

# **ECHOES OF PROTECTION:** Comprehensive care and advocacy for vulnerable children and adults in the church.

**EXECUTIVE REPORT**

**2025**



Dados da Catalogação na Publicação  
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná  
Sistema Integrado de Bibliotecas – SIBI/PUCPR  
Biblioteca Central

E96  
2025

Executive report : Echoes of Protection : comprehensive care and advocacy for  
vulnerable children and adults in the Church / project coordination: Bárbara Pimpão  
Ferreira, José André de Azevedo ; [authorship]: Rivaldo Dionizio Cândido. Curitiba :  
[s.n.], 2025.  
1 arquivo online (45 p.) : il.

Publicação digital (e-book) no formato PDF  
Bibliografia: p. 39-42  
ISBN: 978-65-5385-189-4

1. Populações vulneráveis. 2. Direitos das crianças. 3. Direitos dos adolescentes.  
4. Violência em crianças. 5. Violência – Aspectos religiosos – Igreja Católica.  
I. Ferreira, Bárbara Pimpão. II. Azevedo, José André. III. Cândido, Rivaldo Dionizio.  
IV. Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná. V. Pontifícia Universidade Católica do  
Rio Grande do Sul. VI. Igreja Católica. Diocese de São José dos Pinhais (PR).

CDD 20. ed. – 361

Bibliotecária: Luci Eduarda Wielganczuk – CRB 9/1118

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Núcleo Lux Mundi

#### **Funder**

Porticus Latin America Eireli

Porticus is a philanthropic organization that aims to contribute to a just and sustainable future in which human dignity flourishes. The organization works with local and global partners in search of systemic change and solutions in four areas: environment, civil society, education and faith communities.

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## PRESENTATION

The “ECOSYSTEM FOR THE DEFENSE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDHOOD AND VULNERABLE PERSONS IN ECCLESIAL AND CIVIL SCOPES” project is an initiative carried out by the Marist Center for the Defense of Children (CMDI), Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná (PUCPR), Diocese of São José dos Pinhais, and Porticus Latin America Eireli, in partnership with Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) and with the support of Núcleo Lux Mundi<sup>1</sup> (NLM), Província Marista Brasil Centro-Sul e Farol 1817. In order to consolidate knowledge about the defense and protection ecosystem in the fight against violence against children, adolescents and vulnerable people, through continuous training and communication focused on prevention, its development is organized into two initiatives: research and communication. The Project has its own visual identity and specific disclosure, such as **“Echoes of Protection: Integral Care and Defense of Children”<sup>2</sup>**

The research is divided into three axes and their specific reports:

1. field research on child protection in the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais (Volume I): investigate how the protection ecosystem is structured; map the profile and knowledge of religious and lay people who participate in the Diocese on child and adolescent protection policies;
2. mapping the child and adolescent protection network (Volume II): mapping the protection network; identifying opportunities and potential for strengthening the protection policy in the territory of the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais;
3. survey of friendly publications on child protection carried out by the Catholic Church in Brazil and Latin America (Volume III): list the elements of friendly communication, mapping of publications on prevention of violence against children and adolescents in the Church in Brazil and Latin America, analysis of materials mapped based on criteria of friendly communication.

The report proposes recommendations and strategies for qualifying training processes, listening, investigation and referral, relationship with the territory and use of clear and friendly communication.

<sup>1</sup> Núcleo Lux Mundi is an initiative of the Conference of Religious of Brazil (CRB), in partnership with the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), created in 2020, to strengthen the protection of children, adolescents and vulnerable adults within the scope of the Catholic Church in Brazil. To learn more visit the website: <https://nucleoluxmundi.crbnacional.org.br/>

<sup>2</sup> To learn more visit the website: <https://centrodedefesa.org.br/projeto/ecosdeprotecao/>

The research has a complementary character, bringing results that strengthen the mission of the Church in promoting safe environments for children and adolescents and vulnerable adults to have their faith experience. This is the strength of the ecosystem, an environment formed by elements that interact in a balanced way and are strengthened in updating and paying attention to the identified development needs and opportunities. The research presented in three volumes contributes to the joint and articulated work in a network connecting actions, institutions and people in the promotion of comprehensive care, defense and promotion of the rights of children, adolescents and vulnerable adults.

Enjoy your reading!

Br. Valdir Gugiel  
Executive director

**Marist Center for the Defense of Children**

## INSTITUTIONAL WORD

As we flip through the pages of this report, we are invited to listen to the echoes of a hope that is renewed with each gesture of care, with each alliance signed for the sake of childhoods. The “Echoes of Protection” project is more than a compendium of data and analysis: it is the living testimony that the protection of children and adolescents is born from the encounter between science, faith and collective commitment.

In this ecosystem, each institution, each leadership, each person is like a tree that, by putting down deep roots in the fertile land of solidarity, sustains the forest of integral protection. PUCPR, alongside partners such as Center for the Defense of Children, PUCRS, Núcleo Lux Mundi, Diocese of São José dos Pinhais and Porticus, reaffirms its mission to promote safe environments where the dignity and rights of children flourish.

The research gathered here reveals not only challenges, but also paths: it shows that violence prevention requires open dialogue, ongoing training and collaborative networks that cross institutional boundaries. Every data, every voice heard, every mapped practice is an invitation to action, to sensitive listening and to the construction of fairer and more effective public policies.

May this report inspire students, religious, pastoral leaders, and the entire community to be thoughtful and creative guardians of care. May we, together, broaden the horizons of protection, weaving a network where no child or adolescent is on the margins of affection, justice and hope.

Thus, we continue to echo the call to shared responsibility. Enjoy your reading!

Br. Rogério Renato Mateucci  
Rector  
**Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná/PUCPR**

## INSTITUTIONAL WORD

Our Lord Jesus Christ calls each of the faithful to be a shining example of virtue, integrity, and holiness.

