During 2014 the world celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on which UNICEF’s mandate is based. This human rights treaty was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 20th of November 1989 and ratified in Colombia through Law 12 of 1991. The Convention forms the fundamental framework under which governments should implement their policies for childhood and adolescence.
It is critical to note that the effects of violence are not the same for the entire population, given that the impacts vary according to the experiences of each person and define the relationship between the individual and society.

The efforts made by UNICEF Colombia, which contributes to a healthy and peaceful society that can continue to progress, focused on the creation and strengthening of protective environments and peace for the country’s children and adolescents.

Once more we would like to express our gratitude to: international cooperation efforts, especially the governments of Canada, Sweden and Norway; the United States Fund for UNICEF; national and sub-national authorities; and corporate and individual donors. UNICEF would also like to express our thanks for the technical contributions from different non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, media outlets and academic institutions. All of these supporters have contributed to the results achieved in 2014, results that have benefited Colombian children and adolescents.

UNICEF will continue its collaborative work to guarantee children’s rights as a pillar of transformation for society. UNICEF feels strongly that only the combined will and commitment from all members of society will allow Colombia to continue to prioritize the rights of children.

Roberto de Bernardi
UNICEF Representative, Colombia
What is UNICEF?

UNICEF is the United Nations Children’s Fund, a United Nations agency that contributes to the transformation of the world by promoting the rights of children and adolescents, in the conviction that children and adolescents are fundamental to achieving human progress.

The agency was founded in 1946 by the General Assembly of the United Nations in order to respond to the needs of children at the end of World War II. Since that time, the protection of children, without concern for their race, nationality or creed, has become a universal mission that will be commemorated on its 70th anniversary in 2016.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF’s fundamental document, constitutes the most widely ratified of all international human rights treaties, with 195 countries currently party to it. All countries that sign the Convention are obliged to fulfill its charter. The Convention specifies all of children’s human rights that were previously stipulated in other international instruments and articulates these rights in a more complete way, providing a series of guiding principles that form a fundamental vision of childhood.

Currently, children and adolescents from around the world are protected by 54 articles in the Convention, which includes 42 rights and additional provisions made by the Convention that are covered in Articles 43 to 54. Promoting and guaranteeing children’s rights represent UNICEF’s daily mission and inspiration in Colombia and around the world.

What does UNICEF do in Colombia?

UNICEF Colombia aims to support children and adolescents so that they may live in a country where the State and society guarantee their basic rights, social inclusion and non-violence in the framework of national legislation, human rights instruments and international law. Taking this into account, UNICEF focuses its work on the most disadvantaged geographic areas and on especially vulnerable population groups, such as people affected by displacement and violence in rural areas and/ or populations living in poverty, Afro-Colombian populations and indigenous communities. UNICEF prioritizes the regions and departments with indicators that are very much below the national average, where violence and its consequences have had a significant impact on children, adolescents and their families.

During the current cooperation period UNICEF, works to achieve three central objectives: i) prevention and assistance to children and adolescents that are victims of Violence; ii) the reduction of Inequalities that have the biggest impact on children, and; iii) the Political, economic and legislative positioning of children and adolescents’ rights.

**V** PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE.

**I** REDUCTION OF INEQUALITY.

**P** POSITIONING OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN POLICIES, BUDGETS AND LAWS.
Prevention of Violence

In a context in which children and adolescents continue to be the most vulnerable to violence in their daily lives and in the framework of the armed conflict, UNICEF supports institutional, social, community and family environments to prevent and protect children and adolescents from violence, exploitation and the effects of the conflict and natural disasters. To prevent violence against children and adolescents in 2014, UNICEF and its partners carried out the following actions:

- **Strengthening of protective environments for the prevention of all types of violence**, with local processes and a national impact, permitting children and adolescents to acquire and develop skills so that they can construct life plans independent of illegal armed groups and organized armed violence, through artistic, cultural, sporting and communications activities.

- **Institutional strengthening** for the construction and implementation of local action plans designed to prevent recruitment of children by illegal armed groups, promoting the use of technical and financial resources for child protection.

- **Support to the integrated national action policy against anti-personnel mines** and unexploded ordnance, and continuation of the Risk Education Strategy for Anti-personnel Mines, Unexploded Ordnance and Improvised Explosive Devices.

- **Continuation of efforts to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in the tourism sector.**

- **Review of the Gender Equality strategy** so as to achieve a balance in the participation of girls and women, ensuring that all children have the same opportunities for developing their talents.

- **Coordination of the implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)** in the framework of Security Council Resolution 1612 for the reporting of serious violations of the rights of children and adolescents in the context of the armed conflict.

- **Technical assistance and other types of support to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF)** for the provision of appropriate treatment and assistance to children and adolescents who demobilize from illegal armed groups.

- **Support to the commission that monitors the rights of adolescents** detained in the juvenile justice system and provision of technical assistance to key actors within this system.

- **Advocacy and technical assistance** to the Colombian Government to promote children’s issues and to ensure a child-focus on new areas of action including truth and historical memory, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition within the transitional justice framework established by Law 1448 of 2011.

