



Hidden Crimes

Confronting sexual violence against children

Juana was 8 years old when she was first raped by her godfather. She realised it was wrong but she didn't know what to do. She felt completely alone. There was no point talking to her mum or her older sister about it – she knew that it had been happening to them too.

Juana's teacher had received training from Si Mujer in detecting and preventing sexual abuse, so when Juana started acting differently in school her teacher suspected something was wrong and referred her to Si Mujer. Si Mujer gave Juana medical care and provided her and her family with psychological support to help them deal with their

traumatic experiences. With Si Mujer's ongoing help, the family reported the abuse to the police, and made it through the long and difficult legal process. Thanks to Si Mujer and the bravery of Juana and her family in standing up to their abuser, Juana's godfather is now in prison. Five years later Juana still receives regular counselling from Si Mujer and she, her sister and their mum are now rebuilding their lives together.

Sexual violence is a largely silent problem that affects thousands of Colombian children each year. Children of the Andes has begun working with Fundacion Si Mujer to help children like Juana stand up to abuse and to make it stop.

You can prevent more children like Juana from experiencing these terrible crimes.

Please make a donation today



Sexual violence and child pregnancy

In Colombia in 2011, 19,433 children and young people like Juana were reported as victims of sexual violence. Because of the hidden nature of this crime, where the abuser is often a close family member of the child, the majority of cases are never reported. It has however been estimated that around 200,000 children are sexually abused in Colombia each year.¹ Children and young people with disabilities, HIV and AIDs, or in care are even more vulnerable to this horrific hidden abuse.

200,000 children are sexually abused in Colombia each year,¹ and between 2010 and 2012 almost 18,000 child pregnancies were registered in the city of Cali alone.

Sexual violence is a violation of a child's basic rights. It damages their health, welfare and development, and it increases the likelihood that they will experience further abuse. It can also result in child pregnancy. Between 2010 and 2012, 17,578 child pregnancies were registered in the city of Cali alone. The majority of these pregnancies occurred in children from the lowest income groups, living in barrios on the outskirts of the city.

These children and young people do not have access to adequate information about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and many do not have the confidence to make informed decisions about these rights. Children in the area have told Si Mujer that in their communities and schools there are high levels of sexual violence and child pregnancy and that they don't know where to go when these things happen. These

same children were not even aware that intercourse with a child under 14 years old (the age of consent in Colombia) is considered rape.

Child Friendly Healthcare Services

In 2007 the Colombian Government created Child Friendly Healthcare Services, which aim to provide sexual and reproductive health services for children and young people to reduce rates of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. However, children and young people do not use these services because of the lack of privacy, confidentiality, and accessibility, and the continued stigma around sexual health topics. What's more, in practice these services provide little information on sex education and sexual violence, and no specialised care for victims of sexual violence.



Providing care for victims of sexual violence

COTA's new partner Fundacion Si Mujer currently offers the only comprehensive service in Cali for victims of sexual abuse. They have almost 30 years of experience working in this area both independently and with the Colombian government and international organisations. Si Mujer, with COTA's support, have developed an innovative new project – to set up their own child friendly healthcare service designed, implemented and run with the active participation and leadership of children and young people themselves, ensuring that it is easily accessible for all who need it. This service will target the most vulnerable children, and will specialise in providing care to children with HIV and AIDS, with disabilities, and who are living in care. To ensure that it is accessible to every child who needs it, a mobile version of the service will also travel directly into the most marginalised neighbourhoods.

The service will provide children and young people who have experienced sexual violence with high quality, easy to access information, support and care. This will include psychological counselling, emergency contraception, screening and care for sexually

Workshops, activities, and peer training help the children to understand what is right and wrong for their age, and to experience their sexuality in a healthy way.

transmitted infections and accompaniment through legal processes where required. In cases where rape has resulted in pregnancy, Si Mujer will provide unbiased information and care so that girls can make an informed decision about whether to continue with the pregnancy or have a termination, as is their legal right.

Preventing and reducing sexual violence

The project will also strengthen vulnerable children and young people's protection against sexual violence or abuse by providing sex education and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services. Through workshops,

activities in music and art, and peer training provided by youth leaders, the children will develop the confidence to be children, able to understand what is right and wrong for their age, and to experience their sexuality in a healthy way. They will be supported to understand about harmful and non-harmful relationships, and about the physical changes children go through, giving them a feeling of control over their bodies. They will also receive information and support about what to do and who to go to if they feel at risk of sexual violence.

Trained youth leaders will play an active role in promoting sexual and reproductive rights in their communities, influencing local and national government, and working with the existing services in Cali to help to improve the care available to all young people in the region.

