



**CHILDREN  
CHANGE  
COLOMBIA**

# Champions of Peace

Jefferson is a self-assured and articulate 15-year-old from Buenaventura. He loves football and chess. Now, through our partner Fundescodes, he's discovered a new passion – film making. With his friends at the project, he makes films that shine a light on the reality of life in their community, one of the most violent and historically neglected in all Colombia.

But Jefferson hasn't always been the confident young man he is today. Growing up in a place where conflict, extortion, drugs and domestic abuse are common can have a severe impact on children's mental health. When Jefferson joined the project a few years ago he was painfully shy; He would stare at the ground and couldn't make eye contact with the adults who spoke to him. Even so, he knew he'd found a safe haven.

**When Jefferson joined the project a few years ago he was painfully shy.**

**Please help children like Jefferson to do more with their lives than they ever knew was possible.**

**PLEASE DONATE TODAY**

He enjoyed learning about his rights and feeling like he was part of a movement for change in his community.

The project recognised his potential and invited him to join their young leaders group.

**Within a year, he was unrecognisable!**

Within a year, Jefferson was unrecognisable! He quickly learnt to use a camera and became the go-to person for taking photos and filming interviews at the project. He started to help plan Fundescodes' public events and took care of attendees on the day.

Last year he was chosen to open Fundescodes' annual youth forum on children's rights. In a strong, clear voice he welcomed over 200 children and adults from Buenaventura's most marginalised communities. His voice defied fear - not only his fear of public speaking, but the fear generated by the pervasive violence of armed groups that has paralysed and silenced his community.

Jefferson is proof that even in the most difficult places, when given a chance and safe surroundings, children can flourish and become the champions of peace in Colombia.

This a real story and both Jefferson and his family give full consent for his name and image to appear in this publication.



# Defying fear and reigniting hope

The city of Buenaventura, where we have been working with our partner Fundescodes for two years, is a paradox. It is home to the country's most important port – each year around one million containers pass through its docks, generating \$5 billion US dollars of tax revenue. Yet for decades its largely Afro-Colombian inhabitants have faced the highest levels of poverty and insecurity in Colombia.

Despite government investment to modernise the port, the city itself suffers from severe under-development. Many neighbourhoods do not have access to running water or reliable electricity, poverty levels reach 80%, just one in five children receive a full secondary education, and poor healthcare provision means that the infant mortality rate is twice the national average. This already extreme situation is compounded by the long-term presence of armed groups. The local population has been repeatedly caught in the firing line in the groups' brutal battles for territorial control, and children are particularly at risk

of being used as informants, drug traffickers, combatants or for sex. As a result, thousands of families have been uprooted, fleeing their homes to relocate to other parts of the city, only to face violence once again. Weak public institutions, hampered by corruption, have been unable to fulfil their responsibility to prevent, and protect children from, multiple abuses. People in these communities feel abandoned and have lost hope that their situation will ever improve.

