



# Children of the Andes

Building a better future for vulnerable children in Colombia  
Spring 2009

## Growing up with Children of the Andes

In 1991 Children of the Andes was born to help street children living in desperate conditions in the sewers of Bogotá. We turn 18 this year and, with your help, have already achieved so much. We have given thousands of vulnerable children back their childhoods and helped them become confident, independent adults.

But Colombia's most vulnerable children need our help now as much as ever. Children like Fernando, who ran away to escape regular beatings and abuse at home. He begged at traffic lights and sometimes had to steal food to survive. To numb the hunger and the cold, he started to sniff glue.

Fernando, now aged 10, arrived at COTA partner the Albergue Infantil Mamá Yolanda two years ago. At the Albergue he was helped to overcome his addiction and his trauma, and become a child again.

The Albergue also helped Fernando to get back in contact with his mother. Fernando's family live in a make-shift home on the outskirts of Bogotá, and it was a constant struggle for his mother to look after her four children on her own. The Albergue's family reunification workers helped her find ways of controlling her frustration without resorting to violence and worked with the whole family. After a while, Fernando returned home. He now goes to school, and helps his mother with the housework.

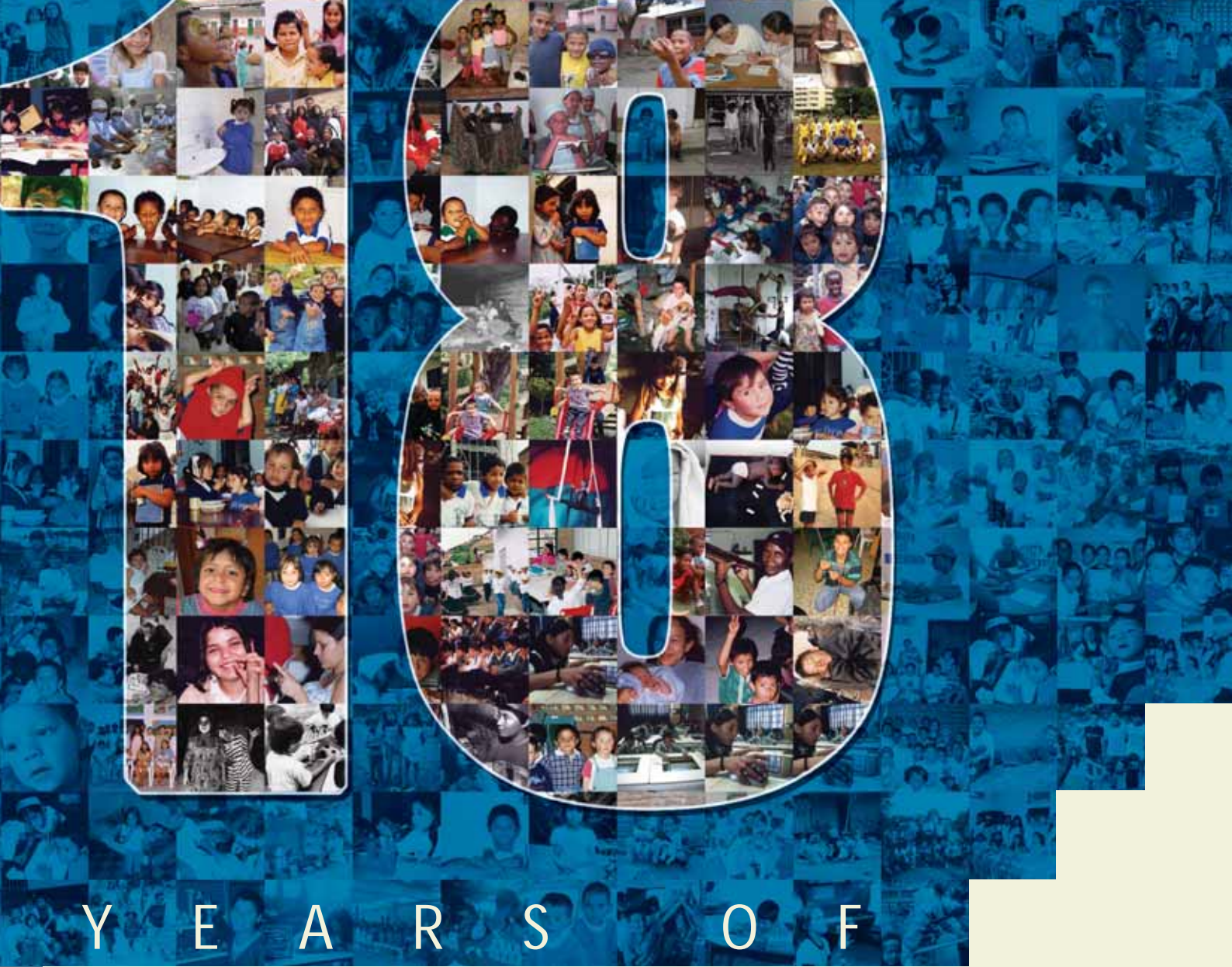
**Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, many children like Fernando have left the dangers of the street for a loving and caring environment and have gone to school.**

