



OUR IMPACT 2017



Overview:

Understanding our impact

Children Change Colombia works with the most at risk children, to keep them safe and defend their rights in the long term.

We want to help children create a society where their rights are respected and they are included in important decisions that affect their lives now and in the future.

To do this, we work in partnership with Colombian children's organisations who have a proven record in defending children's rights and helping them demand change.

Our 25+ years of working with children have convinced us that when **children are able to speak up for their own rights**, this is a powerful way to ensure that **children's rights are protected in a lasting and effective way.**

In order to back-up this conviction with evidence, we have developed a system that enables us to effectively measure and understand the impact of our work each year.

The information presented in this report has been collated by our partners and assessed against a set of overarching indicators – verifiable changes that show we are achieving our key strategic aims of:

- 1) protecting children from immediate harm and defending their rights in the long-term.**
- 2) tackling neglected issues that threaten children's rights.**
- 3) strengthening children's organisations in Colombia.**

The following report pulls together our overall organisational impact in 2017 in these three areas.



Overview: 2017 in numbers



The people

In 2017 we worked with **6,166 children and young people**. As a result of this work, we also **indirectly impacted the lives of a further 9,936 children** – siblings, peers and neighbours of the children who participated in our project activities.

We also worked with adults - parents, teachers, policy makers – to encourage and help them to keep children safe now and in the long-term. In 2017, **1,941 adults** participated in our project activities or attended forums, performances and campaigns led by children from our projects. A further 11,899 adults benefited indirectly from our work.

We helped
16,102
children to change
Colombia
in 2017

That's 30,000 people who are better equipped to protect children's rights as a result of our work in 2017 alone!

The issues

We tackle the most neglected issues - issues that pose a serious threat to children's rights and well-being, but on which insufficient work is being done to counter the harm they cause.

In 2017, we worked on **3 neglected issues**:

- sexual and gender-based violence
- recruitment into armed groups and reintegration into society
- commercial sexual exploitation

The partners

We worked with these **8 inspiring organisations** in 2017, providing much-needed funding to run their programmes but also technical support to help them become stronger organisations, better able to defend the rights of vulnerable children in the long-term:



Protecting children's rights:

In 2017 we protected the rights* of:

5,934

children to freedom from violence, abuse and neglect.

2,690

children to protection from sexual exploitation.

2,444

children to freedom of expression.

2,187

children to recovery from trauma.

1,911

children to relax, play and participate in a range of cultural activities.

916

children to protection from involvement in war and armed conflict.

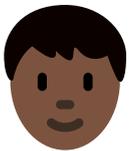
* These rights are defined within the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. In total, in 2017 we protected 16 Rights of the Child.



Protecting children's rights:



9 in 10 children that we worked with in 2017 showed that they had learnt how to protect themselves from violence and abuse.



9 in 10 adults that we worked with in 2017 learnt how to make a more protective environment for children, keeping them safe in the long-term.

In 2017 our 8 partners:

- shared their experience of good practice with **118 organisations** working in the field of children's rights.
- **influenced at least 16 organisations** to improve their practices.
- trained **3 organisations** to successfully implement their model for protecting children's rights.



The neglected issue: Sexual and gender-based violence

Sexual violence violates children's rights, damages their health, welfare and development, and increases their vulnerability to further violence. In 2017, 10,900 cases of child sex abuse were registered in Colombia – that's 30 children each day. Despite this, it continues to be a major 'silent' problem in Colombia. Sexual violence has also been used as a weapon of war during Colombia's prolonged civil conflict.



Spotlight on: Quibdó

With our partner Circulo de Estudios, we're working to reduce the risk of conflict-related sexual violence against children in the most high-risk parts of Quibdó and to increase adults' ability to protect children from it.

Children learn to express themselves

94 children reduced the amount of time they spent on the streets. Through regular dance, music and theatre workshops, the children gained greater self-confidence and learnt to express themselves - this helped them to reduce aggressive behaviour and relate better with friends and family.

