



Children of the Andes

Building a better future for vulnerable children in Colombia

Spring 2013

Going for Goals

Eduardo's life had been marked by violence since he could remember.

His dad was murdered when he was 5. His mum had left years earlier and was living in Cazucá, a sprawling *barrio* on the outskirts of Bogotá. Alone, terrified and desperate to find her, he packed his bag and caught a bus to Bogotá.

When he finally arrived, Cazucá was far from the dream home he had pictured for himself. He didn't feel safe anywhere. Outside he was harassed by the gangs that ruled the streets, at home he faced his violent stepfather. By the age of 12 he was taking drugs – it was the only refuge he could find.

One day Eduardo heard that some *locos* (crazy guys) had started a football school called Tiempo de Juego on a piece of waste-ground near his house. Eager to do something fun, he borrowed some trainers and went along. Now, 6 years later, Eduardo's life has been transformed by the project – he has given up drugs, is finishing school and has become such a committed and passionate advocate that he was recently made a 'youth leader', with a small salary.

Children like Eduardo grow up feeling abandoned, forgotten, and unable to escape the violence that becomes part of their daily life. Children of the Andes is working with Tiempo de Juego to use sports, drama and music to help children and young people like Eduardo develop the skills and positive friendships to build a better, safer future for themselves and for their community.

We can only help children like Eduardo with your support.

Please make a donation today.



Displacement & poverty in Cazucá

Cazucá, in Soacha, near Bogotá, where COTA's new partner Tiempo de Juego (Time to Play) is based, is one of Colombia's poorest and most dangerous communities. 7 out of 10 people living here have been displaced by Colombia's ongoing, violent conflict and over 74% live below the poverty line.

Families living in this sprawling *barrio*, ascending up into the hills surrounding Bogotá, have limited access to even the most basic services, including water, electricity, health care and education.

Many of the families here are large and headed up by single mothers, who struggle to make a living and look after their children with no support. Most schools in Colombia only provide half-day schooling, so with nowhere else to go, many of the children and young people from Cazucá spend a lot of time on the streets. Here they are faced daily with the harsh realities of drugs, crime and gangs, and are vulnerable to being recruited, often forcibly, by urban militia groups, which have a strong presence in the area.

In Cazucá, children like Eduardo grow up on the fringes of society

and reach youth and adulthood with a sense of hopelessness and desperation. Their chances of finding a job or making an income are minimal – partly due to the stigma of living in the area. Although they are full of potential, they don't have the skills they need to build a positive

Crowds of young people were flocking to play every weekend, clamouring to do something positive, together.

future for themselves, or role models to show them that a life away from gangs and violence is possible.

COTA and Tiempo de Juego begin work this year on an exciting new project aimed at generating these vital skills and positive role models for children in Cazucá.

Protecting children through sport

Tiempo de Juego began when its founder started visiting Cazucá to play football on a piece of waste ground with some young people he'd met while he was researching the gangs that are so prevalent in the area. Before long, crowds of young people were flocking to play every weekend, clamouring to do something positive, together. They developed a way of playing centred around guiding 'principles', like honesty, respect, tolerance, equality, commitment and team work. The idea was that the principles could be applied in other areas of the children's lives, helping to protect them from the numerous risks they faced.

In just 4 years, Tiempo de Juego has already helped 1,600 children and young people from Cazucá to make themselves safer from the dangers that surround them. The programme has grown from football to include dance, basketball, athletics, and a work creation programme.

A programme for children and young people, led by children and young people

As the programme grew, a structure was developed where 'youth leaders', young people trained and supported by professionals, began to lead some of the activities themselves. The effect of this is that children are inspired by the leaders and adopt the principles they have learnt in the project hoping that they too can become 'youth leaders' one day. In turn the young leaders realise the responsibility of their position and become positive role models both within the project and in the community itself. This is vital in Cazucá, where, for many children, their only role models are involved in gangs and violence.

Supporting positive change

In 2013 COTA and Tiempo de Juego will be working together to bring this project more expressly out into the community and into schools, using music and drama - subjects chosen by the young people themselves. In their half day outside school 100 children and young people will develop and produce two performances, using them as a way to showcase their positive abilities, and engage their families, community members and other young people in the community in positive change.