**Please make a donation today and help us help more children like Fernando.**



The photographs do not represent the specific children mentioned.  
All children's names have been changed.





Y E A R S O F

# Children of the Andes

## Helping children of all ages

Children of the Andes (COTA) has given millions of pounds to a wide range of projects reaching Colombia's most vulnerable children, including street children, working children, disabled children, child victims of sexual violence and exploitation, displaced children and many other children at risk.

With your support, we have been able to transform the lives of thousands of Colombian children. We have helped our partner organisations develop and improve their work and reach more children.

### Off to a good start

Children of the Andes' support starts before birth at Cermujer, a home for child mothers -many of whom are victims of sexual violence- and their babies. On arrival at the home, girls are underweight, in poor health and traumatised. Cermujer provides nutritious food, comprehensive health care and a loving environment; all vital to babies' development. All

babies are registered at birth and are enrolled with the public health care system and most go on to primary school. Cermujer also helps the young mothers gain an education and the skills to be able to support their children while growing up.

Diana came to Cermujer when the brothel she was forced to work in was raided by police. She had a difficult

pregnancy but both she and her little boy, Juanito, are doing well now.

*"With the help of all the Cermujer teachers, I'm studying hard. I want to make a life for myself. I never want my little boy to go through what I went through."*

Diana, 15





Photographs have not been labelled to protect the identities of the children.

### Learning to learn

Education is vital to children's development, yet millions of children in Colombia are denied this basic right, including more than two million child workers. COTA partner the Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (ACJ) reaches out to children in their places of work. The project encourages children to stop working and helps them catch up with their studies so they can return to, and stay at, school.

*"I like everything about ACJ, but what I like most is that two months ago I started school. I feel good because at school they tell me that if I make an effort I can improve. And I also go to homework workshops at ACJ. I want to keep studying, go to university and one day be an accountant."*

Carolina, 14

young people who have spent most of their lives in care homes the confidence and skills they need to live independently.

*"I often wonder what would have become of me if it wasn't for FFF. Sometimes I think I wouldn't have survived, because before I came here I was so disillusioned with life and full of anxiety about my future. I thought I'd never have the opportunity to make something of my life. Or maybe I would have returned to my life on the streets, to get away from my family and everything that happened to me there, which wasn't good."*

*"Thanks to FFF, I was able to fulfil my ambition to become a nursery school teacher. But most importantly I've grown as a person."*

Catalina, 20

### Looking forward to life

It's easy to forget how difficult growing up is. For children who have no family, have spent most of their lives on the streets or in care homes, who have a disability or are living with HIV/AIDS, the transition from child to adult is so much tougher. We work with young people who, like us this year, are turning 18. COTA partner the Fundación Formación d' Futuros (FFF) is dedicated to giving

Children of the Andes helps its partners grow, too, through learning from each other. FFF is working with other COTA partners whose children are turning 18. They are assisting Fundamor in developing a "preparing for life" project for children aged 8-18 living with HIV/AIDS, helping them look after themselves and grow into confident and healthy adults.

