

## Rotaractors from Nicaragua upholding children's rights amidst COVID-19 pandemic

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[COVID-19](#) is changing our lives. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization estimates that more than one billion children are out of school or child care. Parents and caregivers are

exploring ways to work remotely or are unable to work, and may become unemployed. For the poorest of the poor, these challenges are even worse. It is unknown how long the situation will last. And for everyone, social distancing and enhanced hygiene practices seem to be the key to our health and safety.

This has serious implications for children.

Parents and children are living with increased stress, uncertainty and fear. And the biopsychosocial impact of the crisis can increase parenting stress and violence against children. As guidelines encourage social distancing, children are also becoming isolated and are losing their connection with the community which provided them support they may not have otherwise, not even at home. Thus, their risk of suffering violence, becoming homeless, not receiving appropriate physical and mental health care, and dropping out from school, among other consequences, is higher. All of these represent threats to children's rights. "Social distancing is essential to defeat this pandemic, however, we should be very mindful of the consequences of social isolation," said Dr. Abraham Salinas-Miranda, director of the Harrell Center for the Study of Family Violence at the University of South Florida.



But times of hardship can also allow for creative opportunity: to build stronger relationships with our children and help promote their rights. And to this end, in celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 60th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the 30th Anniversary of the Convention about the Rights of the Child, Rotaractors from the Rotaract Club of León-Nicaragua are helping increase awareness about the rights of children through the educational campaign “[A treaty for good treatment.](#)”

This campaign is a symbolic “vaccination” through which children, their parents, school staff and community members are empowered with knowledge about the rights of the child. They are taught what the rights are, and how to actively promote and protect them in a child’s life on a daily basis and in a person-centered way. The goal is to create awareness about the [Rights of the Child](#), which include the right to health, to a family, to education, to an identity, and the right to be protected from violence, among others.

The project was initially done in-person at children’s schools, and when the COVID-19 pandemic began, we strengthened our efforts to become even more united and have decided that we will continue the campaign online. This way, we will continue contributing towards the development of supportive environments for children, because, as Dr. Abraham Salinas-Miranda says, “support systems and community play an important role to help prevent violence, and uphold children’s rights, even if virtually.”

COVID-19 is not the first virus to threaten humanity, and this is not the first pandemic either. We are committed to contribute to the victory of humankind over this global threat, by helping strengthen families and our community through the promotion of the rights of children, our future generation.

If you or your club are interested in participating in this campaign, please [contact](#) Dr. Imelda Mercedes Medina.