

A yellow circular logo with the text "CHILDREN CHANGE COLOMBIA" in red, white, and blue. The background of the entire page is a photograph of two young girls in traditional Colombian folk costumes, one holding a straw hat.

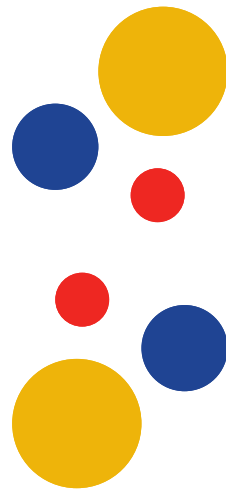
**CHILDREN
CHANGE
COLOMBIA**

**We ensure that the most
at risk children can claim
their right to a safe and
happy childhood.**

OUR IMPACT 2019

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 29 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**.

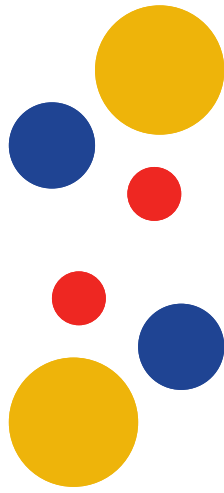
In order to back-up this conviction with evidence, we have developed a system that enables us to effectively measure and understand the impact of our work each year.

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 2019 in these three areas.

Overview: 2019 in numbers



The people

In 2019 we worked with 2,119 children and young people. As a result of this work, we also indirectly impacted the lives of a further 2,666 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 2019, 1,130 adults participated in our project activities or attended forums, performances and campaigns led by children from our projects. A further 977 adults benefited indirectly from our work.

We helped
4,785
children to
change Colombia
in **2019**

That's almost 7,000 people who are better equipped to protect children's rights as a result of our work in 2019 alone!

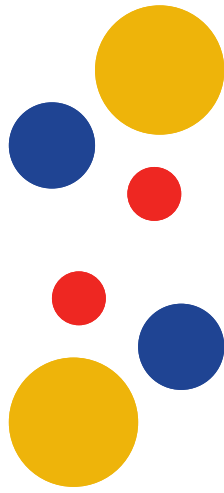
The issues

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

In **2019** we worked on **4 neglected issues**:

- sexual and gender-based violence
- recruitment into armed groups and reintegration into society
- commercial sexual exploitation
- children's rights

Overview: 2019 in numbers



The partners

We worked with these **7 inspiring organisations in 2019**, 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.



...Other impact numbers

Number of unique visitors
on **CCC** website:

7236 new visitors
4424 returning visitors
7313 users

Number of **active**
Facebook members:

Increase of **423** from **2,245**
(2018) to **2,668 (2019)**

21 CCC events:

3 in **UK**
1 in **Colombia**
11 Gabeto nights
6 art classes

Protecting children's rights:

In 2019 we protected the rights* of:

2,119

children from violence, abuse and neglect.

667

children to recovery from trauma.

1,076

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

2,098

children to the goals of education.

705

children to protection from involvement in war and armed conflict.

276

children from child labour.

2,098

children to freedom of expression.

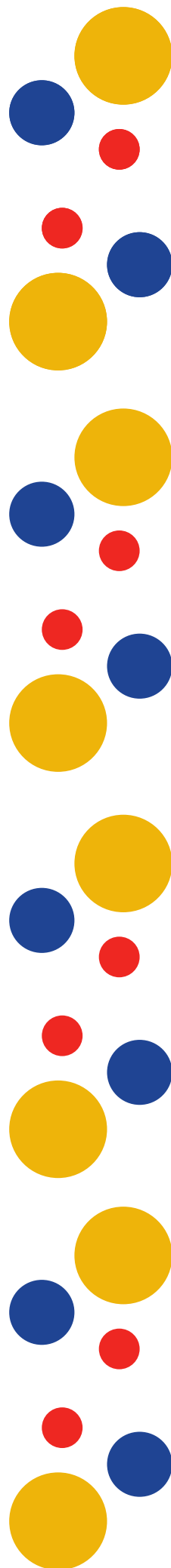
554

children from minority or indigenous groups.

