

No 66 / 2025

Christmas Newsletter



Through their eyes, Christmas is hope. Through yours, it can be change. In this issue, we share the stories, voices, and dreams of Colombian children who remind us what Christmas is truly about: love, hope, and togetherness. Discover how your generosity is helping turn their wishes into joy, and see the difference your kindness makes this season of giving.

www.childrenchange colombia.org



How Children Change Colombia projects empower Children and Communities

Dear friends,

As we approach the Christmas season, we want to express our deepest gratitude for your continued support of Children Change Colombia. Thanks to your generosity, hope continues to shine for thousands of children and young people across Colombia who face poverty, violence, and exclusion. Your compassion and commitment make it possible for them to dream, learn, and build brighter futures.

This Christmas, as we reflect on the power of kindness and community, we are reminded that every act of support big or small truly changes lives. From all of us, and from the children whose lives you help transform, thank you for keeping their dreams alive and for standing with us in creating a safer, fairer, and happier Colombia.

In this newsletter, you'll discover how your generosity is helping turn children's wishes into moments of joy and hope. You'll read inspiring stories that show the real impact of your support and see how your kindness is transforming lives this season of giving. Each smile, each opportunity, and each dream fulfilled is possible because of you.

We are working tirelessly to address the pressing challenges facing children in Colombia. From expanding educational opportunities to safeguarding children from forced recruitment and supporting survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, our projects prioritise empowerment, resilience, and sustainability. These efforts are only possible because of your generosity and the partnerships we've built with local communities and grassroots organisations.

In 2024, we have implemented 18 projects supporting more than 5,500 children. However, CCC's work is more relevant than ever. Colombia faces significant challenges: the rise of forced recruitment, new waves of violence, and the reduction of U.S. financial aid to social programmes. Our mission continues, and Children Change Colombia will not stop its work until all children in Colombia have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

This Christmas, we invite you to share the gift of hope. Your donation -no matter the size- can help a child in Colombia access education, protection, and the chance to build a brighter future. Together, we can ensure that every child feels seen, supported, and safe this festive season. Please consider making a Christmas donation today and be part of the change that brings light and opportunity to children across Colombia.

Merry Christmas!



Angela Carreño
Executive Director



Discovering the power of my voice

The story of Sharyanis a young defender in Cartagena

When I first joined the group, I was very happy — but also a little nervous. I remember smiling a lot because everything made me laugh, but I didn't talk much. I liked watching what everyone else was doing, but I preferred to stay quiet. The same thing happened to me at school - I never knew whether what I was going to say was right or wrong.

As the days went by, I started to feel different. The activities were fun, and our teacher always listened to us. Everyone could take part without being afraid. I really enjoyed spending time with the other girls and boys, feeling listened to, and learning that I am valuable — even when I make mistakes. It doesn't matter if I get good or bad grades; I will always be special. One of my favourite activities was when we played at being reporters. We had to speak in our own voices about what we liked and what we didn't — because our voices have power.

We had to talk about ourselves and share our opinions, but not just in any way, hehe. We had to speak with confidence, because our teacher told us a story about a girl who wasn't listened to - her voice was timid, and others took advantage of her. I learned that I can say "no" when something doesn't feel right, and that I have a "safety bubble" I must protect - not everyone is allowed inside it.

If another boy or girl asked me what it's like to come here, I'd tell them that this is a place where you feel calm and safe. Here, you learn to protect yourself, to express what you feel, and to believe in yourself. For example, I tell one of my best friends at school that she can say no - especially when something makes her uncomfortable. Sometimes people make us greet others when we don't feel like it, but if that happens, we can just shake hands instead.

My mum says that now I talk a lot more - that I tell her everything - and that it's good that I express what I think and feel. She says I can now recognise when something isn't right and that I understand my body is a treasure. She tells me she's very proud of me, and that makes me happy.