- **Provision of technical assistance to the Ombudsman’s Office** and engaging in advocacy with civil society partners in order to strengthen social mobilization and public monitoring of the impunity surrounding grave violations of children’s rights.
Reduction of Inequality

UNICEF works to guarantee the rights associated with birth, citizenship and development, particularly so that children, adolescents and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers can achieve universal access to quality services in the areas of education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene. These actions are particularly vital for populations with higher levels of vulnerability such as indigenous, Afro-Colombian, remote rural and marginal urban populations. To contribute to the reduction of inequality, UNICEF and its partners collaborated on the following actions in 2014:

- **Continuation of support to the global initiative** “A Promise Renewed,” which aims to stop the death of children from preventable causes. In particular UNICEF contributed to the development of an intercultural integrated care methodology for early childhood in Wayuu indigenous communities, as well as a quality improvement model for health care in children’s first 1,000 days of life. This action resulted in a reduction in maternal and child mortality in prioritized municipalities.

- **Improvement in the quality of education curricula and delivery to make them more relevant and inclusive.**

- **Generation of partnerships with civil society organizations** to monitor the achievement of children’s right to education and identification of strategic public policy areas to make progress in guaranteeing this right.

- **Support to the national strategies for early childhood development** “From Zero to Forever” and for teenage pregnancy prevention.

- **Generation of partnerships** at a national level that promoted discussion between Government institutions and civil society regarding the impact of the conflict on the lives and opportunities enjoyed by children and adolescents.

- **Generation of partnerships and capacity strengthening at national and sub-national levels** to permit an analysis of the impact of the lack of opportunities for children and adolescents, which severely affect their ability to grow and develop. This is a result of the inequality caused by the geographic, gender, ethnic and economic factors that persist in the country.
Positioning of children and adolescents in the Policies, budgets and laws

UNICEF contributes to the positioning of child and adolescent rights in policies, budgets and laws, to ensure that the guarantee and restitution of these rights is a priority and is based on evidence. UNICEF also contributes to the national legislative framework and the participatory management of social and economic policies at national and different sub-national levels. During 2014, UNICEF Colombia made important progress in the area of social policies by contributing through the following actions:

- **Production of knowledge** through the study of corporate social responsibility related to childhood and adolescence in the country, along with the elaboration of a toolkit to strengthen this movement.

- **Promotion of partnerships** and coordination mechanisms to promote the inclusion of children in national and sub-national government agendas, to improve investment and to maximize existing knowledge.

- **Increasing the transparency and governance of public issues related to childhood** through the strengthening of control mechanisms, the broadening of public dialogue, and public discussion of children’s rights among different members of civil society.

- **Increased and improved information on childhood and adolescence** and its use for the formulation, execution and monitoring of public policies for childhood and adolescence.

- **Promotion of dialogue and reflection on policies** at a macro level that form national frameworks, legislative reform and budget allocation affecting children and women.

- **Generation of awareness and consensus regarding the need to invest more in childhood** and to allocate budgets for implementing public policies that achieve a sustainable process in the guaranteeing of children’s rights.
Situation of Colombian children

Colombia has a population of more than 47 million, of which 32% are children and adolescents. The majority of the population is mestizo (mixed race), with 10% afro-descendent and 3.4% indigenous. Currently three quarters of the population live in urban areas and it is expected that this proportion will increase to 85% by 2050.

Despite an armed conflict that has lasted more than fifty years, Colombia has made significant progress in improving opportunities and quality of life for its citizens. Since 1990, the Human Development Index has grown by 20% and the economy of the country is widely recognized as having achieved steady medium to high growth, with an advanced legal and political framework that sustains a growing offer of basic social services and security. There are tangible signs of progress: the Government is reaching a majority of children, adolescents and their families; crime and murder rates have dropped; and the quantity of illicit crops, one of the main drivers of the conflict, has been significantly reduced.

In addition, in 2012 the Government of President Juan Manuel Santos initiated dialogue with the FARC-EP armed group towards an eventual peace agreement. Colombia is currently experiencing a window of opportunity to achieve not just integrated reparations for victims of the conflict but also the reconstruction of the country’s social fabric and reconciliation.

Sustained growth, together with the expansion of social protection programs, has contributed to reducing income poverty from 49.7% (2002) to 30.6% (2013) and the rate of people living in extreme poverty from 17.7% to 9.1% during the same period. The multi-dimensional poverty rate – defined as the percentage of people with at least 5 well-being indicators that are deficient – also reduced from 30.4% in 2010 to 24.8% in 2013. Despite the significant efforts that have been made, Colombia remains a profoundly unequal country, and social mobility continues to be affected by gender, geographic location, ethnicity, age and factors related to the armed conflict. For example, between 2002 and 2012 the salary differences between men and women increased from 18% to 23.3% while living in rural areas implied facing a greater impact and intensity of
multidimensional poverty. Age also constitutes a key determinant of social vulnerability. In 2011, 34% of children lived in multi-dimensional poverty. In La Guajira and Córdoba Departments, this percentage increased to 64.5% and 56.2% respectively.