**Our work with children of all ages would not be possible without your support. Thank you for helping us reach 18 and continuing to help thousands of Colombia's most vulnerable children reach adulthood.**



1991

COTA born following Desmond Wilcox's documentary highlighting the plight of children living in the sewers of Bogotá.

COTA sends first grants to Colombia providing medical, social and educational aid to **street children** through residential care and street patrols.



1992

COTA supports **Flying Doctors**, bringing medical assistance to sick children in remote, war torn areas of Colombia.

1994



1995

1996

COTA supports **peacebuilding communities**, helping displaced children overcome trauma and empowering their families to build sustainable futures.



1998

January 25th 1999 **EARTHQUAKE**: COTA runs an emergency appeal to support earthquake victims, culminating in an auction of Colombian art at Christie's.

COTA rebuilds **four schools destroyed by the earthquake** in coffee producing region.

2000

## 18 years of Child

“I still remember when my home was a cardboard box, and my music the honking of buses... As I grew up and got to understand the streets, I knew I had to steal to survive. But I didn't like it, I wanted to learn.”

Andrés, who spent his early life living in the sewers of Bogotá until he was rescued by COTA partner Fundación Niños de los Andes.



“It made us dream again, it gave us an opportunity to show society that even though we are refugees we are valuable, that there is hope for us. When I grow older I'm not going to do what they did to me. I believe that the spiral of violence could change if we, the young people, change and begin to apply what we've learned... My contribution is setting an example and teaching what I've learned to others.”

Young peacebuilder, CEDAVIDA project.





0 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009

COTA supports **young peacebuilders**, empowering hundreds of young people affected by conflict to overcome trauma and help build peaceful futures for themselves and their communities.

COTA starts work on a **child-led land mines education** project.

COTA extends its support to young people **who have spent most of their lives in care homes** to help them build independent and fulfilling lives.

COTA opens its Field Office in Cali, enabling us to provide technical support as well as financial assistance to our project partners.

COTA supports the **development of an educational model for working children**.

COTA appoints a Field Officer in Bogotá, enhancing the level of technical support we provide to our partners, helping them to become more sustainable in the long term.

COTA currently supports **13 partner organisations**, providing support to **thousands of vulnerable children**.



## ren of the Andes

“The circus has changed me physically and mentally. I’ve learnt to share with people. I’ve learnt to have more confidence. The circus teaches you to find solutions to problems, to manage space, to focus more on your work... what was a dream becomes a reality in the future.”

Jose Henry, 17, graduate of the Circo Para Todos.



“When I leave the foundation I am going to keep going and progress. I have learnt many new things here. They have given me good advice and motivated me to continue with my studies, to dedicate myself to my son and to support my mother and siblings so they look after themselves. Thanks for everything.”

A young woman on leaving COTA partner Cer Mujer.

“The rap workshops have given me self respect. I used to think I was no good, because of the life I led, the drugs and stealing, but now I can do something worthwhile with my life.”

Camilo, 17, ex-gang member who benefited from Fe y Alegría.



# Thankyous

## Dear Friends

During 2009 Children of the Andes will be celebrating its 18th birthday. It seems symbolic that we will be reaching "adulthood" as an organisation at a time when we may face some of our toughest challenges yet.

Reports indicate that the credit crunch has already hit charitable donations and that they may be hit further in the months – and possibly years – to come.

However, over the course of our 18 years, we have invested in developing our expertise and infrastructure and are well placed to see through the difficult financial times ahead.

We are lucky to count on support from a wide range of sources - from individuals to trust funds, businesses, schools, churches and events. This breadth of generosity from many different people and organisations, helps protect us from any sudden fall in income in one area.

In addition, the fact that we have remained small gives us the flexibility to be able to respond speedily to any unforeseen challenges – whether they are challenges faced by our project partners or those linked to our fundraising and administration work in the UK.

