

**CHILDREN
CHANGE
COLOMBIA**

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

CHILDREN CHANGE COLOMBIA

Dear friends.

As we reflect upon the past year, it is with immense gratitude and joy that we extend our deepest thanks to each one of you who has played a vital role in making it an extraordinary journey for Children Change Colombia.

In the spirit of giving, your unwavering support and generosity have not only brightened the lives of countless children but have also fuelled our mission to create a brighter and more promising future for the youth at risk in Colombia. Throughout this incredible year, your support has been the driving force behind our ability to implement impactful programmes providing essential resources and tools to many communities. From educational initiatives to protection from sexual exploitation and working with young survivors of forced recruitment, your contributions have made a significant difference in the lives of the children we serve and their communities.

In 2023, we supported 3,581 children from different communities in Colombia and we also started our first UK based project, 'Colombia Colores', engaging kids of the Colombian diaspora in London. Furthermore, we continue our work by hosting advocacy events with the British government, universities in the UK, and diplomatic bodies by promoting the chapter of the Colombian Truth Commission about children and young people.

Thank you for making our work possible. Your belief in our cause empowers us to continue striving for excellence and amplifying the positive change we can achieve together.

In this annual report, we aim to show the tangible impact of your support, celebrating the milestones we have achieved and the lives that have been touched. We invite you to explore the stories of resilience, growth, and hope that have been made possible by your dedication to our cause.

Once again, we express our deepest gratitude for being an integral part of this incredible journey. Your belief in the power of compassion and the potential of every child has made this year truly amazing.

With heartfelt thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela Carreño".

Angela Carreño
Executive Director

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Scan this QR to visit our webpage



Introduction

This report is primarily an account of Children Change Colombia's work in the field and its activities to promote the protection of children's rights in Colombia during the year 2023.

The following pages contain descriptions of each of our projects in Colombia. We are pleased to be able to tell you that in 2023 we supported **7 local grassroots organisations** with **9 different projects** including our newest project in London: "Colombia Colores". We **supported 3,522 children in Colombia, plus 40 children from London, and their families**. We also conducted **more than 30 workshops** with our local partners - online and in person - as part of our capacity-building programme.

About us

Children Change Colombia (CCC) is the UK's largest charity working exclusively in Colombia, with offices in London and Bogotá (Colombia) and over 30 years of experience. We believe that, with the right support, Colombian children can claim their right to live safely and in peace and demand that the adults responsible for protecting their rights do so – in this way, children can change Colombia.

Over the last three decades, CCC has helped more than 65,000 children to overcome the trauma of poverty, armed conflict, displacement, and a lack of education, and has invested £13 million in more than 50 multi-annual projects all across Colombia. To help children achieve this, we rely on strong local partnerships with Colombian organisations who truly understand the needs of the children they work with, and have the experience and knowledge to find effective solutions. We are committed to working with the children who need us most and in areas (thematic and geographic) that we feel are neglected by other organisations.

Our aims



Defend
children's
rights



Tackle
neglected
issues



Strengthen
children's
organizations

The past 33 years we've supported

through
collaborations with
grassroots social
organisations

68 
Projects

invested in
Colombia

£15
Million

to overcome the
trauma of poverty,
armed conflict and
lack of education

72,942

children



Mission

Support, empower and protect children and young people that are survivors/victims or are at risk of the most neglected issues in Colombia, by strengthening local grassroots to positively impact their communities and defend their rights in the long term.



Vision

Create a better everyday life for the children and young people who are survivors/victims or at risk from Colombia's most neglected issues.

CHILDREN
CHANGE
COLOMBIA



Colombian registered
Charity
No. 900082050

UK registered Charity
No. 1075037

Why Colombia?

Issues like **poverty, social inequalities, armed conflict and corruption** are rooted at the centre of Colombia's history. Colombia is known for its struggle to end violence and social inequalities exacerbated by armed groups such as ELN and Las FARC which historically have taken control of rural areas. The December 2022 peace negotiations with ELN has stated, "ELN leaders began a negotiation towards the disarmament with Venezuela as the guarantor country and headquarters of the negotiations"(1).

