



Children of the Andes

Building a future for street children and child victims of violence in Colombia
Autumn 2007



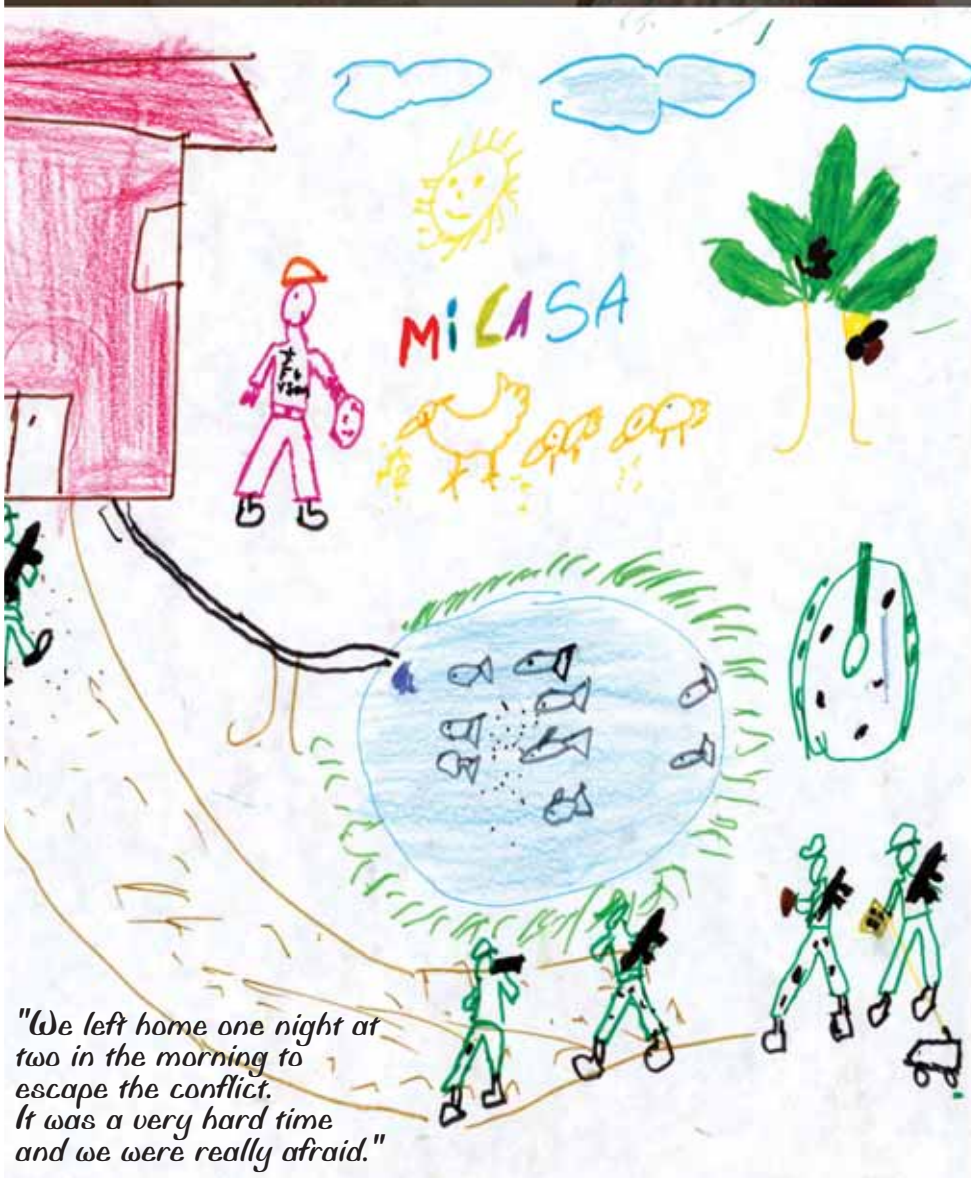
Through the eyes of a child: Internal Displacement in Colombia

Colombia's long-running, complex and deep-rooted conflict has caused between 2 and 4 million people to leave their homes in the last 20 years, resulting in the world's second largest internal displacement crisis.

