



**CHILDREN
CHANGE
COLOMBIA**



Dancing in the street

“I’m learning skills that will help me for the rest of my life,” enthuses 13-year-old Alicia from Quibdó. “The project has kept me and my friends away from violence and helped us discover our talents.

“Horrible things used to happen at home that made me cry and made me angry. I didn’t know what to do so I used to self-harm - it was the only thing that calmed me down. Now I’ve left that all behind and express myself through dancing and singing! It’s taught me to respect my body and share my emotions instead of bottling them up. Dancing inspires me and makes me happy!

“People have a negative image of our neighbourhood. They’re scared to come here because they think we are all bad people and drug addicts. It is true that life here is tough – some boys from my street have joined gangs and many girls my age are pregnant. Their parents are hardly ever around to pay them attention.

“As part of the project, we’ve put on plays and dance performances which have helped people in the city to see a different side to our neighbourhood. They’ve seen that people here work hard, have talent and a desire to do

something positive with their lives. Children in my class used to say rude things to me about where I am from, but since watching me perform in public they see me differently. I have more friends now and they want me to teach them what I’ve learnt.”

With your support, more children like Alicia will have the chance to develop life-changing artistic skills and stay safe from the violence that surrounds them.

When young people like Alicia are safe and inspired they can begin to confront the risks and challenge the inequalities that make their neighbourhoods such hard places to grow up.

**Will you help them?
PLEASE DONATE TODAY**



Making a dramatic change

Partnerships are at the heart of what we do. Without our partners, we wouldn't be able to make a lasting difference to the lives of children affected by poverty, conflict and neglect in Colombia.

So we are delighted to tell you about our plan to take our partnership work to the next level – for the first time in CCC history we are planning a collaboration between our Colombian partners and another UK-based children's rights organisation, Theatre for a Change.

Over the years, we've seen great examples of our partners using dance, drama and music as practical tools for defending children against threats to their safety and for protecting their rights in the long-term. By participating in the arts children like Alicia (on the front cover) can learn an enormous

amount - and have loads of fun! So we have decided to bring six partners together in a new project. It will combine the most important shared elements of their work – artistic expression, children's self-protection, youth leadership, community engagement and youth advocacy.

This is where Theatre for a Change come in – they have developed a unique approach to using theatre as a tool to help children change their communities. It has already proved effective in Africa and South Asia, and they have asked us to be the first organisation to apply it in Latin America.

The problem

Across Colombia, children and young people face risks and injustices that lead to them feeling unprotected at home and insecure in their community. Last month the Ministry for Health revealed that 41% of children in Colombia have suffered physical, psychological or sexual abuse. Three quarters of these incidents occurred at home. Feelings of loneliness and fear can lead children to believe that armed groups and other exploitative adults offer physical and emotional security.

As well as facing the risk of recruitment by armed groups and criminal gangs, the children we work with are disproportionately impacted by poverty, a lack of access to state resources, and marginalization from political participation.

WHAT IF...

through creating and performing community theatre, children could be protected from the risks around them?

WHAT IF...

children had the chance to learn about their rights and identify local issues that threaten those rights?

WHAT IF...

children had the opportunity to develop their communication, self-confidence and assertiveness skills, and learn how to reduce their vulnerability?

WHAT IF...

children could directly engage with adults in positions of power to ensure safer homes, schools and neighbourhoods?

It is a tall order, but the Theatre for a Change approach has shown that it can make these changes.



Changing communities through theatre

Using the Theatre for a Change approach, we want to teach children and young people to write and perform interactive theatre productions, as a means of helping them to find their voice, tell their stories and discover shared experiences. Like dance, drama also helps children to develop a greater understanding of their body and its abilities, to express difficult emotions, and to learn to work as part of a team.

Over the course of our yearlong project, 180 children will give a series of public performances in their home communities. These will all shine a light on a particular risk that they feel is threatening their rights. This risk will be chosen by the children at the start of the project but, given the contexts they live in, it could be sexual or domestic violence, gang recruitment, child labour, or poor quality healthcare and education.

As well as teaching children life skills that will help them protect themselves from harm in the future, the performances also aim to drive practical and positive changes in the children's communities. Local adults (parents, family members, teachers, councillors, law enforcement agents) will be invited to attend the performances. Some of these will be people who the children would never normally meet, let alone talk to about their lives. At each performance, the children will first act out the play themselves. Then they will repeat it, asking adult audience members to replace certain characters, obliging them to step into the children's shoes. The adults will be able to experiment with different ways of confronting the challenges that their characters face and find a better ending for the story.

Through this approach, children gain a voice and people with the power to protect them find out what it is like to face the children's everyday threats and struggles. The power holders can then commit to becoming part of the solution.