Now I feel more cheerful. I always want to come to the workshops even when it's about to rain, I get ready early because I don't want to miss a single day. I've realised that I can help others feel happy too, because I stand up for them and teach them to respect themselves because we all have rights. I want to keep learning many more things, because our teacher says there are still very important topics to explore. I'm excited to keep discovering how to protect myself, how to help others, and how to use my voice to do good things and to love myself - because I am unique and special.



Camilo and Esteban became entrepreneurs in Santander

Esteban and Camilo are two rural high school students who have decided to become entrepreneurs thanks to the support from Children Change Colombia. They were part of the project of entrepreneurship and bilingualism in Santander. They competed with their projects in the entrepreneurship fair last October and they have won the opportunity to receive seed capital and technical support to make this dream come true.

"I think this training we've had is really cool, because they've taught us about finance, what to do, what we need to set up a project, and how to know when a project is profitable or not. Where I live is very humid and I have seen that the plantain grows very well so I thought that I could create my own agrobusiness with plantains. There are young people who don't start a project because they lack the resources, they don't feel supported, they don't know how to do it. But with this opportunity, anyone can be motivated to get involved and create their own business".-Camilo

"The area where I live is tropical, with rainy seasons and plenty of sunshine, so it's a suitable climate for building a chicken coop and raising chickens. However, there are also times when it gets very cold, so the chickens need to be protected with tarpaulins and heated with lights or bulbs to make them more comfortable and allow them to develop healthily. And this is my business. My family is also very excited to participate in the project. With CCC we learned a lot about our business, how to strengthen it, how to carry it out, and we also contributed new ideas to strengthen it."-Esteban.



How music helped Yarianis - Music for peace in Barranquilla

When I first joined Música Para la Paz, I didn't think I was good at anything. At home, people sometimes called me "sick" or "stupid," and I started to believe it. But everything changed when I learned to play.

Our drum teacher says one word when we play: "Transform it." He tells us that every rhythm can change sadness into power, and anger into movement. I didn't understand it at first, but little by little, I began to feel it in my hands. When I hit the drum, I feel like I'm letting go of everything that hurt me.

In the project we talk about emotions, about what is right and wrong, and about how every person deserves respect. Children Change Colombia helps us learn to protect ourselves and each other, especially the girls. Our psychologist Kevin often reminds us, "You are not what others say. You are what you discover inside yourself." Those words helped me stop saying bad things about myself. Now, when someone laughs or says girls shouldn't play the drum, I play louder.

In one workshop, we painted a mural that said: "Respect has rhythm." It's true. Every time we play together, we learn how to listen, how to share space, and how to be at peace.

In October, we performed in front of the whole community. When the music stopped, everyone was clapping. I looked around and saw the other girls smiling, that moment made me feel powerful. Music didn't just teach me how to play. It taught me how to listen.

STEAM and inclusion in la Sierra Nevada

Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM)

Marco became a leader

Marco is 14 years old and is a student with a unique way of learning and engaging with the world. He has Asperger's. He has always shown great curiosity and a strong talent for technology. Although at first he preferred to work independently and showed little interest in traditional classes, the teachers and professionals from the project saw great potential in him and decided to support him so he could develop his talents in an environment that truly motivated him.

Through this process, Juan has found the STEAM laboratory to be a space where he can express himself freely, experiment, and put his technological knowledge into practice. There, he is not only strengthening his skills, but has also begun to support his classmates by coordinating activities, leading small projects, and taking on responsibilities within the lab.

His participation is transforming how both his peers and teachers perceive inclusion. What began as a strategy to motivate one student has become a model of inclusive and cross-cutting education, showing that, with the right support, every student can contribute to collective learning.

Today, Juan is a role model within his school. His experience has inspired other teachers to develop inclusive projects and to recognise the importance of creating spaces where every student can find their place. Thanks to him, the STEAM laboratory is becoming a space of collaboration, diversity, and shared growth - where differences are seen as strengths that enrich the entire educational community.