This crucial new project can directly help thousands of children over the next 4 years, but we need your support to make it happen.

Please donate today and help us to give children a voice to prevent and protect themselves from sexual violence.

How COTA & Renacer are protecting children from Commercial Sexual Exploitation



We have already helped 140 children and mobilised all sections of the community to create a more protective environment for children & prevent CSEC

In July this year COTA and our partner Renacer reached the halfway point of our 5 year project to reduce and prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in Cartagena.

Cartagena is a city with two faces – the beauty and magic of life in the popular tourist destination contrasts sharply with the shocking poverty levels found outside the walled city, where large numbers of people, many of whom have fled violence elsewhere in Colombia, are struggling to survive. The collision of these two worlds fuels the sex tourism industry that has been developing in the city, exploiting vulnerable children and young people who need money for their family or who are looking for a way to escape poverty and violence at home.

You may remember COTA introducing this project to you in our Spring 2010 newsletter, where we told you the story of Oscar, who was only 8 years old when he was first coerced by a tourist who wanted to touch him in return for money Oscar knew his mum desperately needed. You rallied amazingly, with 157 people donating a total of £7,757 plus gift aid. Thanks in part to this fantastic response, in 2011 we were able to start up the project to prevent and reduce CSEC. We have already achieved impressive results, helping 140 children and mobilising all sections of the community to create a more protective environment for children and prevent CSEC.

So that you can see exactly what your generous donations have already helped Renacer to achieve, here are the key achievements of the project so far:

1

140 vulnerable children who have experienced CSEC or have been sexually abused and are at risk of CSEC have received intensive psychological support to help them to recover from the trauma that they have experienced, increase their self esteem and confidence. Crucially, they have also been

helped to think about their goals for the future and how they can achieve them, as well as receiving support to get back into, or remain in, school. All of the children and their families understand that CSEC is a crime that should not be tolerated and how they can report it to the police.

2

341 family and community members are more aware of CSEC and how their own children and other children in their community might be at risk of it. These parents and carers have taken part in activities to help them understand more about what CSEC is, how it harms

children, how adults can protect children, and how to report cases where CSEC has occurred. In this way Renacer has empowered adults in the communities to create protective environments for children, with adults looking out not only for their own children, but also for others in the community.

3

Renacer has developed **a specialist Diploma** for teachers on prevention of CSEC and care for victims of CSEC. This is the only Diploma of its kind and over the last 2 and a half years Renacer have used it to provide **40 teachers** with in-depth training on CSEC, how they can identify children who are at risk of it and what to do when CSEC risk is identified, as well as how to protect children

and prevent CSEC in schools and communities. A further **2,006 teachers** have attended awareness raising activities held by Renacer or by teachers who have been inspired by the Diploma and wanted to share their learning with their colleagues. This is a huge achievement and will contribute greatly to making schools and communities in Cartagena safer for children.

4

43 public servants (including social workers, doctors, police, lawyers, local councillors and community leaders) have taken part in a second specially designed Diploma for public servants, aimed at increasing their understanding of CSEC and encouraging them to devise and implement plans to improve care for CSEC survivors and their families.

Research that Renacer did with teachers and public servants in 2011 found that a shockingly high percentage did not recognise CSEC as an abuse of children, but were more likely to blame the child for being 'sexually provocative'. They have focused work with these groups on changing these prejudices and creating a greater understanding of CSEC, and compassion for children who have experienced it.

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported this project so far.

With your continued donations we can keep on helping both Renacer and Si Mujer to make a real difference in the lives of children who suffer, have suffered or are at risk of sexual violence and exploitation.

News

Fernando Montaña's Gala

The show was a phenomenal success and raised over **£13,000**. The evening was filled with the very best in dance and classical music, with artists travelling from all over Europe to perform. Thanks to everyone who helped to make the event a success.



Murray Tennis Clinics

A big thank you to the Murray family for their two COTA tennis clinics. These have raised over **£4,700**, of which £1,400 was donated by Amanda Kesterton at the St George's Hill Lawn Tennis Clinic for two signed tennis rackets.



Thames Walk

Thanks to all the Thames Walk 2013 participants, we raised over **£6,000**. Join us on next year's Walk, **Saturday May 10th 2014**.



Thank yous

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

Individuals

Lorena Cuervo, **Martha Sykes** and **Sandra Prada** asked for donations to COTA in lieu of birthday presents; **Roderick Long** and **John White** asked for donations as retirement gifts; **Lyn Payne** donated proceeds from a meal with her running group. **Marta Elias and family** for donations in memory of Chris Elias; **Geoffrey Hawtin** donated to COTA after his talk at the Melcombe Regis Rotary club; and **Richard Strange** (Trustee of the Purley Overseas Trust) organised a concert at St Marks Church in Purley for COTA.