The evidence shows that this project has the potential to make lasting changes in six of Colombia's most marginalized communities. We need your support to raise the money required to start the project. Please donate what you can to help us get this life-changing work underway.



Give today to help children to change Colombia!

The impact of your support

Last year we worked with 2,066 children and young people.

As a result of this work, we also indirectly impacted the lives of a further **1,856 children** – siblings, peers and neighbours of the children who participated in our project activities.

We also worked with adults – parents, teachers, policy makers – to encourage and help them to keep children safe now and in the long-term. **1,162 adults** participated in our project activities or attended forums, performances and campaigns led by children from our projects. A further **940 adults** benefited indirectly from our work.

Insight into the numbers

These **2018** figures are in comparison to **6,000** children and **1,941 adults** in **2017**, an anticipated reduction because of a change in the projects we funded. In **2017** two of our partner projects came to a successful conclusion. They both incorporated large awareness-raising events and campaigns and therefore reached a large number of people.

Working with fewer children has real benefits – we aim to offer intensive, personalised, holistic support to children, families and community members to help them internalise what they learn through the project and use this to protect themselves and other children in the long-term. This kind of support can mean working with fewer young people.



Protecting children's rights

IN 2018 WE PROTECTED THE RIGHTS OF:

- 2,066** children to freedom from violence, abuse and neglect.
- 1,490** children to protection from sexual exploitation.
- 1,919** children to freedom of expression.
- 1,943** children to recovery from trauma.
- 2,066** children to relax, play and participate in a range of cultural activities.
- 635** children to protection from involvement in war and armed conflict.

Raising awareness and improving practice

IN 2018 OUR 7 PARTNERS:

- shared their experience of good practice with 90 organisations working in the field of children's rights across Colombia.
- helped at least 8 other organisations to improve their practice.

Thank you for making this work possible through your generous support!



Planting peace

Over the last year, we have been supporting our partner Fundescodes in Buenaventura to protect children from violence and rebuild protective and peaceful communities.

As part of the project, 100 children and young people aged 8-18 have designed and run a series of creative campaigns in their four neighbourhoods to promote peaceful coexistence among their neighbours. They managed to involve around 300 children and adults.

The campaigns included meetings to discuss children's rights with the local authorities, a 'Hug-athon' in which the children went from door to door offering hugs and kind words to their neighbours, clean-up activities to reclaim playgrounds from disrepair and use by armed groups and drug dealers, setting up a community kitchen garden, film screenings and mini-theatre productions.

It typifies the community spirit that the children's campaigns inspired.

The community garden was one of the project's great successes. It typifies the community spirit that the children's campaigns inspired. This is in direct contrast to the widespread mistrust and hostility that the children say permeates community relations.

The initiative was entirely the idea of the children and young people – they asked their neighbours to donate cuttings of plants that have a particular significance or use in Afro-Colombian culture, as well as disused tyres to use

as planters. This gave them the opportunity to promote the gardening scheme and encourage conversation between the generations.

The next day, the children invited the community to join them in clearing the yard of the local community centre, painting the tyres and planting them up.

To end the day, the children had organised a 'community cooking pot' – community members brought ingredients for a large stew which they cooked outdoors and then shared amongst all the neighbours.

One of the boys involved in the activity told Fundescodes that he was amazed by the kindness he experienced that day from his neighbours – "They came out to offer us fizzy drinks when they saw we were thirsty!" he told a member of staff.

Community members say that they see maintaining the garden as a symbol of peace and community reconciliation.



Thank you to all our supporters and volunteers who make our work possible!

Meet our Star Supporters



Felipe Peñacoba & Sara Lievano Ramos

Felipe and Sara were two of our superstar fundraisers at the Thames Walk, getting a group of 21 people to join and securing £1,230 matched funding from Felipe's employer, Finastra.



Kaitlin Fitzpatrick

Kaitlin and her fantastic fifth grade Spanish class in Michigan organised a fundraising project for CCC. They sold bracelets, posters and other arts and crafts, raising £470! Thank you for showing us that children everywhere are changing Colombia!



Tom Hollander

A big thank you to actor Tom Hollander for presenting our BBC Radio 4 Charity Appeal, and thank you to all of you who donated. It was a huge success, raising over £12,000!

Thank you to everyone who supported our Thames Walk!

This year we had our biggest turnout ever with over 120 supporters, new and old, joining us in Richmond Park! We exceeded our fundraising target and raised over £11,000, which is fantastic and will have a big impact on our work this year and beyond.

We couldn't have done it without some top volunteers and star fundraisers. So we want to say a big thank you to **Gloria Grajales** for providing delicious Colombian treats, **Yvonne Velasquez** for her brilliant networking and promotion, **Lucinda Sturgis** for being our top fundraiser, our Patron **Fernando Montaña** for joining us and leading the dancing at the picnic, and all our stewards for making the day such a success.