In just 4 years, Tiempo de Juego has already helped 1,600 children and young people

And as for Eduardo – well, thanks to Tiempo de Juego, Eduardo has turned his life around. After going to that initial game, he started going to their football sessions every Saturday, happy to have something positive that he could look forward to during the week. As time passed, he became fonder of his football friends than the friends that he used to take drugs with. He turned 17 last year, and realized he had gone 4 years



without taking any drugs. Thanks to his dedication and commitment to being a positive force for change in his community, he became one of Tiempo de Juego's 'youth leaders', which earns him a monthly salary. Eduardo is also finishing school, and last year he organised a football tournament at his school, using the skills he learnt at Tiempo de Juego to help other young people see that there is a way to escape the violence that surrounds them, that sports are better than drugs and violence, that in this community young people can still have dreams.

Please donate and help more children like Eduardo fulfil their potential.



How we made a difference in 2012

2012 was a challenging year financially for Children of the Andes and we were not alone. A poll commissioned by the Charities Aid Foundation revealed that 40% of the UK's charities fear they will have to close if the economic environment does not improve.

However, thanks to the generous support of our donors, we were able to weather the storm. Income for 2012 was approximately £659,000 (based on a pre-audit calculation) and 83p in every £ was spent on our work in Colombia.

Most importantly of all, in 2012 we continued to work with nine partners; provided support to over 13,000 children, young people and their families; and helped drive forward new areas of learning that have the potential to impact on children across the country.

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In Cali, **Formacion d' Futuros** and **Fundamor** continued to lobby local and national government to provide support for care-leavers and those still in care, to help them make the difficult transition to independent living. This included a



meeting with Colombia's National Director of Social Services. They have now been offered their first government contract to provide leaving care services to children in Cali, and hope this will be the first step to the introduction of a national leaving care support programme.

Fundación para la Habilitación y Rehabilitación Basada en la Comunidad continued to support disabled children and their families from volunteer-led centres based within communities. In 2012, they were able to promote the inclusion of almost half of the children they worked with in mainstream local schools, supporting the entire process from the challenging task of securing a school place, to providing

specialist support and training to teachers, families and children to help ensure the inclusion process is successful.

In Cartagena, **Renacer's** campaign to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) went from strength to strength. In 2012 Renacer worked intensively with 52

vulnerable children and their families, and a further 1,795 teachers and 155 community members. As well as helping to build a much greater public understanding of the risks of CSEC, this work is having an enormous impact on the lives of vulnerable children, helping them to improve relationships with their family, progress at school and understand what can put them at risk of CSEC.

In Bogotá, **Albergue Infantil Mama Yolanda** completed the first year of their Comic Relief-funded Family Reunification Project, which works with children who have been in care or who are at high risk of going into care. At the end of the year, 95% of the children and young people involved in the project remained with their families without returning to care or to life on the streets – a fantastic improvement on the national average of 66%.

These are just a few of the successes of 2012 – please check out our website for updates on all of our partners.

**On behalf of the children,
our partners and the team,
thank you for making this
inspiring work possible.**



Swim Providencia: a challenge like no other

COTA supporter Nicholas Pole has embarked on a personal challenge of a life-time. This April he is taking on a sponsored swim around Providencia Island, Colombia. The total distance is 24 km, including 10 km against strong currents - it's no surprise that this challenge has never been completed before. Nic made a first attempt last year but was unable to finish due to the currents.

This year he is pulling out all the stops to complete the challenge. The beautiful waters surrounding the island are rich in marine-life, including shark, stingray and turtles.

If you enjoy swimming in open waters, watch out for the chance to do the challenge yourself.

Nic has already raised over £1,600 but he has a target of £15,000. You can sponsor him at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ProvidenciaIsland> or by donating in the usual ways (mentioning Nic's challenge).

Once he's completed his challenge, Nic is hoping to use his experience to make the Providencia Challenge an annual event that would be open to all our supporters.



