



**CHILDREN
CHANGE
COLOMBIA**

Claiming age-old rights in a new Colombia

“I want to defend my community’s rights and give my people the chance of a better future,” says Tomas, 17, from the Awa indigenous group. “Indigenous people have age-old rights and privileges; I want to learn to fight for them. This is what motivates me to get up, to go to school every day, to stay focused.”

The Awa has a population of 27,000, of whom 3,000 live on their ancestral lands in the far south of Colombia’s jungled Putumayo region, right on the border with Ecuador. Like many indigenous groups across Colombia, the Awa are threatened with cultural and even physical extinction. For decades, indigenous communities have been caught in the crossfire between rival armed groups, their lands littered with landmines and repurposed for drug cultivation. Children and young people can see little future for themselves or their communities beyond ever-present conflict.

Now that I understand the problems my people face, I want to study law. I want to help my people to claim their rights.

“When I was young I thought I’d become a soldier, but now I have a different vision of my future. The project has helped me understand the complexity of the problems our society faces. I’ve discovered my voice, my rights, my freedom to have opinions. I’ve learnt to discuss my ideas with other young people and to listen to and understand theirs. We’re learning how to live peacefully and build a strong society. Now that I understand the problems my people face, I want to study law. I want to help my people to claim their rights.”

Young indigenous Colombians like Tomas hold the key to their communities’ survival. Please help them to gain the education they need to succeed.

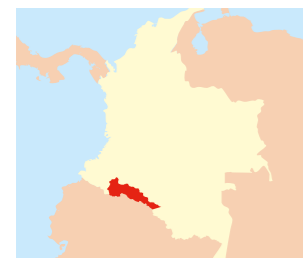
PLEASE DONATE TODAY



Empowering Colombia's young indigenous people

Since 2016, we have been working in remote, largely indigenous communities in Putumayo with our partner organisation Casa Amazonia. When our project started, we hoped that the peace accord with the FARC guerrillas – who controlled swathes of rural Putumayo – would make it possible for indigenous people to receive much-needed support from the government. The accord included commitments to help indigenous groups reclaim their ancestral lands and to protect their unique rights and cultures.

Instead, however, violence against rural and indigenous people has spiked as various armed groups have rushed to fill the power vacuums in former FARC territories. The largely indigenous towns and villages in Putumayo where we are working with Casa Amazonia are some of the worst hit parts of Colombia. Under the promise to “maintain order”, armed groups have set strict curfews that limit people’s ability to earn a living and frequently distribute pamphlets containing threats against anyone who questions their authority.



On top of this, illegal gold mining, coca plant cultivation, drug trafficking and landmines are destroying the land and whole areas are effectively

inaccessible. This seriously jeopardises traditional indigenous farming, hunting and fishing practices and so accessing affordable, nutritious food has become a growing challenge.

A lack of strong state institutions in the area has meant that even when community members try to seek protection or redress for violations of their rights, the support they receive is inadequate. Added to this, the remote and inaccessible nature of the indigenous communities means that few humanitarian organisations operate there.

Children’s needs overlooked

In the daily struggle for survival, the basic needs and rights of children and young people are often overlooked. It is common for parents to encourage children to drop out of school at an early age to help earn money for the family. The best-paid work is in illegal drug cultivation, and the head teacher of a small local school told us that at least 50 of his pupils have dropped out to pick coca leaves.

Girls, who are often considered secondary to boys in these strongly patriarchal communities, frequently leave education when they are ‘sold’ into marriage by their families as teenagers, or because they are expected to carry out domestic duties at home. The widespread acceptance that men have control over girls’ lives and

bodies has led to girls facing a very high risk of sexual abuse, both within the community and at the hands of members of armed groups.

Laying foundations for change

All this is why our work with Casa Amazonia is so important. It is a lifeline - the only support many of the communities receive. The project provides a crucial combination of therapeutic support and training in rights and advocacy skills to empower indigenous schoolchildren and young people, their families, teachers and local leaders to protect the future of their communities.

Colombia’s indigenous groups – in numbers

102 indigenous groups living in Colombia today

64 languages spoken

3.5% of the national population

40% are under 15 years old.

67 groups at risk of extinction, 36 because of the armed conflict.

So far in 2018, **10,600** indigenous people have reported abuses of their rights caused by on-going armed conflict.

In response to requests from local girls, the project also has a strong focus on combatting sexual abuse and promoting girls’ rights. Casa Amazonia runs activities and meetings to help children and adults – both males and females – to question gender stereotypes, recognise girls’ strength and potential, and make changes in their everyday lives to ensure girls have the same opportunities as boys.

So far, the project has made some important progress, laying the foundations for lasting changes in the communities.

Taboos around discussing sexual abuse are starting to dissolve – children no longer think that it is normal and they are starting to talk openly about the issue with their friends and families. Parents and teachers have started taking greater responsibility for protecting children from abuse and are supporting them to remain in, and enjoy, school.