30 children created a dance show about violence, its consequences and how it can be overcome. They performed it in a public square, and later in Bogotá.

Adults listen to children

30 local adults learnt to help run the project workshops. Now they are points of reference who the children can turn to when they feel unsafe or afraid, during or outside the project.

"I wish all of the children in Quibdó could come to the project."

Manuel, 11 years old

Spotlight on: Putumayo

With our partner Corporación Casa Amazonía, we're working to protect children and young people in remote indigenous communities from sexual violence and forced recruitment by armed groups by tackling taboos that keep these dangers invisible.

Safe spaces for healing from trauma

78 children and **40 of their parents and teachers** began to overcome the trauma of violence, conflict and neglect thanks to regular therapy sessions, including yoga, dance and counselling.

Children understand and demand their rights

60 children gained a better understanding of their rights, learning that sexual violence is not normal, that they are entitled to protection from it, and how to access support.

10 youth leaders from across the region learnt advocacy skills that they will go on to use to take their demands for the protection of children's rights to their local government.

Safer schools

A local school set up clear a student discipline procedure, as well as care pathways for pupils at risk. We also brought teachers together with the local education authority to create a committee that will work to improve schooling in Putumayo.

The neglected issue: Sexual and gender-based violence



Spotlight on: Cali

With our partner Si Mujer, we've been working with children and young people from communities with high rates of sexual violence, gender discrimination and teenage pregnancies. Since 2014, we've helped Si Mujer run a 'Child and Youth Friendly Healthcare Service' in the city centre, with a mobile service that serves the most marginalised communities.



Access to unbiased medical care

716 children accessed first-time medical consultations, **522 children** accessed psychological consultations, and **1,681 consultations** were made on the use of contraception. **391 pregnant girls** aged under 22 came through the service who didn't want to continue with their pregnancy for one of the three legal reasons in Colombia. Si Mujer was able to provide or accompany all of these girls to receive a legal and safe procedure.

Equal rights for boys and girls

132 children and young people aged 22 and under participated in 40 hours of training on their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and tackling gender inequality, and how to become youth leaders in this field.

80 young people held replicas of their training, reaching **1,200 young people** in their schools, communities and in local organisations.

Talking publicly about children's rights

Youth leaders also reached **over 1,300 people** through public activities including 2 SRHR festivals; campaigns in parks, colleges and universities on women's and LGBT+ rights and the right to abortion; and a presentation at a conference on abortion in Peru.

The 'mobile service' made 25 outings to promote Si Mujer's free healthcare services, reaching **767 young people** who would otherwise have little access to information or services about their SRHR.

Improving children's services

Si Mujer held an exchange with **30 youth leaders** from 14 Child and Youth Friendly Healthcare Services across Colombia. They also funded initiatives devised by local youth leaders to promote SRHR in their communities.

Si Mujer also ran training for **36 staff** from 17 other child friendly healthcare services in the Cali region.



The neglected issue: Recruitment into armed groups and reintegration into society

Tens of thousands of children have been recruited into Colombia's various illegal armed groups and gangs. Some are forced or indoctrinated, or are enticed with promises of money, status, or protection for their family. Young people who manage to escape face severe stigmatisation and insufficient support from the state to build a new life.



Spotlight on: Soacha

With our partner Tiempo de Juego we've developed a programme of innovative arts, drama and music activities that integrates life-skills training, psychological support and technical skills training.

Enjoying a safe, happy childhood

268 children participated regularly in weekly activities in their chosen artistic pursuit, reducing the amount of time they spent in risky situations.

Open conversations

160 of the children learnt to use art to express feelings about their difficult, often violent life experiences. This ability to express themselves assertively helps children protect themselves - for example, it enables them to say no to participating in a dangerous or illegal activity.

