

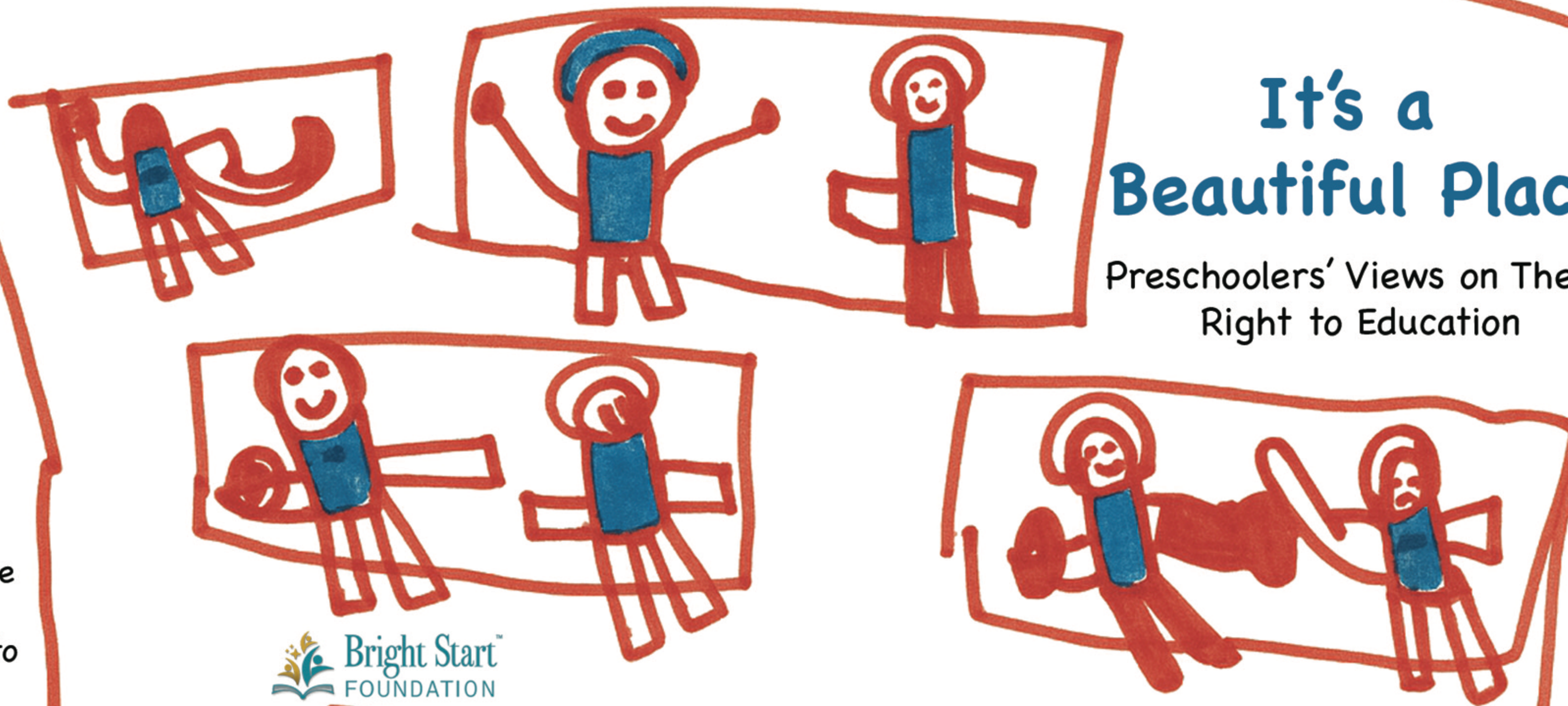
Views from children aged
3 to 6 years old from:

Brazil
Germany
India
Mexico
Nigeria
Peru
Saudi Arabia
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
Zimbabwe

to inform governments working
on a new optional protocol to the
Convention on the Rights of the
Child to strengthen their right to
education.

It's a Beautiful Place

Preschoolers' Views on Their
Right to Education





"It's a beautiful place where we can read stories and explore."

In May 2025, more than 1000 children aged 3 to 6 years old, from 10 countries, shared their views regarding the value of early childhood education, including pre-primary education.