Over 50% of the displaced are children, witnesses and heirs to an adult conflict.

Not only is displacement traumatic, but it is also extremely disruptive to children's lives and often leads to increased poverty and marginalisation.

By providing protection, healthcare, education and emotional support, COTA and its partners are helping children affected by this situation overcome their experiences and access the services they need and deserve.



"We left home one night at two in the morning to escape the conflict. It was a very hard time and we were really afraid."

The Challenge of Internal Displacement

What is an internally displaced person?

The Colombian government considers the displaced to be “all persons who have been forced to migrate within the national territory because of acts of violence which threaten their life, integrity, personal freedom or safety”.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are protected by various bodies of national and international law. However, because they have not crossed an international border, they are not protected by any specific convention, as is the case for refugees.



‘Silent’ and invisible

The number of displaced in Colombia is the subject of much discussion, but there is no doubt that the crisis is vast in both scale and scope.

Numbers can also be hard to visualise, especially when, as is the case in Colombia, the displaced are not grouped into camps but are dispersed across the country. They are in many ways invisible, but always vulnerable and often discriminated against.

The fear and uncertainty that cause displacement lead many not to register with the authorities at their destinations. But many are also just too overwhelmed by their experiences and simply do not know how to access the government support available to them. Instead, they merge into urban slums, struggling to survive on the margins of society.

For children, despite their resilience and ability to adapt to difficult situations, displacement is inextricably linked to violence and upheaval. Its consequences are wide ranging, but include:

- Trauma and emotional distress
- Separation from family
- Lack or loss of official identification documents
- Missing out on school, often compelled to work as result of family poverty
- Poor health, risk of malnutrition and limited healthcare options
- Discrimination due to ethnicity and economic and social status
- Increased poverty as a result of having to leave their farms and livelihoods

2007 has been declared the Year of the Rights of the Internally Displaced People in Colombia by the Colombian Catholic Church, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Colombian Human Rights and Displacement Consultancy (CODHES).

Why does displacement happen?

There are many reasons why people abandon their homes and livelihoods. Many are escaping targeted violence and intimidation by armed groups vying for territorial control. Others flee the general threat of violence or to prevent the abduction and/or forced recruitment of themselves or their children into the illegal armed groups.

Who does it affect?

The majority of displaced people are small farmers or those living in isolated villages. Approximately 75% are women and children, and 40% are from indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

What is being done about it?

The Colombian government has some of the most advanced and comprehensive legislation in the world to protect and assist the displaced (Law 387 of 1997), and it has made significant efforts in recent years to respond to criticism by channelling more resources into tackling the crisis.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) are among the leading international actors addressing displacement in Colombia. They work with national and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the government to assist the displaced.

However, the complexity, scale and ongoing nature of the problem mean there is still much work to be done to improve protection and long-term support for the displaced.

What are Children of the Andes and its partners doing to address the problem?

All of COTA's partners are affected in some way by displacement. Some work directly with displaced children,



All drawings are by displaced children, provided courtesy of Eduardo Carrillo, Director of "Little Voices". For further information, please contact COTA.

others in communities that have been affected by the influx of displaced people.

Colombo Británica

Colombo-Británica is a community nursery for children aged 2-7 years living in a poor neighbourhood of Bogotá that is host to a large number of displaced families and economic migrants.

Most of the children are cared for by mothers or female relatives who have fled the conflict. Desperate to provide for their children, many mothers have no option but to leave them locked at home while they go out to work. As a result, most of the children at the nursery suffer from malnutrition and impaired development. The nursery provides essential food, healthcare and mental and physical stimulation, and ensures that every child is enrolled in primary school when they leave. In addition, they make sure that each child is registered and has the documentation it needs to access public services.

In 2005, 25% of the 107 children at the nursery were displaced, and of the 84 new arrivals in 2006, 14 were displaced.

Displacement in Numbers

- According to the Human Rights and Displacement Consultancy (CODHES), 3,940,164 Colombians have been displaced since 1985.
- The Colombian Government's official register of displaced persons records the number of displaced as being over 2 million.



Formemos

The Formemos Foundation is located in a rural municipality near Bogotá. It offers a residential and day programme of education, vocational training in agriculture and psycho-social support to 215 children.