## Children leading change

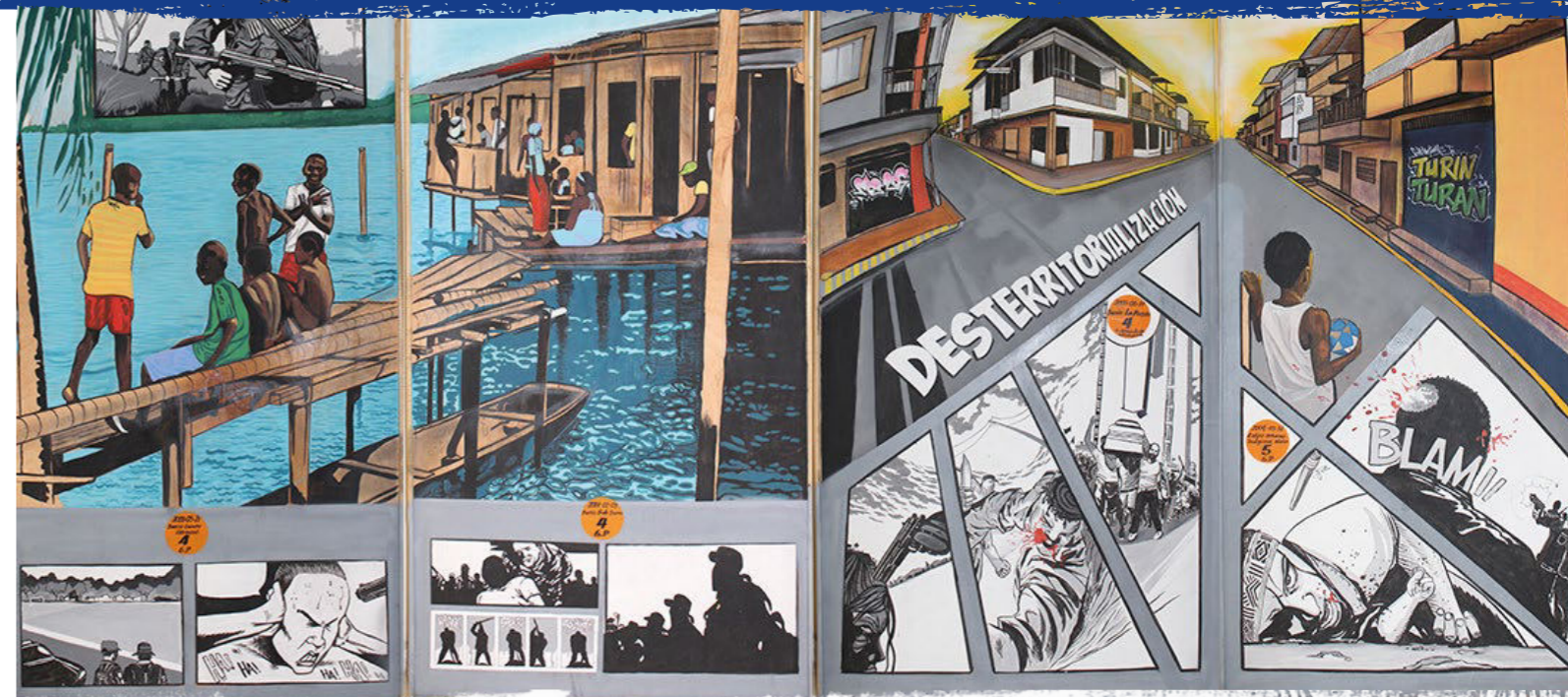
There is an urgent need to ensure the situation does change. The safety of thousands of children, and the future of peace in Colombia, relies on it. At Children Change Colombia, our experience convinces us that the only way to bring about effective change is to empower communities to take the lead in making it happen.

Thanks to your support for Children Change Colombia, Fundescodes is currently working in four of Buenaventura's worst-affected

neighbourhoods to support the city's youngest generation, children like Jefferson, to reignite hope and a commitment to protecting children's rights within their communities.

Some highlights of this approach in action are:

- Fundescodes helped one community set up a 'Chapel of Memory'. Adorned with photographs of community members who have been killed or disappeared with armed groups, it is now the site of regular vigils. These displays of unity and remembrance are also peaceful acts of defiance of the fear and hopelessness that has silenced these communities.
- As we mentioned in our last newsletter, during a month of city-wide demonstrations against government neglect, Fundescodes' youth leaders met with public officials to share their ideas and opinions about developments required by the city's youth.



Artwork: "How violence has taken away our territory and identity"

- Children have led community clean-up campaigns, bringing over 600 children and adults together in one year to reclaim public football fields and playgrounds from neglect or appropriation by armed groups.
- Last September, 14-year-old Nicol travelled to Bogotá for the first time in her life to sit on the panel at our youth forum alongside a Colombian Presidential candidate. She spoke emphatically about the need for Colombia's national government to pay attention to the constant abuses of children's rights that occur in Buenaventura.