These views provide valuable input for the open-ended intergovernmental working group on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to strengthen the right to education by explicitly recognizing the right to early childhood care and education, and a legal guarantee of free pre-primary education.

The children live in Brazil, Germany, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe.

These consultations were led by educators trained in the Voices of Children Pedagogy™ developed by the Bright Start Foundation, a non-profit organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland. Similarly, the children all participate in the Voice of Children Pedagogy project, which is implemented throughout the academic year in their pre-primary classrooms.

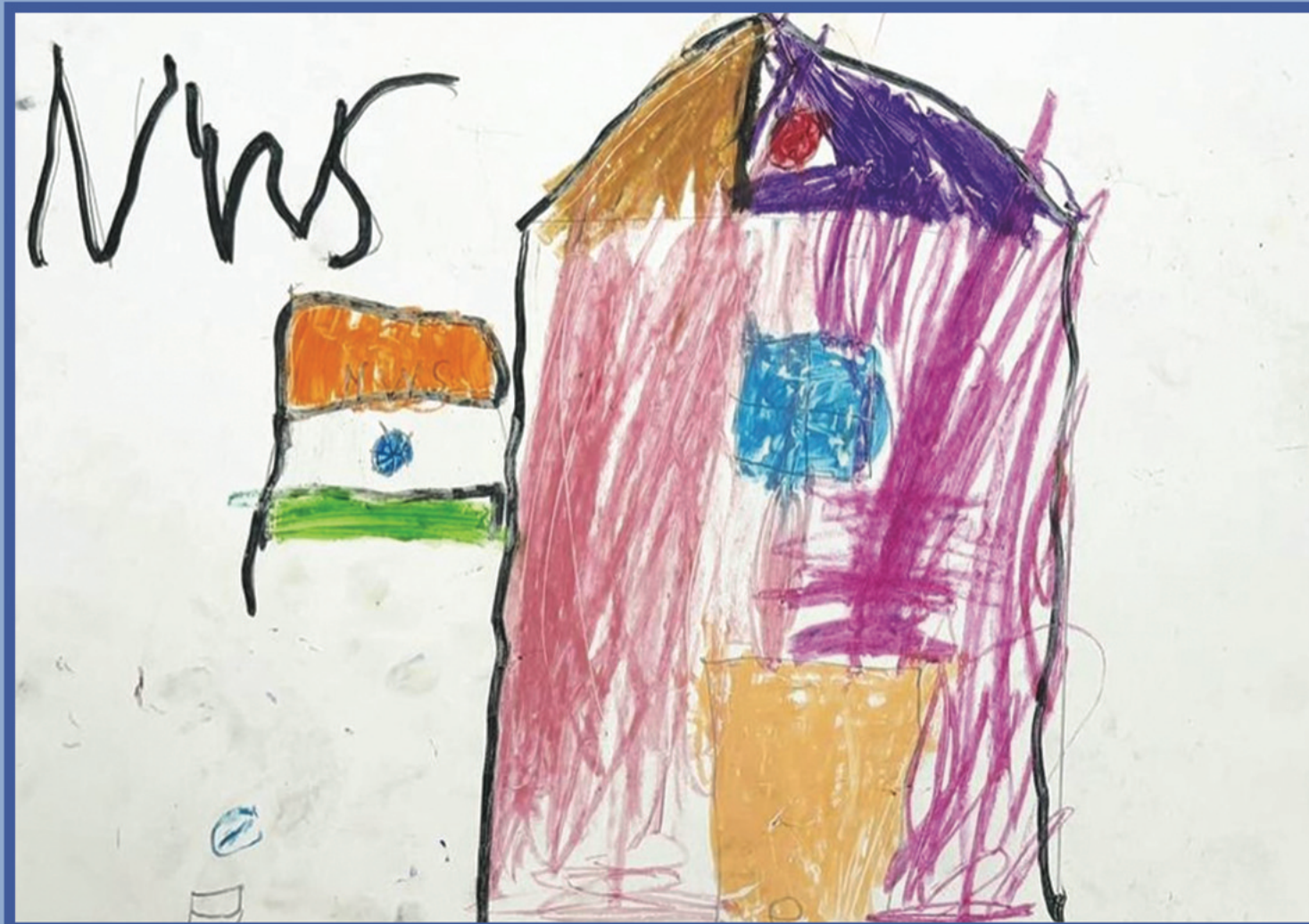
From the beginning of the academic year, children were engaged in a mission to create artwork and messages to be shared with children and adults around the world. Over the course of eight months, they worked on their creations, and in early May, each child was invited to select the artwork they wished to share, along with the message they wanted to convey.