**This year we will be channelling all our efforts into ensuring that Colombia's most vulnerable children continue to receive the vital services they need, despite the financial crisis.**

**Your donations, however large or small, will enable us to do this.**

With warmest thanks



Rachel Joseph, Executive Director

## Individuals

Special thanks and congratulations to Catherine and Chris Elzackers, who made a wedding appeal to support COTA's work with street children. They raised over £530 for COTA.

Our most sincere thanks to Mr. Lester Coupland and his colleagues, who chose COTA as the beneficiary charity for a dress-down day at Cranfield University School of Management, raising £126.

Thanks to Lucy Gardner who took part in the London Triathlon 2008 raising almost £700, to Rosalie Millard-Evans and Teresa Molano who raised £350 by taking part in the 5K Women's Run and to Nubia and David Crollick who participated

in the Berlin Marathon last year and have raised £595 so far.

Thanks to salsa teachers Jeffrey Davila and Lilly Suarez who organised a special Christmas lesson to raise funds for COTA. Thanks too to Barbara Young, Claudia Suarez, Josephine Whitehead, Nicholas Mann, Steve Henderson and Verity King for the fundraising activities they organised.

Our condolences to the family of the late Mary Rose Stemp who fundraised extensively in her local community. We have been so grateful for her long-standing support and the generous donations made in her memory.

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

## Community

Thanks to the Rotary Club of Burton Upon Trent for raising £1,500 and the Rotary Club of Maidenhead that donated £400 last year.

Thanks to the Swansea Latin American Association for donating the proceeds of their Christmas raffle.

We would like to thank the students of King's Wood Montessori School (Foxboro, USA) who studied Colombia last year and put on a Colombian coffee sale raising US \$586.



St Andrews Clubmoor Church (Liverpool)

Thanks to all the churches and religious groups that have supported us in recent months, including: Alexandra Presbyterian Church (Belfast), Church of the Immaculate Conception (Stroud), St Andrews Clubmoor (Liverpool), St Joseph's Catholic Church (South Molton), St Leonard's Toddler Group (Teignmouth), St Peter's Church (Marlow), The Parochial Church Council of East Clandon and the Religious Society of Friends (St Albans).



Julián Virguez (bottom)

Thanks to Julián Virguez who raised £304 by doing a parachute jump last August, despite his fear of heights: *"It was sunny. We arrived at the aerodrome at 8am and waited anxiously till about 3pm when I was called to get ready for the jump. It's very difficult to describe the feelings I had during and just before the fall, as the whole thing was quite quick. It turned out to be great fun and not as scary as it looks. I was inspired by the children I've seen in Bogotá who are forced to work and endure street life from a very early age when they should be playing and going to school. It's heartbreaking."*



Yes, I want to help the boys  
and girls in Colombia.  
Yes, I want to be part of a peaceful  
future in Colombia!

## Celebrate with us

We are so excited about reaching our 18th year of supporting Colombia's most vulnerable children! We appeal to all our supporters to join COTA's celebration and help us raise vital funds to continue our work by baking cakes to sell to friends and colleagues. A cake-bake is an opportunity to impress others with your culinary talents and eat more cake!

## Recent Events



Children of the Andes Project Talk 2009

COTA ended 2008 with a Festive Drinks Night at Cubana bar, where supporters enjoyed live Colombian music and dancing, a tombola and great Latin American food and drinks, raising a total of £1,500.

In February, COTA held its annual Project Talk during which our Field Officers updated supporters on news from the projects. Those who missed the talk can watch it online courtesy of Aculco Radio. You can access the video via our website.

Over the last few months COTA has taken part in several community events in London, enabling us to raise awareness about our work and raise funds.

Since we are a small team, we are looking to recruit volunteer "COTA promoters" to represent us at community events all around the UK. If you can donate one day per year to help us spread the word about our work in your community and help raise funds, please contact us. We will be happy to provide guidance and promotional materials.

## Upcoming Events



### Thames Walk

The COTA Charity Walk along the Thames and into Richmond Park returns this year on **Sunday 24th May**. Join us with family and friends for a bank holiday weekend to remember! It is a perfect opportunity to get fit,

enjoy a magical landscape and share a picnic with other COTA supporters, as well as to gain sponsorship to help COTA build a better future for vulnerable children in Colombia.