Colombia is currently experiencing favorable conditions that will allow the country to achieve many of its Millennium Development Goals. However, the national averages hide persistent inequalities within and between regions. For example, the mortality rate for children under the age of 12 months is more than double the national average (17.47%) in departments in the Pacific (Chocó, 41.92%) and Amazon (38.44%) regions. In the La Guajira department, this indicator is at a critical value of 31.61%. In accordance with data from the National Ministry of Health and Social Protection (2012), the highest rates of maternal mortality occurred in three of the five regions with the highest rural, indigenous and Afro-descendent populations: the Caribbean, the Pacific and Orinoquía. In Chocó, the maternal mortality rate is 224 per 100,000 live births, more than three times the national average (65.89%).

The poorest regions in the country where the majority of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendent communities live also face an increased presence of illegal armed groups and illegal economic activities. As a consequence, violence represents a further obstacle to guaranteeing children’s rights. The official figures reflect both the significant impact of the armed conflict on children as well as the effects of other forms of violence.

As of November 2014 a total of 7,028,776 people have been registered as victims of the conflict, of which 2,182,707 are children and adolescents. Children are particularly affected by: Anti-personnel Mines (APL), Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED); recruitment and use of children by armed groups; sexual violence associated with the conflict; internal displacement; and confinement/lack of access to humanitarian assistance. Even though it is impossible to know with certainty how many children and adolescents are currently linked to armed groups, between 1999 and 2013 the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) assisted 5,417 children and adolescents who demobilized from illegal armed groups, (28% girls and 72% boys).

The risks associated with the conflict are exacerbated by the vulnerability of the country to natural disasters. Cyclical environmental phenomena (La Niña and El Niño) cause recurrent landslides, floods and droughts, the latter causing restrictions in access to water that are constantly increasing and which directly impact children.

Gender-based violence, especially sexual violence against children, continues to constitute a critical threat, even while there is systematic under-reporting of the incidents. This violence persists both in the context of the armed conflict and in society in general. The official information comes from forensic exams associated with the reporting of sexual crimes. In 2013, 86% of these legal medical examinations were carried out on children and adolescents, of which 84% were female and 16% male.
Civil society organizations state that the level of impunity in sexual violence cases within the conflict can reach up to 98%. In addition, independent reports have estimated that between 2008 and 2012 there were at least 48,915 cases of victims of sexual violence against children under the age of 18 (41,313 girls and 7,602 boys) in which the alleged perpetrator belonged to an armed group.

Social equality, protection and peace building are key factors that define children’s rights and their wellbeing, particularly in the context of the historic moment that Colombia is currently experiencing. While the peace negotiations continue there is an urgent need to ensure that children’s rights are at the top of the agenda, maintaining the position and visibility of children, which has been achieved with a significant amount of effort.

Quality in education constitutes the one area that contributes more than any other to promoting equality, peace building and reconciliation. The country’s educational system is still striving to provide quality education to ensure the inclusion and permanence of children and adolescents in schools, especially for indigenous and Afro-descendent students. Of 100 students that enter school in the urban zones, 82 will complete their education, while in rural areas just 48 students will graduate. Even though the illiteracy rate is at 7.4% nationally, among Afro-descendants and indigenous populations it is at 11.2% and 28.6%, respectively.

**The voices of children and adolescents**

During 2014 UNICEF Colombia began an in-depth analysis of the situation of children and adolescents in the country as part of a contribution to different processes at national and organizational levels. This will be digitally published in 2015. The findings and recommendations of the study will contribute to the implementation of the Government’s new National Development Plan. The study has also helped UNICEF make progress in the formulation and agreement of a new Cooperation Program with the Colombian Government that will run from October 2015 to December 2019.

The study reflected discussions with decision-makers from public institutions, UNICEF’s national strategic partners, civil society organizations and academics, as well as a sample of children and adolescents. Discussions involved the current scenario and the possible trends for children, the principal causes, determinants and strategic action routes that accelerate the guaranteeing and universal exercising of children’s rights based on equality, awareness of the conflict and peace building.
This 2014 UNICEF Colombia Report reflects the voices of children and adolescents, via messages about the situation, as seen from the perspective of people under the age of 18. Groups of children and adolescents were consulted regarding their daily lives and their rights in the Departments of Nariño, Choco, Cordoba and Cundinamarca.

Chores at home

Respondents describe a daily routine that includes a range of domestic activities. Both young girls as well as female adolescents undertake chores at home and look after younger relatives from an early age while boys are assigned the tasks of going to the store and running errands. A young woman from Choco stated:

“For me a normal day is I get up at 6.15 in the morning, wake up my younger brothers and sisters to take them to school, I get them ready and give them breakfast. My mum works and sometimes she has different shifts, sometimes she works all night and then she’s tired so I help her. I take my siblings and nephews and nieces to school, I come home, I make lunch for my sister and grandmother, I get my brother from school, I come home again, I sit down for a bit to watch TV and afterwards I make dinner, then I watch TV and I go to bed.”

Games and fun

Children spend their free time playing and doing homework:

“In my free time sometimes my classmates come and play with me at home or sometimes we do homework and then when we finish we play”

(Girl, Choco).