1,568

children to protection from sexual exploitation.

*These rights are defined within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In total, in 2019 we protected **17 Rights of the Child**.



Protecting children's rights:



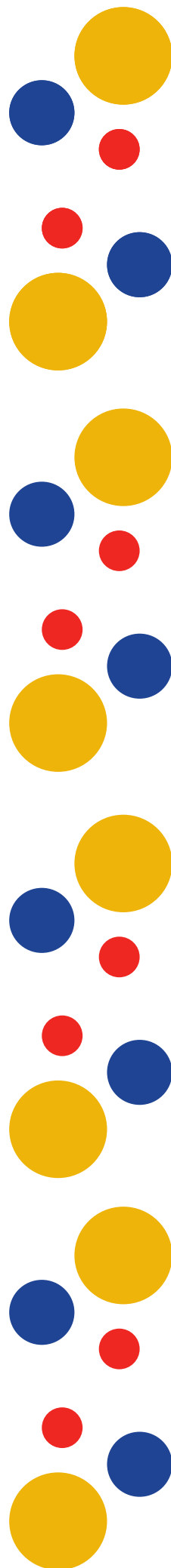
70% of children that we worked with in **2019** showed that they had learnt how to protect themselves from violence and abuse.



73% adults that we worked with in **2019** learnt how to make a more protective environment for children, keeping them safe in the long-term.

In **2019**, our **7** partners:

shared their experience of good practice with **46 organisations** working in the field of children's rights.
influenced at least **16 organisations** to improve their practices.
trained **1 local** organisation and **1 rural** school 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 Colombia, 91,982 cases of sexual violence against boys, girls and adolescents were registered between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, 25,536 sexual offences were registered against minors. Children between 10 to 14 years old are the most affected age group, counting for 44% of all cases.

Spotlight : Quibdó, Chocó.

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

Children understand their rights

50 children gained a strong, practical understanding of children's rights and spoke confidently about the social problems and opportunities that exist in their communities, linking these to the violation/ protection of rights. The children have formed strong bonds of friendship, meeting to travel to the project together safely and discussing their fears and doubts with one another. All 50 children also participated in the creation, rehearsal and presentation of a performance called Natural Drum that highlighted the risks they face in their communities, which was attended by over 200 people in Quibdó.

Adults listen to children

35 local adults, 'community leaders', helped run the project workshops and carried out home visits to every child's family. Now they are points of reference who the children and their parents turn to for support during or outside the project.

Developing youth leadership

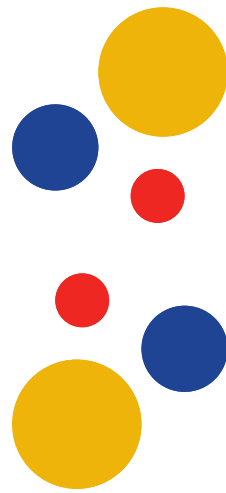
35 young people undertook youth leader training – learning the qualities of a good leader and practicing them by running activities with the younger children. They also took part in the city's Youth Week celebrations where they took part in debates about the risks young people face in Quibdó and the lack of free time activities available and made suggestions for tackling these issues.



"Thanks to this programme I don't self-harm anymore, I have friends, I'm doing better at school, and I've learnt to play musical instruments. I've been in the programme one year and I hope I can continue."

Yulmeris*, 13

The neglected issue: Sexual and gender-based violence



Spotlight : Mocoa, Putumayo.

With our partner Corporación Casa Amazonía (COCA), 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.

Children gain confidence to seek help:

Regular therapy and rights education sessions helped 55 at risk children to develop an increased sense of self-worth, confidence and self-respect and to build open, protective relationships with their families.

Children understand risks

By the end of 2019, 40 children had gained skills to exercise their individual rights. Through various activities using traditional and ancestral practices from different ethnicities such as peace dances, temazcales (sweat lodges), yoga, and T.R.E (Trauma Releasing Exercises), children developed skills and learned how to express and talk about the risks they feel they are confronted by every day.