Thank You to our CCC Community!

Thank you to the groups, schools and churches that have supported us in recent months through various fundraising events and collections, including: **St. Joseph's Catholic Church (South Molton)**, **Alexandra Presbyterian Church (Belfast)**, **Carmelite Monastery (Preston)** and **St. Winefride's Convent School**.



Art and Drinks Tour

We want to say a big thank you to Art Historian **Daniela Galán**, who runs a monthly Latin American Art Tour at the Tate Modern and donates £20 from each ticket to CCC.

Are you interested in art? Then join the tour on **Saturday 28th September**, **Saturday 26th October** or **Saturday 30th November**.



'I Love Latino' Night

A big thank you to **Abhijit Kapadia** for his support as CCC representative at our monthly Latin club night in Camden.

Why not come along? Tickets are £8, all of which is donated to CCC! Upcoming dates: **Friday 27th September**, **Friday 25th October** and **Friday 29th November**.

Want to get involved? Contact Grace at grace@childrenchange colombia.org or 020 3559 6756 to discuss how you can help us spread the word, fundraise, lend your skills as a volunteer and much more.

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends

I hope you were moved by Alicia's story (see p.1) . It's very tempting to see Alicia's problems as all having been solved by dance. Of course, it isn't that simple.

Many of the things that make Alicia's childhood so difficult – poverty, poor schools, unsafe streets – are beyond her powers to fix on her own, and certainly not with a song and dance routine.

And yet, as she so brilliantly describes, learning to dance and perform with others has kept her safe and given her a self-confidence that leads to so many other things.

Part of the problem that children face in neighbourhoods like hers is that they are dismissed or ignored by powerful adults, be they in their families, their schools or in the corridors of power. But articulate and inspired young people like Alicia can't be ignored for long.

That's why we want you to help us inspire more young people through our new Colombia-wide theatre project, Theatre for a Change. It will help children all over Colombia stay safe. It will also provide them with a way of communicating directly and powerfully with adults who have the power to make their communities safer places to grow up.

You have helped children like Alicia believe they can change their world. As I said in my last letter, this is not only because of the money that you give. It is also because when young people in Quibdó hear that 150 of you turned up to our Thames Walk to support them (see p.6), or that hundreds of you read our newsletters, it gives them strength and makes them realise that they are not alone.

Please keep up this fantastic support. It makes so many good things possible – many more than we are able to describe in these pages.

Many thanks



Duncan Millar,
Executive Director

Autumn 2019



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.

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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	

Please return completed form to **Children Change Colombia, The Green House, 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road, London, E2 9DA.**
For more information about Gift Aid, Direct Debits, legacies or payroll giving, please telephone our office on: 020 3559 6756

Colombia diary

The newest member of our team, **Juan Sebastian Londoño**, our Project Officer in Bogotá, writes about his first impressions of working for CCC.

"It's been just over a month since I joined Children Change Colombia, and I would say that the best thing about my experience so far has been the direct (and sometimes remote) contact I have had with the partner organisations and the rest of the CCC team.

In terms of the partners, I have had the opportunity to get to know people with extensive experience of protecting the rights of Colombian children. Their expertise and passion for seeking the best for children and young people are clear. I've seen for myself the hugely important human resources and infrastructure our partners have in place. I now look forward to travelling to meet staff from our partners who operate outside Bogotá. I can't wait to get to

know communities that are far from Bogotá in geographical terms, but which I already feel close to because of the warmth and friendliness of the people we work with there.

On the other hand, I have the constant and unconditional support of the CCC team in London. My first impression of them was their understanding of Colombia. Almost all of them have lived here at some point and they have very special memories of the tropical (and subtropical) time they spent here. I feel sure that they understand the context and the specificities of working here. I must add that I am not working alone in Bogotá; I have my colleague Blanca. She has been at CCC for some time and she guides and advises me in my daily work.



If I had to choose one word to describe my job, it would be 'mediator'. I think this will be my main role from now on: to act as a bridge between the UK team and our much loved and respected partners. It's terrific to be part of such a diverse and committed team of people."

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:

Gift Aid Declaration

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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:

- Yes, I require an acknowledgement (please tick or we will assume you do not; this will help us save on administration costs).
- Yes, I would like to receive information about CCC's work protecting children's rights in Colombia, fundraising events and campaigns, and how I can get involved.

Children Change Colombia, The Green House, 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road, London, E2 9DA
t: 020 3559 6756 e: info@childrenchangecolombia.org w: childrenchangecolombia.org

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Thank you!