Interested in sports activities in Colombia this year?

Women's race (2km, 4km, 8km or 12km)
Cali – 5 May; Medellín – 14 July; Bogotá – 29 Sept.
www.carreradelamujercolombia.com

Warriors Challenge (5K with 12 obstacles)
Bogotá – 6 April; Medellín – 4 May.
www.desafiodeguerreros.com

Cali Half Marathon – 2 June.
www.juanhocorrelon.com

Bogotá Half Marathon – 28 July.
www.mediamaratonbogota.com

10K Night Race (date and place TBC).
www.energizernightrace.com

News

Thames Walk

This year our Thames Walk will not be on the bank holiday, but on Saturday 11th May. Our traditional route along the riverside and into Richmond Park is very scenic. We hope you will join us with family and friends.



Stewards Wanted

We urgently need volunteer stewards for the walk. Thames Walk stewards will need to participate in a “dummy walk” on April 27th as well as being available on 11th May. If you would like to help, please contact Heidi (heidy@childrenoftheandes.org) by April 24th

Farewell to our Chairman

David Maxwell Scott stood down as Chairman of the Board of Trustees in December 2012 after nine years of service. David’s support, guidance and wisdom helped transform COTA into a more professional and strategic organisation. We welcome Caroline Moser as our new Chair. Please see her letter below for more details.

Letter from the Chair

First and foremost I would like to say how honoured I am to have been appointed to this position. I am taking over from David Maxwell Scott, who has been such a powerful and impressive Chair for the COTA Board over the past 9 years, bringing with him important skills from the business sector. My own background and links to Colombia are somewhat different, but nevertheless I hope they will serve me in this position.

I first went to Colombia in 1968, and as an urban anthropologist have undertaken a number of studies there over the years. I did my PhD fieldwork in an open fruit and vegetable market in a very poor *barrio* of Bogotá way back in 1970. As I sat daily in the market, I watched how the sellers with dignity and pride, minded their young children along with selling their wares. While at the World Bank in Washington DC, I led the team undertaking the first study of violence as a development problem, undertaken across the country in Colombia. Then together with Cathy McIlwaine, also now a COTA trustee, as well as a team of Colombian academic and NGO researchers, I undertook a nine-city study of local community perceptions of crime and violence. Finally, together with Colombian trainers I spent four years building the capacity of the Women’s Initiative for Peace (IMP) to help them as a broad popular women’s network

to reach consensus so as to be able to participate more effectively in the different peace processes that have occurred in the country. Here I learnt so much about the courage and bravery of women and children who had been displaced, persecuted or attacked in their daily lives.

As Colombia rebuilds its country and economy, its society and local communities, it is a particularly exciting time to support initiatives such as COTA. I bring to the position of Chair not only a long-term knowledge of Colombia, but also a strong love and appreciation of the extraordinary warmth and hospitality of its people, and a firm commitment to assist COTA with its strategy to build a better future for vulnerable children, and the associated organizations it supports.

In the coming months and years I hope to have the opportunity to meet many of COTA’s supporters as well as visiting the projects it supports in Colombia.

With best wishes

Caroline

Thank yous

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

Individuals

Thanks to COTA Trustee Felipe Alviar-Baquero who raised funds by photographing his Olympic Torch with over 4000 people; Los Musicos (www.musicos.co.uk) for their gig in Spitalfields; Amparo Marquez, Camila Coulet and Sandra Prada who asked for donations instead of birthday presents; Andrea and Jan Stodieck who asked for donations instead of wedding presents; Jenna Lane who organised a Film Screening; Ana Martinez who donated the proceeds from an online sale; Resham Khiani who organised a fundraising pampering day; and Alejandro Cubillos who led a group of amateur runners.

Community

A big thank you to everyone at Haringey Sixth Form Centre, Kingston Grammar School (pictured below) and Magdalene House Preparatory School (Wisbech).

Thanks to religious groups that have supported us in recent months, including: Alderney Religious Society of Friends, Alexandra Presbyterian Church (Belfast), Barnstaple Religious Society of Friends, Canterbury Cathedral, Derby Cathedral, St Joseph's RC Church (South Molton), St Leonard's Toddler Group (Teignmouth).