Adults listening to children

The children demonstrated their new artistic skills, representing their community in a positive light. They performed at an international film festival, at the 'National Centre for Historical Memory' alongside well-known Colombian musicians, and Tiempo de Juego's annual community festival. In total, **760 people saw the children perform.**

Positive role models

12 young people, who joined the project as children, took on leadership roles in the running of the programme. 5 of them ran workshops with minimal support and of these, **3 have been given staff contracts** to run workshops from 2018 onward.

Training other NGOs

We supported Tiempo de Juego's team and youth leaders to devise and run training for **11 children's organisations** from across Colombia, to teach them how to implement Tiempo de Juego's methodology themselves.

2 organisations are now using Tiempo de Juego's approach to help vulnerable children in their communities. The remaining 9 are due to complete their training and start running activities independently in 2018.



The neglected issue: Recruitment into armed groups and reintegration into society



Spotlight on: Bogotá

We've brought together the expertise of two of our long-term partners - *Tiempo de Juego* and *Fundación Mamá Yolanda* - to provide a holistic approach to tackling girls' involvement in gangs.

Equal opportunities for girls and boys

161 girls and young women at a residential care home and a juvenile justice centre took part in weekly sports and yoga activities combined with life skills and gender workshops.

The girls learnt to identify and question damaging gender stereotypes and learnt about other girls who've developed their lives healthily and safely.

Strong, nurturing families

We provided **33 families** with intensive support, including home visits and group workshops, to help them find ways to protect their daughters from gang involvement in the future. When their daughters return home, these parents will be better equipped to provide a protective home environment.

With our partner *CRAN*, we are supporting young people in Bogotá who've left Colombia's guerrilla groups. We're also helping *CRAN* to build the capacity of children's organisations from other parts of Colombia to support former child soldiers and other vulnerable children who face a high risk of recruitment.

Belief in a brighter future

We provided intensive support to **43 demobilised young people** and their **24 foster parents** in Bogotá. 40 of the young people were able to recognise the opportunities that they have now and the strengths they have in themselves to take advantage of these and achieve something positive in their lives. All 43 young people now know how to access services such as healthcare, education and employment.

Communities protecting children

One community organisation based just outside Bogota learnt new strategies for protecting local children from armed groups and helping them achieve their life goals.

Alongside this organisation, we helped **30 children** at risk of recruitment to develop a closer, more protective relationship with their families and a clear understanding of what they want to do in the future and how to achieve it. 31 parents of these children received individual and group support, helping them to improve their family dynamics.



The neglected issue: Recruitment into armed groups and reintegration into society



Spotlight on: Buenaventura

With our partner Fundescodes, we're working to create safer communities, where children and young people are protected from threats such as forced recruitment, violence and discrimination.

Violence-free spaces in the community

We established **four 'Peace and Reconciliation Schools'** in Buenaventura's most conflict-affected communities.

These provided **80 vulnerable children** with a safe, friendly environment where they talked freely about the dangers they face in their communities and reflect on the effect that the constant threat of violence has had on their lives. All 80 children started to avoid people and places that pose a risk of violence.

Children leading change

60 children ran activities to raise awareness of children's rights with **230 children** and **30 community leaders** from their neighbourhoods.

Many of these adults acted on what they had learnt, taking steps to make their community safer - in one instance they cut down a patch of tall grass where people regularly hid to take drugs and where sexual assaults had taken place.

20 youth leaders used film, radio, music, social media, photos and newspapers to share their experiences of peacebuilding with their communities and audiences in the UK.

United communities

15 adult community leaders completed 130 hours training in psychosocial support to become 'Community Therapists'.

Using their in-depth knowledge of the needs of their communities, they developed and delivered psychosocial 'interventions' to support victims of violence and promote women's and children's rights.



Children created a map of their neighbourhood, highlighting the places where they feel safe and unsafe

"I have learnt that children and young people's voices are important and that we have the right to an opinion about lots of different things."

