

# TRANSFORMING FUTURES THROUGH EDUCATION AND GREEN JOBS

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**CHILDREN  
CHANGE  
COLOMBIA**



## Reshaping the future through education and work opportunities

The pandemic, among all its problems, highlighted the stark inequalities faced by Colombia in terms of access to quality education. The different modalities of remote education adopted as an alternative during the pandemic increased the education gap for children and young people in areas with very low connectivity, such as the rural areas of the Caribbean region. In partnership with Misión Gaia, Children Change Colombia's new initiative aims to tackle this issue.

The project takes place in Minca, a small village on the Colombian Caribbean coast in the foothills of the imposing Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. A place where the contrasts are as challenging as they are common in many of Colombia's rural regions; on the one hand there are lush landscapes full of diversity and richness in agricultural products, such as coffee, mixed with an emerging ecotourism industry, while on the other hand the local context is marked by few job opportunities and a lacking social infrastructure.

The project uses an approach based on active methodologies that aim to improve the academic performance of students in two rural schools and to provide them with tools for development through extracurricular and vocational training that will enable the children and young people to succeed in their academic courses and find meaningful careers at the end of their high school studies.

Workshops are held to reinforce transferable skills such as oral expression and critical thinking, as well as STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics) topics and English lessons that allow them to deepen their knowledge and abilities.

Within the project, students have created a communications collective where, using media such as videoblogs, podcasts and magazines, they develop research skills, critical thinking, creativity, use of technological tools, expression and other soft skills, as well as connecting with their territory

and culture. So far, the children and young people involved in this collective have been highly motivated. They are discovering new experiences and ways of learning that allow them to rediscover their environment and get excited to learn new things.

Additionally, monthly workshops are held with teachers, where teaching methodologies are enriched by introducing active methodologies and gamification to encourage more participatory teaching processes.

Vocational training and entrepreneurship workshops are carried out with the young people in their final two years of secondary school. The main topic they learn about is the potential of their territory for sustainable agriculture and ecotourism. The training includes field trips that end with internships in local businesses for some of the students, allowing them to gain first-hand work experience.



**“The objective is to motivate the students so that they can transcend within the territory and open doors for them to become transformers of their communities and build their own futures.”**

**Wilson Herazo, Education Coordinator at Misión Gaia**

## Our annual summer Thames Walk

In June, we held our annual Thames Walk, which included a walk along the Thames and a picnic in Richmond Park. Overall, the day was a great success, with a record 130 people attending and over £10,000 raised! It was a beautiful summer's day, where the CCC team and our wonderful supporters could gather together and share our love of Colombia. It was lovely to see so many faces, old and new, and to have the Colombian Ambassador Alvaro Gomez attend, as well as the Consul Ricardo Lozano, who gave a heartwarming speech about the importance of our work. We'd like to give a special thanks to Doña Gloria Grajales who made her usual delicious empanadas, and to Eduardo Florez from the Colombian Coffee Company, who sold coffee with all proceeds going towards our work. A special shout-out also has to be given to all the lovely people who joined in the Cumbia dancing and gave us an amazing show! To those of you who couldn't attend, we hope to see you next summer!



## Capacity building activities

This year, CCC signed a technical cooperation agreement with the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF). Thanks to this agreement, we supported the delivery of a training programme on post-traumatic stress for children to 40 civil servants that work with vulnerable children with our partner Action for Child Trauma International. We also are implementing a collaborative support partnership between CCC, ICBF and our partner Círculo de Estudios, to exchange experiences and lessons learned on gender-based violence and child sexual abuse in Quidbó and Cartagena.



**Almudena García and Pilar Rivas, psychologists that delivered the training.**



**“As soon as we arrived, I noticed excitement and amazement on the children’s faces. They were astonished by the walls, ceiling, the stairs, and all the theatre paintings and decorations, saying they had never seen anything like it before.”**

## **The Journey of the Anaconda (El viaje de la anaconda)**

This August, the children from our project with Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (ACJ) attended a wonderful performance in the Cristobal Colón Theatre (Bogotá), one of the most emblematic cultural centers in Colombia and a site of national heritage.

The performance by Maria Monica, known as ‘La Montañera’, was about the journey of an anaconda to many places in Colombia, with each song referring to food, places, customs, and culture.

This excitement continued into the performance, as they saw the incredible set design, costumes and music full of animal references, nature and bright colours. The children sang, and danced along to the songs, and at the end got to personally meet the star of the show Maria Monica and take pictures with her. Overall, they loved the experience and had the opportunity to see art and music in a memorable evening.

