

# A RIVER FOR EVERYONE

TEXT BY MARÍA BARANDA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JUAN GEDOVIVUS





MARÍA BARANDA was born in Mexico City. She is a poet, storyteller, and translator. She studied psychology at UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico). Her work has been translated into English, French, Lithuanian, and German. She has contributed to publications such as *Casa del Tiempo*, *La Gaceta del FCE*, as well as magazines *Revista de la Universidad de México* and *Vuelta*.

María Baranda was a recipient of the FONCA (Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes) scholarship in the Young Creators program for poetry in 1990 and 1995, and the FONCA/Rockefeller scholarship for essay writing in 1997. She was a member of SNCA (Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte) from 1999 to 2005. She has received multiple awards and recognition for her work, including the Premio Nacional de Poesía Efraín Huerta 1995 for *Los memoriosos*, Premio Iberoamericano de Poesía Villa de Madrid, Spain, in 1998 for *Moradas imposibles*, Premio Castillo de la Lectura 2001 for *Tulia y la tecla mágica*, Premio Nacional de Poesía Aguascalientes 2003 for *Dylan y las ballenas*, Premio El Barco de Vapor 2003 for *Silena y la caja de secretos*, Premio Castillo de Lectura 2004 for *Ángela en el cielo de Saturno*, Premio FILIJ de Cuento para Niños 2004 for *Un lugar en el mundo*, the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Honor List 2008 for *Marte y las princesas voladoras*, and *The White Ravens* in 2008 for *Hago de voz un cuerpo*.

A RIVER  
FOR EVERYONE

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### A RIVER FOR EVERYONE

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# A RIVER FOR EVERYONE

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Illustrations by Juan Gedovius



# PRESENTATION

As part of the **Árbol** collection, *A River for Everyone* is a literary proposal that the Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE, National Electoral Institute) has made available for children, with the goal of promoting an interest in reading with texts that introduce them to topics of civic formation and democratic values.

This publication is part of the National Civic Culture Strategy 2017-2023, which seeks to contribute to the strengthening of our civic culture, recognizing that we need to make an impact on the public sphere through the empowerment of citizen participation.

This volume offers children's communities throughout the country the possibility of approaching the basic principles of social organization. We have chosen a fictional story in order to explore the experience of life in society and, therefore, of the much-needed construction of citizenship. The characters that converge in this story choose to formulate their own laws in the face of the various dilemmas that arise while living together in a common space.

With this publication, particularly aimed at preschool children, we want to celebrate that approximately one hundred years ago, in February 1917, Mexico's Magna Carta was promulgated. The Magna Carta is the highest law that governs us and regulates our living together, that guarantees our rights and outlines our obligations as Mexicans. In this text by María Baranda, illustrated by Juan Gedovius, the characters will help the readers take a journey through our individual rights established in Chapter I of the Constitution of the United Mexican States. The characters, represented by various animals, address the right to education, the right to have a fair job, the right to freedom of expression and religion, and the right to move freely through the national territory in their process of community legislation.

Parents and teachers will find in this small literary work a very valuable tool to accompany children in their knowledge of individual rights and in their reflection on the validity and relevance of individual rights in our daily lives.

This publication is, above all, an invitation to read for pleasure. Carefully designed for the youngest children, the story is a very pleasant and playful opportunity for them to learn about the fundamental content of our Mexican Constitution.



For a long time, a river full of fish fed and made the bears living on its banks very happy, until one day a group of hungry wolves came from the mountains in search of food. They were desperate, and they began to attack the bears to take their food.

In the face of danger, the bears growled and showed their sharp claws.

The bear chief warned the invaders:

"From here to there, past the river, is our territory, and no one, none of you, will be able to cross it."

"Very well," answered the wolf chief, "but all the fish are ours."

"No way, they are our food," replied the bear.

