



November 20
Universal Day of Children's Rights

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GETTING TO KNOW GUATEMALA

Did you discover anything new through the email we sent you yesterday? Were you able to check all the suggested links? Congratulations! If you didn't, don't worry, there is still plenty of time.

Today we bring you the VOICES OF THE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS from Guatemala. Click [here](#) to locate this country on the map.

In our first email, we mentioned that the first objective of the *Universal Children's Day* celebration was to promote mutual exchange and understanding among children and adolescents.

One of the links in the message helped you discover the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). Each day you will have the opportunity to read at least one article regarding the different rights of children and adolescents.

Convention on the Rights of the Child - Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

We now bring you three testimonies of adolescents from Guatemala, which the Human Rights Council examined in 2012. Recommendation 89, submitted by Norway, reads: "Implement specific, long-lasting and effective measures to reduce the alarmingly high rate of children suffering from chronic malnutrition, especially among the indigenous population, in which eight out of ten children are affected, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)."

These teenagers are studying in a Marist school called Instituto Tecnológico K'iché. They speak about the problems of education, health and poverty in their country.

"The majority of the Guatemalan citizens are of indigenous origin. For this reason, sometimes, because of lack of education, or due to the fact of low income, they live in poverty and especially they lack food. Those especially affected by this situation are the children. The parents do not have sufficient resources to consume healthy food of good quality, because the price of these is very high, or simply they do not have sufficient information concerning basic nourishment.



In Guatemala malnutrition is a problem that affects the country, especially the poorest. A solution that I see for this is to guarantee their rights as citizens. The more affected are the indigenous people. We all should learn to eat in a healthy manner guaranteeing the economic resources to live better". **Juana Verónica Jerónimo Nix.**



"Children should be taught the rights in a way they can understand, thinking like they do, using games and enjoying. We do not want a senseless life and without value neither do we want to live in ignorance. Rights exist and these should not only favor the children born in a golden cradle, but also the children who live in the countryside from infancy, who work from the age of 11 and 12 years having to carry on their shoulders the needs of their families. We want the rights to

guarantee the opportunity to study, to play, to have leisure time, and time of rest. In this way, acquire wisdom and intelligence, so that Guatemala can grow and progress to receive new generations of children". **Fátima Lorenzo.**



"It is important to foster in our society values such as respect, humility, tolerance, and solidarity and to practice these, in order to eliminate discrimination. On the other side, it is important to promote the participation of children with disability, to create the conditions so that they can feel secure and can trust.

Besides, persons should also have to accept them and help them, encourage them and support them to keep on going and to participate in a higher level in our society. After all, we are all human beings and children of God.

“A person with some disability that can overcome these problems becomes an example for everyone”. **Brayan Steven López.**

What do you make of these testimonies? Similar situations take place all over the world. Do they also happen in your country? We invite you to read articles [24 and 28 of the Convention](#) regarding health and education.

Consider mentioning this situation to the people in your school, to your friends, coworkers, Marist community, family, etc. If you are a teacher, think about discussing the topic with your class. Be creative!

[FMSI](#) would welcome your comments on its [Facebook page](#).

We invite you to reflect on these important issues regarding the children of your country and of the entire world.

Stay tuned! See you tomorrow!