*(Vos estis lux mundi, 2023)*

As pastor of the particular Church of São José dos Pinhais, I recognize with deep gratitude the path we have traveled together in the Echoes of Protection project. I praise God, who has constantly illuminated His Church with the light necessary for discernment. I acknowledge with appreciation the institutions that have walked with us in this mission. And I am especially grateful to our communities, which have embraced with sensitivity and responsibility this urgent call to a culture of care and attentive listening.

The protection of children, adolescents and people in vulnerable situations is an essential part of the Gospel. Jesus taught us, with gentleness and firmness: "Whoever welcomes one of these little ones in my name welcomes me" (Mk 9:37), and warned: "Whoever causes one of these little ones to stumble..." (Mt 18:6). To protect is, therefore, to welcome Christ Himself and to take seriously the Gospel responsibility of caring for every life.

Since 2024, when we started this path with the Marist Center for the Defense of Children, PUCPR, PUCRS, Núcleo Lux Mundi and Porticus, we have understood that this project is not just a research, but a true process of pastoral conversion. It requires listening, self-criticism, training and courage. That asks us for transparency, responsibility and maturity. That helps us to look inward with truth, and outward with sensitivity, recognizing that the evangelizing mission is only authentic when it is born of safe environments and healthy relationships.

What this report presents is the result of an intense journey, lived with seriousness and a spirit of communion. They are territorial analyses, surveys of the safety net, community listening, studies on friendly communication and mappings that allow us to see clearly both our potentialities and our weaknesses. This material offers us a realistic and, at the same time, inspiring diagnosis: it points out paths, indicates urgencies and reveals possibilities for growth.

This is not a conclusion, but a starting point for a synodal path in which we learn to walk together, discern together and assume together the mission of promoting truly safe environments. Now, we are called to transform knowledge into pastoral practice, information into formative processes, perceptions into concrete protocols. The "Echoes of Protection" project will continue with us as

a permanent reference, helping us to mature prevention policies, promote safe environments and cultivate an ecclesial culture in which no vulnerable life is neglected or made invisible.

I extend my gratitude to the academic and pastoral teams, the priests, deacons, religious men and women, lay leaders, catechists, and collaborators who contributed to this process. May every step taken help us to be an increasingly fraternal, mature and responsible Church.

I ask that this report be read not as a technical document, but as a call from the Spirit. An invitation to community conversion. A renewed commitment to life.

May Saint Joseph, silent and faithful guardian, accompany us in this mission. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of tenderness and care, help us build a Church where every child is loved, respected, and protected.

With my blessing and esteem,

Bishop Celso Antônio Marchiori  
**Diocesan Bishop of São José dos Pinhais**

## INSTITUTIONAL WORD

The commitment to the integral protection of childhoods is one of the most beautiful expressions of the educational and evangelizing mission of the Marist charism. Caring for children, adolescents and vulnerable people, in all the spaces where we are present, is to concretely assume the defense of human dignity and the construction of a culture of protection and care. "*Echoes of Protection*" project, developed by the Marist Center for the Defense of Children, in partnership with Marist Universities and ecclesial and civil institutions, represents a significant contribution to this path of creative fidelity to the Gospel and to our educational tradition.

Inspired by this conviction, "*Echoes of Protection: Integral Care and Defense of Children*" project reaffirms the commitment to cooperate with the Church in building a culture of protection and co-responsibility. Based on listening and research, advocacy and training actions, this work translates Pope Francis' call for a "Samaritan Church" capable of caring for human wounds and generating safe spaces into practice.

The mapping of safety nets and the study on communication friendly to childhood and adolescence reveal the strength of the dialogue between faith and science. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the joint action between researchers and students from PUCRS and PUCPR in the work conducted throughout 2025. The conclusions reached indicate that the prevention of violence requires articulation between public policies, educational institutions and ecclesial communities. This path is in line with the *Apostolic Letter Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (2019), which calls on the entire Church to implement effective mechanisms of prevention, acceptance and accountability.

Before the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te*, by the Holy Father Leo XIV, on love for the poor, emphasizes that it is necessary to reaffirm that the Church, inspired by the example of the Master who taught the people divine and human truths, [...] has taken on the mission of forming children and young people—especially the poorest—in truth and in love. And this high mission implies the aforementioned duty of protection, the central object of this study.

The Marist Center for the Promotion of the Rights of Children and Adolescents understands that evangelizing is also protecting. Every datum, every testimony, and every initiative described in these reports are seeds of the Kingdom, sown on the fruitful ground of hope. The Marist educational mission, illuminated by the

spirituality of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, invites us to see in each child the face of Jesus, and to transform our environments into spaces of love, care and justice.

May this publication inspire the whole Church and society to take up with renewed ardor the commitment to promote the life and dignity of childhoods. May the Spirit of the Lord, who makes all things new, continue to guide us in the task of building, together, a culture of care, tenderness, and protection.

Our best regards,

Prof. Dr. Br. Sandro André Bobrzyk  
Rector of the Law School of PUCRS

**Coordinator of the Marist Center for the Promotion  
of the Rights of Children and Adolescents - PUCRS**

## INSTITUTIONAL WORD

The integral protection of children, adolescents and vulnerable adults is, above all, a call of love. An ethical, human and community commitment that invites us to walk together, adding knowledge, responsibilities and hopes. This executive report brings together the results of the research of the project "Echoes of Protection: comprehensive care and defense of childhoods", the result of the partnership between the organizations involved here, united by the desire to strengthen policies and practices to prevent violence.

The information gathered broadens our view of the realities experienced by children and adolescents and helps to improve the mechanisms of care and protection. The data clearly and sensitively show the importance of integrated action: institutions, support networks and professionals united in the defense of human rights and in the construction of truly safe and welcoming environments.

Initiatives like this from CMDI build an ecosystem of care, in which each organization offers, with dedication and complementarity, contributions to responsible, humane and effective practices.

This work also echoes the call for profound ethical and cultural transformation. The Church has recalled that transparency, truth and courage are essential so that painful situations do not recur. Pope Francis, in the Motu Proprio *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (2023), underlines that the prevention of abuse is born of a continuous and sincere conversion of the heart, manifested in concrete actions that prevent and face this evil. It is from this spiritual source that the commitment of the institutions involved in promoting a culture of care, protection and welcome springs.

