



Covid-19: One Year On

It goes without saying that for over a year, Covid-19 has encroached upon every aspect of our lives, and for Children Change Colombia the story has been no different. As the virus took hold in March 2020 we quickly realised the threat this pandemic posed to the children we work with and launched our 'Help Colombia Covid-19' campaign.

One year on, we're really proud of the work we've done to ensure that the essential services our partners provide to at-risk children have been able to continue. Using regular phone calls and digital communication, we've been able to continue providing crucial psychosocial

support to children who live with trauma due to conflict, sexual violence and abuse, and our partners have looked for creative ways to continue providing the recreational activities that so many children rely on. That's included running theatre groups, creating music videos, and staging dance performances online.

We have also been working hard to adapt to new challenges. In the initial months of the pandemic, many of the families we work with were struggling due to rising

unemployment. We responded by supporting families with emergency rent support, distributing food, toiletries and PPE to communities, and running workshops for adults affected by unemployment.

In recent months, we have turned our focus towards the devastating impact of the pandemic on children's education. Many schools in Colombia were closed for the better part of a year, and for children living in low-income or rural areas, remote learning was not a viable alternative. In response, we worked with **CRAN**, **Acadesan** and **Círculo de Estudios** to distribute tablet computers to children and young people. These devices are helping children and young people keep up with their studies, as well as maintain contact with leaders at the projects, which has helped them cope with the challenges this pandemic has brought.

Thanks to your support, we helped more than 27,000 people

Help us ensure children and young people like Carlos have the right to a safe and happy childhood

PLEASE DONATE TODAY



No child should be at war

Childhood brings to mind specific experiences: your first day at school, birthday parties, playing outdoors with friends. It is hard to imagine a childhood without these simple moments, a childhood where daily life is shaped by war, and where violence is the norm. **Since the beginning of the internal conflict in Colombia, thousands of children have been recruited into illegal armed groups,** in effect having their childhood stolen from them.

Carlos is one of these children for whom the right to a safe and happy childhood was taken away. He now attends our project with CRAN:

"My name is Carlos¹, I am eighteen years old and I started attending this programme in March last year. My life before the programme was horrible, I had no idea who I was or what I was going to do with my life, I didn't know the city or what education was, I experienced a lot of fear and pain.

I am now doing much better, living with 'auntie', she helps me with everything that I need, I have learned from her, we cook together and look out for each other; these are good times. But what worries me is when I leave this place, because I don't yet know where to go or what to do.

I've been through a lot, but I try to focus on the positives. I am stronger and more resilient facing the things that have happened to me and that still happen in my life. I feel that I need to fight for what I want, considering everything that I'm capable of doing and putting into practice what I have been taught during this time.

The programme has had a big impact on me, I think differently compared to when I arrived, I'm more social, more empathetic and I have better self-awareness and self-esteem. I like to study and want to graduate from high school, go to university and study psychology so I can help the people in my community, and have a home of my own."

Minors have been recruited into armed groups in Colombia since the beginning of the conflict, but developments in the security situation over the past year have created an ever more complex threat facing at-risk children. Covid-19 has made it even more difficult for agencies to monitor

"The programme has had a big impact on me, I think differently compared to when I arrived, I'm more social, more empathetic and I have better self-awareness and self-esteem"

¹ Carlos' name has been changed for Safeguarding purposes

² Calición contra la vinculación de niñas, niños y jóvenes al conflicto armado en Colombia

and react to threats against children's safety, and in 2020 alone, at least 222 minors were recruited. Agencies are facing greater difficulty in responding to protection, reaction and monitoring due to the emergency generated by Covid-19. In 2020 alone, at least 222 minors were recruited (Coalico).²

What are we doing to help?

At CCC, we want to make sure that there are more stories like Carlos'. Forced recruitment into armed groups or criminal exploitation and reintegration into society is one of CCC's three highest priorities to tackle over the next 5 years.

Since 2017, we have worked with CRAN (Centre for the Reintegration and Attention of Children) to tackle this issue. Together we have prevented the recruitment of 405 children into armed groups and helped 262 children formerly associated with armed groups to restart their lives in foster homes in Bogotá, Soacha, Manizales, Villavicencio Restrepo and Mocoa.

Sadly, after all they have been through, these children still face

stigma from society, and suffer shame and trauma as a result of their past. The project aims to raise awareness and eliminate the stigma of these children and adolescents. Specialists provide psychosocial support to enable demobilised children to recover from the trauma they have experienced, and help them to develop the necessary life skills to reintegrate into society.