Although a peace agreement between Las FARC and the government was signed in September 2016, the situation continued to deteriorate during the last presidential period. However, with the appointment of the president Petro, the government promised to enforce the peace treaty.

According to the National Center for Historical Memory (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica), **from 1958 to 2020, more than 17,860 Children and Young People (CYP) were recruited by armed groups** (2).

The latest figures regarding the participation of children in the war are provided but the Truth Commission report "Where there's truth there's peace": from 1985 to 2016, 28,192 children were forcibly disappeared; from 1990 to 2018, 6,492 children were kidnapped; **from 1990 to 2017, 16,238 children were recruited by armed groups;** and from 1985 to 2019, 3,049,527 children were victims of forced displacement.(3).



Access to education was already strained for many CYP living in rural parts of Colombia, including Chocó, the poorest Colombian municipality. Conditions of poverty and social inequity limit the quality of teaching and resources available to those able to go to school.

Despite the fact that the Colombian constitution requires that boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 15 attend school, currently **approximately 1.2 million Colombian children (11% of all school-age boys and girls) do not receive any formal education** (4).

Additionally, poverty and sexual and gender-based violence are co-related. **In 2021, about 17,000 cases were addressed to restore the rights of minors, where 52% correspond to cases of sexual violence and 72% of cases occurred inside children's homes.** Likewise, 91,982 cases of sexual violence against boys, girls and adolescents were registered between 2015 and 2019. Children between 10 to 14 years old are the most affected age group, accounting for 44% of all cases.

1. CNN, (cnn.com): "Colombia and the ELN open a new path to peace with negotiations in Venezuela" November 2022.

2. Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, "A war with no age" Report, February 2021

3. Truth Commission - Colombian Special Jurisdiction of Peace: Report: "There's Future where There's Truth" Chapter: "No es un mal menor" (is not a minor issue) on participation of children in the colombian war. www.comisiondelaverdad.co, August 2022.

4. Ministry of Education of Colombia and OCDE, Report: "Education in Colombia, Review of national education policies" March 2017.

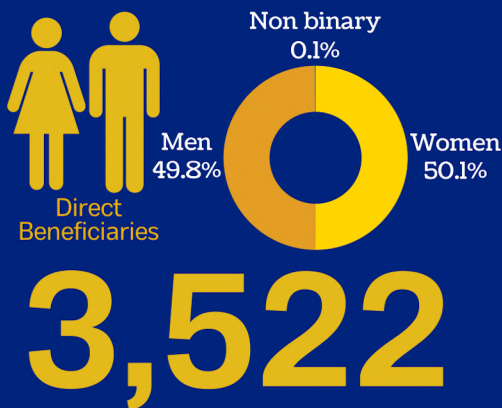
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Due to the diversity of our projects and partners in Colombia, we are able to work towards many of the **United Nations' SDGs**, whilst still principally concentrating on our **three key strategic aims**. Outlined are the UN's SDGs that Children Change Colombia was able to champion in 2023.

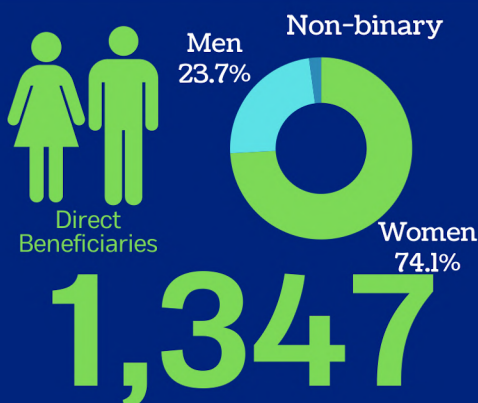


2023 Impact numbers

Children and Young People



Adults



Protecting children's rights

In 2023 we protected the rights of...

3,522

Children against discrimination

3,522

Children having the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities

1,170

Children having the right to use their own language and culture (Indigenous and Ethnic communities involved)

2,448

Children improving their access to education

1,074

Children from exploitation

1,133

Children against violence

489

Children from harmful work

471

Children towards recovery and reintegration into society (prevention and protection)

403

Children from sexual exploitation

364

Children with a safe placement

74

Children through family guidance as they develop





Our partners

In 2023, we worked with 7 inspiring organisations, providing crucial funding for their programmes as well as the technical support needed for them to become stronger organisations and be able to better defend the rights of at-risk children in the long-term.