# Mental health and elimination of stigma

Children Change Colombia has started a new 3-year project with Tiempo de Juego (TDJ) and the Centre for Restoration and Child Care (CRAN) to introduce a community-based project aiming to reframe narratives of trauma and stigma through the production and dissemination of audio-visual content made by children that were forcibly recruited.

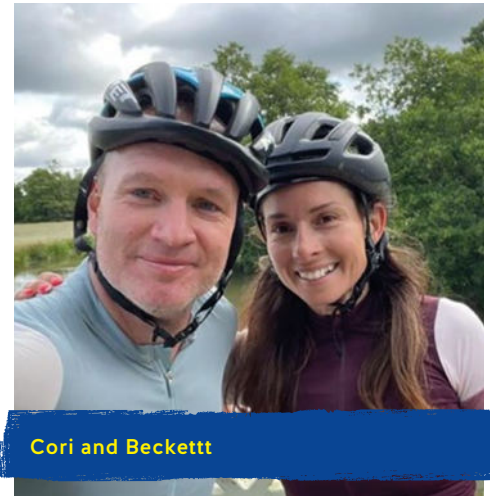
In addition, it seeks to build protective

and safe environments where adults are responsible for ensuring long-term healing and well-being. This project wants to enhance positive relationships between young people and their communities, and use narratives of resilience to create protective and healing environments for those young people who return to their neighbourhoods and communities after dissociating from illegal armed groups.

CRAN and Tiempo de Juego will be working with 750 young people in centres in Bogota and Villavicencio. Within these centres, professionals trained in this community-based approach will be working with children, families, and communities to create protective environments through developing children's rights, and teaching adults how to help them heal, learn and grow.

## Cori raised £15,000 for this project!

On the 3rd of September, Cori Hollenbach organised a dinner and a silent auction in Kent. The food was prepared by Colombian Head Chef, Oscar Fonesca, and the auction featured luxury Colombian artisanal designs. Not satisfied with this, the following weekend Cori and her husband Beckett rode from London to Brighton to raise funds for this project. They raised an amazing total of £15,000. Thank you so much for your generosity and hard work!



Cori and Beckett



## Football for Peace Challenge and Crypto donations

We have also launched the Football for Peace Challenge! Collectively with our supporters, we're aiming to complete 2022 keepie-uppies and support 22 communities in rural Chocó. £30 will give one child a full football kit and boots, £215 will train 5 teachers on the prevention of child recruitment, £450 will give a whole team of children their football kit and boots, and £1,000 will allow us to restore a football pitch.

To raise funds for the Football for Peace project CCC has also signed up to the Giving Block to enhance our donation options and allow our current and new donors to give through crypto. All of our crypto donations will be going towards our project that aims to support and prevent potential victims of forced child recruitment in the rural Chocó region.

We'd like to thank the professional footballers who have helped us raise awareness of this project: Davinson Sánchez (Tottenham Hotspurs & Colombia national team), Esteven Alzate (Brighton & Hove Albion F.C), Yaser Asprilla (Watford & Colombia national team), Alexei Rojas (Arsenal and Colombian National under 18s)

## Preventing Child Recruitment into Armed Groups Through Football Initiatives

Violence continues to be a serious problem in many regions of Colombia, even after the 2016 Peace Agreement, because there are armed actors still fighting for control. Chocó has historically been inhabited by Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities and has been particularly affected by the conflict and child recruitment into illegal armed groups. Many children have nowhere to go to be safe from the violence surrounding them and struggle to make plans outside of the conflict.

Children Change Colombia and our partner ACADESAN are working to prevent the recruitment of girls and boys into armed groups and to provide them with safe spaces that guarantee their rights to access education, culture, and recreational activities. Sport lets young people connect with their peers and community, gives them a sense of belonging, and helps children develop skills in critical thinking, empathy and managing their emotions. Above all, it provides a safe space where children can simply be children.



### NEWSLETTER NO 60

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# Yes, I want to help transform the lives of children in Colombia

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Signed

Date

- I do not require an acknowledgement (please tick or we will assume you do; this will help us save on administration costs).
- I would also like to receive email updates about your work protecting children's rights in Colombia, your fundraising events and campaigns, and how I can get involved.

You can change the ways you hear from us at any time using the contract details below.

You can also donate online at [www.childrenchange colombia.org/donate](http://www.childrenchange colombia.org/donate)

Thank you so much for your support!

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