During the last ten days of May, educators guided the children into a meaningful conversation, inviting them to reflect on the reality that many children around the world do not have the opportunity to attend pre-primary education.

It is truly inspiring to witness how children perceive the world—especially when it comes to education. Their insights and ideas remind us just how powerful and thoughtful young voices can be.



"My dream school is full of shelves stacked with toys. It's a school made just for toys!"
Antonio, 4 years old, Brazil



"I made my school... I love my school, and I learn a lot of things here."
Virisha, 5 years old, India



"I think school is really important—it's where we learn to read and make friends.
I drew my friend Manuelle because I love spending time with her."
Cecília, 5 years old, Brazil



"It's about love and friendship. It's really nice to have friends and play with them. I'm very happy at school because I want to be with my friends: Natalia, Aitana, and Michelle."

Danna, 6 years old, Mexico

Tiny Hands, Big Messages

We begin by listening—because every conversation on preschool education must start with those it serves first.

Children as Agents for Sustainable Change

The **Voices of Children Pedagogy™** is a bold and transformative international initiative that reimagines early childhood education by placing children's agency, rights and creativity at its very heart. Grounded in the belief that children aged 4–6 are not only learners but leaders of thought, the project empowers young children to express their voices on the issues shaping their lives, communities, and the world around them.

Harnessing the creative arts as a powerful medium for reflection, communication, and discovery, the pedagogy invites children to predict, explore, imagine, question, create, and lead. In specially designed **Voices of Children Pedagogy™ Labs**, children explore their identities, dreams, and responses to global challenges that affect them. Educators serve as co-researchers, listening attentively and documenting children's ideas, stories, and artworks to inform educational practice, support advocacy, and contribute to systemic change, while parents and grand-friends engage in this journey by adopting an intergenerational approach, fostering mutual learning, shared wisdom, and deepened community connection across age groups.

At the core of the initiative is the conviction that young children are agents of sustainable change. Each year, their journeys culminate in **the Voices of Children Pedagogy™ International Galleries**, celebratory virtual and in-person exhibitions where children present their creations and powerful messages to the rest world. These events are not just celebrations, they are acts of advocacy. Through the annual **Manifesto for Change**, children articulate the two issues they most want their country's leaders to address, calling for action, equity, and inclusion. Now active in 10 countries across all continents, the project is implemented through appointed Voices of Children Pedagogy™ Centres, early childhood education settings where children lead the process. They co-create personal portfolios, establish the rules of their learning environments, and engage in cross-border classroom exchanges that nurture empathy and global citizenship from an early age.

The initiative advances sustainable change across three powerful dimensions:

Educational Transformation, by championing child-led, inclusive, and culturally grounded pedagogies that centre learning around children's experiences and voices, while engaging researchers in co-constructing knowledge and advancing evidence-based practices.

Community Empowerment, by fostering deep collaboration between children, educators, families and researchers, built on respect, trust, and shared purpose to strengthen learning ecosystems.

Global Advocacy, by positioning young children as contributors to local, national, and international policy discussions on education, rights, and sustainability, supported by research that amplifies their voices and impact.

Through its emphasis on imagination, agency, and dialogue, the Voices of Children Pedagogy™ is not merely a project, it is a global movement. It challenges us to listen to children not only as students, but as visionaries. It reframes early childhood education as a foundation for building equitable, peaceful, and sustainable societies and equips children with the curiosity, compassion, and confidence to navigate and shape an uncertain future.

With the active participation of schools, the engagement of researchers and educational institutions, and the commitment of communities across all countries, this initiative will continue to spark lasting change for generations to come and ensure that every educator and every child, no matter where they are in the world, can actively participate, contribute, and be heard.