Creativity creates hope

Children in the two schools got to take part in workshops of music, dance, and traditional indigenous crafts - opportunities that they had never considered were an option for them in their remote villages. These sessions helped to release tension and relax as well as develop their social skills and learn basic knowledge of how to play instruments and how to develop artistic simulations.

Parents promote gender equality

35 Parents have started making changes at home - ensuring their sons share domestic chores with their daughters, and including their children in family decision-making processes rather than leaving this to the father or another male relative some parents have also expressed their desire to become formally involved as community leaders in 2020 - two of them have already decided to be part of this group.



"Personally, it (the project) helped me out to grow as a person, to understand my rights and learn about values. I also learnt how to communicate and seek a dialogue.

Jacquelin*, 17 years old.

The neglected issue:

Commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a hugely underreported problem in Colombia, affecting an estimated 35,000 children. Children between 14 and 17, the majority of which girls, are understood to be the most affected by sexual exploitation crimes.

Spotlight : 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 to protect children from it.*

Taking steps to stay safe

371 vulnerable children gained greater protection from CSEC through theatre, dance and music workshops that taught about the different forms CSEC can take. They also learned about the risks they can face online and committed to using social media in a safer way. 64 children who needed extra support received one-on-one counselling.

Loving, protective families

149 family members of these children improved their parenting skills in areas such as positive and respectful communication, including children in family decision-making processes, showing affection, building bonds of trust and non-violent conflict resolution. They have been trained to identify signs that may indicate their child is at risk of sexual exploitation and how to support them.

Schools taking action

In 2 schools, 490 students and 46 teachers learnt to identify signs that a child is experiencing CSEC and how to help them. Teachers have been devising ways to incorporate teaching about related issues - substance use prevention, sexuality, gender, self-care and CSEC awareness - into the regular school curriculum.

New opportunities

91 young adults exposed to commercial sexual exploitation received psychosocial and practical support to help them get their lives back on track. 60 signed up to vocational training courses and 16 found a new job.



"My school recommended that I start a process of psychological support...I felt I was worthless and had no valuable goals to accomplish. It has helped me a lot to be able to talk to someone...I feel that the project has helped me...to recognise all the positive things I have".

Stiven*, 18

The neglected issue:

Recruitment into armed groups and reintegration into society

It is impossible to know the real number of child soldiers in Colombia. However, in 2016, before the FARC demobilised, estimates showed that there were nearly 16,000 child soldiers in Colombia. However, following the signing of the peace agreement between the national government and the FARC, the reconfiguration of the armed conflict and its actors has caused strong territorial disputes, therefore increasing the demand for combatants, a situation that influences the involvement of children and adolescents in the armed ranks and carrying out tasks such as surveillance, drug dealing, extortions, transport of arms, homicides, and threats.

Spotlight : Bogotá, Restrepo, Meta.

*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 regions to support former child soldiers and other children who face a high risk of recruitment.*

Redefining the past

38 demobilised young people and their 23 foster parents received intensive individual and group support. They no longer view themselves as passive victims, recognise their capacity to lead change in their lives, and they have clear ideas about their hopes and dreams for the future. Importantly, they also demonstrate the skills, confidence and determination they need to achieve their dreams.

Realigning the future

CRAN carried out activities with young people at risk and 84 young people developed socio-emotional skills that have enabled them to strengthen their relationships with their families and communities. CRAN helped them develop an insight into their interests, feelings and opinions which contributed to the creation of life plans.

Sharing insights

CRAN worked with four local organisations, Tiempo de Juego and Proyecto de Vida in Soacha, Casa Amazonia in Mocoa, NULUKA and a local school in Restrepo, helping them to integrate new strategies for protecting local children from armed groups. They shared with these organisations their methodological tools and trained staff in how to replicate sessions with the families and children.

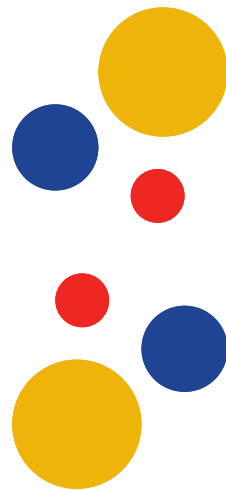


"I have learned a lot in the workshops. They have helped me to put in practice my life plan, to think better and to make good decisions about what I want to do now and what I will do in the future".