Community

Thanks to religious groups that have supported us recently, including: Alexandra Presbyterian Church (Belfast), Carmelite Monastery (Preston), St Botolph Lullingstone (Orpington), St Joseph's RC Church (South Molton), St Andrews Clubmoor (Liverpool), St Leonard's Toddler Group (Teignmouth), Southdown Methodist Church (Harpenden).

Sport Challenges

Thanks to everyone who has raised funds through sporting challenges, including: **Felipe Cano**, **Conor Ryan**, **Paul & Liz Smith**, **Tim Bradley**, **Nicholas Pole**, **Angela Rueda**, **Betty Encinales**, **Julia Hayes** and **Roberta Aresu**.

The British 10K 2013 team: **Carlos Jaimes**, **Hiroko Rodaway**, **Jasmine Cristancho**, **Leonel Sarmiento Mottoa** and **Steve Hervoeut** raised nearly **£1,500**.

Forthcoming Sports Challenges

We have guaranteed places for the **Silverstone Half Marathon, 2nd March 2014**. We have one place for the **London Marathon, 13th April 2014** which we will be offering to the highest fundraising bidder. Please contact us if you would like to participate in these challenges.

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

Letter from our Director

Dear Friends,

During my recent visit to Colombia, COTA's Colombia staff and I met some of the key organisations involved in addressing children's issues – the Ministries of Health and Education, Social Services, Save the Children, UNICEF and Fundacion Carvajal – to update them on the work of our project partners and explore opportunities for greater collaboration.

We were pleased to find that there was real interest in our partners' work, and our discussions resulted in some exciting plans. Colombian Social Services are planning to improve the quality of training offered to social workers, and we hope our partners will be able to input into this process by offering training in their specific areas of expertise. The Ministry of Education's Department of International Cooperation has invited us to share information on all the education projects we are currently supporting, with a view to exploring funding opportunities. And Save the Children's Colombia Director has asked to visit our partners in the Cali area, as part of a process of looking at what more they might do in this part of Colombia.

The meetings also enabled us to get an updated picture of the problems facing children across the country. We learnt that Buenaventura, despite being Colombia's major port, is affected by high levels of poverty,

unemployment and violence. A shocking 81% of the population lives in poverty, 65% are unemployed and a further 15% are underemployed. We plan to accompany the Fundacion Carvajal on a visit to Buenaventura shortly, to see the work they are doing with some of the most marginalised families.

All the institutions we met agreed that sexual violence is one of the major unaddressed problems facing children and young people in Colombia today. Although the government is working to tackle the problem of child and teenage pregnancies, this cannot be separated from the wider problem of abuse and violence. The Ministry of Health gave us the shocking statistic that 84% of babies born to child mothers (under 14 years of age) have been fathered by men over the age of 20. I hope you will take the time to read about the programme we are developing with Si Mujer to prevent sexual violence against children and provide support to victims. *With your support* we hope to be able to start work on this vital programme in 2014.

With warmest thanks to you all,



Au-tumn 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

Heidy Araque, COTA's new Cali Field Officer, shares news from her first few weeks in Colombia

After seven years working for COTA in London, I was thrilled to be moving to Cali and working alongside our partner organisations there. In my first month in Cali, I was able to catch up with all our partners there.

As my arrival coincided with mid-year, most of our partners were in the process of taking stock of their activities in the first half of the year and reviewing their plans for the following six months, in light of funds available. This has been a challenging year for several COTA partners and they battle with some hard decisions over financing and staffing. Yet it's really heart-warming to witness their commitment to the children and families who use their services.

As a field officer, it's my role to support partners through the daily challenges of their work; to seek to understand their perspective on the best way

forward; to act as a sounding board and to help ensure funds are used in the best possible way to bring about lasting changes in the lives of children and their families.

In my first few weeks, I have understood better why COTA makes so much effort to carefully select its partners. It's a process similar to choosing a life partner!

As in previous encounters with our partners, I am happy to see that our supporters, and the COTA team, are helping to create life-changing opportunities in the lives of so many children who are often neglected and who struggle to fulfil their rights. I am more committed than ever to ensuring that our partners can continue to provide their support to young people and bring about the changes needed to reshape Colombia into a fairer, more peaceful place.



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!

Children of the Andes, Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street, London, EC2A 4LT t: 02075490225 e: info@childrenoftheandes.org w: www.childrenoftheandes.org
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All names have been changed and photos carefully chosen to protect the child's identity.