The children at Formemos arrive in a vulnerable state and suffer from a range of problems caused by poverty, violence and displacement. Because these experiences were preventing the healthy development and participation of many of the children, COTA helped Formemos establish a Social Welfare department in 2003. Today, the children receive individual and group therapy from a team of social workers and psychologists, and a carefully designed support programme is integrated into all areas of work at Formemos.

This year, 30% of the students at Formemos are from internally displaced families, a marked increase from 20% in 2006 and reflective of a worrying trend.



Antonio's Story

"My name is Antonio Villalba*; I am ten years old. I used to live in a small village in Huila, but I left there with my parents one night at two in the morning to escape the conflict; we were really afraid and it was hard because we couldn't even tell our family. We went to Medellín, but after my father died we had to move to Bogotá. There, we lived in the street in "El Cartucho", which was a really dangerous area. My brothers worked at the traffic lights all day and I had to stay alone and wait for them to bring me food. One day a social worker came and asked us if we wanted to go back to the countryside and go to school, which made us all very happy. So we went to Formemos. Now I have many friends and my mother no longer has to worry about feeding us and sending us to school, which is better. It's really cool when we see her at the weekend and tell her about everything we've learnt. My brothers and I believe in people again and we want to move forward with our lives so our mother does not have to work so hard. When I grow up what I would most like would be to have a farm with animals, horses and everything."

*Pseudonym

To find out more about displacement in Colombia, here are some useful websites:

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: www.unhcr.org
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: www.internal-displacement.org
- International Committee of the Red Cross: www.icrc.ch
- Colombian Government - Acción Social: www.accionsocial.gov.co
- Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES): www.codhes.org



How we raise funds and what we do with your donation

Who we are

The Children of the Andes (COTA) team is currently made up of a Director, a Trust Fundraiser, a Community and Events Fundraiser, an Office Manager and a part time Finance Manager in London, and 2 Field Officers in Colombia.

We also rely on volunteer support in our London office. In fact, many of COTA's team were volunteers before joining as employees.

How we account for the funds we raise

Everything that we do with your donations is regulated by professional financial auditors and the Charity Commission – the UK government agency that regulates the charity sector.

How we raise funds for our work

We raise funds through individuals and community fundraisers, trusts and foundations, corporate donors and events. Our strong and diverse income base helps protect COTA and our partners against sudden shortfalls in any one area.

As well as bringing in funds, our events and newsletters help us keep in touch with our supporters and raise awareness about our work.

Ways you can give to COTA

- You can donate to COTA by **cash**, **cheque**, **charity voucher** or by filling in the **credit card** payment slip found on all our donation forms
- You can also **donate online** through our website, www.childrenoftheandes.org
- If you are planning to participate in a sponsored event - this could be a trek, marathon or special occasion - you can invite your friends, family and colleagues to sponsor you online by setting up your own **fundraising page** at www.justgiving.com.
- **Remembering COTA in your will** is another special way to make a lasting difference to children in Colombia.

Regular Giving

- **Standing Orders** are the only source of income that we can count on month in month out, and are crucial to helping us plan for the future.
- **Payroll Giving** is a unique way for you to give to charity because it allows you to donate from your gross pay before tax, effectively increasing the value of that donation. To find out more about payroll giving, just contact your HR department.

Adding value to your donation

Gift Aid helps us maximise the impact of your donation. For every £10 you donate, we can claim £2.82 in Gift Aid, taking the total we receive to £12.82. In other words, if you are a taxpayer, just by filling in the Gift Aid declaration form on the tear-off slip, and returning it to our office you could enable us to do more for all the children you help through COTA.



From Pocket to Project

You make a donation

We log the donation on the day of receipt. We hope you understand that unless you request it, we do not acknowledge each and every donation. This would use time and money that could be better directed towards children in Colombia.

The details of the donation are entered on our secure donor database. Rest assured that we will never share your details with other organisations.

The donation is paid into the bank. All our funds are divided into **Unrestricted Funds** and **Restricted Funds** and paid into separate bank accounts accordingly. Restricted Funds are donations made for a specific project or appeal. If you want to support a particular project, you can tell us this when you make your donation. Unrestricted Funds are donations made to the charity as a whole.