This report is therefore more than a data set: it is a loving step on a journey that requires vigilance, commitment and cooperation. May his conclusions further strengthen the path already taken and remind us that protecting children, adolescents and vulnerable adults is everyone's mission — and it begins, in a simple and profound way, in each of us.

I also wish to express with gratitude the inspiration I find in the ministry of Pope Francis. His humility, his tenderness towards the weakest and his words always full of hope and love illuminate this path. Among his many messages, I especially keep the memory of his advice, as beautiful as it is true, attributed to St. Teresa of Calcutta: "Where to begin? With you and with me." It is with

this light that we follow, with an open and trusting heart, firm in the mission of promoting prevention, care and responsibility — concrete steps of the love of God living among us, in the search for safe relationships, safe environments and safe processes.

Eliane De Carli  
Coordinator  
**Núcleo Lux Mundi**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The human rights of children, adolescents and people in vulnerable situations always occupy a place on the political agenda, academic research and other state institutions. In an action for the defense and protection of their rights, it is sought to establish national laws and international commitments demarcating an ethical commitment for the full development of children and adolescents. Examples are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1945) to which Brazil is a signatory; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) ratified by Brazil; the Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988), specifically art. 277; the Child and Adolescent Statute (Law No. 8.069/1990) and other legislation that were defined in response to emerging needs and improvement of the legal system to ensure the absolute priority of children and adolescents in the country.

In the ecclesial sphere, the protection of the most vulnerable is treated under the mission of safeguarding<sup>3</sup>. In 2001, Pope John Paul II issued the Apostolic Letter *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela* (John Paul II, 2001), which established norms for addressing the most serious offenses committed by clerics. The pontificate of Benedict XVI, with the Pastoral Letter to the Catholics in Ireland (Benedict XVI, 2010) addressing cases of abuse by members of the Church in Ireland, expressed his closeness to the victims and, furthermore, proposed a path of healing, renewal, and reparation. More recently, Pope Francis has carried forward the path of his predecessors with the establishment of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and the Apostolic Letter *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (Francis, 2023), which are decisive for promoting a culture of care. The path undertaken by the Church demonstrates its ongoing concern for the protection of children, adolescents, and vulnerable adults<sup>4</sup>.

Consolidating a “culture of care” in the ecclesial context requires attention to local cultural specificities, including the manifestation of faith; the observance of state legislation established for the prevention, protection and defense of the rights of children and adolescents; the establishment of adequate communication

3 The term “tutela” has a double connotation relevant in the ecclesial and legal context. In the scope of theology and pastoral care, the Church uses “tutela (safeguarding)” in a broad sense, referring to the mission of spiritual and social protection and care of the most vulnerable, according to the evangelical commandment of charity. In Brazilian law, “tutela (guardianship)” assumes a specific technical-legal meaning, linked to the legal protection of civilly incapable persons or the defense of rights before the State. Thus, its adoption in the ecclesial context must be understood in a pastoral and ethical key, without being confused with the restricted use of civil law.

4 The Church understands by vulnerable adult, “any person in a state of illness, physical or mental disability, or deprivation of personal freedom that in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or want and, in any case, to resist the offense” (VELM, 2023). In the field of Human Rights, the correct name to refer to individuals or groups whose rights are violated or weakened is “person in a situation of vulnerability”, however, because it is a research on the ecclesial scope, it was decided to use the canonical term.



to address the issue, exalting the dignity of the person. Dialogue between the Church and the State and civil society, proximity to families and the formation of Catholic leaders, pastoral workers, priests and religious is what can ensure safe and welcoming environments for children, adolescents and vulnerable adults to make their journey of faith.

In this context, the project "Ecosystem for the Defense and Protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons in the Ecclesial and Civil Scope" is constituted, known as Echoes of Protection, with communication initiatives on the protection of children and adolescents for the entire Church of Brazil and the development of three researches on protection in the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais and friendly communication in the Church of Brazil and Latin America.

The first was a field research on the protection of children in the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais that aimed to investigate the perceptions, practices and needs of priests, religious and lay people in relation to the prevention of sexual violence against children and adolescents, subsidizing training strategies and more effective protection policies. To this end, it used the application of a questionnaire and the realization of a focus group, being possible to collect the perceptions and needs of the Diocese to strengthen a culture of care, and to face challenges related to the dissemination of information, the overcoming of cultural barriers and the consolidation of permanent training processes.

The second survey mapped the child and adolescent protection network of the fourteen municipalities that make up the territory of the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais. The study detailed the functioning of the public facilities that make up the network of each municipality, focusing on the areas of Social Assistance, Public Security, Justice and Health. In addition to identifying the services available and their forms of action, the research points to possibilities of coalition between the public service units and the ecclesiastical instances of the territory, aiming to strengthen the protection network through collaborative, integrated and territorially contextualized actions.

The third survey mapped communication materials on protecting children and adolescents from sexual violence published by the Church, analyzing them based on friendly communication. Divided into two phases, it carried out an integrative review on friendly communication and mapped the publications of the websites of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America and the archdioceses and dioceses of Brazil. The results show the existence of good communication practices aimed at preventing violence, in addition to emphasizing the importance of expanding



and disseminating sensitive and accessible communication approaches by the Church when dealing with the subject.

Thus, this report assumes not only the role of diagnosis, but also of support for decision-making and the strengthening of institutional, formative and pastoral policies. It aims to be an instrument of reflection, support and social and community transformation, nurturing the itineraries of continuous formation and construction of a Church - and a society - increasingly aware of its responsibility, transparent and proactive in defending the rights of children and adolescents and life.





## 2. CHILD PROTECTION IN THE DIOCESE OF SÃO JOSÉ DOS PINHAIS

### 2.1 Objective

Contribute to the promotion of safe environments in the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais, identifying perceptions, practices and needs of priests, religious and lay people in relation to the prevention of sexual violence against children and adolescents and vulnerable adults, in order to support effective educational strategies and protection policies.