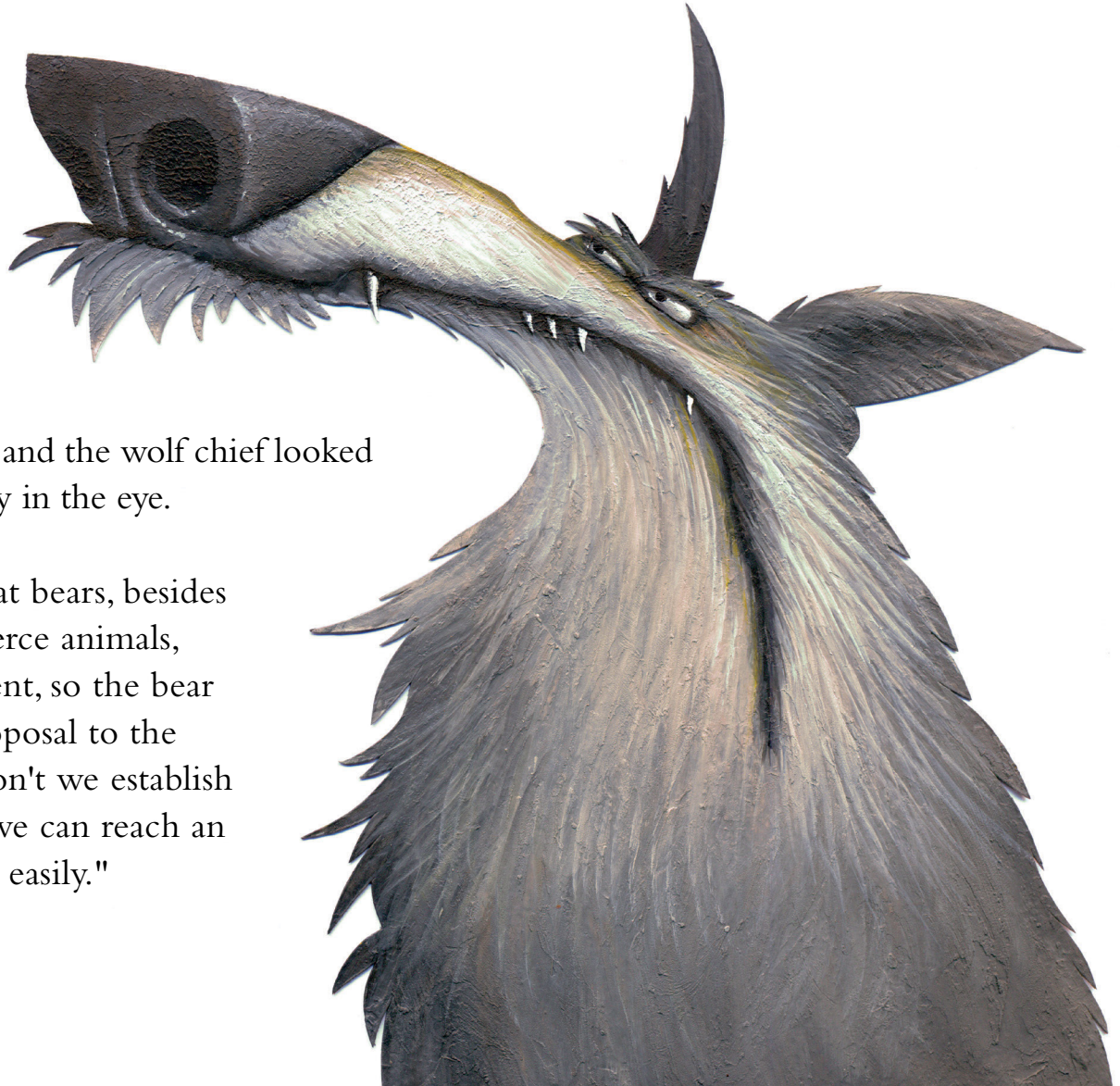
"If we can't eat bears, we'll have to feed on fish," threatened the wolf.



There was a long silence. The bear knew that if he did not allow the wolves fish, his family would be eaten, but at the same time he could not allow the wolves to feed on what belonged to the bears.

The wolf thought that if they were not allowed to eat fish, they should immediately attack the bears.