Lina, 14 years old

The neglected issue: Commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a hugely under-reported problem in Colombia, affecting an estimated 35,000 children. Since 2011 we've been working to protect children from experiencing this exploitation and the devastating impact it has on their physical and mental health.



Spotlight on: Bogotá

With our partner ACJ Bogotá, we work in a designated 'tolerance zone' in the Colombian capital where sex workers are permitted to operate without prosecution and can be seen on the street at all hours. Many children from the area have parents that are engaged in sex work. As a result, for many children, sexual exploitation is normalised.

Knowing how to stay safe

147 vulnerable children gained greater protection from CSEC through theatre, dance and music workshops that taught about the different forms CSEC can take and how to stay safe online and on the streets. Children who needed extra support received one-on-one counselling.

Strong, protective families

103 of the children's families attended CSEC prevention workshops and received support to access employment opportunities away from sex work.

"Since joining the group, so many things have changed in my life -it's made me think about my surroundings in a completely different way. The truth is, it's become like my second family."

Samuel, 20 years old

Teachers aware of the risks

In schools, **654 students, 231 of their parents, and 59 teachers** learnt to identify signs that a child is experiencing CSEC and how to help them.

The teachers set up a 'CSEC Prevention Committee' in order to support colleagues with advice and work towards incorporating an action plan for CSEC prevention into their school's charter.

Women redefining their lives

We supported **61 young adults** involved in CSE to find alternative employment, and 45 of these secured a stable, salaried job. Thanks to 'Academic Catch-up Courses' for those who had dropped out of school as children, 20 gained their high school diploma.

Institutions coordinating for change

We brought together **20 professionals from across Bogotá**, including lawyers, psychologists, politicians, academics and social workers, to form a 'CSEC Committee' which met regularly to discuss best practice for CSEC prevention and to develop a care pathway for cases identified.

Strengthening children's organisations in Colombia:

A significant part of our work, and what differentiates us from many other UK-based NGOs, is the extent and permanence of the support and accompaniment that we are able to offer to our partners, thanks to the presence of our two permanent project officers in Bogota.



Encouraging reflection and analysis

At the beginning of the year, we helped each partner to analyse what they see as the strengths and weaknesses of their organisation in the key areas of programmatic work, fundraising and governance. Our Project Officers then worked with the partner staff to strengthen the specific areas that each partner defined as a weakness.

In this way, **we can be sure that our support is helping to create a stronger organisation, not just a strong project.**

Developing child participation

Circulo de Estudios identified that they were interested in incorporating a youth advocacy element into their work in Quibdó and so our Project Officer worked with them to identify the steps that they needed to take in order to do this.

Using **examples from other partners' experiences**, we helped their team to recognise that in order to develop youth advocacy it was important to provide more opportunities for child and youth participation within the project, to help the children and young people to develop the leadership skills and confidence required for carrying out advocacy activities in the community. We then helped the team to identify ways they could involve children in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project.

Sharing learnings with Social Services

Our other Project Officer provided on-going support to the two partners running our Comic Relief-funded project, described earlier in this report. At the start of the year, she helped the two organisations to prepare for a series of meetings with Colombian Social Services. The meetings were a chance to present their project, draw attention to the neglected issues the project addresses, and identify key contacts within Social Services who could support the project and share our partners' learnings within their institution.

Our partners found that their meetings with Social Services **increased the institution's interest in understanding and responding to issues around girls' involvement with gangs.**

Building strong, equal partnerships

Our partner Tiempo de Juego gave us the following feedback about our support:

"We identify Children Change Colombia as a partner that is not only interested in the project that they fund but in strengthening all elements of partner organisations like us. They are a partner that don't make you feel judged or audited; we know that we can speak openly with them about problems that arise, in the knowledge that they will help us overcome them in the best possible way."



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Cover photo: Youth leaders in Buenaventura.

Names of children in the featured quotations have been changed for child protection reasons.

Photographs show real participants in CCC-funded projects.