



## TAPORI

is a worldwide friendship network which brings together children from different backgrounds who want all children to have the same chances. They learn from children whose everyday life is very different from theirs. They think and act for a fairer world by inventing a way of living where no one is left behind.

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# Tapori Newsletter

N° 430, November 2020-January 2021



**Dear Taporis,**

After a long break due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we discovered that many of you went back to school. Despite the resumption of classes, some cannot go to school every day. Many have not been able to go back at all. We wish you a lot of courage, whatever your situation is. We hope you can keep the desire to learn.

In this letter, we want to share with you the messages that we received from children from different countries. They tell us about how each one does their part to take care of others and of the planet, like the hummingbird, bringing water droplets to the great fire. "I look after you. You look after me." ; is the message that stood out from their reflections and their actions. Another theme in their messages was the water that surrounds them in their everyday life. You will discover children living by rivers, lakes and seas who know very well that every single one of their actions, as simple as they might seem, can impact their community. We hope that their messages can inspire you and that you can yourself be committed, wherever you are.

# A Journey through the Great Lakes region

1

Our journey begins at the foot of the Virunga mountains. There you find the spring water feeding several rivers and the gigantic lakes in this region in Africa called the "Great Lakes region". Along the way, we'll get to see the children who live there and who will share their stories and messages with us. Let's board our boat, the Taporí Express, to meet them!

2

We have our first stop in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the city of Bukavu.

"We, the Taporí children of the star group, live in a neighborhood near Lake Kivu. The smell of pollution reaches the hospital on the shore. We wanted to do something about this. One day, each and every one of us took a shovel and we cleaned up thoroughly before putting plants in the ground. We hope that this will bring happiness to the people who are ill."

"Let's take care of our environment to bring happiness to others."

6

The Taporí Express is going to continue its journey on the Lukuga River and then join the River Congo, one of the longest rivers in the world. Our boat will have traveled through the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville and Angola before reaching the Atlantic Ocean. From there it will be able to set out to meet all the other children in the world.

3

For our 2nd stopover, the Taporí Express stops in another district of Bukavu bordering the Ruzizi River.

"On October 17, we went to meet children who collect the plastic bags up from the Ruzizi River. We wanted to get to know them better. We discovered that they sort the bags out and then sell them at the Rwanda border nearby. We helped them because this takes them a lot of time. But it's also dangerous work because the polluted water and waste can infect them and they can't afford to go to hospital."

"Let's be sensitive to people who live around us."

4

Let's go down the Ruzizi River up to Lake Tanganyika. Our 3rd stop is in Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi.

"In Bujumbura, children love to swim in the lake, renowned for its very soft water. Some take small fish out of the fishermen's nets where they've been trapped. They are called "untanglers." On the shore on October 17, we danced and talked with the former ambassador of Burundi. Because of the garbage and the companies' constructions on the lake, the water level is rising and flooding our houses. We have to take care of the lake to protect ourselves."

"Let's protect our environment to protect ourselves."

5

Let's cross the lake on the Taporí Express to get to Uvira. We are back in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"In Uvira, our district is crossed by the Mulongwe River which flows into Lake Tanganyika. This year, we had terrible rains which led to the river bursting its banks. Many houses were washed away. We were very frightened. In spite of this, neighbors had the courage to help each other. Together we even made our own bricks to rebuild some of the houses."

"Together, we overcome the difficulties."



# "I love fishing and sometimes at school I dream of the sea."

From the small corrugated iron hut where he lives, Roudy and the other children of Case Noyale say hello to the sea at sunrise. Before going to school, they love to admire the beautiful landscape.

Case Noyale is a village on the south-west coast of Mauritius. The main activity there is fishing, which is Roudy's favourite pastime.

This 12 year-old boy is very sensitive to nature. He struggles with reading and writing but he likes drawing and he says: "I love fishing and sometimes at school I dream of the sea." Roudy plays an active part in the street library, going to fetch the other children and inviting new ones to join in. Most of the time, he chooses books about the sea and explains to the others the different fish, the types of coral and the ecosystem.

While the Covid-19 pandemic had already greatly affected life in Mauritius, a new concern came up at the end of July with the oil spill caused by the bulk carrier Wakashio that sank off the coast.