Adolescents develop new interests in growing technological development that connects them with realities that are external to their local environments. They are also interested in affectionate relationships, recognition from their peers, gatherings in public places, art and sport, in addition to fulfilling their obligations to do chores at home.

“I spend my free time, more than anything, on the internet, in an internet café, I go there because I have some electronic programs to make music, to make mixes, specifically in champeta and vallenato music (Male adolescent, Cordoba).

Both boys as well as girls actively participate in youth collectives related to art, music and activities for personal growth.

“We find out about a lot of situations that happen here, they give us a guide, we also dance salsa and they teach us to play instruments.”

“They also teach us a lot regarding the topic of sexuality, how we can protect ourselves and what the effects are of having an unwanted pregnancy.”

(Adolescents from Choco).

It’s important to emphasize that these statements come from children and young people living in highly vulnerable areas with precarious resources.

The presence of violence

Violence is described by the interviewees as something habitual to their environment. In Nariño children and adolescents explicitly mentioned a high presence of violence, especially in relationships between peers and teachers in school, which is a recurring factor in almost all of the testimonies from children and adolescents.

“The children that fight in class and swear at the teacher are taken out of class by the coordinator and they are taken to the bathroom and they get physically disciplined.”

(Boy, Nariño).

“Last year they had their fists raised all year, if I didn’t study they hit me, if I didn’t wash the dishes they hit me, if I didn’t sweep, the same. If I didn’t learn my times tables they also hit me with a belt.”

(Girl, Cordoba).

In Choco children and adolescents spoke of the “social cleansing” phenomenon, a violation of the right to life, described in these testimonies from two male adolescents in Choco:

“The cleansing is for young people who are drug addicts, they come to this neighborhood and rob people, so that’s why they have the social cleansing. They have killed young people from here and now the neighborhood isn’t so bad, it’s more peaceful.”

“It’s a problem because sometimes you have to go meet with people and you’re walking and they began to shoot at each other and you can’t see anything but bullets.”
It appears that there has been a normalization of violence as a means of correcting behavior that is considered inappropriate, as demonstrated by a girl from Cordoba:

“Sometimes it’s good (that they hit us) because we don’t do some things, sometimes our parents tell us to do something and we don’t want to do it, so that’s when they have to hit us.”

**Their rights**

Despite recognizing “their right to have rights,” children and adolescents mentioned situations where these rights are violated and they have no guarantees to exercise them. Respondents agreed that because they are from low-income backgrounds their rights are not respected:

“We have a lot of rights, as young people we should have them but in a neighborhood with such limited resources the people don’t recognize these rights, they’re not going to say ‘ah, you’re a young person and you have rights so go and exercise them’ and as a young person you also develop the mentality of leaving your rights to one side and saying that if you want to study then study and if you want to work then work. Often we just don’t think about these rights, because I might have the right to study, and that’s fine, but in a lot of places it costs money to study, so we don’t think a lot about our rights, and in a low resources neighborhood like this the people only think about working to get ahead and to have something.” (Adolescent from Choco).

**Children’s and adolescents’ view of gender differences**

In the testimonies there are clear differences between men and women, primarily associated with gender stereotypes. Through the work of UNICEF and their partners, it is evident that these differences can be reduced in daily interactions, as can be seen in this statement:

“Because we play a lot of football, we were more selfish, only the boys played football, only the boys made decisions and we discriminated against the girls. This game can bring us together and women can show us, the men, that they can do the same things we can do.” (Boy, Choco).

It is clear, however, that the area of gender equality requires constant action.
To discuss the achievements for children made by UNICEF and its partners in Colombia, it is necessary to recognize donors from the private sector, individuals and governments of countries such as Canada, Sweden and Norway.

Without the resources obtained from these donors, UNICEF’s work would not be possible. This work continues to be necessary to ensure that more and more people, companies and organizations are conscious of the needs of the country’s children and contribute to guaranteeing children’s rights.

- In the area of emergencies, UNICEF Colombia during 2014 specifically supported the most vulnerable communities in nine departments, providing supplies, services and technical assistance. UNICEF, as a leader of two emergency clusters—Education, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene—provided, together with its partners, potable water, appropriate management of solid waste systems and hygiene education, benefiting 224,350 people in schools and rural homes. UNICEF collaborated with the National Ministry of Education to strengthen local contingency plans and school risk management plans, conceptualizing schools as protective spaces. UNICEF provided furniture, school security equipment and learning materials for 9,610 children and adolescents affected by emergencies.

- UNICEF worked in partnership with local health authorities and partners in the departments of Córdoba, Guajira, Chocó and Meta-Guaviare to provide assistance to 12,116 of the most vulnerable children and mothers. In addition, UNICEF supported the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) and the department of La Guajira in the development and implementation of the community-based assistance protocol for malnutrition.

- In 2014, thanks to the support of UNICEF and its partners, 376 institutions in the regions with the highest levels of emergencies in the country (Caribbean, Pacific, Orinoquía and the Amazon), designed their emergency plans in a participatory fashion, preparing for both natural disasters and complex emergencies.