### 2.2 Project path

This study, conducted by Marcio Luiz Fernandes, Caroline Filla Rosaneli and Kathleen Vieira (2025a), is characterized as a descriptive and analytical research with a quantitative and qualitative approach that is divided into two stages, namely: application of an online questionnaire and holding a focus group, duly approved by the Research Ethics Committee of PUCPR (Certificate of Presentation of Ethical Appreciation – CAAE: 86778825.5.0000.0020).

The questionnaire with 19 questions related to the protection of children, adolescents and vulnerable adults in both the civil and ecclesial spheres was applied to people with ties to the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais – PR, totaling 62 participants.

The Focus Group was conducted online, lasting 1 hour and 40 minutes, and included the participation of eight people. The activity followed a structured script with questions designed to deepen participants' perceptions regarding the protection of children and adolescents from violence, identifying beliefs, principles and values, as well as the specific needs and potentialities of the Diocese.



## 2.3 Results

### Profile of the participating audience

**56%**

» Predominance of individuals between 40 and 59 years.

**61%**

» Predominance of women.

**75%**

» They predominantly identify themselves as White;

Most of the participants develop their pastoral activities in São José dos Pinhais (35%), reflecting the central role of the municipality as the headquarters and main religious pole of the Diocese; however, there is also a relevant performance in Araucária (16%) and Piraquara (11%), both officially included in the diocesan jurisdiction; Em relação ao vínculo com a Igreja, a maior parte dos respondentes afirmou ser catequistas (41%), seguindo de padres (16%) e seminaristas (9%).

Regarding their connection with the Church, most respondents reported being catechists (41%), followed by priests (16%) and seminarians (9%).

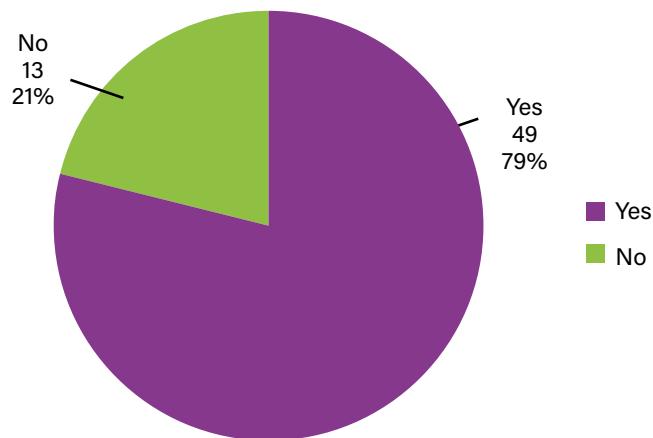
Most respondents were involved in pastoral activities, and 55% have been in the same role for more than five years, and 39% of this group have been for more than 10 years.



## Working with children and adolescents

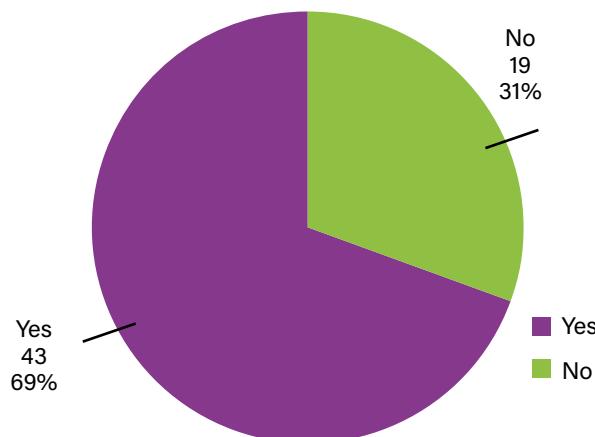
Among the research participants, a significant majority of activities focused on the care of children and adolescents were identified, highlighting the importance of actions to prevent abuse aimed at this age group in the analyzed initiatives.

» **Chart 1: Assistance to children in the activities carried out**



Source: Fernandes, Rosaneli, Vieira (2025a)

» **Chart 2: Assistance to adolescents in the activities carried out**



Source: Fernandes, Rosaneli, Vieira (2025a)

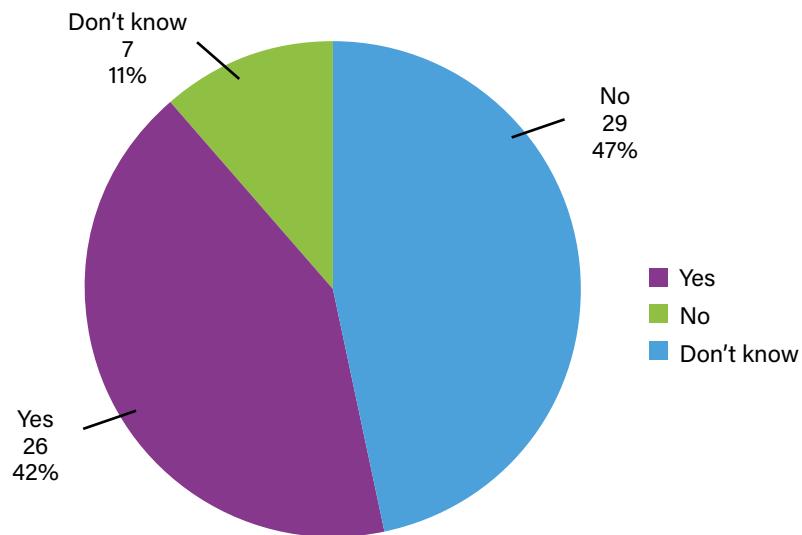
According to Fernandes, Rosaneli and Vieira (2025a), the results demonstrate that expanding and intensifying the training of agents who work with children and adolescents is not only recommended, but essential to guarantee rights and promote truly protective and safe ecclesial environments.



## Protection of children, adolescents and vulnerable adults

The survey reveals that most respondents carry out activities with children and adolescents, as well as the need for greater practical knowledge about policies to protect children, adolescents and vulnerable adults in the Diocesan context, Religious Institutes and Communities.