Unrestricted Funds are the lifeblood of the charity, allowing us to channel resources where and when they are most needed. Unrestricted Funds also cover the cost of running the charity, ultimately ensuring that our staff in London and Colombia can continue to work in support of our partners. We make every effort to keep our operational costs to a minimum so that we can maximise the funds we send to our projects. For every £1 that you donated in 2006, 77p was sent directly to our projects and/or used to provide direct support to our projects.

Our Field Officers contact the project to let them know that funds are on the way. The project gives us official bank receipts for all funds it receives from us. Ongoing communication between our Field Officers and projects, as well as monitoring visits to each project at least twice a year, enable us to account for every penny that you donate.

When the project in question is ready to receive some or all of the funds set aside for it, we notify our bank, which then arranges to transfer the money to the project.

Dear Supporters,

This year continues to be a busy one for Children of the Andes! Our UK office has been working hard to raise funds for our partner projects, while our Field Officers Barbara and Maria Cristina are increasingly focusing on helping them become more sustainable and improve the quality of their services. Our support varies from project to project, but includes help securing local funds and advice on improving planning and budgeting.

In addition to scaling up our level of support in the field, we are also moving into new areas of need. We recently began working with Renacer, an organisation with extensive experience tackling child sexual exploitation in Colombia. Through Renacer, we are providing direct support to child victims of sexual exploitation, as well as contributing to prevention and awareness-raising programmes about this issue.

This Autumn I will be travelling to the field to spend time with our current projects as well as explore a number of exciting new initiatives. There is so much need in Colombia, but with the resources we have we are determined to continue reaching as many of the most marginalised children as we can. Your donations make this possible.

With warmest thanks to you all for your ongoing support.

Rachel
Chief Executive

Thank yous:



Nick Rennie

Marathons and Adventure Activities

Nicholas Rennie ran the Vienna City Marathon on 29 April and raised £439; Camilo Cortenay ran the British 10k London Run on 1 July, raising £166; and Georgina Gamlen raised £237 by competing in a 100 Yard Swim on 19 March.

Good luck to Victor Lohle, who will climb Mont Blanc on 25 August and has so far raised an impressive £4,000 in sponsorship. Good luck also to Louise Semple, who will participate in the BUPA Great North Run on 30 September.

Churches

Once again, we would like to give our warmest thanks to all the churches and religious groups that have supported us in recent months, including: Westminster Abbey (£789); St. Michael Catholic School (£500); Alexandra Presbyterian Sunday School (£370); The Church of the Immaculate Conception (£234); St. Botolph Lullingstone Parochial Church (£100); The Community of the Transfiguration (£100); and The Carmelite Monastery (£50).

Special Mention



We would like to say a special thank you to **Josephine Whitehead**, who has been involved with Children of the Andes as a volunteer since 1993. Over that time, Josephine has seen the charity grow and evolve, and staff and other volunteers have enjoyed her knowledge, companionship and constantly optimistic outlook. We appreciate all of Josephine's hard work and support!

"On retiring I found that I had the time and energy to show some appreciation for my luck in life. Having seen the BBC programme on children living in Bogota's sewers, and because I have a family connection with Colombia, COTA was a natural choice. I was impressed with the energy and commitment of the young staff, enjoyed their company, and I happily went to the office almost weekly. I was made to feel the jobs I did were useful and I had a rewarding sense that I was helping to improve the lives, in a humble way, of some of Colombia's most impoverished and threatened children."

Schools

Special thanks to staff and students at St. Edward's school in Oxford, whose "HISPANIC SHOW 2007" raised an amazing £1431; and to Rye St. Antony School and Magdalen College School for raising £125 and £103 respectively.



St Edward's

Individuals

Steve Henderson held a concert with Thea Gillmore and donated all proceeds to Children of the Andes, which came to £645. Steve commented that: *"This is our 10th year running Mr. Kite Benefits, which aims to raise funds for charities and support some great musicians. Children of the Andes has always struck a personal note for my wife, Shirley, and I. A few years ago, I was lucky enough to do some work in Ecuador, where we were shocked to see the differences between how the two halves lived. I had to stop Shirley from emptying her loose change in the street and causing a scramble amongst the young, and I promised her that we would find a way to help children in the region in other ways. Children of the Andes provided just*



Marta Hatfield

that chance." For more information please visit www.mrkite.org.