- During 2014 and in collaboration with its partners, UNICEF implemented the Mine-Risk Education strategy that benefited 21,645 children and adolescents. Support was also provided to 97 landmine survivors, including 7 girls and 18 boys, all victims of anti-personnel mines, improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance in the departments of Chocó, Antioquia, Tolima, Meta, Guaviare, Caquetá, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Cordoba, Cauca and Putumayo.
UNICEF has developed a model for building protective environments that prevent recruitment by illegal armed groups in the departments of Sucre, Sucre, Cordoba, Choco, Antioquia, Cauca, Soacha, Nariño, Putumayo, Meta and Guaviare. This model has been implemented through local projects and by supporting national initiatives, strengthening the capacities of 50,499 children and adolescents, their families and communities in the zones that have been most affected by the armed conflict in the aforementioned departments. These projects have provided tools and knowledge that allowed participants to identify and promote skills so that they can build life projects that are free from violence.

In partnership with Colombia Joven, UNICEF developed the “Peace for Youth” and the “Time for Peace” initiatives.

Peace for Youth has the purpose of raising awareness among young people in Colombia regarding peacebuilding. In 2014 around 600 young people from 10 regions across the country learnt about peace culture and developed peace and reconciliation initiatives that link the knowledge they gained with situations from their daily lives. Participants become part of the “Peace Builders” network, a platform that will replicate their experiences at a national level and link more participants to this strategy.

In the Time for Peace diploma course, 3,145 adolescents and young people participated in an academic process to learn about how to build peace. This process led to the development of 900 peace initiatives by the students, demonstrating the strategic role of adolescents in the creation of peaceful solutions to conflicts.

UNICEF Colombia concluded the third phase of its institutional and community accompaniment process with 11 communities from the municipality of Manaure in La Guajira, a process which guarantees the integrated and intercultural care of early childhood in the Wayuu indigenous group. The continuing technical and operational support to educational agents, their communities and families is what led to the creation and implementation of a Community Monitoring System called Ayaawataa, which in the Wayuu’s wayuunaiki language means “to see and recognize.” This action’s main achievement has been the promotion of the importance of children (and their rights) with families and communities, taking into account that the ancestral cultural practices do not provide this recognition of importance to all children. In the prioritized communities the infant mortality rates went from 13 child deaths in 2012 to only 1 child death in 2014, while severe malnutrition dropped from 5.47% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2014.

To improve the quality of health assistance received in the first 1,000 days of life, 12 municipalities received permanent training in the areas of clinical health and health care management as well as accompaniment and monitoring of improvement plans developed with participants. On average, communities reached a compliance level of 84% for these plans. Actions were implemented in 12 new municipalities from four departments to develop municipal improvement plans. Some 3,551 public officials received training and 16,142 medical histories were reviewed. As a result of the execution and monitoring of the plans, significant improvements were achieved in the departments Bolivar, Cordoba, La Guajira, Cauca and Putumayo. The reduction of maternal mortality in eight of the 12 prioritized municipalities can be attributed to the changes facilitated by the process of strengthening capacities.
UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Education and the Alliance Education Everyone’s Commitment, developed the “Right to Education Index” which was launched on the 10th of December 2014. This facilitated the organization of existing information related to education in the country in the categories of access, availability, acceptability and adaptability. The index will be improved based on the results of national and regional debates and will be updated every two years.

At the beginning of 2014, the El Niño phenomenon caused drought conditions in the north of the country, affecting around 5 million people. UNICEF, along with various humanitarian actors, responded to health, nutrition and technical assistance needs through the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene, specifically in La Guajira. A total of 1,640 families directly benefited from this support, including 747 pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and 2,340 children under the age of 5, of which 6% were diagnosed with severe malnutrition and received treatment.

UNICEF Colombia worked with the Ministry of Education to increase the coverage and effectiveness of the “School Seeks the Children” program, which aims to identify children and adolescents that are not studying in formal education or are at risk of dropping out, and to guarantee their right to quality education. The programme was implemented in Putumayo, Guainia, Vaupes, Caqueta, Cordoba, Choco, Cartagena, Cauca, Bolivar, Santa Marta, Medellin, Buenaventura, Nariño and Norte de Santander. Also in 2014, UNICEF Colombia and the Ministry of Education facilitated the enrolment of 10,327 children under the age of 18 who were not studying in formal education in rural areas of Nariño, Cordoba, Putumayo and Norte de Santander.

In 2014, UNICEF Colombia, working with authorities in the Amazonas department, developed Community Educational Projects with six communities in the region. Educational tools were created with local indigenous authorities that facilitated intercultural participation, improved children and young people’s learning skills and incorporated new technologies for learning the Ticuna indigenous language, mathematics, the links between traditional ancestral medicine and the teaching of chemistry, biology and science, and the use
of indigenous cosmovision in the teaching of literature and written language at primary and secondary levels. This project methodology was transferred to the department of La Guajira. Around 250 indigenous communities participated in the process in 13 educational institutions. Five “Seeds of Life” events were held on remote ranches to attend to the early childhood population from indigenous communities while respecting their cultural practices. In addition, 400 teachers received training in ethno-education tools.