Dana's message of thanks

My name is Dana and, together with the Children Change Colombia Foundation, we've been working on a series of projects that have been very interesting and meaningful for all of us as students. With the guidance of Professor Wilson, we've learned so many things, and I want to thank you for everything. We truly value all the lessons and knowledge you've shared with us. Thank you.

With Professor Wilson, we've been working on a project called Chicas Líderes (Girls Leaders), through which we've learned a great deal - especially about leadership, sexual education, and the importance of women in every part of the world. We want to thank you for this opportunity and for everything you've taught us.



Sofia's Story: Learning to believe in myself again

My name is Sofia, I am 17, I was recruited by an armed group, but I have learned that that doesn't define me. When I first joined the programme for demobilised children, I was a very distrustful girl, without rules or structure, because I grew up without family support or the warmth of a home. I was rebellious. At that time, I was in ninth grade, My educational process wasn't easy, During the first few months, I wanted to leave – I won't deny it. I didn't like being in a house that wasn't mine, as I was used to a very different kind of life.

I eventually finished ninth grade and the programme's professional staff then suggested that I validate grades 10 and 11 – an opportunity I'm deeply grateful for, because it motivated me to keep going. That same year, I was given the chance to start a technical degree. I decided to study to become a nursing assistant. At first, it was very difficult because of the demanding routine and all the assignments – nursing from Monday to Friday, and school on Saturdays.

I owe this to the programme, which always supported me emotionally. There were many moments when I felt like I couldn't go on, but thanks to teamwork, I can now see the results – not only in myself, but also in my friends. Thanks to the programme, we've all been able to finish our studies.



More than a goal: The revolution of women's football in Tumaco

Omaira is 9 years old and lives in one of the most difficult cities in Colombia. She speaks softly, but her voice carries strength.

"Before, we played football just for fun. Now we're learning new things - how to work as a team, how to take care of ourselves, and how to believe in ourselves."

For her, playing in a women's tournament has been a dream come true. "Girls hardly ever get the chance. This time, we have to make the most of it."

Omaira has improved her grades, feels calmer at home, and often repeats one lesson that now guides her life:

"It doesn't matter if you're a boy or a girl. If you have talent, you can play."

A Grandmother in the Stands

Among the spectators, there's always Aida Lucia , Omaira's grandmother, who never misses a match.

"I've seen her learn so much... I'm proud of her. She's a striker and brings me so much joy," she says, smiling.

She's noticed changes at home too:

"Now she knows how to take care of herself, how to behave, and how to speak with respect. The teachers have taught her things no one ever explained before. I can only give my thanks."

EVENTS

THAMES WALK 2025



'DATA TO DISRUPT TRAFFICKING' AWARDS



PROJECT TALK 2025



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME VISITS



TEAM WELLBEING DAY



SCHOLARS DOCUMENTARY



available on YouTube

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Executive Director: Ángela Carreño

Communications Manager: Victoria Cornelio

Articles: Patricia Montenegro, Wilson Herazo, Jessica Alfaro, Gabriela Vera, Kevin Staaden, Mayerly Layton, and Libia Garzón.

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SCAN ME!

Share the
Christmas
Spirit Today!



Donate Today

Help us continue supporting Colombian children who remind us what Christmas is truly about: love, hope, and togetherness. Your kindness can make this season of giving one to remember.

£15 for a football for our Football4Peace project in Tumaco to prevent forced recruitment, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, and promote gender equality

£30 for education kit (school bag, colors, pencil, ruler, eraser and notebooks) for a child affected by internal displacement or natural disasters.

£70 for music instruments for our project in Barranquilla, where music and education are used as a way to find peace and development in communities.



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- I require an acknowledgement (please tick or we will assume you do not; 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 contact details below.

You can also donate online at www.childrenchange colombia.org/donate

Thank you so much for your support!

T (+44) 208 050 4992
 E info@childrenchange colombia.org

Please return this form to Children Change Colombia, 5 Richbell Place, Holborn, London, WC1N 3LA