For every project, there are designated safeguarding focal points to let our partners know the guidelines of safeguarding and address any concerns that arise during the implementation of the project. The DSO maintains regular communication with the focal points of safeguarding and as part of the reinforcement of organisations working with CCC, there are training sessions and experience exchanges between all contact points. CCC is part of the Keeping Children Safe network, an independent not-for-profit organisation, that works under the mission of ending abuse, exploitation, and abandonment of children in organisations around the world. We receive consulting services from them regarding safeguarding topics safeguarding topics.



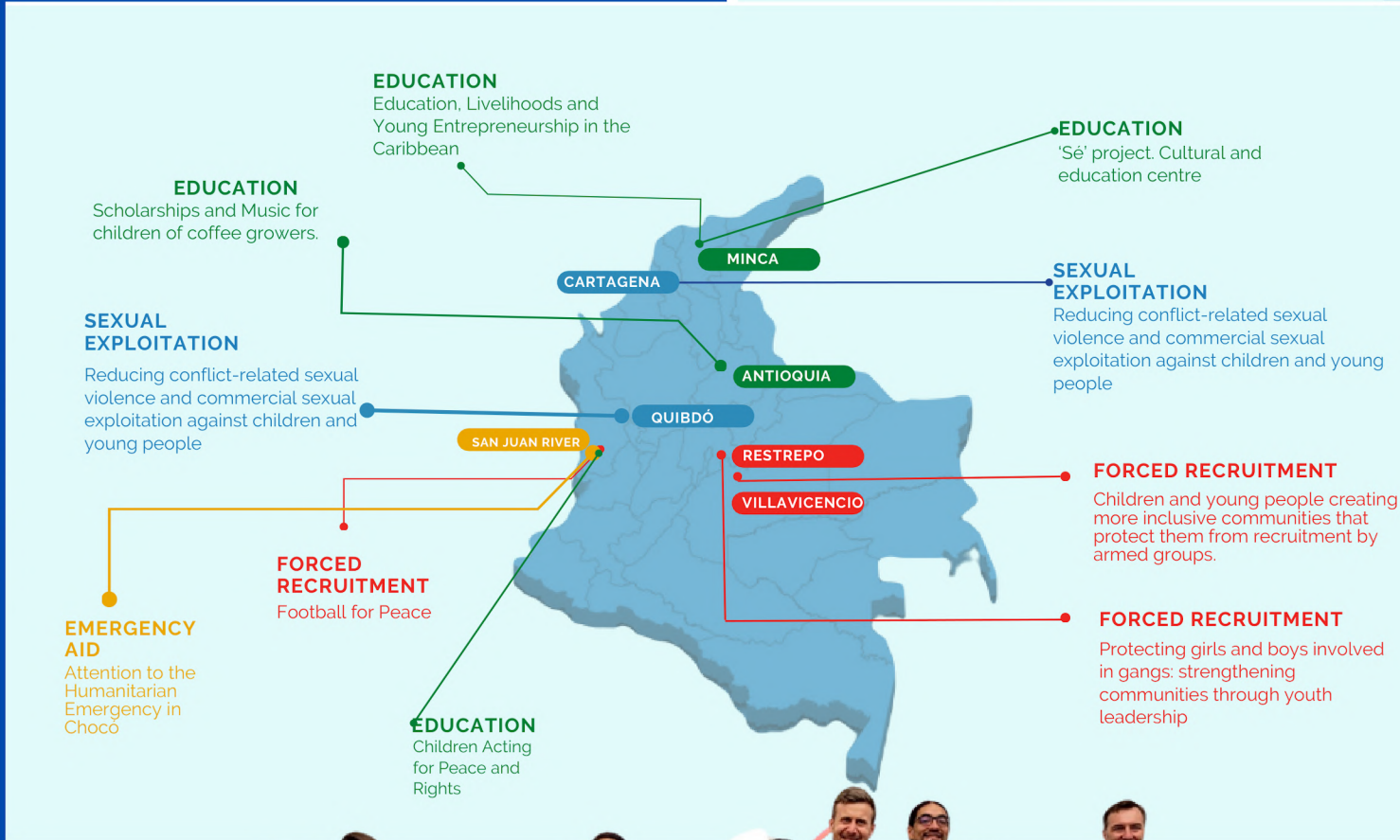
Our work in 2023:

Project locations



UK

Colombia

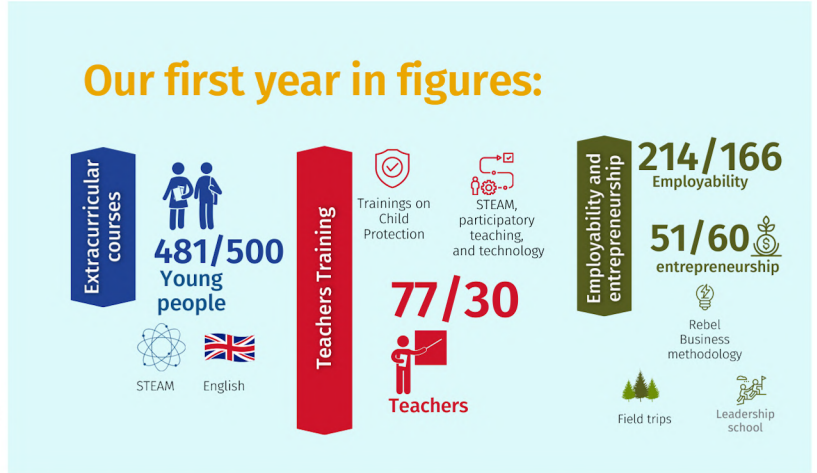


Access to Education



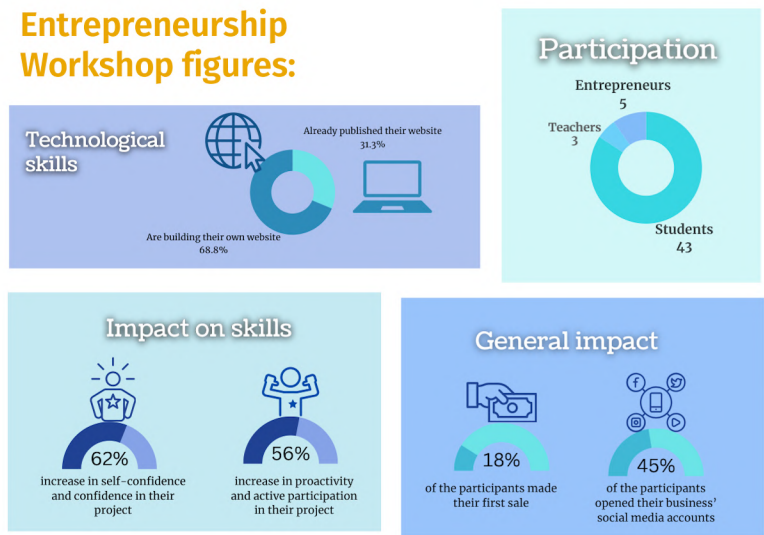
Project: Education, Livelihoods, and Young Entrepreneurship in the Caribbean
Partners: CCC and Misión Gaia
Locations: Minca, Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, Magdalena

Children Change Colombia launched this new project in the beginning of 2023. It aims to educate and motivate both students and teachers from educational institutions along the Caribbean Coast. It encourages their development of professional and personal skills that will allow them to improve their academic and professional performance, reach their goals, break the cycles of poverty, and improve their livelihoods.



During this first year, we developed a range of different activities, workshops and extracurricular classes. The highlight of this first period was the development of **our first entrepreneurship workshop**. It was held from June 2 to 5. A total of 51 people attended, 47 of them attending more than 70% of the programme. It was attended by 43 students, 3 teachers and 5 local entrepreneurs. The participants learned about financial education, savings planning, product costing, marketing, digital marketing (knowledge and creation of their enterprise on social media), creating their own webpage, soft skills and logo design, among other areas. These activities were developed with the guidance of entrepreneurship professionals from Bogotá.