When the boat ran aground on the reefs in their lagoons, all the people in Mauritius were very angry and worried about the impact of this shipwreck on the fishermen's lives on the south-east coast of the island.

The children living on the coast are very worried. Roudy and his friends in Case Noyale are also worried. The young boy asked one of the street library facilitators:

"Maria, do you think the oil spill from Wakashio will pollute our sea here in Case Noyale? It will take years to clean the corals and the sea."

Roudy would like to work as a fisherman but he thinks the destruction of his environment could destroy his dream.

"When I grow up I want be a fisherman [...] But with the pollution, soon there will be no more fish in the sea. We can't eat the only fish that will be left, because they're "poison" fish. There's poison deposited on the corals and we'll be poisoned if we eat fish that swim there. "



# Make your own Taporì Express

In this Taporì Newsletter, you have discovered the actions children from different parts of the world have begun in order to care for people around them and for our planet.

**Now it's up to you!**

**You can make your own boat:**

- An origami boat with paper.
- With bottles, cans or any other object to recycle.
- By drawing it.



**Think about the name** you would like to give your boat and who you would like to invite on board. Can you explain your choice ? What would the mission of your boat be ? For instance, you clean the water of a river, join other children, etc.

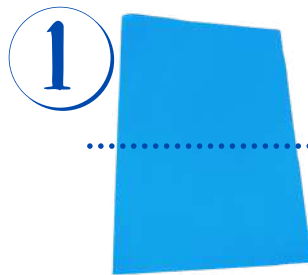
**Get together** with your friends, neighbors, with your family or your classmates and ask each other:

- How is water part of your daily life?
- Who do you share it with in your home, neighborhood, city, etc?
- What are the water-related problems around you and in the world?
- What is the impact of these on the environment and people's lives?
- How can you take care of the planet and people around you?

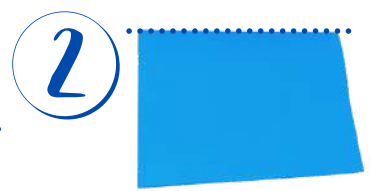
Everyone can **write** on a piece of paper one idea you talked about that you would like to share with other children around the world.

**Send** your boats to Taporì, if possible by mail or take a photo of them and send it by email.

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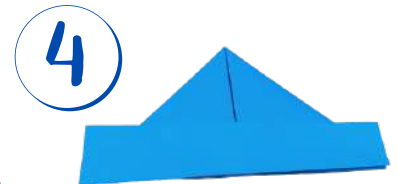
Take a rectangular sheet of paper.



Fold it in half from top to bottom.



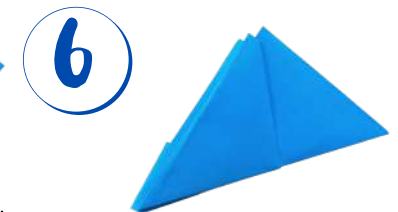
Fold the top corners and bring them to the centre of the sheet.



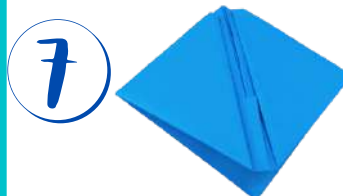
At the bottom of the triangle is a rectangular strip. Fold it up over the triangle. Do the same on the other side.



Open the triangle by putting your hand inside it, fold it the other way round to get a flat diamond shape.



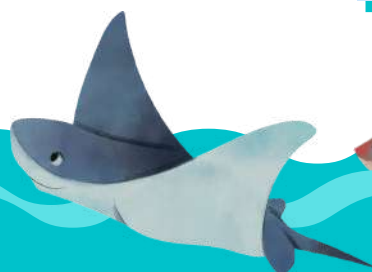
Raise the bottom tip of the diamond and fold it upwards, tip to tip. Do it for the side facing you. Then turn the diamond over to the other side and do the same thing again.



Open the triangle to form a diamond shape again, as you did earlier. Pull both sides of the diamond outward, the boat is formed by unfolding.



Give the boat a curved shape by opening its base with your fingers. Your **Taporì Express** is ready !