As their homes and schools have become safer, more supportive places, the children have had the opportunity to explore their interests and abilities and make plans for the future. The head teacher mentioned above told us that Casa Amazonia has helped many of his pupils to turn their lives around and become role models for their peers. Girls are also starting to demand equal treatment to boys, and Casa Amazonia is there to offer support to help them cope with any resistance or stigma they face.

Casa Amazonia is also working with local government institutions, helping them understand the needs of indigenous communities and supporting them to take rapid, effective measures to protect children. The local education authority has started taking steps to improve schools across the region, to make them safe, stimulating environments where children and teachers want to be.

Our work with Casa Amazonia is far from over. The children have a clear, positive vision of their future – where they and their communities flourish, where the local authorities protect their rights, and where girls and boys are equal, active members of society.

We need your support to make sure this vision can become a reality for these children.

Please donate today.



A mandala – designing and making this symbol of healing brings children and adults together.

The impact of your support

We've been crunching numbers to measure and understand the impact of our work with children (and the adults responsible for their care) in Colombia last year. We're delighted to share with you some of the wonderful, life-changing achievements that you helped to make possible!

- **6,166 children and young people** directly participated in activities run by our partners in 2017.
- We funded training, therapy and events for **1,941 adults** - parents, teachers, policy makers - to help them to keep children safe now and in the long-term.
- We also indirectly impacted the lives of **21,835 children, young people and adults**.

That's 30,000 people better able to protect their own or others' rights!

Our 25+ years of working with children have convinced us that when children are able to speak up for their own rights, this is a powerful means of ensuring that these rights are protected in a lasting and effective way. By gathering 'impact data' each year, we can back-up this conviction with hard evidence, like this...

- **9 in 10 children that we worked with in 2017 showed that they had learnt how to protect themselves from violence and abuse.**
- **9 in 10 adults learnt how to make a more protective environment for children, keeping them safe in the long-term.**

To learn more, visit our new impact webpage today!
www.childrenchange colombia.org/what-we-do/impact

Spotlight on Cali

Between 2015 and 2017 we had lottery funding for a project with our partner Si Mujer to set up and run a 'Child and Youth Friendly Healthcare Service' in the city of Cali. Over the 3 years, the Service reached **10,000 children and young people aged under 22** who may otherwise have had no access to professional, un-biased information, advice or care on issues around sexual health, unwanted pregnancies, and sexual and domestic violence.

- 2,000 young people accessed the Service's medical and psychological consultations.
- At least 2,200 young people learned to make informed choices about contraception usage.
- 300 young people took part in intensive training in sexual and reproductive health and rights. They replicated this training in local schools, care homes, youth organisations and more, reaching 3,000+ young people.
- Youth leaders organised public outreach events and campaigns to raise awareness of sexual health and rights, reaching 7,000 children and adults.
- Over 600 staff from healthcare services across Colombia were trained to provide better support to young people around sexual health.

These numbers exceed the Service's targets by up to 60%!

The high uptake demonstrates the critical need for accessible, youth-friendly sexual healthcare in the Cali region; a gap which the Service has been able to fill with great success.



What will your legacy be?

Want to make a long lasting difference to the lives of the most at-risk children in Colombia now and in the future?



Then leave a gift in your will and help children like Tomas, who you read about on the front over, and many more young people continue to change Colombia.

Get a FREE will with CCC!

Regular donations help us plan for the future and give children the support they need to build a safe, happy future for themselves, and their friends, families and communities.

As a thank you to all our standing order and direct debit donors for your committed support, we would like to offer you the chance to get your will written for FREE! We have partnered with Farewill, an online will writing service to offer you a free will. To claim this offer just contact Grace at grace@childrenchange colombia.org or use any of the details on the back page to get your special code!

We value the support of all our donors, and for all other CCC supporters we are offering you the chance to write your will for a discounted rate of £45! To claim your discounted will go to www.farewill.com and use the code CCC50. If you want to leave a legacy to CCC, but don't want to do it online, there are other services, such as The Co-operative, or you can find a solicitor on the Law Society website: www.lawsociety.org.uk.

Remember your loved ones first

We understand that you want to make sure your loved ones are provided for, and we would always encourage you to ensure they are cared for first. But you don't have to choose. You can make a huge difference to the lives of children in Colombia and leave us a gift once your friends and family have been provided for.

Legacies are vital to our fundraising! They enable us to send money to projects when it's needed most, when other funding isn't available.

There are three types of gifts you could leave us:

- **A residuary legacy** - A percentage of your estate, once all other expenses, debts and gifts to loved ones have been deducted, is donated to CCC.
- **A pecuniary gift** - A specific amount of money as a gift.
- **A specific gift** - A specific or named item, such as jewellery, antiques or other personal items.

No matter how big or small, any gift you leave will help us continue to defend the rights of the most at risk children in Colombia, now and in the future.