Over the past months, children across diverse countries and contexts have delivered a powerful message in support of the right to preschool education. **Through their voices, artworks, reflections, and cross-border exchanges, they have explicitly stated that access to quality early childhood education is not a privilege, but a fundamental right for every child, everywhere.** Their messages, rooted in lived experiences and bold imagination, have called on leaders and decision-makers to listen, act, and prioritise the foundational years as a time not only for learning, but for belonging, expression, and building a fairer future. In doing so, children have emerged not just as advocates, but as catalysts for change, **reminding us all that the global conversation on preschool education must begin by listening to those it serves first.**

True progress begins when we recognise children not as future citizens, but as leaders in the now. Their voices carry the vision of a world yet to come and the courage to build it.

Children's voices hold the wisdom and vision our world needs, now more than ever. The evolving Voices of Children Pedagogy™ centres those voices in a worldwide movement shaping education into a powerful tool for equity, peace, and sustainable transformation.

Dr. Eirini Gkouskou

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"I like stories. My favourite story is Goldilocks and the Three Bears."
Hind, 5 years old, United Arab Emirates



"This is what I think my teacher's house looks like! ... There is lots of grass and nice flowers around his house, and the sky is very blue... Two of the windows are love hearts, because we love our teacher."

Julia, 6 years old, Germany



"This is for my teacher, because she's sick. This is her and she has green hair. This is a heart for her, and she is holding coffee to make her feel better. This [in front] is a tree and a pink flower."
Sara, 4 years old, United Arab Emirates



"I like to play with toys and see-saw."
Ameyaa, 3 years old, India

Do you think every child should have a chance to come to preschool? Why?

"Yes, because if children don't go to school they don't learn."

"We learn not to hit, to respect friends."

"If you don't learn you won't know how to use a computer."

"Yes, to become smarter."

"That's so sad! They don't go to school because they don't have a mum?"

"We learn to share with our friends."

"It's a place to learn cool things."

"We learn games."

"At preschool, we can learn to read and write."

"At preschool, we make friends. We learn to play together and we learn that we are different. For example, I like cherries, but some people might not like them."

"Yes, to play with friends."

"School is important so we don't make mistakes."

"If I met a child who couldn't go to preschool, I would give them a ride to my school."

"I learned how to write long sentences, and now I have a notebook where I write little stories! I also learn how to be a good friend and not get upset when someone else takes my turn."

"If I met a child who couldn't go to preschool, I would help by giving money. One day, I saw a hungry child on the street and I gave him my cheese bread to help."

"Preschool helps us learn about planets, animals, and other things."

"I work with new materials, I learned to count, to add,
and new songs. I use clay, I draw, and paint."

"Because we need everyone to be happy."

"I'm learning songs, cutting, drawing with colours, and recognizing letters."

"I like sharing toys with my friends, I like learning new things to study."

"To play a lot, and draw."

"Now I'm learning to write, read, do addition, and I
earn about the Earth, the continents, and our country."

"Yes, because we don't stay home."

"I'm learning to take care of my planet and to work."

"I'm learning the letters in my name and making new friends."

"I'm learning to share, to add, and to write my name."

"I learn how to read and walk nicely without kicking others.
I learnt how to keep my hands to myself."

"I'm learning to read and write, I've discovered new materials,
I have new friends, and I'm learning what friendship is."

"Artwork, phonics, writing my name, counting, number."



"I want to become a doctor when I grow up. Doctors help people."
Aafiayh, 5 years old, United Arab Emirates



"When I grow up, I'm going to be an astronaut, and from space,
I'll take care of the axolotl [a critically endangered Mexican salamander]."
Joaquín, 4 years old, Mexico



"This is Mr. Bunny. He lives in my school. I love bunnies because they are cute and fluffy."
Karis, 4 years old, Nigeria



"A girl is playing in the garden, and she wants to help the flowers grow. She wants to plant more flowers, and so she puts lots of seeds on the ground."

Nyasha, 6 years old, Zimbabwe

What would you tell a friend who has never been to preschool? What should they know?

"Preschool feels like a big house where you play, eat, go on trips, and work with materials."

"In my preschool, there are teachers who take care of us, lots of materials to work with, and we learn every day."

"There are lots of materials and you learn new things. Tell your parents to ask for more preschools for everyone."

"It's a lovely school, we can play and learn more."

"A place where you can learn and make art."

"At school, we learn how to read."