# From Ventilla to Kibera

November 20 is the universal children's day. It is a day to think about the experiences of other children throughout the world. We share here with you what the Taporis have to say.

"Hello, my name is Lisbeth. I am a Taporis child from Ventilla, a neighbourhood of Madrid in Spain. My group and I talked about rights. A right is something that everyone needs and something that no one can live without.

Each person talked about important rights:

- For me it's family.
- A house, because without a house you will have to sleep in the cold street, without a bed or somewhere to get together.
- Love, because love is so important.
- Not being discriminated against because of where you live or what your house looks like, and not being looked down upon.
- Freedom to be yourself.

Yet, in Madrid, these rights are not respected. Many families have to live in squats with the fear of being evicted. The ones who do have a house do not always succeed in paying on time.

How can we live peacefully if our future hangs by a thread?"

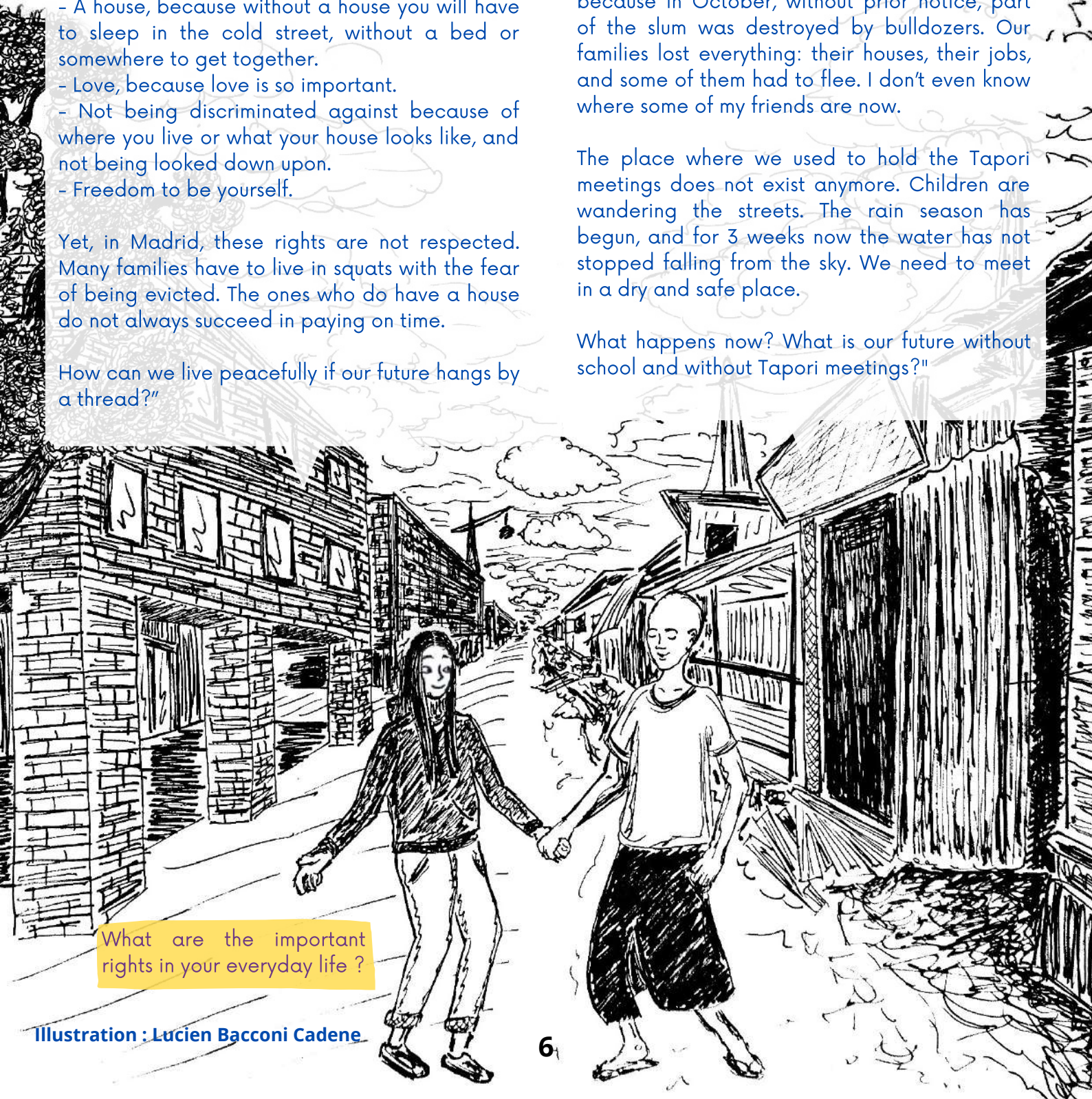
"Hello, my name is Eugene. I live in Kibera, a slum near Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. I agree with you, Lisbeth. You cannot have a good life if you do not have somewhere to get together with your family or friends.