» **Chart 3: Existence of a policy to protect children, adolescents and vulnerable adults in the Diocese, Religious Institute or Community**



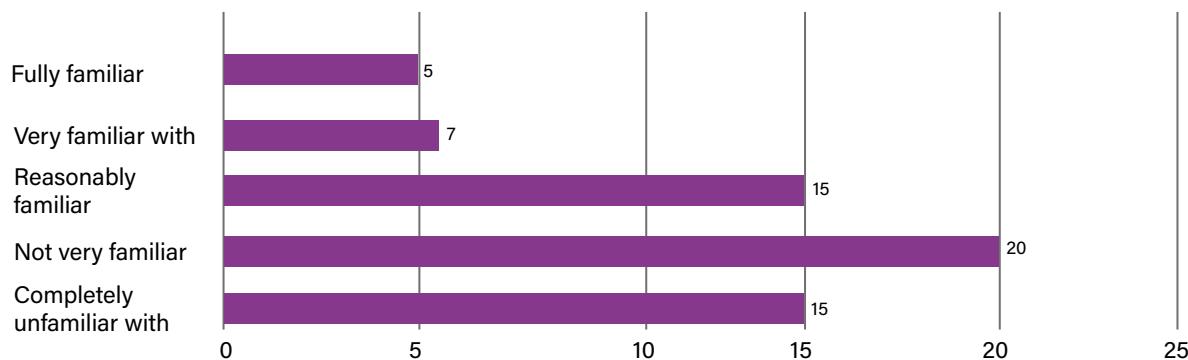
Source: Fernandes, Rosaneli, Vieira (2025a)

Less than half (42%) of the participants claim to be aware of the existence of a protection policy (graph 3), which according to the authors (Fernandes, Rosaneli, Vieira, 2025a) compromises the ability to respond adequately to situations of violence and violation of rights.

Regarding the level of knowledge of the participants about the protection network for children, adolescents and vulnerable adults in the municipality, reasonable or lesser knowledge is evident.



## » Chart 5: Knowledge about the protection network for children, adolescents and vulnerable adults in the municipality

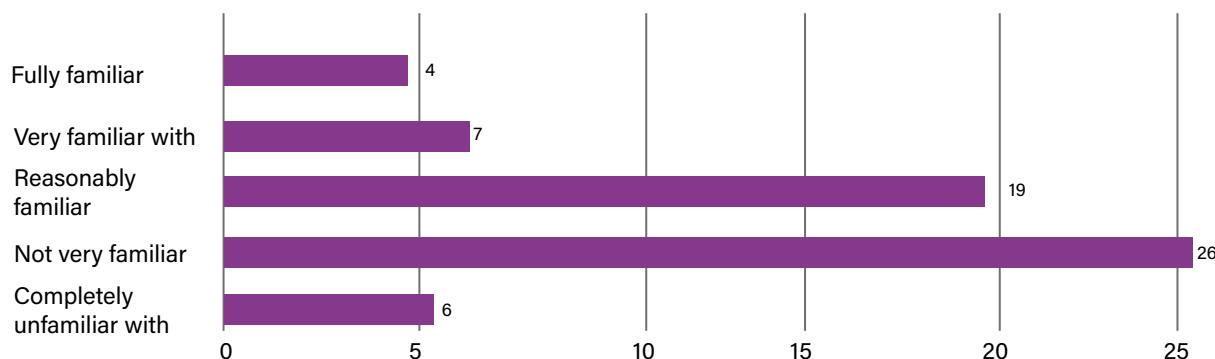


Source: Fernandes, Rosaneli, Vieira (2025a)

The results presented in chart 5 show the need for knowledge and access to protection mechanisms for children, adolescents and vulnerable adults, such as specialized police stations, child protection council, CRAs, CREAS, Public Prosecutor's Office and Basic Health Unit (UBS). For the authors (Fernandes, Rosaneli, Vieira, 2025a), there is a need for educational and informative actions to learn about the institutions that make up the Rights Guarantee System.

The research also highlighted the need for training with guidance to listen to and welcome victims of violence against children, adolescents and vulnerable adults.

## » Chart 7: Knowledge of guidelines for listening to and welcoming revelations of violence made by children, adolescents and vulnerable adults



Source: Fernandes, Rosaneli, Vieira (2025a)

Most participants stated that they had little (26) or only reasonable knowledge (19) on the subject. There is a need to expand the training of trusted adults who can be chosen by children, adolescents and vulnerable adults to welcome a report of violence.



## Training on protecting children, adolescents and vulnerable adults

The research reveals a scenario of more selective participation in training on the subject, since 81% declared not having participated in training on the subject in 2023. Catechists, family members and religious leaders are indicated as a priority audience to participate in training processes and the topics listed were:

- » Reception of a report of violence;
- » Care and support for the victim
- » Types of violence:
- » Sexual education to prevent sexual violence;
- » Knowledge of canon and civil law with regard to children and adolescents
- » The relationship of children and adolescents with the internet

According to the researchers (Fernandes, Rosaneli, Vieira, 2025a), the results indicate that the agents of the Diocese recognize the importance of broad training, based on qualified listening, reception protocols, legal knowledge and prevention practices, in addition to understanding that these actions should prioritize catechists, families and leaders.





## 3. MAPPING OF THE CHILD PROTECTION NETWORK IN THE TERRITORY OF THE DIOCESE OF SÃO JOSÉ DOS PINHAIS

### 3.1 Objective

Map the protection network for children and adolescents in the territory of the diocese of São José dos Pinhais, including the organization and flow of referrals.

### 3.2 Project path

To carry out this research, Cristiano Hamann, Estéfano Elias Risso and Guilherme Schoeninger Vieira (2025b) conducted a study aimed at mapping the protection network in the municipalities that make up the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais, an analysis of the demographic and socio-cultural data of the region was carried out, considering the religious aspect as an element that directly implies the community configuration of the territories. According to the authors of the research (Hamann, Risso, Vieira, 2025b), in several cities, religious institutions — especially the Catholic parishes mapped in this project — play a relevant role not only in the spiritual sphere, but also in social mediation, in listening to situations of vulnerability and in referral to public services.