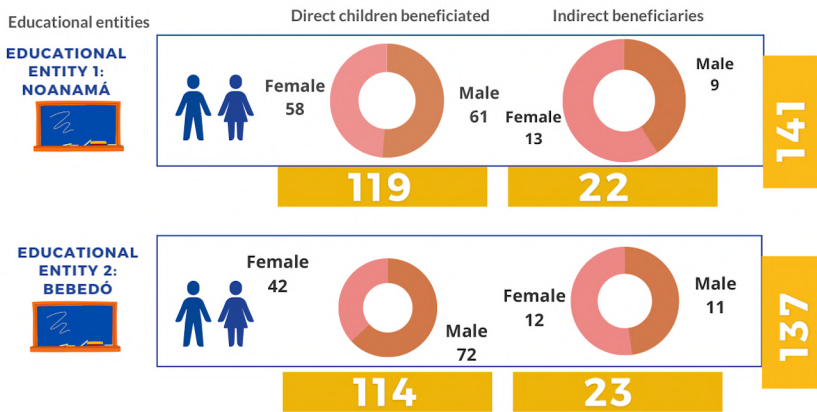
Entrepreneurship Workshop figures:



Access to Education

Project: Children Acting for Peace and Rights in Acadesan
Partners: ACADESAN Community Council
Locations: San Juan River Communities, Chocó

This project is based in Colombia's Pacific region and aims for 300 Afro-Colombian children from Chocó, from three local schools, to develop socio-emotional skills and improve their capacities to participate in peacebuilding processes and to involve themselves in the protection of the environment within their territories.



Among all the possible participants in the project, 233 children were direct beneficiaries. Initially, the project estimated 100 would be the direct children beneficiaries from the project. This represents an increase of almost 133% of the overall participation.

100% of the teachers acquired better knowledge about the design of pedagogical strategies that strengthen the socio-emotional competencies of students. 94% of the student groups from the two educational institutions implemented strategies that promote socio-emotional skills towards the protection of the territory. Likewise, two educational institutions within the ACADESAN territory are advancing in the transition from PEI (Institutional educational project) to PEC (community educational project) through the comprehensive ANALYSIS of the territory.



Access to Education



Project: "Sé"(Be) project. Library and cultural center

Partners: Oro Molido

Locations: Minca, Magdalena

This project is based in Minca, Magdalena and it aims to provide a multipurpose center that the community needs and can be used for education. The construction of this center has just finished; it will be a space used as a library and also will be available to hold cultural sessions, community meetings, and other activities. Oro Molido aims to provide support to the communities through this center, offering educational sessions and connection to internet.

The library will have a multifunctional character. Not only will it be used to store books and offer a quiet and inspiring space, but it will also be a place where students can continue their education through artistic, literary and scientific activities.

Project: Educational projects in Antioquia

Partners: Oro Molido

Locations: Antioquia

Research projects: We work on structuring research projects generated from the needs and questions that arise from the rural sector in the Southwest of Antioquia. Those in charge of leading these projects are primary and secondary students and, in addition, students with scholarships from the Foundation who carry out their social work through the resolution of questions that arise from the problems of the territory.

Music academy: Oro Molido promotes music and education as a way to find peace and development in communities. The sessions include classes on music theory and introduction to playing instruments, and provide the opportunity to make ensembles where students demonstrate their performance skills in different musical rhythms, covering traditional genres and classical music repertoires.

Musical peace bands: To date, the Foundation sponsors three martial peace bands that represent their municipalities in regional and national events. The program works on three pedagogical processes: musical initiation, instrumental training, and marching.



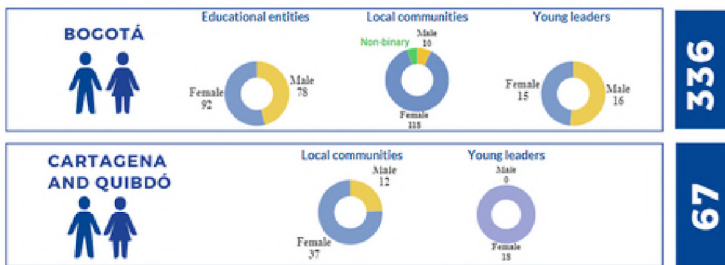
Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence

Project: Reducing conflict-related sexual violence and commercial sexual exploitation against CYP

Partners: ACJ and CDE

Locations: Cartagena, Quibdó and Bogotá.