Susan*, 18

The neglected issue:

Recruitment into armed groups and reintegration into society



Spotlight : Buenaventura.

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

Children promoting community coexistence

At four 'Peace and Reconciliation Schools' in Buenaventura's most conflict-affected communities, 100 children learnt about their rights and how these are threatened within the context in which they live. A particular focus was placed on mental health and peaceful coexistence and how decades of conflict have impacted negatively on these. The children devised and carried out interventions to improve coexistence in their communities such a campaign to ask their community members to reduce the volume at which they play music.

Children leading change

The children, supported by youth leaders and local adults, led an advocacy campaign, passing on their knowledge of children's rights to 135 children and young people from their communities. They put together a series of short films which highlighted specific risks in their communities and showed them at a youth-led forum on children's rights and peacebuilding.

Youth leadership in action

28 youth leaders got involved in a wide range of advocacy activities, from making radio shows and videos to promote children's rights to joining city-wide campaigns in memory of victims of the Colombian conflict and promoting peacebuilding. They appealed to local public officials to commit to taking action to protect children's rights.



"Fundescodes have helped me to become a better person...I can speak easily in front of lots of people without fear that they won't listen to me or that I have nothing valuable to say... I didn't know about my rights or how to defend them but Fundescodes have shown me how."

Jeison*, 16

The neglected issue:

Recruitment into armed group and gangs and reintegration into society

Violence, inequality and poverty have led to many thousands of children and young people being recruited into armed groups and gangs. As a result, many children have had to endure detention in juvenile or protection facilities. According to the Colombian Social Services in the last 5 years over 15,000 children and young people (between the ages of 14 and 17) have gone through juvenile detention in Colombia. The vast majority of these children and young people come from the most marginalised neighbourhoods and regions in Colombia where children often suffer neglect, intra-familial violence and lack a support network within their family or community.

Spotlight: Bogotá

*We brought together the expertise of two of our long-term partners – **Tiempo de Juego (TDJ)** and **CRAN** – to provide a holistic approach to tackling girls' involvement in gangs.*

Building a new future

69 girls and young women at a residential care home took part in weekly arts activities combined with life skills and gender workshops. They have started putting their new skills, like conflict resolution and teamwork, into practice to help them achieve new, positive life goals. We also provided one to one support sessions for girls who needed further psychosocial support. They have greater self esteem too and understand they have a right to a life outside the gangs they see around them every day.

Adults providing better care

We provided 25 parents with intensive support, including home visits and group workshops, to help them resolve family difficulties through dialogue rather than aggression, opening up opportunities to understand and protect their children from the risks they face. We supported 12 professionals from 4 community organisations with training to be able to provide better care to the girls and replicate project activities when our team is not there.

Campaigning for change

TDJ designed and ran a youth-led forum on the challenges and opportunities for improvement within the Colombian Juvenile Justice system which was attended by key members of government, civil society and the business community. The outcomes of the forum will be compiled into a document that will be submitted to relevant government departments with the aim of influencing policy change.



The neglected issue: Child Labour in illegal Mining.

There are around 5000 children working in illegal mines in Colombia. These mines are run by armed groups, that often enforce extortion fees and incite terror on communities where unregulated mining is taking place, forcing both adults and children to work either in the mine itself or carry out tasks such as carrying messages or supplies, panning for gold, or for sex. This has had a severely detrimental effect on children's education, leading many children to drop out of school entirely.

Spot light: San Juan River, Chocó.

With our partner **Acadesan** an Afro-Colombian Community Council based in an extremely remote jungle region in western Colombia, was a new partner for 2019. The project aims to improve the quality of education in order to keep children in school and away from harmful child labour – including in unregulated mines – and recruitment into the illegal armed groups that operate openly in the area.