It is known that wolves are animals that protect their family and go to great lengths to take care of their cubs.



The bear chief and the wolf chief looked each other closely in the eye.

It is known that bears, besides being big and fierce animals, are very intelligent, so the bear chief made a proposal to the wolves: "Why don't we establish laws? That way we can reach an agreement more easily."

"Laws? What are laws?," answered the wolf.

"Laws are rules that we all respect and that help us live together well and in peace. This afternoon several animals will talk about our laws so that no one forgets them. You can come," he said, while he pointed his paw toward the forest.

The wolf was curious to see what it was all about and accepted the proposal, thinking that maybe he could find the solution to feed his family.

However, the bear added:

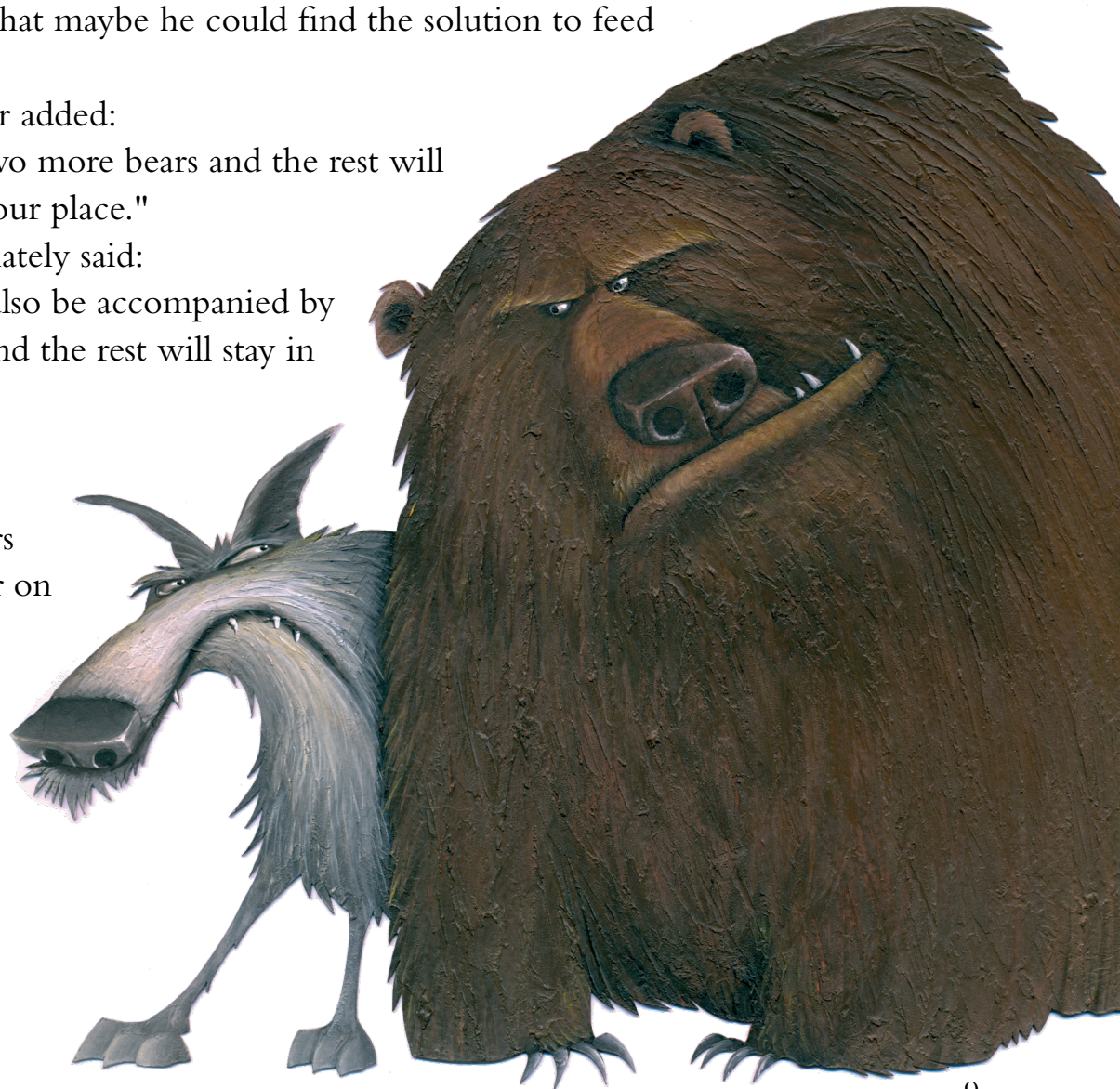
"I will go with two more bears and the rest will stay to watch over our place."