CRAN also trains other community-based organisations in their methodological approach for the protection of children who face a high risk of recruitment by armed groups.

At the moment, thanks to our supporters, 47 demobilised young people (28 in Bogotá and 19 in Villavicencio) are receiving psychological support and training to strengthen their social skills, to participate in and contribute to building a new life away from violence and conflict. Also, more than 45 professionals in Bogotá, Villavicencio and Manizales are being trained to create protective environments to prevent further recruitment of young people. This is a joint effort by CRAN, its allied organisations, and the host communities..



According to the Colombian Government:

- 9,133 minors formerly associated with armed groups have been demobilised (January 2021)
- 40.2% cases came from 5 departments: Antioquia (15.7%), Cauca (6.6%), Meta (6.4%), Caquetá (6.2%) and Nariño (5.2%)
- 68% of the children were boys and 32% girls



Above: Children and foster mothers commemorate Red Hand Day via Zoom

Red Hand Day

Red Hand Day first began in 2002. Today there are 250,000 children involved in wars around the world. This year, our partner CRAN commemorated International Red Hand Day, a day dedicated towards raising awareness of this issue. They held an online event with 12 foster mothers and 24 children from the Foster Home Demobilisation programme. The participants drew silhouettes of their hands on paper and coloured them in red. Each participant wrote their dreams and goals on their hand drawings. A common theme emerged of their desire to redefine their own story, and to share their experiences in order to change other people's lives.

30 Years Supporting Children in Colombia

1991-1996:

Children of the Andes (COTA) is born following a documentary by Desmond Wilcox about children living in the sewers of Bogotá.

- COTA begins its support of Fundación Niños de los Andes. Projects include a community centre in Manizales for families living in **extreme poverty** which provides families with healthcare, food and transportation to school; the Hope Centre, a **rehabilitation centre for children living in the sewers in Bogotá** which provides children with medical support, therapy and practical workshops.

1996-2001:

COTA launches medical, nutritional and recreational projects for children across Colombia

- COTA supports the Flying Doctor Service providing **medical aid to children** in dangerous, inaccessible areas.
- Fe y Alegría: a **peace-building and youth initiative** engaging children in gangs in Usme in dance and music.
- COTA funds ongoing **earthquake appeal for Quindío**. Funds raised build a daycare centre, train five mothers to run the centre, and provide trauma therapy to help children affected by the earthquake.
- COTA supports Circo para Todos, a professional circus school based in Cali **offering young people living on the street's classes** in dance, music, clowning and developing their career opportunities.
- Cedavida- helping families displaced by conflict start a new life. Through the "**Peace Building Community**" set up in Apartadó, more than 7,700 people receive direct therapeutic, nutritional, educational and vocational help.



2001-2006:

COTA expands its work into peacebuilding activities and the often neglected issue of sexual exploitation of children. In 2005 COTA opens its first office in Cali, Colombia.

- COTA supports Hogares María Goretti- a **residential care and rehabilitation home for girls who have experienced sexual abuse**. Girls' families, particularly their mothers, are deeply involved in the process of empowerment and recuperation whilst developing the older girls' vocational and practical skills.
- Colegio del Cuerpo, a social **dance project, uses dance to help children recover from the trauma of witnessing war**, increase their sense of self-worth, and cope with life as a displaced young person. Research shows the programme improves school attendance, behaviour, academic performance and the ability to deal with conflicts.
- Cinde and Cedavida establish networks of children across Colombia to become 'ambassadors of peace'- **empowering young people to become youth leaders**. Thousands of children participate in their conflict resolution workshops and seminars.



2006-2011:

COTA works to protect child victims of landmines and HIV/AIDS, and continues its work on neglected issues, supporting young people leaving care facilities

- Fundación Restrepo Barco (FRB) supports **landmine risk education** in Colombia to prevent landmine accidents among children and young people. With funding from the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, COTA and FRB develop a child-led mine awareness programme- to help children identify risks and ways to protect themselves.
- Fundamor Foundation provides **support to orphaned and abandoned children with HIV/AIDS**. Fundamor organises Colombia's First National Convention on Children and Young People Affected by HIV and AIDS in 2009. 120 young people, 34 NGOs and government agencies attend.
- Formación d'Futuros gives support to **care-leavers to help them build a dignified and fulfilling life**. Projects include a residential support programme that helps vulnerable young care-leavers manage the difficult transition into independent living.