## Navigating new threats to peace

The surge in energy and hope within Buenaventura has been mirrored in other similarly marginalised areas of Colombia. This is due, in large part, to the commitments made within the recent Peace Accords to promote political participation within long-marginalised sections of Colombian

society. However, this surge has been counteracted with a spike in brutal reprisals by armed groups. In the 16 months since the Peace Accords were signed, over 200 local leaders have been assassinated for seeking to improve living conditions in their communities. Fundescodes has felt this backlash directly. In January a local human rights activist, Temistocles Machado, who had supported Fundescodes' activities in his community, was killed. Since then the Director of Fundescodes has himself received threats.

With tensions high across the city and heightened fear of the repercussions for anyone who questions the status quo, we at Children Change Colombia are working more closely than ever with the team at Fundescodes to help them find a way to continue their vital peace-building work, without putting themselves, or the children and young people, in danger.

Fundescodes' team of local people have the insight and expertise to

provide support to children and their families on how to protect themselves from new risks as they arise. As an initial precaution, they have decided that this year their work with children will focus less on public displays of activism and more on the use of media – radio, social media, film and newspapers – to engage with the wider community.

This is undeniably a complicated and hazardous context for us to be working in. But this is precisely why Children Change Colombia is in Buenaventura. Children there urgently need immediate protection and safe, supportive spaces in which they can explore their talents and use them to contribute to transforming their city for good.

**We need your support to make this work possible. Please donate today.**

**At Children Change Colombia, our experience convinces us that the only way to bring about effective change is to empower communities to take the lead in making it happen.**







## Transforming neglected regions - Project Talk 2018

This year's talk focused on our work with children at risk in some of the remotest and most neglected regions of Colombia.

We premiered two new films on the night which gave touching insights into the reality of life for young people who are growing up cut off from the resources and opportunities that so many of us take for granted.

**You can watch the films online featuring Jefferson from the front page at: [childrenchange colombia.org/project-talk-films](http://childrenchange colombia.org/project-talk-films)**

As context for the films, our team explained why we are moving into remoter communities. These communities - Buenaventura, rural indigenous communities in Putumayo, and the coastal and jungle areas of Chocó - are on the 'front line' of the peace building process in Colombia. This is where lasting peace will be won, or lost.

Following the 2016 Peace Accord between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas, many hoped that it would lead to the withdrawal of violent actors from vulnerable communities, particularly those who had been effectively cut off from the rest of Colombia by the conflict. This, in turn, was to bring the resurgence of local democracy and the extension into these communities of security and public services from the state, which had hitherto been unable to enter. This remains the hope. But the course of rebuilding communities was never going to run so smooth.

In many communities, the formal withdrawal of the FARC has led to the incursion of other illegal armed groups. The end of the FARC conflict has brought into sharper focus the persistence of other underlying problems - the continued malign influence of the international drugs trade, and the marginalisation that disproportionately affects indigenous and Afro-descendant communities.

Such factors pose real and urgent threats to the safety of thousands of children and young people in remote and neglected communities. It is precisely to these communities that Children Change Colombia is extending its work, in order to empower young people to build resilient communities and to resist the many threats that they continue to face.

We believe it is crucial to give these children the skills and opportunities to make their voices heard. This, alongside making sure adults listen to what children have to say, is the foundation of our work.

So much can start for children when they feel listened to - it boosts their self-esteem, it challenges their sense of hopelessness, and it lets them know that their opinions and ideas are valuable.

**As a Children Change Colombia supporter, you play a crucial role in making these children feel listened to. Thank you for reading and sharing their stories and for letting them know you're on their side!**

# Eat, Travel, Work for Colombia!

## Colombian Food Tour

We invite you to immerse yourself in Colombia's culinary culture and taste its unique tropical flavours! From empanadas (stuffed and deep fried corn pastries) and juices of exotic fruits to the famous aguardiente (anise-flavoured spirit), this 3.5 hour tour in London will give you the opportunity to taste Colombia's most popular foods and learn the fundamentals of Colombian cuisine.