- Together with the Secretariat of Education, UNICEF implemented the first phase of the project “Think, Dream and Express Yourself: Constructing a Creative Pedagogy” in Putumayo. This action generated methods and tools that supported more than 200 teachers to incorporate artistic languages, communication and the use of new technologies in classrooms. This contributed to improving learning and participation processes in schools as well as strengthening peaceful coexistence.

- With the Secretariats of Education and Afro-Colombian authorities in Choco and Cauca, UNICEF carried out the first phase of the Community Educational Projects for Afro-Colombian communities. A total of 407 teachers were trained in conceptual, pedagogical and didactic tools for the implementation of an autonomous educational model for Afro-descendent communities. UNICEF facilitated support for the departmental educational policy through the incorporation of programmes and budgets designed to improve educational quality for Afro-descendent communities in these territories.

- UNICEF, together with the National Ministry of Education and other partners from the National Committee for Education in Emergencies, carried out an assessment of the situation of 533 boarding schools in the country as a means to ensure educational access and permanence for around 33,000 children and adolescents who live in remote rural zones. In addition, a Public Policy Guidelines document was developed to create protective environments and guarantee the rights of children and adolescents. The National Ministry of Education created a Technical Committee to develop a document on guidelines for boarding schools that establishes basic standards for the country.

- UNICEF through its “Vote for Childhood” strategy implemented with the Alliance for Colombian Children, facilitated an increase in knowledge among Presidential candidates, technical staff from political parties, media organizations and voters regarding the problems faced by children, which contributed to a recognition of the importance of this population in political campaigns.

- UNICEF supported the second meeting of municipal Mayors in favor of children, adolescents and young people, entitled “New generations, Territories and Peace.” Around 200 mayors from the most vulnerable municipalities developed agreements that contribute to peacebuilding in their territories while also seeking contributions from private companies for these initiatives.

- Together with more than 1,700 representatives of public and private organizations from the country’s 32 departments and its Capital District, UNICEF Colombia engaged in advocacy actions to promote analysis, goals and accountability strategies that guarantee the rights of children within the National Development Plan.

- UNICEF led the process to strengthen civil society participation in the development of public policies for childhood and adolescence with participation of more than 12,000 people – 8,286 children and 4,383 adults – from urban and rural zones in the prioritized municipalities.

- In 2014 UNICEF generated information and knowledge for better decision making, which included increasing the size of and updating the database for the Childhood and Adolescence “Information System”: SINFONIA, using data from official national sources. Versions of this system were implemented in the prioritized territories. UNICEF also contributed to the collection of information on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for childhood in the country through a study of more than 1,300 companies from 9 sectors of the national economy. This led to the creation of a toolkit for the strengthening of CSR in the area of childhood.
• **By the end of 2014 a total of 2,695 children and adolescents** had benefited from improvements to their environmental and sanitation infrastructure and could apply relevant knowledge regarding hygiene. Compared with the initial baseline, knowledge and practices of participants in the initiative improved by 80%.

• **UNICEF Colombia identified and promoted partnerships** and coordination mechanisms between a range of entities for the benefit of children, including the “Facts and Rights” strategy, which brings together government officials to discuss and develop concrete agreements regarding sub-national actions that guarantee children’s rights. These types of strategies allowed UNICEF to support design and consultation processes that contributed to the formulation of National Development Plan.

• **In 2014, UNICEF Colombia undertook a review of the topic of Gender Equality**, which examined the alignment of the national work plan with UNICEF’s Global Gender Equality Plan. At the same time an external evaluation of this topic was undertaken with the international cooperation of the Governments of Sweden and Canada. The analysis identified lessons learnt, which highlighted that UNICEF Colombia strengthened the capacity of its partners for the prevention and integrated response to sexual violence, including access to justice. The evaluation highlighted the emphasis on an intercultural approach to protect indigenous girls and female adolescents in La Guajira and Cauca against sexual violence, involving parents in the care of their children and the empowerment of women. In addition, UNICEF Colombia helped to improve the way in which cases of sexual violence against girls and female adolescents are documented in the country.

• **UNICEF developed a social mobilization strategy against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in the tourism sector.** Originally implemented in Cartagena, the strategy was extended to Medellin and Leticia, the capital of Amazonas and on the border with Brazil and Peru. In Leticia, UNICEF Colombia facilitated an agreement between the border municipalities of Brazil, Peru and Colombia to articulate strategies for the prevention and response to this form of exploitation, including the trafficking of children and adolescents.
UNICEF promoted sexual and reproductive rights with and for adolescents and young people in the municipalities of Cauca and Cordoba, strengthening the leadership capacity, knowledge of sexual and reproductive rights, and the formulation of life plans for 1,980 participants. UNICEF contributed to the National Committee of Adolescents Living with HIV in the cities of Cali, Medellin and Cucuta, in which creative initiatives and activities were developed that contributed to the creation of knowledge regarding stigma and discrimination associated with HIV.

The final phase of the pilot program “Beings of Care”, that provides assistance to early childhood through the application of an integrated health, nutrition and hygiene strategy with direct action from “education agents” that support communities and systematically monitor families, achieved in a period of less than a year significant changes in parenting and care for children under the age of five. These results were the product of joint actions with the partners Fundación Pies Descalzos, Ayuda en Acción and the Quibdo office of ICBF.