The wolf immediately said:

"All right, I will also be accompanied by two more wolves and the rest will stay in their positions."

In the afternoon, the wolves and bears followed each other on the road. They did not speak, but they stayed on guard.

They kept a close eye on each other.



When they reached the forest, they discovered that the representatives of many species had arrived: a raccoon, a hummingbird, an owl, a snake, a bobcat, a butterfly, a coyote, a queen bee, a snail, a deer, a weasel, a ladybug, a puma and a bat. They were all chatting or just lying down calmly.



Suddenly, the squirrel arrived and sternly said:

"Today we must review our laws because there have been some problems."

The puma had raised his paw to speak:

"I want to read what we already have," he said while he cleared his throat.

"Go ahead," said the squirrel.

The puma began to read sternly:

"1. Here, in this forest, that is, in our territory, we all have the same rights, and even if our ideas and opinions are different, we must all be accepted as we are."

The frog took a huge leap and said:

"I have problems with the owl because he won't let me jump from his tree."

Whispering started to spread, but the squirrel silenced it:

"Complaints, frog, go last."

The puma continued:

"2. No one may use another animal for work without the corresponding pay, that is, slavery is forbidden."

"Oh, what a blessing!," said the little snail.

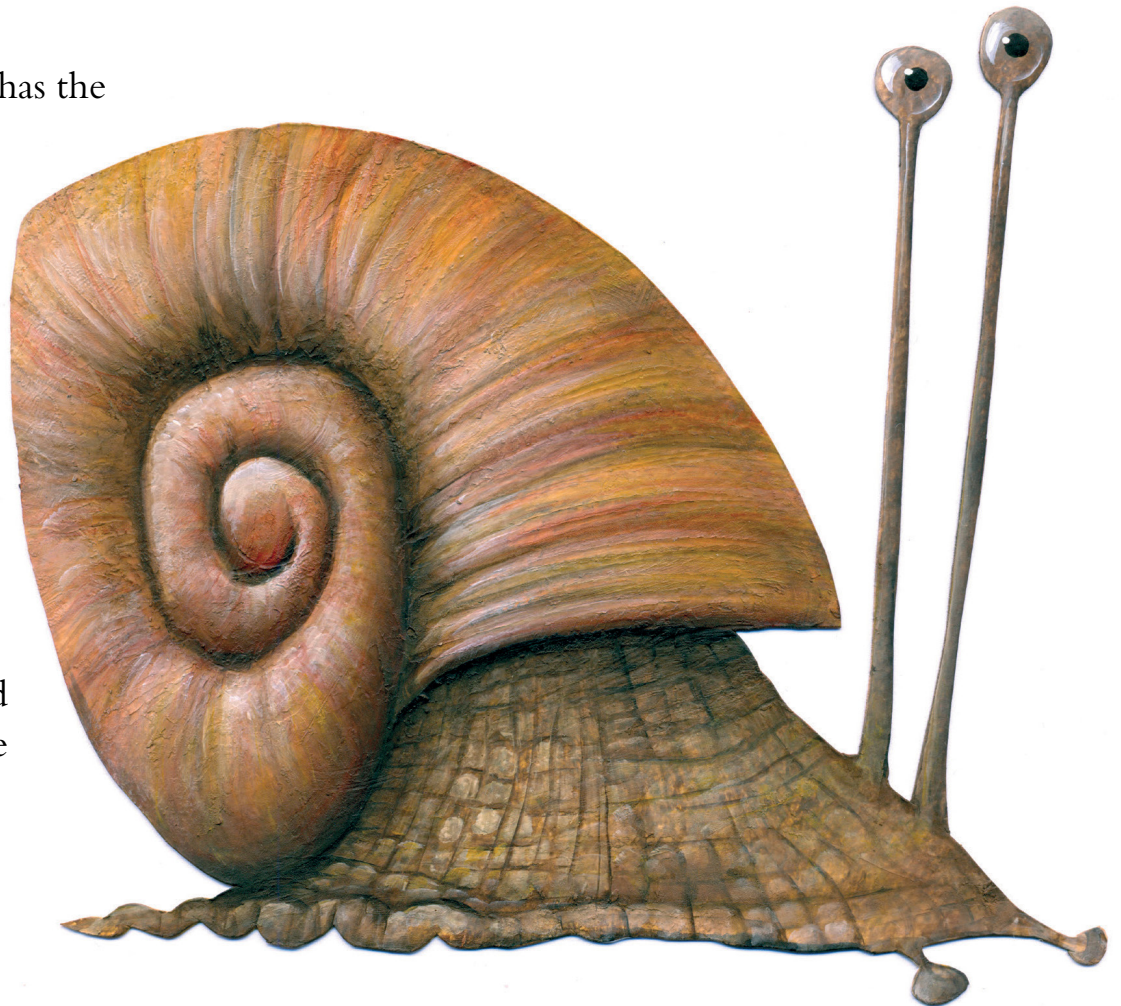


"3. Although we all come from different backgrounds and we have different colors, some with hair and some without, some with legs and others with wings, some with a mustache and others with nothing, we are all the same."

Here the animals turned to look at each other because they knew they were all very different from each other, but that rule somehow made them feel like brothers.

The wolves didn't understand much, especially since no animal interrupted to say they didn't agree.

"4. Everyone here has the right to learn more, to have knowledge of the dangerous places, to recognize strange sounds, to have others explain how to protect ourselves from danger. That is, to be educated in the matters of the forest, the river, the sky, and anything that anyone could want."



At that moment the wolf chief raised his ears and the bear chief did the same. It was a sign that they both agreed on that.

"5. When something important happens we should all be informed. The hummingbird will be in charge of repeating the news every day."

The hummingbird, of course, looked very happy and proud.

"6. We can have any kind of party or event we want: races, somersaults, jumping from the tallest tree and even swimming in the river, anything we want."

Here the bear chief stood up and with a loud voice said:  
"I don't like this law. The river is ours. And no one can go in there."



All the animals turned to look at him. But no one said anything, except the coyote:

"This river belongs to all of us, to everyone who lives here. If you don't like it, you can go somewhere else and look for another river."

"Very well," replied the bear chief.