### Birthday Party

Visit our website for information about our 18th birthday party in London this summer. It will be an event full of Latin American music, salsa dancing and all for a great cause! If you would like to organise a party in your city please contact Heidy at [heidy@childrenoftheandes.org](mailto:heidy@childrenoftheandes.org).

## Standing Order Form

Return completed form to Children of the Andes

### To the Manager

Name of the Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

Account No

Sort Code

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

This sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_

On the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

This date should be at least one month from today.

### And the same sum

monthly  quarterly  yearly

Name Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address

Postcode

Signature

Date

Yes, I do require an acknowledgement (please tick or we will assume you do not; this will help us save on administration costs).

## Gift Aid Declaration

I would like Children of the Andes to reclaim tax on any donations I have made over the last 6 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 28p for every £1 you give).

For more information about Gift Aid, standing orders, legacies, payroll giving, greeting cards, alternative gifts or fundraising, please telephone our office on: 020 7549 0225

## Thank You!

CHILDREN OF THE ANDES

Development House, 56 - 64 Leonard Street,  
London EC2A 4LT

T: 020 7549 0225 F: 020 7549 0226

E: [info@childrenoftheandes.org](mailto:info@childrenoftheandes.org)

W: [www.childrenoftheandes.org](http://www.childrenoftheandes.org)

Registered Charity No. 1075037



Please donate now



## Children of the Andes

Building a better future for vulnerable children in Colombia

I would like to make a donation of

£5  £10  £25

£50  £100

£ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to:

Children of the Andes OR

We accept the following cards: Access, Visa, Mastercard, Eurocard, CAF Charitycard.

Please debit £ \_\_\_\_\_

From my (card type) \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Card No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax No.: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please see our contact details overleaf

## Thank You!

## FIELD OFFICEDIARY



In May 2008, after several years of terrific work with COTA in Colombia, Maria Cristina Temmink, our Field Officer in Bogotá, decided to return home. In the same month, Gina Ortiz also decided to return home to Colombia. Gina is our new Bogotá Field Officer and here she gives her first impressions of working with COTA.

"After four years in Lima, Peru, I decided it was time to return to Colombia. I wanted to do something to address the many problems that my country has and to help, in some way, the many people facing lives that are so tough it is sometimes difficult for us to imagine.

When Children of the Andes offered me the job, I didn't hesitate. I would be working with an organisation dedicated to the welfare of an extremely vulnerable group of people; I would be working in my country and for my people.

In my first few months, and as I have got to know our partners in Bogotá, I have been amazed at their commitment to their work and deeply touched by how much they care for the children.

At the same time, it has been hard coming to terms with the realities of the children's lives. These kids should never have had to endure such hardships. Childhood should be free from these kinds of problems. But it isn't like that.

Luckily, there are people and organisations out there who understand that these children need support and that, in some ways, it is possible to help make their lives better.

The problems the kids face are many and complex. And this is why COTA is so important because it works in many different areas and with different organisations, but always focusing on vulnerable children.

COTA has managed to foster collaboration between pioneering organisations in different fields who all share the goal of improving child welfare.

It has been fantastic to see how there are people totally committed to working for a section of society that is extremely vulnerable, people whose reward is knowing that they have helped a child develop into a rounded person with dreams and aspirations, despite the difficulties that surround them.

The children on the projects all seem to appreciate the support they get. The kids I have met at the Formemos Foundation for displaced rural children are really keen to take advantage of the education they are offered. And recently I had the privilege of meeting a young man who had been at the Albergue Infantil Mamá Yolanda: he told me that if it weren't for the care and support he'd received at the home, he wouldn't be the person he is today: someone with the skills and confidence to make something of his life.

I believe that organisations like COTA show us that it is possible for the world to come together and work with the same goal, that we can all contribute to making changes in the lives of people who need our help."

### CHILDREN OF THE ANDES

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