



**CHILDREN  
CHANGE  
COLOMBIA**

## Yes, she can!

“This work is so important to me,” says Lina, a youth leader from Si Mujer, our partner in Cali. “It’s a step towards ensuring that violence against women is no longer tolerated, that women can make their own decisions about their bodies, and that maternal health is considered a priority. I want to dedicate my life to continuing the fight for gender equality.

“I can’t believe how much I’ve changed. Si Mujer’s youth leadership training has opened my eyes and my mind. It helped me challenge prejudices I didn’t even know I had. Gender roles, stereotypes, and abuses of women’s rights are so ingrained in the culture I grew up in that it’s hard to notice their existence. They’re just part of what’s considered normal.

“I’m part of Si Mujer’s youth committee now. We help the project staff to share what they taught us about our sexual and reproductive rights with thousands of other children in our city. I’ve given talks and run campaigns in the most vulnerable communities, where nobody knows about their rights or how to get sexual health care. I made sure my school fulfilled its responsibility for providing unbiased sex education. My little sister says I’m her inspiration!”

Our project with Si Mujer is a huge success, as Lina’s testimony above shows. She’s just one of 67 young people who have trained as youth leaders with Si Mujer. They are helping hundreds more young people join the fight against gender violence and discrimination.

**With your support many more  
children like Lina can make Colombia  
a safer, fairer place for everyone.**

**PLEASE DONATE TODAY**

# Rebuilding the lives of former child soldiers

A key task for Colombia this year is reintegrating ex-FARC members safely and successfully back into society. When the ex-combatants are children and adolescents, who have led a life that no child should ever lead, the task of ensuring a safe and fulfilling future for them is even greater.

Two years ago we said that we urgently wanted to support children who had escaped life in armed groups. Thanks to the response we received to our appeal, we were able to start work on the issue with Fundación CRAN, an organisation based in Bogotá who operate the Colombian government's rehabilitation and reintegration programme for demobilised young people under 18.

When we began working with them, CRAN already knew that the government programme had a low success rate. They put this down to the lack of autonomy the

young people had whilst on the programme. So, since 2015, we have been supporting CRAN to develop and run an enhanced version of the government programme. From the outset, CRAN has involved the participants in re-designing the services on offer to them, to make sure that they really do address their needs. Based on the young people's input, CRAN ran activities about money management, accessing public services like libraries, and applying for education and training.

In addition, CRAN has provided the young people with intensive therapeutic support to help them overcome the traumas they experienced in the armed groups. This focus on improving the young people's mental health will have a long-lasting effect on their lives, making it easier for them to succeed professionally and socially once they leave CRAN's programme.

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## Adapting to a changing context

Even in the two years since we started supporting CRAN, the challenges for reintegrating ex-child combatants have evolved. This has meant that our work with CRAN has needed to change too.

When the FARC formally demobilised this year, instead of their child members joining the government reintegration programme, the majority of them chose to return directly to their families. This was too dangerous before the FARC demobilised – the group's continued presence in the children's communities put them at risk of re-recruitment or violent reprisals for having escaped. Although this new trend is positive in that it means that children can return to people and places they are familiar with, it also carries severe risks. Families lack capacity to support their children's complex emotional needs, and are not equipped to help them navigate reintegration into a community where memories of the brutalities perpetrated by the FARC are still raw.



Faced with stigmatisation and burdened with past emotional traumas, the young people are extremely vulnerable to recruitment into other armed groups, many of which are already mobilising to fill the power vacuums the FARC has left. Indeed, the presence of these groups puts all children, not only former combatants, at high risk of recruitment.

## How is Children Change Colombia helping?

Over the next 3 years, we want to support CRAN to continue running their enhanced model of the government programme for demobilised children in Bogotá. But we also want to help them reach out into the communities where children are now at an even greater risk of recruitment or re-recruitment. This work will take place in three areas: Soacha, near Bogotá, an area with high levels of child recruitment by illegal armed groups; and in the Putumayo and Meta regions, which used to have a

very strong FARC presence. Following the model they developed in Bogotá, CRAN will design a programme of activities in collaboration with the young people themselves. It will focus on building resilience to the pressures that lead to recruitment and on planning safe and fulfilling futures.