In addition to mapping the religious presence and parishes of the Diocese, three priority dimensions were listed - Social Assistance, Public Security, Legal and Health, as they constitute spaces for welcoming and dealing with violence in the protection network: Child Protection Councils (CT), Social Assistance Reference Center (CRAS) and Specialized Reference Center for Social Assistance (CREAS), police stations and Specialized Police Stations, Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS), Public Prosecutor's Office and Adolescent Social Inclusion Center (CISA).

The mapping was based on documentary and exploratory research, through consultation with different sources of information of public and institutional access: electronic portals of the municipalities; State Map of the Safe Childhood Task Force (FORTIS)<sup>5</sup>; Social Map MDS (Ministry of Social Development of the Federal Government) - MOPS<sup>6</sup>; Letters to municipal governments; Survey in

<sup>5</sup> Access link: <https://fortis.mapas.pr.gov.br/>

<sup>6</sup> Access link: <https://mapa-social.mds.gov.br/>



search engines; Website of the Public Prosecutor's Office of Paraná; Website of the Diocese of São José dos Pinhais; Demographic Census<sup>7</sup>.

## 3.3 Results

### Description of territory

Population data on the total number of inhabitants, children and adolescents, and religious distribution were gathered. According to the researchers (2025), the results indicate:

- » **more populous municipalities concentrate greater demand on services**, requiring strategies of decentralization and diversification of the network.
- » **smaller municipalities face challenges such as lack of resources and lack of specialized services**, making regional articulation essential.
- » **the significant presence of Catholic communities reinforces their inclusion in the mapping**, as their capillarity and historical link with the communities qualify them as strategic spaces for reception and referral to the institutional network.

### » Table 1: Demographics

5 Link de acesso: <https://fortis.mapas.pr.gov.br/>

6 Link de acesso: <https://mapa-social.mds.gov.br/>

7 Link de acesso: <https://censo2022.ibge.gov.br/panorama/>



Municipality	Population (2022)	IDHM (2010)	Catholic (2022)	Evangelical (2022)	Population 0-19 years old
Agudos do Sul	10,233	0.666	66.6%	26.4%	28.28%
Araucária	151,666	0.758	55 %	31.6%	28.46%
Campo do Tenente	7,508	0.686	71.2%	26.4%	31.6%
Contenda	19,128	0.700	72.6%	21.4%	27.55%
Fazenda Rio Grande	148,873	0.720	48.3%	35.5%	31.56%
Lapa	45,003	0.730	80.4%	13.6%	25.65%
Mandirituba	27,439	0.660	69.5%	23.8%	28.09%
Piên	13,655	0.694	80.1%	16.9%	28.66%
Piraquara	118,730	0.700	39.2%	36.2%	29.66%
Quatro Barras	24,191	0.740	44.7%	36.2%	27.7%
Quitandinha	18,398	0.680	74.3%	22.1%	26.15%
Rio Negro	31,324	0.730	77.3%	16.2%	26.38%
São José dos Pinhais	329,628	0.760	53.1%	30.2%	27.55%
Tijucas do Sul	17,621	0.670	72.4%	20.6%	28.39%

Source 4: Hamann, Risso, Vieira (2025b)

### Overview of the protection network facilities

In larger municipalities, such as São José dos Pinhais and Araucária, a more expressive number of equipment is concentrated, which reflects the need to serve a large and geographically dispersed population.

In smaller municipalities, such as Piên, Quitandinha, Rio Negro and Tijucas do Sul, the structure is limited to a Child Protection Council and a CRAs, with only one CREAS in some cases. This configuration, although it includes basic equipment, reveals low diversity and capillarity of the network, which can reduce the reach and effectiveness of service, especially in areas farther from the municipal headquarters.

Although CREAS is present in small numbers, it still makes up a significant amount, since it is a specialized service responsible for situations of greater complexity and vulnerability.

The quantitative panorama reinforces the perception that **the protection**



**network in the region combines points of higher density of services with more fragile territories**, in which coverage is limited to the minimum required by public policy. This reality, for the authors (Hamann, Risso, Vieira, 2025b), imposes the need to think about strategies of intermunicipal articulation and community strengthening, so that all children and adolescents have effective access to full protection.

### **The Church and the care**

In the context of collaboration between multiple social actors for the effectiveness of the system of guaranteeing rights, the Catholic Church emerges as a capillarized social actor, with transformative and strategic potential in the defense of the most vulnerable. Parishes and religious institutions are spaces for meeting, socializing and belonging, where children, adolescents, families and local leaders circulate, making the **Church a privileged actor in strengthening the network of protection for children and adolescents**.

With its capillarized presence, the Church creates a bond of trust and is also a welcoming and listening space from where the opportunity to identify vulnerabilities arises. **Environments such as catechesis, youth groups are ecosystems of coexistence and privileged observation** in which catechists and community leaders who regularly live with children and adolescents, being properly trained, become protection agents capable of perceiving subtle changes in behavior, signs of sadness, aggressiveness, negligence that may indicate situations of violation of rights.

The Church is not responsible for investigating, judging or solving cases of violence on its own, but it is its responsibility to work with the protection network. **Whenever it identifies a suspicion of violence, the community, through the leaders, has a moral, civic and legal duty to activate the protection network, formalizing the referral.** Acting in this way, the Church contributes to the construction of a culture of care and co-responsibility.

## **4. FRIENDLY COMMUNICATION ON**





# VIOLENCE PREVENTION

## 4.1 Objective

Map and analyze friendly communication materials on protection of children and adolescents against sexual violence published by the Church of Brazil and Latin America.

## 4.2 Project path

The research conducted by Patrícia Helena Ribeiro Munhoz Costa and Márcia Veiga da Silva (2025c) was divided into two stages. The first stage of the research discussed the understanding of the term "Friendly Communication", requiring a literature review research of the Integrative Review (IR) type. The research was carried out in academic databases to analyze national and international studies on communication materials related to preventive actions carried out in different geographical and cultural contexts.

