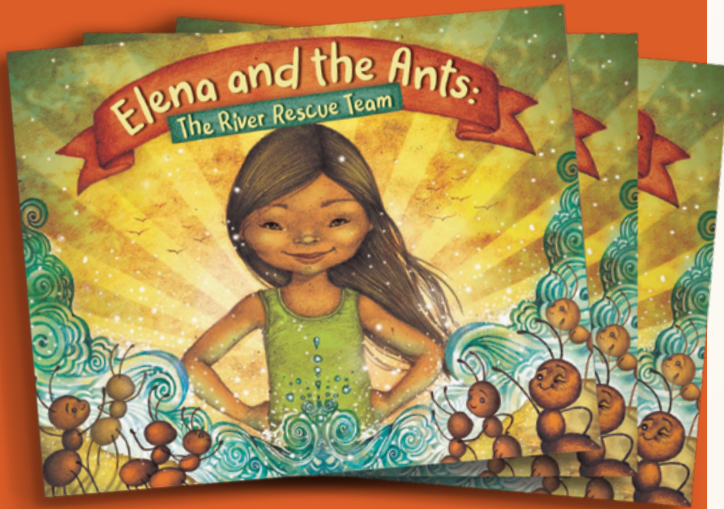


# Learning Guide



This guide consists of a series of suggestions for teachers, parents, and guardians so that they can extract the most benefit from the story *Elena and the ants: The river rescue team*. The story covers the themes of: women and girls' leadership, social action, citizen participation, care for the environment, and respect for cultural diversity. The story can be used to promote women and girls' leadership based on Elena's example, and promote inclusive leadership models based on teamwork.

The story seeks to promote principles such as cooperation, leadership, equality and responsibility. Through the exercises, the the facilitator can explain the following concepts, being sure to implicitly reference actions and attitudes reflected in the story.

## Key Concepts

- **Leadership:** ability to influence, motivate, organize and carry out actions to improve specific situations or problems. In the story, leadership is exemplified by through Elena, who identifies a problem (river pollution), and takes the initiative to seek solutions, as well as motivate and mobilize others. Elena recognizes the skills and talents of others and inspires them to participate in an important community project. It is important emphasize that leadership is collective: in order to really achieve positive change in the town of El Tigre, the help of all is required.

Leadership is also exemplified by Parliamentarian Ríos, who responds to the initiative started by Elena and her friends and takes her to the National Assembly to seek opportunities to implement laws that protect the environment.

- **Equality:** we all deserve access to opportunities and we are all worthy of respect, regardless of our ethnicity, race, gender, or age. All people, whether women or men, girls or boys, are capable of being leaders. Regardless of age or gender, Elena and her friends can generate positive changes and their contributions must be respected and encouraged.
- **Cooperation:** in the story, the characters, citizens of El Tigre, were able to collaborate in accordance with their individual qualities and abilities. This teamwork was what achieved real change in the community.
- **Responsibility:** it is the duty of all citizens to ensure the well-being of their community. By saying "Me?", characters in the story were avoiding this responsibility, as many of us usually do. But Elena, by taking the initiative, recognizes that it is her responsibility to take care of the river.

## Definitions

- **Parliamentarian:** representative of a people, city or region, elected by vote, that is responsible for promoting initiatives to improve the quality of life of citizens. The job of a parliamentarian consists of representing their region (advocating for their interests and needs), creating laws, and examining government actions and budgets.
- **National Assembly:** the parliament, a place where the parliamentarians make the laws that organize a country and that must be respected by each and every inhabitant of a country.
- **Citizen:** person who lives in a territory and that has duties and rights associated with that place. Being a citizen means helping improve the place you live. It also implies having the right to elect the government through voting, including for the parliamentarians who represent citizens.
- **Ngäbe-Buglé Region:** Ngäbe and the Buglé are two Indigenous communities whose populations have lived for hundreds of years in the territory now known as Panama. Many members of both Indigenous communities live in a common region within Panama called a *Comarca*.

## Questions and reflections from the story

## Activities

## Subtopics and key concepts

Who is Elena? What is Elena like? What are her qualities?

Divide the class into groups. Each group can write down a list of words that describe Elena, and then compare them with other groups and see similarities and differences.

Leadership, equality, responsibility.

What does Elena want to change in the town of El Tigre? How does she achieve it?

Mention something you would like to improve in your school or community. Make a plan for how you would do this and who you would ask for help.

Leadership, equality, responsibility, citizen participation.

What skills did Elena see in her friends?

Write down a talent for each of your friends at your table.

Leadership, cooperation, citizen participation, initiative.

What does Elena mean by the phrase "defending the river is defending life"? Why is it important to care for the environment?

Whether in the schoolyard, a park near or around your home, search for a nest of ants and observe them carefully. Focus on how they work and communicate. In your notebook describe what you see.

Environmental care, women leadership, responsibility.

What is the parliamentarian's name and what role do they play in the story?

Invite a parliamentarian to read the book in class (or virtually), and share more about what a parliament is and how the decisions made there help improve towns and communities.

Citizen participation, civic knowledge, responsibility.

Where do Elena and her family come from? What do you observe about her clothing?

Research the Ngäbe-Buglé region of Panama. Invite a member of an Indigenous community to talk about their culture. Emphasize respect for diversity.

Cultural diversity, respect.

Look at the illustrations and descriptions of the town in the story. What is the town of El Tigre like?

Look at your school, your neighbourhood, or your community. What is it like? What words would you use to describe it? Is there nature around you?

Environmental care, spatial knowledge, responsibility.



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