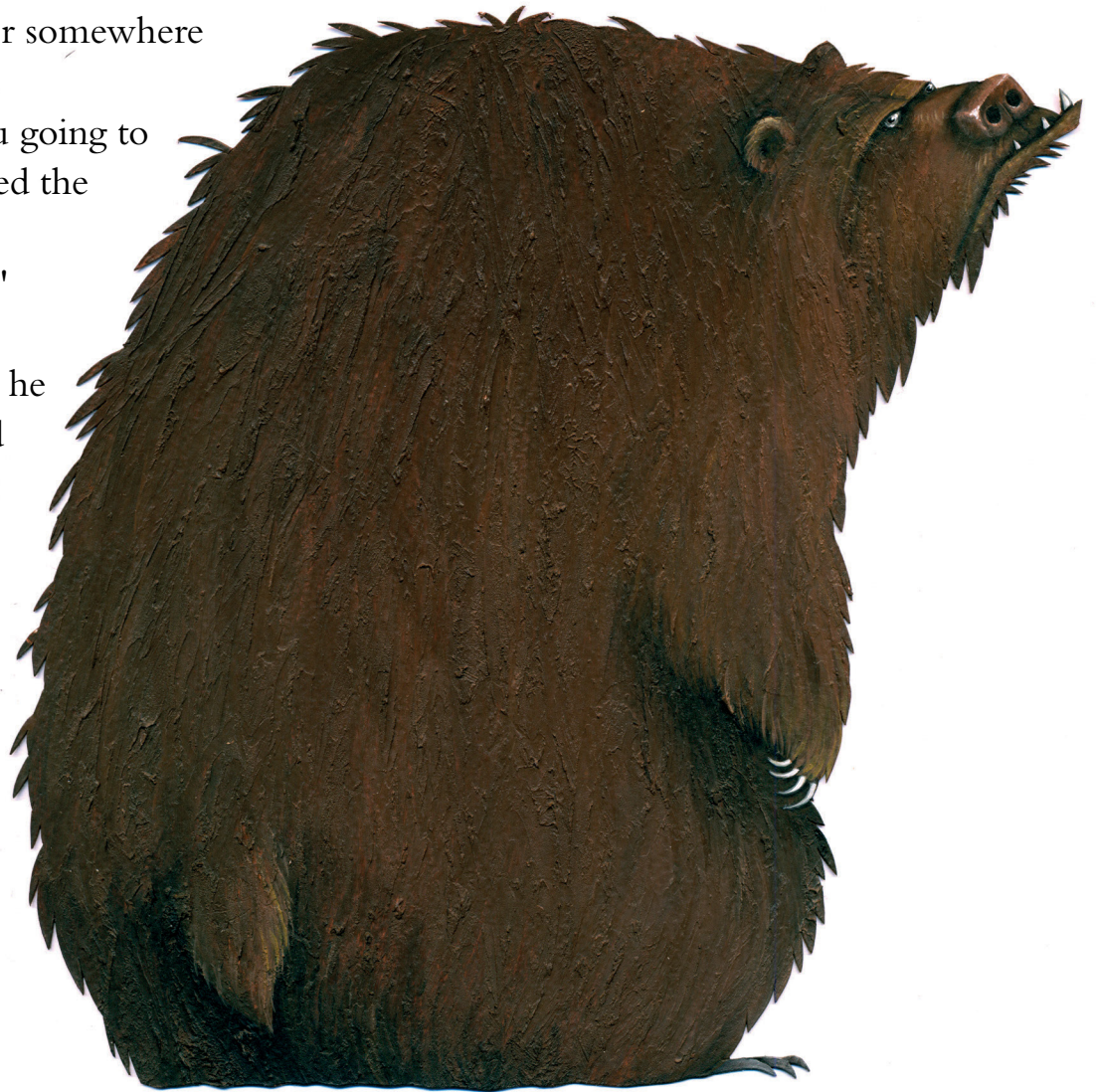
"We'll take the river somewhere else."

"And how are you going to take the river?," asked the wolf, stunned.

"With your help," replied the bear.

And very proudly he turned to leave. And off he went. The other two bears and the wolves followed him.

The animals were astonished, speechless, not even knowing what to say.



When they had left, the puma said:

"7. And finally, I remind you that we all have to take care of our cubs, to teach them everything we can so that they live well and are happy, so they learn to respect the rules that we have read."

The animals shouted:

"Humhum!" at the same time, which meant they agreed.

Then they went over the matter of the frog and the owl. The ladybug also complained about the queen bee and her buzzing, the raccoon about the bat pulling his ears at night, the deer about the snake and her bad manners in crossing the meadow, and an endless number of other complaints. But in the end, they all ate a delicious cake and celebrated that they were so happy there.



However, the squirrel commented to the coyote and puma how concerned she was about the attitudes of the bears and wolves.

"Let them try to take the river," smiled the coyote. "After a few days they will either leave or ask us for help."

"Help to move the river?," asked the puma.

"No, that's impossible, help to try to live like us," answered the coyote, wagging his tail.

"Well, I guess it couldn't have worked out any better," added the squirrel.

"What do you mean?," the puma wanted to know.