## The long-term success of peace in Colombia relies on the inclusion of these young people

CRAN will also work with adults to break down barriers that threaten the successful reintegration of former child combatants across the country. This will involve work at various levels:

- 1 Training for parents and members of the wider community to help them protect rather than stigmatise ex-child combatants. They will be encouraged to value the young people's opinions and include them in decision-making processes at home and in community forums.

- 2 Training for community organisations in Soacha, Putumayo and Meta so that they can begin running CRAN's programme themselves.
- 3 Sharing their enhanced, youth-friendly model with other operators of the government programme nationwide, and supporting these operators to integrate CRAN's model into their work.
- 4 Creating opportunities for demobilised young people to work with employers, educational institutions and NGOs, to eradicate stigma and prejudice against the young people and to improve their access to these services.

These are ambitious plans, but the long-term success of peace in Colombia relies on the inclusion of these young people. Our experience with CRAN shows us that, with the right support, children are capable of overcoming the enormous challenge of redefining their lives after escaping an armed group.



Please help us support them through this life-changing process. **Donate today.**



# ★ Star Supporters ★

## Viva Colombia Fiesta

On March 29th, our promoter **Consuelo Recalde** organised an incredible Colombian fiesta at BPP University in Waterloo, with the support of the BPP Students' Association and its president Anwar Azari. This authentic Colombian Fiesta presented a memorable performance by Angelica Lopez & Her Band, who took us on a musical journey around Colombia through a mixture of traditional Colombian rhythms, folkloric dances and contemporary songs. All funds raised were donated to Children Change Colombia.

## La Caleñita

**La Caleñita**, a traditional Colombian bakery in Elephant and Castle has been supporting our work since 2009. Oscar Caicedo, manager of La Caleñita, has placed a collection box in the establishment where customers can make their donations. When asked about the community's contributions, he said: "They like giving donations; I do not need to ask them to do it."

## Jack Perez-Haydock

Last May Jack Perez-Haydock ran the Edinburgh Marathon for CCC. Jack was touched by the work we do to help children at risk of violence or recruitment into armed groups to develop the skills they need to overcome these challenges. On his fundraising page, **Jack received lots of supportive messages from his friends and family who generously made donations and helped him raise £521.94.**

## A look ahead – our neglected issues

As many of you may know, Children Change Colombia aims to work on the most neglected issues facing children and young people. These are issues that pose a serious threat to children's rights and wellbeing, but on which not enough work is being done to counter the harm caused.

This aim to work on the most neglected issues is one of our core objectives, guiding everything we do.

**Through our partnerships with local organisations, we are currently addressing the following neglected issues facing children and young people:**

- recruitment into armed groups and reintegration into society
- sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence
- commercial sexual exploitation

Of course, as the context in Colombia changes, so do the threats facing children. Over the last year, Children Change Colombia has been undertaking research on a new neglected issue – the issue of mining and the harm that this can cause to children. We have found that children living in communities surrounding legal and illegal mines are at particularly high risk of child labour, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and of recruitment by armed groups to work in or around mines.

We therefore sent out a call for new partners working on this issue earlier this year. We received lots of great proposals from organisations working all across Colombia. Our Programmes Team is currently in the process of selecting an organisation that we think can best reduce the neglect of this issue, keep children safe from immediate harm and defend their rights in the long term, and that will be open to sharing learning with the rest of our partners. With your support, we hope to start work early next year with the organisation we select to protect children in mining communities from exploitative labour and abuse, and help them build a safe, fulfilling future for themselves.

Looking even further ahead, over the next 12–18 months we will be researching two additional issues – education and disability. Children Change Colombia has worked on both of these issues in the past, working on violence in schools and exclusion from education with two of our partners last year. From our experience, we believe that there are elements of these broad issues that are neglected, and that this neglect is causing harm to children's rights. We will be working over the coming months to better understand how these issues have changed in the current context of Colombia and where the gaps are that others are not filling. We will keep you updated!