"It's a beautiful place where we can read stories and explore."

"I'd tell them preschool is super fun, we play, count, draw, and learn new things every day. There are lots of friends and teachers who care for us, play with us. It's so fun when we learn and we discover many things every day."

"School is important because we create things with art materials."

"There are toys, paintings, books, and crayons. We learn math."

"At preschool there are many things to work with, punch, cut, and paint. At preschool we study and don't cry."

"Everyone should go because they all want to learn new things, make friends, and have a good time."

"All the children in the world should go to preschool to study, learn, and get to know the materials."

"I think everyone should go to preschool to be happy and learn a lot, because at home there are no materials or other kids to make friends with."

"Everyone should go to be happy."

"Learning about bees, chicks, bear hunt, and colour."

"Every child must go to school."

"We read books, learn phonics, helps us use our imagination!"

"Come to us! In kindergarten, we don't just play. We laugh, learn, and do fun things. We learn about space, animals, and how to be kind. Kindergarten is a place that makes you love learning and happy every day you go there."

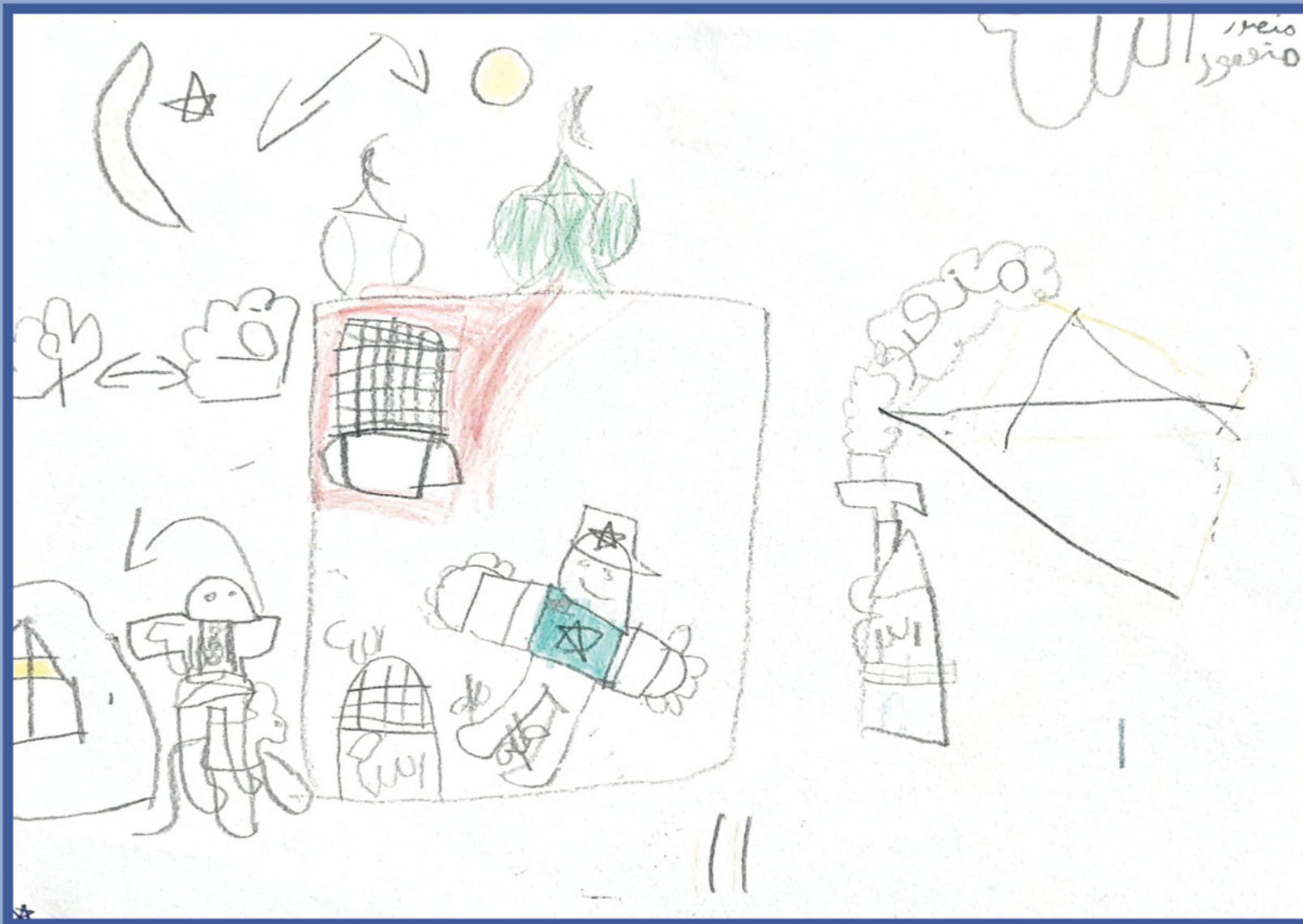


"Mum drives the car to preschool and it makes me happy... I feel safe here."
Lucia, 6 years old, Germany



"My family takes care of nature. With my siblings Mateo and Luana, we pick up trash from the little stream and the small bridge near our house. When it's clean, everything looks nice."

Nicolás, 4 years old, Peru



"When I was little, I didn't talk very well. I used to call a ball a 'bateesh.'
 When I grew up, I learned the word 'ball.'"
 Mansur, 6 years old, Saudi Arabia



"We must take care of the Earth because it's our home. My family lives here, the animals and plants live here too. Children all over the world want a beautiful place to live."

Luciana, 4 years old, Peru

If you were head of all the schools in the world, what would you do for the children who want to go to preschool?

"There should be free school for everyone. I would build more schools with lots of teachers."

"There should be a really big school so everyone can fit."

"There should be a school in every city."

"Create a play area suitable for children with disabilities so we can play together."

"One million schools. There have to be lots of teachers."

"I would show them my school so they could come learn. I'd ask my teacher to please teach the children who want to go to school."

"If a child couldn't get to school, I would create free transportation so they could go."

"I would create a place where poor people can draw."