UNICEF Colombia, in partnership with the Vice-Ministry of Water and Basic Sanitation, promoted the national water policy for rural areas. Water, sanitation and hygiene actions were implemented in 18 Educational Institutions in Santander de Quilichao and Buenos Aires in the north of Cauca. This resulted in the provision of continuous potable water services and the creation of environmental risk management plans in schools, directly benefiting 11,313 people including 3,289 children. At a national level UNICEF promoted hand washing with soap and water in schools and with families to strengthen the habits that reduce preventable diseases.

UNICEF Colombia promoted behavioural changes in families and schools to facilitate the creation of healthy and hygienic environments. UNICEF also collaborated in the modification of behavior in nutritional practices for children under the age of two for families living in extreme poverty.

Triangular “South-South” Cooperation

UNICEF Colombia, in collaboration with the Presidential Agency for Cooperation, has developed two processes of South-South cooperation for the exchange of knowledge between the governments of Colombia, Honduras and Mexico related to the provision of integrated assistance for early childhood.

UNICEF Colombia promoted the exchange of experiences and best practices from the Colombian Government in relation to the execution of the national early childhood development strategy “From Zero to Forever.” This action shared knowledge that has been acquired in the field and brought together both the resources and actors required to carry out these missions.

Staff from visiting governments learnt about the design of intersectorial links to provide integrated assistance to children under the age of five, the wellbeing perspective and the execution of feasible mechanisms for the formation and training of educational agents. Field visits also allowed for the identification of concrete support mechanisms for families, the application of the policy at a local level and the strengthening of the competencies of institutional educational agents, as well as strategies that promote integrated child development.

In addition, two horizontal cooperation exchanges were planned during 2014 that will occur in 2015: The first is between the Ministries of Education of Morocco and Colombia in regards to the implementation of the multi-grade “New School” model; the other is between the Secretariat of Planning of Ecuador and the National Department of Planning of Colombia regarding the topic of monitoring and evaluation national development plans.
Together We Can Do More!

Thank you!

Thanks to the more than 22,000 individual donors who support UNICEF’s mission in Colombia each month. These contributions have represented 80% of income that we have raised at a local level. Together we have achieved a lot.

This year we implemented different campaigns at a national level to invite people to become monthly donors. Thank you for receiving our phone calls, responding to invitations that we sent out and for speaking with our fundraising teams on the streets and in malls.

Corporate Partnerships and Events

In 2014 we developed the basis of a new strategy to engage with the private sector. First, we maintained successful programs such as “Guests with Heart,” in which our partners from the hotel sector (Cotelco and hotels such as Capilla del Mar, Caribe and the Estelar chain, among others) connected us to support from their guests. This strategy helped to finance the initiative directed at the prevention of the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in the context of tourism.

We continued to strengthen our strategic partnership with Ecopetrol, which financed projects in Putumayo and La Guajira. We also began to develop long-term strategic partnerships with partners such as Almacenes Olimpica (through their Olimpica Foundation), signing an agreement for three years until 2017. Thanks to the support of companies such as Caracol Radio, we managed to amplify our message and reach thousands of people who learnt about our work, trusted in our organization and decided to support us. We also received support from the Shopping Malls Association of Colombia and 47 of their malls to raise funds through our end of year campaign called “My wish is for you to help.” Other companies supported UNICEF projects such as Compensar and Cartoon Network, which made a donation as part of their annual sports event.
Important companies connected us to their employees and we received generous support from their payroll donations, including Cavipetrol, Legis, Novartis, Nutresa, Unysis and Unilever. In November we held the 6th edition of the UNICEF 10K footrace, with participation from 6,000 runners (one of the biggest running events in the country) and support from our primary and continuing sponsors of the event: Pensiones y Cesantías Protección, Powerade, GEF, Spinning Centre, Av. Chile Shopping Mall and the Bogotá Institute of Sports and Recreation.

Communications

The external communications strategies during 2014 focused on two objectives: positioning the rights of the most vulnerable children at the heart of the political and social agenda and positioning UNICEF Colombia to support advocacy and fundraising actions in Colombia.

The campaign “Invest in the Power of Children” continued to be used as the primary communication framework to encourage donations.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF Colombia implemented the campaign “Learn about Children’s and Adolescents’ Rights.” Within this campaign a range of initiatives were developed in which children from different zones of the country were the protagonists: The “Peace Building and Children’s Rights” Forum as part of a global UNICEF initiative called ActivateTalks; The launch of the UNICEF Colombia “Rights” website; Presentation of two videos from the campaign, and; A competition for audiovisual pieces between 1 and 3 minutes long, made by children aged 10 and 18 years, on the theme of “My Rights.”

UNICEF Colombia supported the Bogota Film Festival and awarded a prize to the best film about childhood with trophy Petrona, donated by the plastic artist Pedro Ruiz.

In partnership with the European Union a Children’s Rights Manual was published and promoted.

For International Children’s Day UNICEF implemented a social media campaign against gender-based violence.