This year, the estimated number of children and young people, both direct and indirect, that would benefit from the project was 705. The actual number of CYP that benefitted is 1,059. This represents an increase of 50.21% of CYP that benefitted, directly or indirectly.



This year, 96% of the children and young people involved were trained in self-care and self-protection practices and tools. At least 93% of families and caregivers participated and contributed to the reduction of gender-based violence, sexual violence, and CSEC. Strikingly, 100% of community members participated in advocacy activities to demand the protection of children's rights from the responsible public institutions. In Bogotá, at least 84% of the young people and family members involved that were at risk of CSEC were able to develop their life plans and contribute to the prevention of CSEC.

Further, **the British Ambassador in Colombia, Mr. George Hodgson, was able to visit our project** and spent half a day engaging with the children. In the words of our Executive Director, Mrs. Angela Carreño, Mr. Hodgson "read and danced with [the children]. **Our Patron, Fernando Montaña, also visited the ACJ project** a couple of weeks ago. He joined a dance session, talked to the children, and even gave a ballet performance!



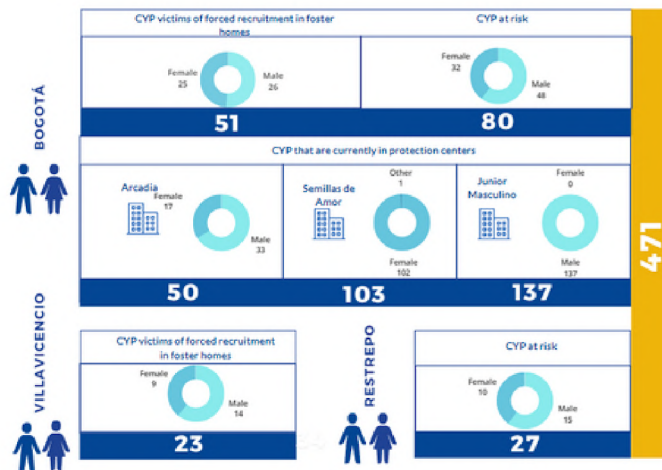
Reintegration into Society, Prevention of Forced Recruitment, and Criminal Exploitation.



Project: Youth Reintegration Into Society: A Community-based Approach Towards Mental Health

Partners: TDJ and CRAN

Locations: Bogotá, Restrepo and Villavicencio



The first-year estimates for this project predicted that a total of 269 CYP would benefit. In reality, 471 CYP benefited from the project, representing an increase of 75% CYP beneficiaries. From this total, 421 were CYP beneficiaries from Bogotá; notably, 131 CYP were direct beneficiaries (i.e. at risk of, or victims of, forced recruitment). In Villavicencio, 23 CYP were beneficiaries; in Restrepo, there were 27 CYP participants.

At the end of its first year, this project reaped incredible results. 90% of the CYP are now aware of the importance of changing their narratives of criminal activities or forced recruitment. 73% of those involved were able to strengthen their positive leadership abilities. Mental health and emotional wellbeing was an important aspect of this project: 99% of CYP that participated in the program reported an improvement to their mental health, while 92% of caregivers (staff) saw an improvement to their emotional health with the help of the provided psychosocial support.

A range of activities were introduced as part of this project. Participants were encouraged to engage in activities designed to develop their interpersonal skills, emphasizing the importance of teamwork, communication, trust, and vulnerability. CYP were encouraged to (re)connect with their inner child and to take time to reflect on their self-image, their goals, and their experiences. They dedicated time to reconceptualizing certain personal and community narratives. A great emphasis was placed on both processing and expressing emotions, and CYP participants were given the spaces to do so.



Reintegration into Society, Prevention of Forced Recruitment, and Criminal Exploitation.