**Children living near legal and illegal mines are at particularly high risk of child labour, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and of recruitment by armed groups**



## Rebuild Mocoa

In the wake of the landslide that hit the southwestern town of Mocoa, Colombian students in the UK came together and created the Rebuild Mocoa initiative to support children and young people who survived this tragedy to rebuild their lives and their communities. The campaign **raised over £14,000** from individual donors

in the UK and abroad and from a variety of events including parties, yoga classes, film screenings, plays, live performances and exhibitions. Thanks to the commitment and hard work of the students, Rebuild Mocoa managed to fully fund CCC partner Casa Amazonia's emergency project in Mocoa!

**For more stories and to get inspiration for your own fundraising activities, please visit our Star Supporters blog on [childrenchange colombia.org/starsupporters](http://childrenchange colombia.org/starsupporters)**

# Thank you

Thanks to all our supporters whose generous donations make our work possible!

We'd also like to thank our amazing volunteers who donate their time and help by doing translations, providing support in our office and assisting at fundraising events.

## Individuals

Luisa Fulcher donated Spanish classes in exchange for donations. Mixy Fandino donated a percentage from the sales of her Wayuu bag collection. The Everett family ran a Colombian after-school club at the Colby School in Norfolk and Gloria Grajales and Patricia McGruddy held a picnic to celebrate Colombian Independence Day. Thanks to Jamie Murray and David Sproul for the money raised through the Deloitte sweepstake.

## Community

A big thank you to everyone at Brampton College, Colby School and St. Winefride's Convent School.

Thanks to religious groups that have supported our work in recent months, including: Alexandra Presbyterian Church (Belfast), St. Botolph Lullingstone Parochial Church, St. John's Hyde Park, St. Joseph's Catholic Church (South Molton), St. Margaret Clitherow Church Third World Group and St. Mary's Catholic Church.

## Sports Challenges

Thanks to everyone who raised funds through sporting challenges, including: Sofia Martinez and Viviana Morrison.

The British 10K team: Jane Green, Cristian Pedraza and Natalia Ramirez.



If you would like to organise an event to fundraise in support of our work or for more information about fundraising challenges please contact [doreta@childrenchange colombia.org](mailto:doreta@childrenchange colombia.org) or 020 7549 0225.

# Upcoming events

## Colombian Food Tour

- 23rd September 2017 • 21st October 2017
- 11th November 2017 • 9th December 2017

Taste some of Colombia's most traditional dishes in a 3.5 hour walking tour in the heart of the Colombian community in London. For more information, visit [childrenchange colombia.org/foodtour](http://childrenchange colombia.org/foodtour)

# News

## Fernando Montaña presents Hollywood Classics raised over £9,000!

A big thank you to Fernando Montaña, The Hippodrome Casino, Oliver Davis, Thorsten Dreyer, Jonathan Hill, Alejandro López, Simona Marsibilio, Sergey Rybin, Kolja Schallenberg, David Warren, Axel Zischka and all volunteers and attendees for contributing to a fantastic event!



## Thames Walk

This year's Thames Walk raised nearly £11,000! We would like to thank all participants, fundraisers, and stewards for making this event such a great success. Join us next year, on Saturday 9th June 2018.

## Help us spread the word!

By distributing Children Change Colombia leaflets around your local community, whether it is to your school, church, library or workplace, you are helping us tell more people about what we do! Please contact Doreta ([doreta@childrenchange colombia.org](mailto:doreta@childrenchange colombia.org)) if you would like to help.

# Letter from the Director

## Dear Friends

When the peace accord with the FARC was signed, many were hopeful that it would bring a real improvement in the lives of the children who lived every day with the threat of armed conflict.

It looks like this is happening. The number of officially registered new victims of the conflict – those who've suffered intimidation, physical violence and forced displacement – fell from 180,423 in 2015 to 82,237 in 2016. In 2017 it looks like this trend is continuing.

These are great gains for Colombia. It is urgent now that we don't let them slip away.

We know that in many parts of Colombia children's rights are still under great threat. This is particularly true of those remoter areas with weak government control and a high presence of the many armed groups that remain. We also know that children who have been displaced or are from indigenous or Afro-Colombian communities still live particularly insecure lives. CCC and our partners are working with these communities in just such places – Buenaventura, Putumayo, Quibdó.

If we act now to help make children and their communities more resilient to the threats that persist, then conflict and

insecurity can be a thing of the past, permanently and for everyone.