### NEXT DATES:

21st April 2018

19th May 2018

16th June 2018

21st July 2018



For more information, visit [childrenchange colombia.org/foodtour](http://childrenchange colombia.org/foodtour)

## Children Change Colombia Tour with Soliman Travel



We are thrilled to announce that the first Children Change Colombia Tour will take place this October! With the help of Soliman Travel, we have created a bespoke 10 day itinerary including some of Colombia's highlights such as Bogotá, the coffee zone and Cartagena as well as a visit to one of our partners in Bogotá.



For more information about the itinerary and bookings, get in touch with us at [events@childrenchange colombia.org](mailto:events@childrenchange colombia.org). As there are only 20 places available on the tour, booking is on a first come first served basis.

**Work for Colombia month**

This May donate one day's earnings to Children Change Colombia and help make Colombia a safe, peaceful place for everyone! Take part in our Work for Colombia month by choosing one day when you donate your skills in exchange for donations to Children Change Colombia or donate a fraction of your working day's salary to us.

For more information, get in touch with us at [events@childrenchange colombia.org](mailto:events@childrenchange colombia.org).



# Thank you

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

## Individuals

**Johanna Freudenberg** raised funds through holding an art exhibition of painted collages of Latin American Myths and Legends. **Luisa Fulcher** donated Spanish classes in exchange for donations and **Clara and Graham Greenaway** organised a fundraising and live entertainment evening. **Lyn and David Payne** held a chilli fundraising night for their running group. **The Everett family** with the support of **Colby Primary School staff** raised funds through a 30-day no sugar challenge. **Nicky Arvaniti (Honorary Consulate of Colombia in Athens)** and **Yolanda Franco V. (Colombo-Hellenic Association)** invited us to hold a raffle at their event. **Ignacio Diaz Pascual** organised a fundraising Christmas dinner and **Ricardo Carvajal** sold hydroponic herbs at work. **Steve Henderson** donated the proceeds from a concert and **Angelica Lopez** fundraised through the Te Amo Colombia Christmas Party. **Hannah Jefferies** and **Poppy Smith** organised a swap shop event. **Maevie Murray Smith (Capital International)** and **Rod Long** invited us to have fundraising stalls at their events. CCC team members **Grace Gaywood, Jennifer Pobi-Browne** and **Doreta Linakis** did a 30-day no sugar and no alcohol challenge.

## Community

A big thank you to everyone at **Our Lady and St Joseph Primary School** and **St Winefride's Convent School**.

Thanks to religious groups that have supported our work in recent months, including: **Alderney Quaker Meeting, Alexandra Presbyterian Church (Belfast), Canterbury Cathedral, Carmelite Monastery (Preston), Church of the Immaculate Conception (Stroud), Congregation of La Retraite, Justice and Peace Group of The Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church (Billericay), St Albans' Religious Society of Friends, St Andrew's Clubmoor (Liverpool), St John's Hyde Park and St Joseph's Catholic Church (South Molton).**

## Sports Challenges

Thanks to everyone who raised funds through sporting challenges, including: **Katherine Delgado, James Lightbody, Clint Nash, Ed Watts and Nick Whitcroft.**

The Hampton Court Palace Half Marathon team: **Martin Diaz and Lucia Pascual.**



# Upcoming events

## Thames Walk Saturday 9th June 2018

Join us and invite your friends and family to our annual ten mile walk into beautiful Richmond Park! It's a great opportunity to spend a day with our team and lovely community of supporters and help us raise funds in support of our work.

### Stewards needed

We urgently need volunteer stewards for the Thames Walk. Stewards will need to be available for a "Dummy Walk" on 12th May, as well as the actual walk on 9th June. If you'd like to volunteer please contact **Doreta (doreta@childrenchangecolombia.org)** by 4th May.