"I will say 'Hello!' I will make them study, make them read, play. I will make them have a circle time. I will say to them 'Be kind.' I will give them the address so they can come from many planes, because they can't come from one plane."

"I'd take them all to school, ride with them on the school bus so they can learn things. I'd also tell them they have to learn to be big like ME!"

"If I were the boss of all the schools in the world, I'd make it so all children could go to preschool for free, so their parents don't worry, and that there are lots of toys, beautiful stories, more drawing materials, tasty food, and all the teachers in every school are kind, give hugs, and help. I'd also make sure all children are happy and good kids."

"I'd give money to their parents so children can go to school, so no child is left out."

"I would tell my mom to give me her money then
I buy them school clothes and stationery."

"I'd provide books and computers to learn."

"I think all schools should be free."

"I'd share notebooks, crayons, and scissors so they can learn to paint and draw."

"Install ramps for children who can't walk so they can go to school."

"I'd build more preschools with lots of materials
and teachers to teach. I'd make sure no child is
left without studying."

"I'd create many preschools so there's enough for
all the children in the world. I'd invite them to
come and learn with the materials."

"I'd build many preschools in every country, with lots of materials so children can learn."

"I'd ask for preschools to be built everywhere so children can go and be happy."

"I'd use magic to create more preschools so all children are happy."

"There should be more schools in the world to be closer to all children, even for children who live far away."

"Every child in the world should go to kindergarten, learn, and play like us."

"Build more kindergartens and schools for poor children."

"Why are there children who don't go to kindergarten? Help them be happy like ours."

"I would make all schools free and put lots of toys in the playground."

"Every child deserves to learn how to write, read, and play with their friends. If they don't go to kindergarten, they might feel like they don't know anything, and they might be sad because they don't have friend or a place where they can be happy. Kindergarten is important so that every child feels smart and strong."



"Runako is sitting with Tendekai and her mum on the sofa. Runako is watching 'Kung-Fu Panda.'
They are eating apples. Apples are healthy food. There are blue flowers outside the house."
Runakorwaishe, 6 years old, Zimbabwe



"Play. Look at the sky. This is moon, stars, Saturn."
Adam, 3 years old, India



"Best friends hold hands and play, and laugh together all the time."
Addison, 3 years old, Nigeria



"All of us need to be friends, and I love all of you."
Tamara, 5 years old, Saudi Arabia



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