Project: Football for Peace

Partners: ACADESAN

Locations: San Juan River Communities, Chocó

Earlier this year, we implemented this new project, 'Football for Peace', with our partner Acadesan. This project seeks to prevent child recruitment through the practice of football in rural Chocó. The practice of football allows for CYP to develop essential socio-emotional skills, and equips them both with the skills and the confidence to advocate for themselves in the face of serious risks, including forced recruitment, sexual violence, and sexual exploitation.

The project is aiming to involve **200** Afro-Colombian children from different football teams in the region in order to improve their ability to actively participate in peace-building processes, working towards the greater goal of preventing regional forced recruitment. We are currently developing this project with **4** football teams from different communities. As we continue to raise funds, we will be able to expand this project to include more teams; our target is a total of **22** teams.



New Projects



COLOMBIA
COLORES



- **First London-based project, 'Colombia Colores'**

In November, CCC proudly launched its first project in London geared towards children between ages 5-12 of the Colombian diaspora. The project aims to engage Colombian born, second, and third generation children in activities that provide them with the space to explore the richness of Colombian culture.

With this amazing initiative, we aim to bring Colombia to children from the Colombian diaspora living in London, and help them connect with their Colombian culture. This project has arisen from a need expressed by the Colombian community in London to offer regular workshops on Colombian culture for their children. The Colombian Diaspora in the UK since the 1980's and it is important to encourage children with Colombian ascendance to reconnect with a larger community and traditions

- **Attention to the Humanitarian Emergency in Chocó: Shelter construction**

CCC is committed to provide emergency support to a partner organization when necessary. In recent months, an armed strike that lasted for more than a week displaced some communities and confined a significant number of communities in Acadesan, Chocó. Acadesan are receiving displaced persons to their headquarters but there's not sufficient space. This is why CCC designed a project where emergency kits will be provided and a multipurpose center/shelter will be constructed. This aid includes: food kits, toiletry and basic hygiene kits, shelter kits, First Aid kits, mobility aid, and the shelter construction and adequation. **We are very happy to announce that, with the support of an anonymous donor, we will be able to build this center in 2023.**

- **New project with partner organisation Acadesan**

In August, alongside our partner organisation Acadesan, CCC started a new project called 'Football for Peace'. The project aims to use the practice of football as a vehicle for the development of key socio-emotional skills by children and young people (CYP) throughout Chocó. The CYP will become equipped with the skills needed to advocate for themselves in the face of forced recruitment, sexual violence, and sexual exploitation in the region.



New Strategic Partners



RODEEMOS EL DIÁLOGO

This year we partnered with Rodeemos El Diálogo, a transnational network of Colombians and friends of Colombia that emerged in the United Kingdom between September and October 2012 to raise awareness among citizens about the importance of the negotiated solution to the armed conflict.

We hosted together in April a series of advocacy events with the British government, universities in the UK, and diplomatic bodies by promoting the chapter of the Colombian Truth Commission about children and young people.



Poli is a Colombian University with a training vocation, which works to provide more and better opportunities for access to education, relevant and quality training, which transforms lives and generates a positive impact on society.

We are partnering with them to provide education scholarships for the CYP that benefit from our projects. The main goal is to grant a scholarship to study a university degree for one young person that is part of the Caribbean project.

Our aim is to continue strengthening this partnership to find common goals working towards the benefit of the youth in Colombia.



This year we have strengthened our relationship with the Colombian Consulate in London. We had 2 events in the Consulate. In April we had a educative session with the Colombian diaspora promoting the chapter of the Colombian Truth Commission about children and young people.

In October we launch together "Proyecto Colores" the first CCC project for Colombian Children in the UK. It encourage young Colombians to learn about and embrace their culture, and to feel connected to each other and the Colombian community at large.



4. AREA ANDINA

Fundación Universitaria del Área Andina

AREA ANDINA UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

Area Andina is an Educational Institution that provides technical education programs, such as technologist degrees, professional degrees specializations, and Master's degrees.. We are partnering with Area Andina on exchange and training opportunities that can be implemented in our projects.. We are also planning to provide further education to the children of our projects



COMBA INTERNACIONAL

This is a international company based in Colombia that helps to design the plans and strategies of companies and foundations. We are currently working hand in hand with this team to reevaluate and generate 2025-20230 strategy for CCC .