## Watch Colombia at the World Cup with CCC at Floripa EC2 on Thursday 28th June 2018!

Watch Colombia's crucial third group game vs. Senegal on a big screen and dance to live Colombian music in support of La Selección and children's rights in Colombia!

### Help us spread the word!

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

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@childrenchangecolombia.org** or **020 7549 0225.**

# Letter from the Director

## Dear Friends

A large part of my job as director of Children Change Colombia is to be comfortable about asking for money. It is sometimes tricky. But I only have to think about young heroes like Jefferson - who you can read about on the front page - and thousands of children like him who overcome huge fears and face awful risks every day of their lives, and somehow my embarrassment disappears. So here goes.

Last year was a good year for Children Change Colombia's fundraising. Thanks to your generosity we raised more than we have ever done in all our 27 years! With this support, we achieved so much: we helped build protective communities for children in Buenaventura, Putumayo and Quibdó; we helped young people face down the threat of sexual violence and stand up for their sexual and reproductive rights in Cali; we continued to enable traumatised child combatants to return to a safer life and supported vulnerable girls to avoid the dangers of gangs in Bogotá; and we stood by children and families trying to defend themselves against sexual exploitation in Colombia's capital city.

We want to do all this and more in 2018. But we are facing big challenges.

Although we continue to gain new support from people and institutions who really care about Colombia, we have recently lost the support of some significant funders. This is no reflection on the quality or importance of our work. They have all confirmed as much. But it is a consequence of the fact that the international spotlight has moved on from Colombia.

The effect of this is that some children we had aimed to carry on standing by in 2018 may be newly at risk. In particular, our capacity to fund the crucial work of ACJ, who are working flat out to protect children from sexual exploitation in the dangerous 'tolerance zone' for sex work in Bogotá, now hangs by a thread.

So if you normally find a fiver for children at risk in Colombia, please see if you can make it a tenner; if it's normally £20, please see if you can find £40. If you can do that, then we can make sure our work to make childhood safer in Bogotá doesn't have to end prematurely.

Thank you from us all.

Duncan Millar, Executive Director

Spring 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. <input type="text"/>	Sort Code <input type="text"/>

## 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

# A genius at work ccc Director, Duncan, in Cartagena.

The auditorium lights went down. As I waited to go on, the murmur of excitement from the crowd exhilarated and disturbed me. It's not easy to take the stage in front of five hundred people who have paid to see genius...

Happily, from a customer satisfaction point of view, they weren't expecting genius from me.

The genius they were expecting was Royal Ballet star and CCC Patron, Fernando Montaña, and I had the privilege of introducing him to his huge crowd of fans at the Adolfo Mejía Theatre in the fascinating Caribbean city of Cartagena\*. Fernando was performing as the headline act of the 2018 Hay Festival.

Fernando gave us a magical performance of a classical ballet piece of his own composition, the Golden Dove, set to the music of Stravinsky. This was followed by a collaboration between Fernando and the Colombian New Music group Suricato, fusing classical, urban and traditional Colombian music and dance.

This is not a review. If anyone has the eloquence to adequately describe the performance, it's not me. Just make sure that whenever you get a chance to see Fernando perform – and you will if you keep in touch with CCC – you take it.

The Hay Festival event was crucial for CCC. As our supporters, you know that our mission to help children build lasting peace in the most vulnerable communities across Colombia is as important as ever. And you know that it is working. But it cannot stop now. To ensure that it doesn't, as the

international focus of concern moves away from Colombia, we are trying hard to increase our support in the place where people have the most immediate interest in a Colombia that is safe for all its children. That place is Colombia itself.

Fernando is a star now recognised all over Colombia. But he grew up in Buenaventura and Cali in neighbourhoods that are still disregarded and neglected. He is the perfect person to make sure that the support we get from people in Colombia can begin to equal the fabulous solidarity from you, our supporters in the UK. So many children and young people rely on it.

We can't thank Fernando, or you, enough.



\*Which you can visit on our 2018 CCC Tour of Colombia (see page 5)

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

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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.

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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!