Forthcoming Sports Challenges

Running:

The British 10K; London, 7 July

We have guaranteed places. Contact us to reserve one.

Cycling:

London to Brighton; 8 September

The spirit of the event is 'taking part' not 'winning' so you can go at your own pace. No previous experience is required.

Swimming:

Great North Swim; Windermere, 14-16 June

Taking place in the breath-taking surroundings of the Lake District National park, you can choose from ½ mile, 1 mile, 2 mile or 5K courses.

More challenges are listed on our website. For more info about participating in events and fundraising in your community contact heidy@childrenoftheandes.org or 020 7549 0225



Spring 2013

Regular Giving

Remember: a standing order is the most cost effective way for us to administer your contribution

Instructions to the Manager

Your account:

Name of the Bank or Building Society: _____

Address: _____ Postcode: _____ / _____

Account No.: Sort Code: - -

Your donation:

Please pay **Children of the Andes** (Account No.: **22052801**, Sort Code: **60-07-02**) at NatWest Bank plc, 14 High Street, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1AX,

The sum of £ _____ on the day of ____ / ____ / 20 ____
(This date should be at least one month from today).

And the same sum Monthly Quarterly Yearly

Your details:

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ / _____

Email: _____ Tel: (_____) _____

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____ (dd/mm/yy)

Gift Aid Declaration

I would like Children of the Andes to reclaim tax on any donations I have made over the last 4 years and all future donations until I notify you otherwise.

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Please let us know if you change your address or if you no longer pay an amount of income tax or capital gains equal to the tax we will reclaim on your donation (currently 25p for every £1 you give).

Please return completed form to Children of the Andes, Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street, EC2A 4LT. For more information about Gift Aid, standing orders, legacies or payroll giving, please telephone our office on: 0207 549 0225

Thank you!

Field Office Diary

Natalia Ucrós, COTA's new Bogotá Field Officer, recounts her recent visit to our partner Renacer, which works to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children in Cartagena

For my visit, the Renacer team had organised three meetings: one with the children that currently participate in the project, another with their families, and one with Renacer's team. I learnt something important from each of these meetings.

The time I spent with the parents and carers was great because I could see the changes that they had gone through regarding the children and their care. I also saw how important they found the project activities and the lessons they learnt from these. I was surprised to find only one man in the group of female carers and to discover what he had experienced and learnt from the project.

What I found most interesting about my meeting with the Renacer team was how they have learnt about and adapted to the circumstances

that they work in and how aware they are that each child has their own history and each changes at their own pace, but is at the same time linked with everything surrounding them.

I played with the children, we told each other stories and even sang together. It was wonderful to see them having fun and just being children – knowing the abuse and neglect so many of them have had to experience, sometimes at the hands of their own families and communities. I was fascinated to see how confidently they expressed themselves, giving such weight and meaning to their words

as they introduced themselves and told me all about their favourite things and their hopes for the future. The confidence they have gained at the project - and the way they've grasped the opportunity to act like the children that they are, to be able to make the most out of their childhood – moved me deeply.



Children of the Andes: Keeping children safe, defending children's rights and strengthening children's organisations in Colombia.

Please donate now

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

Title: _____ First name: _____ Last name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ / _____

Tel: (_____) _____ E-mail: _____

Your donation:

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

Payment details:

(By BACS transfer: **Children of the Andes**; Sort code **60-07-02**; Account no. **31623212**)

Cheque (Please make cheques payable to **Children of the Andes**)

Visa; Mastercard; CAF Charitycard

Card No.: Expiry Date: / (mm/yy)

Signed: _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____ (dd/mm/yy)

Gift Aid Declaration

I would like Children of the Andes to reclaim tax on any donations I have made over the last 4 years and all future donations until I notify you otherwise.

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Please let us know if you change your address or if you no longer pay an amount of income tax or capital gains equal to the tax we will reclaim on your donation (currently 25p for every £1 you give).

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 COTA fundraising pack

Thank you!