Thank you

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

Individuals



This year ten people decided to fundraise in a new way with great success: they set up "fundraisers" on Facebook asking for donations to us instead of birthday presents. It's very easy and quick to create and the money raised goes a long way. You can join the movement too! Our Facebook fundraisers are: **Acos Acos, Daniela Acuna, Tatiana Angel, Laura Ardila-Angele, Ana Maria Heilbron, Nestor Isaza Morales, Paola Molina, Ivonne Patricia, David Peña** and **David Uher**.

Luisa Fulcher donated Spanish classes in exchange for donations. **Aruna Patel** fundraised through work at Barclays Bank. **Lester Coupland** proposed us as the beneficiary charity of a dress down day with his employer, **Cranfield University**. **Teresa Hare Duke** from the **V&A Museum of Childhood**, **Paola Melli** from the **South Social Film Festival** and **Emily Richards** from **Bath University** invited us to have fundraising stalls at their events. **Lyn** and **David Payne** held a chilli fundraising night for their running group. **Chris Davies** from **El Cafecito** donated a percentage from his sales.

Community

A big thank you to everyone at Colby School.

Thanks to religious groups that have supported our work in recent months, including: **Alexandra Presbyterian Church (Belfast)**, **Carmelite Monastery (Preston)**, **Justice and Peace Group of The Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church (Billericay)**, **St. Botolph Lullingstone Parochial Church** and **St. Joseph's Catholic Church (South Molton)**.

Sports Challenges

Thanks to everyone who raised funds through sporting challenges, including: **Derek Carr, Danny Chalkley, Leonardo Duque, James Grant, Jack Perez Haydock** and **Eduardo Torres**.



Upcoming events

Colombian Food Tour
15th September 2018
20th October 2018
24th November 2018

Come along to our monthly Colombian Food Tour to discover some of the best Colombian eateries in London and taste authentic Colombian recipes. For more information, visit childrenchange colombia.org/foodtour



News

Summer Fundraising events

We are pleased to announce that we raised over £6,500 from the Thames Walk and the Colombian World Cup Party last June. A big thank you to everyone who helped us make this possible!

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 or 020 3559 6757.

WE HAVE MOVED!
We recently moved our London office and have a new address and phone numbers. Please make a note of our new contact details, which you can find on the donation form.

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends

At Children Change Colombia, we try to do everything we can to stand up for the rights of children who are at greatest risk of neglect or abuse, and who might not otherwise have many people on their side. We all feel privileged to be working in an organisation with such an admirable aim.

But having an admirable aim is not enough. There are many Colombian organisations who aim to protect children's rights. Some of them are better at it than others. For that reason we take great care to research and select our partner organisations so that we are working only with those who can turn their admirable aims into reality.

How do we know we are doing this? Because once we have begun working with a partner, we devote time to helping them gather information on the changes they are bringing about in children's lives - for example, in children's understanding of their rights, in their capacity to speak out when they feel threatened, in the extent to which they feel safe - and we work to understand how these positive effects of our work persist over time. (You can read about some of the fruits of this work on page 4).

It is because of this painstaking work that you can be sure your support is having a measurable and lasting effect on the lives of children and young people in Colombia.

Just as we are trying to ensure that our work has an impact on children's lives that reverberates long into the future, we hope you will want to ensure that yours will service and making provision for Children Change Colombia in your will. Much of the work we do today is funded by people who had the same generous forethought years ago. Such support is vital to us, so please consider it.

With thanks, as ever, for all your support, however you give it,

Duncan Millar,
Executive Director

Autumn 2018

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
Address:
Postcode:
Email: Tel:
Signed: Date: dd/mm/yy

Service User Number 691313
CAF, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME 19 4TA

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

Colombia Diary

From our Colombia Director, Natalia Ucrós

“In June I participated in the second learning meeting of Comic Relief’s ‘I Define Me’ programme, which we are part of with our partners Tiempo de Juego and Albergue Infantil, alongside other organisations from Colombia, the UK and South Africa. This 3-year programme seeks to protect girls and young women involved, or at risk of becoming involved, in gangs. It has a strong emphasis on learning because worldwide very little is known about the impact of gangs on women and girls’ lives.

Eighteen months into the project, we aimed to share experiences in terms of project design, implementation and effectiveness. We also shared significant findings so far.

It was fascinating to discover that the situations the projects face are very similar, even though we’re in different countries. We all have difficulties getting cooperation from key institutions, although I was surprised that the police prove more cooperative than schools. Another shared problem is ensuring the safety of the project team – working with groups of troubled young women accustomed to violence can be a risk.

It was also great to learn how the different projects manage to draw the girls in. One London based project manages to do it rapidly by giving support in moments of crisis when young women are admitted to hospital; our project

does it through play and by helping girls discover their individuality, as distinct from their gang identity; but it is always by creating an emotional link with the project.

I loved seeing how all the projects are working to recognise the talents of these young women, who are usually only seen as problems. I’m very proud to be part of a network of organisations that is constantly learning about how to change families, schools and communities so that, through the work of the girls themselves, they really can become more caring environments.”



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, 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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You can opt out of receiving newsletters at any time, just contact us using any of the details above

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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).
- 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.

Thank you!