Thanks to Moira Kennedy for her amazing fundraising efforts in recent months, and for her recent donation of £1,500; Marta Hatfield, who raised £210 from her annual Tombola Party in July; and Michele Pepperrell, who raised £410 at a

garden party with family and friends in July.

We would also like to thank Joyce Murdock for raising funds through her annual coach trips; Ray and Lyn Blyth, who raised money by selling cookies and refreshments at their garden party; and Patricia Martinez for raising funds at the Latin American Festival in Swansea in February .

Many thanks also to all our generous supporters who asked for donations to be made in lieu of birthday presents: six year old Ellie Paloma Bursby and her parents (£352); 15-year old Mayumi Ihara (£955); and Pory Conduit (£182).

Events



Thames Walk

The Thames Walk was another very successful event held in Richmond Park on Sunday, 20 May. It was great to see Richmond Park filled with supporters wearing Children of the Andes t-shirts and enjoying their picnics in the sun. This year's attendance was the best ever - almost 200 people were there on the day - and we have so far raised an amazing £6,000. Thanks to everyone who participated and contributed through sponsorship.



Summer Salsa Party

On 14 June we had another fantastic summer party. Over 400 people turned up to the Electric Ballroom in Camden to enjoy music from Cuban sensation Sur Caribe and danced to the fantastic Latin rhythms of DJ Frankie. Thanks to everyone who attended and to our sponsors Cubana Bar and Restaurant, Western Union and Casa en Casa.

Please keep an eye on our website for information about future events



COTA Field Officers Barbara (Cali) and Maria Cristina (Bogotá) conduct regular visits to our partner projects to monitor the use of Children of the Andes' (COTA) funds and support the development of their work. In April 2007, they visited FNA, which runs a comprehensive support programme for child workers in Manizales. Here is Barbara's account:

"The main focus of this visit was to help FNA define its objectives for the year and review progress on several programme improvements that had been discussed on a previous visit. These included working more closely with the children's families and introducing a follow-up programme for ex-beneficiaries.

During the workshop, we began to look at how FNA evaluated its work. It became clear that although it had many reports quoting numbers and statistics, what it lacked was an effective system to measure how their work was improving the quality of life of its beneficiaries. When we dug deeper we discovered that FNA's largest donor required them to present results in quantitative terms, regardless of the overall effectiveness of this approach.

Not wanting to add to FNA's work load, we worked with staff to look at how they could develop their existing systems of evaluation in a way that would meet the needs of their local funder but also provide

more qualitative information on the impact of their work on the lives of the children and their families.

We started this process by posing two key questions to the FNA team:

- What do you hope to achieve through your work, in terms of its impact on child workers?
- How will you know whether you have achieved this impact?

The workshop was extremely positive and led to the definition of much clearer objectives, which are essential to FNA and also help COTA monitor and evaluate the work it funds. The workshop also prompted questions and healthy debate within the FNA team about their work. Additionally, Maria Cristina and I gained valuable experience in working together, benefiting the project with our combined approach. Crucially, the workshop highlighted the added value that COTA brings to its partners. "

'COTA's approach is not to look for the error in our work, but to challenge us to clearly identify and express the value of what we do in terms of the results we expect to achieve. You accompany us in our work, suggesting alternatives and ideas. You have also encouraged us to promote our work, to network with other organisations – something we have not done enough of – and to position ourselves more actively at an inter-institutional level as an experienced organisation working for the of elimination of child labour. In this way, you have added another dimension to this project and its development.'
Elimination of Child Labour Programme Director, FNA Manizales.

Since carrying out this visit, Barbara has been in regular contact with FNA Manizales to help them work towards their newly defined objectives, sharing her findings with Maria Cristina and the COTA team in London.

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 W: www.childrenoftheandes.org

Patron: Virginia McKenna OBE Chairman: David Maxwell-Scott