UNICEF Colombia was the agency that led both the financing as well as the technical design of the peace campaign implemented by the United Nations System in Colombia, called “Breathe Peace.”
What do our donors say?

“The reason that I’ve supported UNICEF all these years is because I know that my contributions are going to be used 100% in the best way possible, to favor the education of Colombian children that are most in need.”

G.S., UNICEF donor since August 1999.

“I would recommend that other people donate to UNICEF because the organization’s reputation and trajectory inspires confidence about their work for the children of the world and for that reason I think more people should support them so that more children benefit, helping them to grow up happy and they can then become adults committed to this beautiful cause.”


Messages from UNICEF in relation to topics covering children’s rights were seen more than 360 million times in both traditional and digital media. In 2014 innovations were made in the use of digital media, generating growth among UNICEF’s followers on social networks and increased traffic for our website.

Twitter 50%  Facebook 260%  Web visits 460%  Open Instagram

All of this was made possible through our communications partners: TBWA Colombia, Caracol Radio, Publik, PHD, Guiomar Jaramillo Comunicaciones, Speakers Comunicaciones and Netbangers, in addition to 12 national celebrities that supported UNICEF’s work during 2014.
“Good or bad examples last a whole lifetime. Let’s educate our children with love.”

Nairo Quintana
Cyclist

“To achieve peace we need to protect our children. Thank you UNICEF Colombia.”

Belky Arizala
Model

“UNICEF is protection for the children of the world, giving visibility to children that seem invisible.”

Marcela Carvajal
Actress

“UNICEF is the guardian angel for children in Colombia and the whole world. It is a team that defends and promotes the wellbeing of the world’s children.”

Iván Lalinde
Host
“UNICEF contributes to the world’s future by protecting and educating children so that they can build an inclusive society that is full of peace.”
Daniella Álvarez
Host

“UNICEF gives a voice to each child in Colombia, protecting and supporting their rights because they are the present and the future.”
Johanna Morales
Actress

“UNICEF protects the most important seeds on our planet, the children”
Natalia Jerez
Actress

“Being a UNICEF Ambassador is the best thing that has happened to me. I thank God for this wonderful opportunity to be able to support children in Colombia and to be an example for girls and boys. It’s a very big responsibility to be part of UNICEF.”
Nicole Regnier
Soccer player
“Thank you UNICEF Colombia for defending and promoting the rights of our children, your work is unique and deserves support and replication. It’s everyone’s duty to protect our children.”

**Mónica Rodríguez**
Host

“Children of today are citizens of the future, they are a seed for global transformation. By protecting their rights and innocence UNICEF guarantees us a better world.”

**Pedro Ruiz**
Plastic Artist

“UNICEF has become for Colombian children the MOST VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY for their rights to be respected and to feel that they aren’t alone.”

**Carolina Cruz**
Host

“UNICEF represents the present for children with their educational and protection projects in conflict zones.”

**Aida Morales**
Actress
Messages to the future from our children and adolescents

Colombian children and adolescents send hopeful messages. They talk about dedicating themselves to their studies in order to prosper in any field they choose, and they also implore their peers to take advantage of family support as a foundation for achieving their dreams.

They advise other children to stay away from drugs and crime, sharing personal and/or family experiences as a way of teaching others not to lose sight of their goals.

Children and adolescents aspire to short-term goals that will help them find the path that each one will take, acting correctly, behaving well and respecting others.

These values are expressed in the following statements:

“Young people and children should take advantage of their studies that they’re doing right now, we should take advantage of each second of our lives because life is something that you don’t receive every day. We need to appreciate the importance of studying and keep studying every day and we need to think that life isn’t going to last very long, that we get just a little bit of life to enjoy, but that small bit of life is divine”.
(Female adolescent from Nariño.)

“Children and adolescents need to fight for what they want, because despite the fact that we face a lot of difficulties we need to fight for what is possible. We need to do what we need to do to reach our dreams because we all have dreams and you can’t worry about the obstacles in the way of those dreams. We all face difficulties but if we fight against these we can achieve our dreams.”
(Girl from Choco.)

Children also ask the general public to respect differences, to not discriminate and to accept the diversity of cultures:

“My message would be that we shouldn’t discriminate against people and not worry about the color of their skin, their nationality or their ethnic group because we are all people, human beings, and we all have our feelings and like my classmate said we need to respect others so that they respect us. Don’t do to others what you don’t want done to you. We need to learn to value our lives and the lives of the people that surround us.”
(Female adolescent from Nariño.)

The expectations for the future among children and adolescents are associated with improving their quality of life and the sustainability of the lives of the people around them. This means that studying a professional degree is closely related to helping their parents and families overcome their current situation.

“My mum wants me to study and get ahead, she wants me to do something productive and not turn out like here with nothing to do and killing herself for any type of work available so that she can put food on the table”.
(Female adolescent from Choco.)

A female adolescent from Córdoba stated that:

“I want to be a doctor because that way I can help people. When I grow up and achieve my dream of being a doctor if someone in my family gets sick I would help them instead of someone else and they wouldn’t be suffering because they didn’t have any money”.

Invest in the most profitable Power of Colombia.
Invest in the Power of Children.