ACTION FOR CHILD TRAUMA INTERNATIONAL

CCC holds a partnership with this UK-based organization. ACTI specializes in Childhood Trauma and Safeguarding Action. They train and support our staff, local people and NGO staff, giving them the skills to treat children and young people traumatized by conflict, violence, and disaster. With them we have implemented two face to face workshops in Bogotá.



CENTRO NACIONAL DE CONSULTORIA

We're currently getting advice from the CNC on how to implement efficient project monitoring and evaluation tools, different methodologies to show results and impact evaluation. skills to improve our performance as an organisation. We have already met with them to talk about the Caribbean project that would be the piloting of this process.



REBEL BUSINESS

Rebel Business School is a revolutionary entrepreneurship academy that since 2012 has helped more than 15,000 people in 7 countries around the world to set up their own businesses without investment and without business plans. For the beneficiaries, its programs are totally free and its funding comes from partnerships in both the public and private sectors.. They are currently supporting us proving entrepreneurship workshops to the young people of the Caribbean project.



Capacity Building

- **Keeping Children Safe Workshop**

The organisation Keeping Children Safe provided a webinar/workshop to the whole CCC staff and team to address Child Safeguarding Standards. This time it was an online session, but next year we'll be holding a face-to-face/meeting session with this organisation and our staff in the UK.

Keeping Children Safe

- **Caribbean project teachers workshop**

CCC carried out a workshop on innovative teaching techniques, **"Beyond the classroom: active methodologies: innovation and creative thinking"**, to the teachers from our Caribbean project. Although the goal was to involve only 39 teachers (those from the institutions), we saw the participation of 69 teachers in total.



- **ACTI Workshop to our partners**

From November 30 to December 2, CCC in partnership with ACTI (Action for Child Trauma International) developed training in **Accelerated Treatment for Childhood Trauma "CATT" (for its acronym in English)**, for 20 people from our partner organisations. They participated in this course for learning techniques to help the children of their communities to recover from trauma; This was also a space to exchange experiences and reflect on the importance of self-care when working with CYP. Additionally, 3 participants advanced in the training process as **instructors** in the CATT protocol, at the end of their training they will be qualified to train personnel in this methodology.



Events



- **Thames Walk**

On the 17th of June, we enjoyed an incredible day with all our supporters in London: a 10-mile walk along the Thames with a picnic in the beautiful Richmond Park. We loved seeing so many of you at our Thames Walk 2023! It was a beautiful day full of music, dancing, and community building, all to raise funds to continue helping children change Colombia



- **Project Talk**

On October 10, we held our annual Project Talk, an evening where CCC staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters were able to come together in support of our common cause. The event was hosted by Diana Bermudez, a British-Colombian actress. It opened with a speech from Carolina Giraldo, Chairwoman of CCC. We then had a panel featuring Stella Charman, Executive Chair of Trustees for ACT International, and Fabian Cardozo, co-Founder of The Rebel Business School; they spoke about their organisations' work, and how they partner with CCC.



- **Christmas Party**

As a sign of gratitude for an amazing year. Volunteers, staff, outreach team and trustees gathered to celebrate Christmas at The Dickens Inn in London. This was the first Christmas party CCC hosted. One of our ongoing supporters sent a check specifically to invite all the team for a nice treat. Thank you very much Mary!



- **Project Launch - Colombian Consulate**

The following week, on October 18, CCC hosted the official Project Launch for 'Colombia Colores', the London-based initiative aimed at educating children of the Colombian diaspora about their culture, and encouraging them to feel more connected to their roots.

The event, held at the Colombian Consulate, was intimate and informative. Those in attendance learned about the inspiration for the projects, its logistics, and its goals. The children at the event were allowed to be creative in a separate part of the room, doing an activity that involved listening to the sounds of Colombian nature and drawing their interpretations



- **Advocacy activities Commission of Truth representatives**

We continue our work by hosting advocacy events, in alliance with 'Rodeemos el Dialogo', with the British government, universities in the UK, and diplomatic bodies, by promoting the chapter of the Colombian Truth Commission about children and young people.



Thank you!



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Children Change Colombia is a UK registered Charity, No. 1075037.
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Photographs show real participants of the projects.