The challenge is to ensure that the foundations of lasting peace – safety, prosperity and greater equality – can be built in all communities. If we can do this then what the peace process has started can continue until no childhoods in Colombia are marred by fear of violence or lack of opportunity.

We know that with inspiring youth leaders like Lina, who is challenging gender discrimination and violence (see the front cover), and the other brave young people you can read about in these pages, Colombia can meet this challenge.

It is so heartening to them and to all of us to know that you, Children Change Colombia's supporters, are standing shoulder to shoulder with them.

Thank you.

Duncan Millar, Executive Director

Autumn 2016

# Regular Giving

Donate by Direct Debit (this helps reduce our administration costs)

£5  £10  £20  Other £  monthly/quarterly/annually (delete as appropriate) starting on 1st  15th  (please tick as appropriate) of (month) 20 (year)

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society:** Please pay Charities Aid Foundation Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Charities Aid Foundation and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To:	Bank/Building Society
Address:	
	Postcode:
Name(s) of account holder(s):	
Bank/Building Society Acc. No.	Sort Code

## Your details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms	Service User Number 691313 CAF, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME 19 4TA	
Address:		
	Postcode:	
Email:	Tel:	
Signed:	Date: dd/mm/yy	

## Gift Aid Declaration

I am a UK Tax Payer and I would like Children Change Colombia to reclaim the tax on all qualifying donations I have made to them in the past 4 years as well as any future donations. I will notify them if I am no longer eligible or if I change address.

To qualify for gift aid I understand that I must have paid income / capital gains tax that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs I donate to will reclaim on my Gift Aid donations in the tax year in which they are received and that other taxes such as Council Tax and VAT do not count for this purpose.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: dd/mm/yy

# Colombian Diary from our Project Officer, Camilo

“Throughout Colombia’s history, the Pacific region’s mainly Afro-descendent and indigenous population has been excluded from much of the country’s social and economic development. Widespread violence, illegal mining and drug cultivation by armed groups have hit the population and the environment hard. Promises by the government to protect the lives and livelihoods of local people have repeatedly come to nothing.

For three weeks in May, over 200,000 people brought the two largest cities in the Pacific region, Buenaventura and Quibdó, to a stand-still with peaceful demonstrations requesting an end to government neglect.

In Buenaventura, 60 civil society organisations, including our partner Fundescodes, united to propose a programme of city-wide developments that respected the population’s rights and cultures and the natural environment. In talks, the government promised to speed up the process of providing clean drinking water to all parts of the city, to improve the quality of education, and to provide more healthcare and recreational facilities. Young people from Fundescodes played an important role in this process, contributing their opinions and experiences in these discussions with public officials.

In Quibdó, demonstrators gained government commitment to their requests for completing work on roads to two major cities in Colombia’s interior, and building five new hospitals in the region. Our partner Circulo de Estudios joined these

demonstrations – children, young people and women organised traditional dance and music presentations to celebrate their Afro-Colombian culture, as well as joining marches and participating in community debates.

The young people’s participation is another example of their ability to change Colombia. By demanding their rights, they are helping to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion that has affected their communities for generations. While it’s possible that the government’s commitments won’t come to fruition, the demonstrations and public debates have mobilised the population of this marginalised region and shown them that by joining together peacefully to argue for social change, they can transform their societies.”



## Please donate now

### Donor details (We won't share your details with anyone else.)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Email:	Tel:

### Your donation

I would like to make a donation of: £5  £10  £25  £50  £100  Other £

### Payment details

(By BACS transfer: **Children Change Colombia**; Sort code **60-07-02**; Account no. **31623212**)

Cheque (Please make cheques payable to **Children Change Colombia**)

Visa  Mastercard  CAF Charitycard

Card No.

3 digit security number (on signature strip):  Expiry Date:  /  (mm/yy)

Signed:  Date:

**Children Change Colombia, Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street, London, EC2A 4LT**

t: 02075490225 e: info@childrenchangecolombia.org w: childrenchangecolombia.org

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Signed:

Date:

- Yes, I require an acknowledgement (please tick or we will assume you do not; this will help us save on administration costs).
- Please send me a fundraising pack

## Thank you!