activities.
- Focus programs and projects on actions that can strengthen families to provide wellbeing to children in all its dimensions, especially nutrition, access to safe water, basic sanitation, educational opportunities and an aesthetic natural environment that provides a sense of security and harmony.
- Promote the participation of children and adolescents in ADVOCACY's actions, identifying their own agendas that they are interested in promoting and supporting them in paving the way for relationships with the appropriate actors.



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