Exceeding desired outcomes

In 2019, Acadesan was able to work with 276 children, significantly more than the 80 originally planned. It ran 28 workshops in 4 local schools with the participation of 276 children. Through activities using play, physical movement and traditional Afro-Colombian storytelling techniques, children learnt how to express themselves and listen to and respect the views of their peers and natural environment. More children now understand the importance of their education and that they can lead a life away from the illegal mining industry.

Respect for the natural world

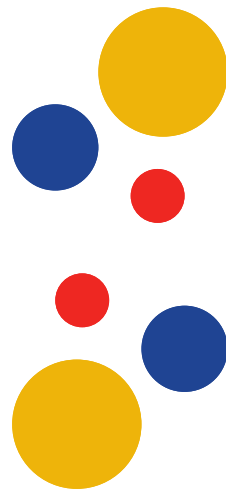
Many activities focused on teaching children to appreciate and care for their environment. These included cleaning and reforestation campaigns, planting 1200 local fruit trees. One of the tree planting locations was an ex-mining area which taught children about how illegal mining damages the important ecosystems where they live and alternative productive uses of this land.

Involving teachers and community leaders

18 teachers completed a three-day training workshop which taught them how to support children in continuing to develop skills taught during the project - they focused on topics including self-care, threats to the community from mining, importance of trust within the community for resisting violence etc. Community leaders participated in workshops which taught them about specific human rights violations that children and young people in their communities face and why it is important to protect them.



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 permanent Project Officers in Bogotá.

Establishing our new partnership

After securing funding in 2018 to start our project with an Afro-Colombian Community Council called 'Acadesan' we developed the project this year to tackle a 'neglected issue' – mining and its impact on children's rights. The project which aims to improve the quality of education in order to keep children in school and away from harmful child labour exceeded our expectations this year and managed to work directly with 276 children instead of the 80 originally planned. It has been a successful first year with Acadesan and we hope to continue this work into 2020.

Protecting children's rights in the long term

We encourage and support our partners to develop projects which can be shared with other organisations working on similar issues and with relevant state bodies that could provide funding. We are committed to increasing the visibility of the issues we work on and to making sure that policy makers, funders and the public in Colombia and the UK are aware of our partners' work. These efforts have the potential to strengthen the work of our partners, raise awareness, and encourage policy and practice changes which support more children and bring about long-lasting change.

Building strong, equal partnerships

Our partner TDJ told us this year, **"Thank you to CCC for supporting and advising us along the way, incentivising learning and always making us question ourselves."**

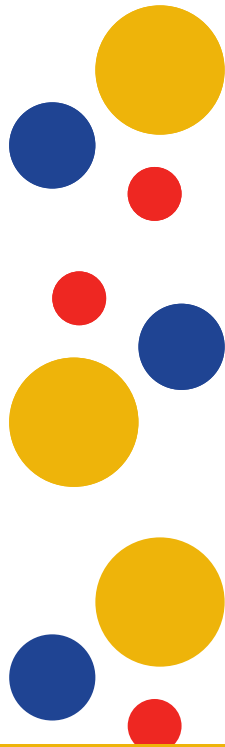
Sharing expertise

Our Project Officer provided partners with ongoing support on issues that affect their projects, and helping them to share their expertise with one another. For example, drawing on what we have learnt from other partners, our Project Officer was able to support Tiempo de Juego to develop their advocacy plans and in early December 2019 TDJ hosted a youth-led forum to discuss children's rights within the Colombian juvenile justice system with attendees including the Attorney General's office, Social Services, international NGOs, and specialists from the USA and UK.



Sustaining partnerships

During 2019, we worked with four of our existing partners to develop new, innovative three-year projects that began in January 2020. These partners are CRAN, ACJ, Tiempo de Juego and Acadesan. We have seen the difference these organisations have made already to children in Colombia and we are proud that we can help support them to develop and extend the sharing and reach of their methodology and innovative solutions to protecting children's rights.



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Cover photo: Youth leaders in Quibdó, Chocó.

Names of children in the featured quotations have been changed for child protection reasons. Photographs show real participants in CCC-funded projects.

***Quote names:** We have changed the children's names for safeguarding purposes.