2011-2016:

In 2015, Children of the Andes becomes Children Change Colombia and continues working with disabled children, victims of sexual abuse and gangs

- Fundación para la Habilitación y Rehabilitación Basada en Comunidad (HRBC) provides **community outreach centres for children with and without disabilities**. The project offers support to children with disabilities and their families, in poor and inaccessible areas of Cali. HRBC helps children become active members of their communities, learn, develop and go to school; and increases families' capacity to care for them.
- With most schools only providing half-day schooling, lots of children have nowhere else to go. Many spend a lot of **time on the streets and are exposed to violence**. Tiempo de Juego runs a project aimed at generating vital skills and positive role models for children through activities like football, dance and a work creation programme. Youth leaders lead activities; children are inspired by their leaders and adopt the principles they've learnt.
- Sexual violence against children is a largely silent problem that damages children's health, welfare and development. Si Mujer provides **teacher training in detecting and preventing sexual abuse, medical care, psychological support**. The organisation also runs a child-friendly healthcare service designed, implemented and run with the active participation and leadership of children and young people.

2016-2021:

Children Change Colombia launches its girls in gangs programme, and supports victims of child labour. In 2017 the Cali office moves to Bogotá.

- CCC supports CRAN to develop and run a rehabilitation and reintegration programme for demobilised young people under 18. Based on the young people's input, CRAN runs activities on money management, accessing public services, and education.
- From 2017 CCC supports a project under Comic Relief's 'I Define Me' programme, with Tiempo de Juego & Fundación CRAN. Girls are supported to develop life skills through arts and youth leadership. Girls put into practice new life skills like teamwork and conflict resolution, to help them achieve new life-goals.
- Mining operations have become increasingly exploitative of workers. Acadesan's development of a new school curriculum integrates teaching about Afro-Colombian culture and rights to make education more relevant to the children's everyday lives. There's also a focus on developing children's social and emotional skills so that they can contribute to a peaceful environment within their schools.

Thank you

To everyone who supports us through their generous donations or voluntary efforts - you make our work possible!

Community

We would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who has gone above and beyond to support us over the past few months. **Angela Vives** launched an online shop selling face coverings to raise funds for CCC and other organisations supporting the Colombian pandemic response. **Jamie Murray and his wife Alexandra** held a hugely successful auction in support of CCC, raising over £6000 for our work!

Thank you to everyone at **Alexandra Presbyterian Church (Belfast)**, **St. Botolph's Church (Kent)** and **St. Joseph's Catholic Church (South Molton)** for your generous contributions to our work in the past few months.

Global Experience Week



We were honoured to work with Imperial College London as part of their 2021 Global Experience Week. We got together with a group of five talented MBA students, discussing our projects in Colombia and what we hope to achieve in the years to come. The students got to work devising new and innovative ways we can spread the word about Children Change Colombia. They did some amazing work, and we're excited to put their plans into action!

Events

In September, we launched CCC's biggest fundraising challenge ever, 'CCC London to Bogota'. Over 80 volunteers came together to run, hike, and cycle their way from London to Bogota reaching the destination in just over two weeks. We were so impressed, we challenged the team to see if they could make it back in the remaining 13 days, and they did! The challenge raised £2444 towards our work, and was such a great way to (virtually) connect with our supporters. A special shout out must go to **Cecelia and the Betfair team**, who made it 8,696 km and raised £732, the **Everett family**, who donated £1 for every km completed, which ended up being an amazing 511 km and £511, and **Liam Mills**, who outstripped us all by running 100 km in just one day!



Ruth and team Maize Blaze!

We've also hosted a whole range of online events. It's been so heartening to see so many of you join us for these events to brighten up a long winter of lockdowns, celebrate Colombian culture, and raise vital funds for our work. We hosted a series of cooking classes with the wonderful **Marianne Focke**, who taught us how to make delicious desserts such as tres leches, and sticky toffee pudding. Another highlight has been our dance parties. In November we threw a 'Fiesta for Colombia', where we were joined by salsa teacher **Natasha Warner** and DJ Jhon Mario for a fantastic night of dancing and music. In February, we were joined by our patron, **Fernando Montaña**, to celebrate Carnaval de Barranquilla. With the real event cancelled this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, Fernando helped us bring the energy and music of the carnival to your living rooms, with a special Cumbia dance class.