"I mean, together they will have to solve a problem and together they will have to get along, at least in that respect."

In the distance they could see the path that led to the river, and there they could see very clearly that two groups, one of bears and the other of wolves, were talking and becoming closer and closer friends.





TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS



# Individual Rights

The Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (Political Constitution of the United Mexican States) should matter to all of us because its articles have to do with our everyday lives. It is our highest law, establishing the rights and obligations of everyone living within the national territory. Our Constitution is made up of 136 articles, and the First Title establishes the fundamental rights and obligations regarding freedom, security and equality of all Mexicans: our individual rights.

In principle, the story of *A River for Everyone* shows, through the bear's words, the need for laws that regulate the interaction and coexistence of all members of the community. In the same way, at different moments of the story, the readers will be able to identify the individual rights that Mexican children should know from an early age, since they have an impact on their daily lives.



1. Everyone is entitled to human rights, as well as the individual rights to protect them. Therefore, slavery and discrimination based on race, religion, disability, difference of opinion and any other cause that violates human dignity and freedom is prohibited.

In our story, the above is clearly reflected when the puma reads the laws in force in the forest and specifies that in their territory, all animals have the same rights and, even though they may have different ideas and opinions, all must be accepted.



2. This Nation is pluricultural because it is sustained from its origins by diverse indigenous peoples who are recognized as having the right to satisfy their needs and the right to autonomy and self-determination.

Upon arriving at the forest, the bears and wolves discovered that the meeting would be attended by representatives of different species and that, although physically they had different characteristics, they were all considered to be equal.



3. Education is a right for all.

In the story it is stated that all animals have the right to learn more and to be educated in different topics.

4. Everyone has the right to fair labor.

In the animal community, no one could use another to perform work without the corresponding pay, and slavery is forbidden.



5. We have the right to express ourselves and to be informed of matters that concern everyone.

On the one hand, at the meeting, all the animals had the opportunity to express their opinions and problems, and on the other hand, the hummingbird was in charge of communicating the most important events to the inhabitants of the territory.

6. We have the right to associate freely,  
to meet with others if the objectives are within the law.

The laws of the forest authorized its inhabitants to carry out different activities without affecting the rights of others.



7. We can move freely throughout the national territory.

The bear didn't agree with other animals entering the river, so he had to move away with the wolf when the coyote explained to him that the river belonged to all those who lived there.



8. It is the obligation of all Mexicans to encourage children to go to school because they have the right to education; to participate in the civic acts of the community; to contribute to the expenses that are generated to organize life in community; to respect the rules and laws that are established in order to live together.

At the end of the meeting, the puma reminded the attendees of their obligation to take care of their cubs; to teach them as much as possible so that they can live well, be happy, and respect the rules of their community.





It will be very important to listen to the doubts and opinions of the children, as well as the experiences they have lived in relation to their rights, both at school and in their community. We hope that the children and their families enjoy this book and that it contributes to their formation as citizens.



*A RIVER FOR EVERYONE*

The Bembo Std font family was used.



JUAN GEDOVIOUS is a musician, storyteller, and illustrator. He was born in Mexico City in 1974. Being self-taught, he has dedicated the majority of his work to illustrating books for children and young adults, which has meant him awards and honorable mentions. His artwork has been featured in textbooks, magazines, posters, album covers, brochures, manuals, museum displays, stage designs, murals, and large-scale reproductions. He has participated in numerous exhibitions both nationally and internationally.



*A River for Everyone* brings children closer to the individual guarantees established in our Political Constitution in a fun way, through the story of the vicissitudes and difficulties that a group of animals face to live together in a fair and harmonious way.

Since the subject of the individual guarantees included in Mexico's Political Constitution is often difficult for children to assimilate, this book from the **Árbol** Collection provides elements not only to initiate them in their understanding, but also to guide them in their interaction with their environment and thus contribute to the promotion of a culture of citizenship.

The last pages of the book include a section with suggestions to encourage reflection and dialogue between adults and children about individual rights and obligations and their impact on daily life.