My friends and I started to attend a Taporis group. We were unable to keep meeting up because in October, without prior notice, part of the slum was destroyed by bulldozers. Our families lost everything: their houses, their jobs, and some of them had to flee. I don't even know where some of my friends are now.

The place where we used to hold the Taporis meetings does not exist anymore. Children are wandering the streets. The rain season has begun, and for 3 weeks now the water has not stopped falling from the sky. We need to meet in a dry and safe place.

What happens now? What is our future without school and without Taporis meetings?"

What are the important rights in your everyday life ?





# October 17 News...

## United States of America



After making paper flowers in a pot representing the Earth, children from New Mexico shared their wishes :

"Recycle plastic so it wouldn't go in the ocean and the fish and sea animals wouldn't be extinct. Also, treat the flower the way you should treat your friends and family." **Fran**, 10.

"I would like nature never to stop, if you don't take care of it, it'll just end." **Vera**, 8.

## Guatemala

Children from the Lycée Julio Verne thought about ways to say no to extreme poverty. Their messages reached us through messenger birds :

"Together, we can change things." **Juan Ignacio**.

In Méry-Sur-Oise, two children reacted to the hummingbird story :

"The hummingbird is doing its share. It means that it does not do a lot but if we all do something, we can achieve a lot. As for the plastic continent- if no one threw garbage, it would not exist." **Jairo**.

"Perhaps every action in itself is not a lot. If there's only one person taking action, it's not much. But if 3 million people do something, we can change the world." **Teo**.



## France

## Algeria

The cultural center of Naciria invited the children to participate in an activity on the topic of social and environmental justice. Here is one of the responses :

"Global warming is one of the environmental problems of the planet that cannot be ignored, left out, or neglected because this problem surrounds us. We face it in our work, our factories, their company, our homes, and our streets. This crisis starts with a piece of paper that someone throws in the street and ends with nuclear waste. " **Dina Ait Ourab**.

## Democratic Republic of Congo

**Bukavu** : Tapori children from two groups visited disabled children at the Ek'abana center in order to do activities together. They met a little girl who had difficulties with fitting into a group. As every child has the right to smile, the Tapori invented ways to reach out to her. It was the first time she had ever played with other children.

**Mountain Library of Cibandirhwe** : The Tapori children visited two families. They helped the families to take care of their piece of land and their house. These families expressed their joy, as they did not have any neighbors to talk to within their community and this gesture allowed them to smile again.



# Welcome to Taponi

## Switzerland

"Hallo, ich heisse Blend. Ich bin 7 Jahre alt. Ich wünsche dir, dass du immer fröhlich sein kannst."

"Hello, my name is Blend. I am 7. I hope you can always be happy."

In 2020, the Taponi group of Rorschach, in Switzerland, began to organize its meetings. Sadly, they had to stop because of the health crisis but they continue the bird campaign through the holiday season. We look forward to receiving their drawings and messages.

## Thailand

This summer, children and teenagers met for a Taponi activity in Maetowo and Maepo, two villages in the northwestern mountains of Thailand, near the border of Burma. These children attend a boarding school there since their own families live too far away from school. Through games, they were able to meet, laugh and have a good time together.

"I live in Thailand and I am 12. My family includes my father, my mother, my grandmother and my younger sister. Our parents work hard so we can go to school. Even if our family does not have a lot of money, I am happy to keep on going to school. When we face difficulties, we cannot give up, we have to persevere. Best wishes." Woralluck



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