Marianne Focke



Fernando Montaña

Technical partnerships

CCC has recently started two technical partnerships with UK based organizations specialising in Childhood Trauma and Safeguarding.

Action for Child Trauma International trains and supports local people and NGO staff, giving them the skills to treat children and young people traumatized by conflict, violence and disaster. They have successfully taken their psychosocial methodology to Africa and the Middle East and now, in partnership with CCC, they are training 10 local organizations in Colombia working with child survivors of forced recruitment, domestic violence, child labour and sexual exploitation.

CCC has also joined **Keeping Children Safe**, a powerful network of NGOs and private companies working with children in over 120 countries around the world. They work across multiple sectors from community projects to international organisations, and support them to do all that is possible to ensure that their staff, programmes and operations are safe for children. Belonging to the network will allow CCC and our partners to access

technical advice and specialised training to further ensure the safety of the children, families and staff we are working with.

New Corporate donors

We are delighted to announce that, since the last newsletter, we have five new corporate donors. We want to thank and welcome to the CCC corporate family **Lead Lads**, **Not1Bean**, **Edco Latam**, **VEDX Solutions**, and the **Dudley and Walsall Health Partnership Branch of UNISON**.

Our corporate partners chose us because, whatever the size of a donation, we will ensure that our donors are informed every step of the way. Our 30 years of experience guarantee robust financial management, efficiency and clear impact of our projects.

Here is what our partners say:

"For us, to be able to give something back to the country that has shaped so much of our lives is a true privilege" **Sean Miller, Director, LeadLads**

"We are thrilled about our partnership with Children Change Colombia, the UK's largest charity with 30 years' experience in supporting children in Colombia, and humbled by the fantastic work this charity has been doing." **Jay Schnoor, Co-founder and COO, VEDX Solutions Inc.**

If you are in finding out how your company can support CCC, no matter how big or small your business is, please contact angela.carreno@childrenchange colombia.org.

LEAD LADS

UNISON

VEDX SOLUTIONS

NOT 1 BEAN

EdCo LATAM CONSULTING

Summer 2020



Regular Giving

Instructions to the Manager

Your account

Name of bank or building society:

Address:

Postcode:

Account No.

Sort Code

 - -

Your donation

Please pay **Children Change Colombia** (Account No.: **31623212**, 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:

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:

Please return completed form to **Children Change Colombia, Richbell House, 5 Richbell Place, London WC1N 3LA.**

For more information about Gift Aid, standing orders, legacies or payroll giving, please telephone our office on: +44 7852 985 711

Letter from the Director



Dear Friends,

This year is CCC's 30 year anniversary. What an incredible privilege it is to work for an organisation that has 30 years of experience helping children in Colombia to empower themselves, impact their communities and change their country.

As you know, I joined this hard-working team one year ago, and during this time I have virtually met so many of you that have been part of the CCC family for 20 or more years. Many thanks for all your on-going commitment to support children at risk in Colombia, and I look forward to being able to meet you in person when conditions allow. We are a small organisation and the only way we have been able to continue our work for Colombian children's rights is thanks to your help.

We are in the middle of a very challenging time, but thanks to your support for the "Help Colombia Covid-19 Campaign", we were able to adapt our projects and continue working with our partners supporting children at risk and survivors of sexual exploitation, forced recruitment and child labour. We were also able to aid their families with food packages, toiletries, PPE, tablet computers, housing allowances and dignity kits.

CCC has worked with over 46 local organisations in these three decades, brave grassroots teams where local leaders have dedicated their lives to transform the communities they live in. For us, it has been an honour to work with them, listening to their challenges, working together to find solutions and helping them to improve the lives of the future generations of Colombia.

On behalf of everyone at Children Change Colombia, and even more importantly on behalf of the children in Colombia that we work with, I'd like to thank you for being part of our community. We invite all of you to celebrate 30 years of helping children to change Colombia, and look forward to many more to come.

Yours sincerely and warmly,

Ángela María Carreño Malaver,
Executive Director

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:

Gift Aid Declaration

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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

Children Change Colombia, Richbell House, 5 Richbell Place, London WC1N 3LA.

t: +44 7852 985 711 e: info@childrenchange colombia.org w: childrenchange colombia.org

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All photos have been taken with the children's permission and full consent has been given for their use in Children Change Colombia publications.

All names have been changed and photos carefully chosen to protect the child's identity.

Thank you!