In the second stage, the communication materials on the protection of children and adolescents against sexual violence published on the official websites and social networks of CRB, Núcleo Lux Mundi, CNBB, archdioceses and dioceses of Brazil, and the episcopal conferences of Latin America were mapped. The mapped materials were submitted to a content analysis, considering as criteria for analysis of the collected materials the elements that make up a "Friendly Communication".

### 4.2.1 Integrative Review

The integrative review aimed to synthesize the existing knowledge on a given topic from the collection by databases, evaluation of results and synthesis of available evidence. This process occurs in six phases: 1) formulation of the problem, 2) literature search, 3) selection of studies, 4) critical analysis of these studies, 5) discussion of the results and 6) presentation/dissemination of the results of the integrative review.



The selected databases - *Scielo*, *Web of Science\_Scielo Citation*, *Web of Science\_Core Collection* and *Scopus* – with search delimited to the period of 10 years (2014 – 2024), had filters applied and inclusion and exclusion criteria that resulted in the selection of 13 articles (Annex A).

From the integrative review, the authors (Munhoz da Costa, Veiga da Silva, 2025c) listed important aspects for friendly communication in order to promote the protection of children and adolescents from sexual violence:

1. Communication actions must be based on **respect for others**;
2. **Easy access to information** to report cases of violence and to protect victims;
3. **Definition of the target audience** (if adults, children and/or adolescents) of the communication materials;
4. When possible, have the **direct participation of the target audience** in the development of communication actions;
5. Powerful **types of communication** for prevention: role-playing, games, storybooks, games, videos and pedagogical/educational resources;
6. **Media types suitable for** the target audience such as short and interactive videos;
7. **Simple (verbal) language without the use of stereotypes**;
8. Functionality: **cognitive optimization and inclusivity**;
9. Non-verbal language: in addition to being free of stereotypes, attention should be paid to the use of real images of children, the recommendation is to use **graphic resources (such as cartoons)**;
10. The **playfulness** must be foreseen in the production of materials/ communication actions;
11. **Evaluation and validation** of communication materials by experts and the target audience.



The authors (Munhoz Costa, Veiga da Silva, 2025c) also highlight other important elements for improving communication on the promotion of rights and prevention of sexual violence against children and adolescents and that should be considered as strategic:

- » **Promoting the self-confidence and self-esteem of children and adolescents** so that they can recognize risk situations and identify trusted people to ask for help.
- » The importance of **training social actors** on the protection of children and adolescents against child sexual abuse.
- » The importance of **conducting and circulating academic research** on sexual violence against children and adolescents.

#### 4.2.2 Content mapping and analysis

Publications on the prevention of violence against children and adolescents made by the Church of Brazil and Latin America were mapped. To this end, all the tabs of the official websites, links, partnerships and social networks (Youtube, Instagram and Facebook) of the 13 Episcopal Conferences of Latin America, the website of the Conference of Religious of Brazil (CRB), Núcleo Lux Mundi (NLM), CNBB and the 264 archdioceses and dioceses of Brazil were accessed.

**694 materials on child protection** were identified, 261 materials published by the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America and 433 materials published by the CRB, NLM, CNBB, dioceses and archdioceses. It is worth noting that Núcleo Lux Mundi and the Chilean Episcopal Conference's *Prevención de abusos* website were only counted once, considering that these two are exclusively dedicated to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

The materials found were submitted to content analysis (Franco, 2008; Bardin, 1977) with the following analytical categories listed from the integrative review:



1. Easy access to essential information;
2. Definition of the target audience;
3. Types of communication of mapped materials;
4. Media types suitable for the target audience;
5. Simple, stereotype-free language (verbal and non-verbal);
6. Material functionality.

## 4.3 Results

The communication materials collected were: news, official documents, social media posts and tabs for pages focused on the Protection and Defense of Children, Adolescents and vulnerable adults.

The research identified the **absence of communication materials on protection and prevention**, in some sites the tab on Protection Policy or Commission for the Protection of children and adolescents was not even identified:

- » 22 Episcopal Conferences in Latin America: **only 9 (41%)** (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela) have the Protection and Prevention tab with relevant information.
- » 264 archdioceses and dioceses of Brazil: **only 67 (25%)** present this tab with relevant information.

The data indicate the need for greater dissemination of information on prevention in the Church of Brazil, through the publication of channels for reporting violence. These data are read in the light of the first analytical category, to **facilitate access to information on where to report cases of violence and seek protection from victims.**



Most of the materials published on the institutions' websites are news, followed by documents and publications on social networks. **All news is aimed at the adult and literate public**, not including the public of children, adolescents, illiterate people. Most of them are not produced locally, they are content with broad themes that circulate equally throughout the regions. According to the authors (Munhoz Costa, Veiga da Silva, 2025c) , this demonstrates the need to privilege local cultural dimensions in the creation of communication materials.

The publication of documents as a form of communication on Protection and Defense of children and adolescents against sexual violence can also be a limitation of communicative action on the subject. With a **more technical and hermetic language, the documents are restricted to religious leaders and priests**, demonstrating the need to adopt a simple language.

In social networks, the posts selected in the research appear as an action closer to friendly communication, with **simple verbal and imagery language, using playful resources, graphic designs, and the ability to reach different audiences**, including adolescents and children.

According to the researchers (Munhoz Costa, Veiga da Silva, 2025c), the analyzed publications demonstrate a limitation in the realization of effective and qualified communication for the prevention of violence against children and adolescents.

### **Friendly publications on the protection of children and adolescents in the Church**

The research found good examples of materials and practices for the prevention of violence and protection of children and adolescents published by the episcopal conferences, archdioceses and dioceses<sup>8</sup>:

1. Bolivia: communication material with attractive layout, distribution of dynamic text with direct phrases, images that dialogue with the text and do not reinforce stereotypes were identified. The material informs in an educational way explaining how to act in front of a victim and the importance of listening.
2. Chile: on the homepage of the website, there is a highlighted feature with a link to the abuse prevention site. The website has a modern layout with

<sup>8</sup> Links to access the materials can be found in Annex B.



striking and light colors, and short and direct texts. The communication materials have graphic designs and specificities for different environments, namely: educational, parishes and communities.

3. Brazil: publications from archdioceses, dioceses, CRB and NLM on preventive actions, aimed at adults working in the ecclesial sphere, on training and information on the prevention of violence against children and adolescents were identified.
4. Colombia: the materials in the "Culture of Care" tab for the training and qualification of adults in the ecclesial sphere were highlighted, highlighting the concern with the theme and the development of preventive actions.
5. Venezuela: the 28 protocols of good practices of the country's dioceses were highlighted, which, although aimed exclusively at the adult public, reveal the concern to produce local materials, taking into account the specific cultural dimensions of each territory.

In relation to the Church of Brazil, through the news, other products and communicational attitudes on protection and prevention of violence were identified, such as educational activities in schools, workshops, seminars and recreational activities aimed at children and adolescents developed by archdioceses, dioceses or partner institutions. Researchers Munhoz da Costa and Veiga da Silva (2025c) highlight the use of the Fazer Bonito Campaign, the partnership of the Diocese of Petrópolis with *Reconciliatio* and Acopamec's actions in the Archdiocese of Salvador:

1. "Fazer Bonito Campaign", a civil action that the Church of Brazil uses heavily to promote local actions, training courses and open dialogue on the subject in its community. Therefore, the campaign appears on the websites and social networks of practically all archdioceses and dioceses, CRB and NLM. The campaign materials inform and educate for the prevention and protection of children and adolescents, using a colorful layout, graphic images, objective text, large letters and short sentences.
2. *Reconciliatio* has a program to promote courses and training on abuse prevention and the promotion of safe environments for children, adolescents and vulnerable adults in Brazil and Latin America. Its Instagram posts demonstrate characteristics of Friendly Communication by promoting effective preventive communication.



**3.** Associação das Comunidades Paroquiais de Mata Escura e Calabetão (Acopamec) has an intense action to prevent sexual violence against children and adolescents. They promote increased communication capacity and self-esteem with activities to support after-school school development and guidance for social educators.

The researchers also highlight two additional actions carried out directly with the target audience, using educational and preventive elements: activities conducted in a state school to warn children about abuse and exploitation, reported in a news article on the website of the Archdiocese of Manaus (North 1); and a stage of the "Health Grade 10 Project," carried out by Caritas of the Diocese of Óbidos (North 2) with school-age children and adolescents to disseminate knowledge about the functions of the agencies within the protection network.





## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evangelizing mission of the Church includes a commitment to the integral protection of children, adolescents and adults in vulnerable situations. In line with legal, pastoral and social frameworks, it is essential that the local Church in communion with the whole Church promotes concrete actions that strengthen safe, welcoming and preventive environments in all its communities.

Although the research has a territorial approach applied to a diocese, based on the results achieved in the research carried out, recommendations are proposed for the entire Church of Brazil, organized into three strategic axes:

### 5.1 Protection of children, adolescents and vulnerable adults

- » Disseminate and promote training on the protection network in force in the municipalities, using friendly communication materials from the Marist Protection Network, as well as other partner agencies.
- » Expand training opportunities on the care and protection of children, adolescents and people in vulnerable situations.
- » Training in protocols for listening, welcoming and forwarding reports of violence made by children and adolescents.





## 5.2 Mapping of the territory's protection network

- » Develop protection policies and protocols that consider prevention, the context of the diocese and the formation of the public.
- » Establish an internal protocol for coping with situations of violence, ensuring articulation with the protection network in the notification stages, in accordance with state services and considering the needs of victims and witnesses.
- » Promote continuous training, in which the types of violence are explained, the warning signs for possible situations of violence, the procedures for communication and safe referral of the child and adolescent victim of violence.
- » Include the theme in preventive educational materials, made available in ecclesial spaces or even inclusion in training curricula.

## 5.3 Friendly communication on violence prevention

- » Create the Protection Policy tab highlighted at the beginning of the first page of the Diocese's official website, which should contain useful information on how and where to make reports of violence suffered.
- » Develop friendly communication materials on violence prevention and how to welcome a victim of violence and make the materials accessible on the Diocese's official website.
- » On social networks, create a Prevention and Protection "highlight" to focus on posts on this topic and pin a post with information on where and how to report.
- » Develop friendly communication materials and actions based on the Friendly Communication e-book resulting from this research.

These guidelines propose practical and collaborative ways for the Church to advance in the construction of a culture of care, based on active listening, co-responsibility and continuous training.



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## ANNEX A

### Articles analyzed in the Integrative Review (IR)

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## **ANNEX B**

### **Friendly Communication Materials**

- » Reconciliatio: Reconciliatio – Person Development
- » Episcopal Conference of Chile: Preventing Abuse
- » Bishops' Conference of Bolivia: Elementos de primera acogida
- » Bishops' Conference of Bolivia: Folleto Díptico Decálogo de la cultura del cuidado
- » Bishops' Conference of Bolivia: El-arte-de-Escuchar.pdf
- » "Faça Bonito Campaign": Home | Faça Bonito



## ANNEX C

### List of abbreviations and acronyms

Acopamec	Associação das Comunidades Paroquiais de Mata Escura e Calabetão
CAAE	Certificate of Presentation of Ethical Appreciation
CAPS	Psychosocial Care Center
CISA	Adolescent Social Inclusion Center
CMDCA	Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents
CMDI	Marist Center for the Defense of Children
CNBB	National Conference of Bishops of Brazil
CRAS	Social Assistance Reference Center
CRB	National Conference of Religious of Brazil
CREAS	Specialized Reference Center for Social Assistance
CT	Child Protection Council
FORTIS	Safe Childhood Task Force
IBGE	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
MDS	Ministry of Development and Social Assistance
MOPS	Strategic maps for Citizenship Policies
NLM	Núcleo Lux Mundi
UN	United Nations
PR	Paraná
PUCPR	Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná
PUCRS	Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul
IR	Integrative Review
BHU	Basic Health Unit
VELM	Vox Estis Lux Mundi



