



SAVING YOUNG LIVES THROUGH CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

COLOMBIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Compassion has been working in Colombia since 1974, and partners with 264 local churches to provide 81,978 children the opportunity to attend school, eat nutritious meals, receive medical check-ups, learn vocational skills and hear about Jesus.

The department of Magdalena, located on the northern coast of Colombia, is ranked as the fifth most poverty-stricken department in the country. The severity of poverty has given way to a number of social issues, one of which is child sexual abuse. The Colombian National Family Welfare Institute has stated that 38 percent of sexual abuse victims are under the age of 6, and in 2002, the Institute of Forensic Medicine and Forensic Sciences conducted 20,284 medicolegal reports on children under 18 years old; 48.5% for which were child abuse, 44.8% for sexual abuse and 6.55% for domestic violence.¹

In response to this situation, Evangelical churches in Magdalena developed 24 abuse interventions that are aimed at preventing all forms of child abuse and assisting individuals who have been victim to it. However, despite the efforts being made, violence against children and adolescents is a complex problem that is entrenched within the society. Locals see it as a family matter which does not require third party involvement, and therefore a lot of cases go undetected or unreported.

Committed to the responsibility of protecting children from an insecure environment, local churches together with Compassion child development centres have decided to implement the first phase of a new strategy on child abuse prevention, to bolster the previous programme.

This RESPOND intervention therefore aims to develop a training programme for 2,538 parents, as well as their children. This training will provide them with information and guidance on risk factors and will publicise the institutions that can help with family problems. It will also challenge socio-cultural constructs of child sexual abuse and transform for the better caregivers' attitudes towards all forms of child maltreatment. Furthermore, the social agents in the child development centres in Magdalena will also benefit from this training, and will be taught how to detect cases of child abuse and what the appropriate approach is for identified cases.



Children and their caregivers from Cielo Nuevo y Tierra Nueva [New Heaven and New Earth] Child Development Centre, one of the child development centres that will benefit from this intervention.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT VIEW

In September 2015, UN world leaders set a transformational course for the future of human development by creating the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Along with other major charities such as UNICEF and Save the Children, Compassion includes these goals at the heart of its work, in order to combat poverty and inequality, and transform our world.

Sustainable Development Goal 1 seeks to ‘by 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.’ⁱⁱ Sexual exploitation often occurs in the poorest communities, where violence and abuse are common and where dysfunctional and fragmented families feel powerless to prevent it and have become de-sensitised to its impact. Compassion Colombia has developed this intervention to fight against cultural injustices and prevent the children in the department of Magdalena from being sexually exploited.





COLOMBIA

Population: 47.5 million
Area: 440,831 square miles
Language: Spanish
Major religion: Christianity
Life expectancy: 70 years (men), 78 years (women)
Inhabitants under poverty line: 5.7% living on less than \$1.90 a day



Colombia is a sovereign state in the northwest of South America, and shares a border with Ecuador, Peru, Panama, Venezuela and Brazil.

Colombia emerged from the collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830, but a four decade long conflict between the government, anti-government insurgents and illegal paramilitary groups created the current situation of social and political instability. Fuelled by the drug trade, the conflict escalated during the 1990s and at one time guerrilla groups are estimated to have held control over 40% of the countryside. The most well-known insurgent group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), was responsible for hundreds of high profile kidnappings and murders in the country, including the father of one of the presidents, Álvaro Uribe.

Many believe Colombia has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years—turning the tide on a long running terrorist insurgency, making great strides in restoring security and stability, and advancing policies that have led to significant social progress and economic growth.

Although incidences of drug-related crime and kidnapping are decreasing in Colombia, they remain an alarmingly common part of everyday life. Colombia's drug trafficking problem continues to be a concern. The country is one of the world's top three cocaine producers and the second largest grower of the coca leaf, the raw ingredient in cocaine.

One third of all Colombian children are anaemic, and approximately 13% of children under five years old suffer from moderate to severe growth stunting, an often irreversible condition caused by chronic

malnutrition during early childhood. Rates of domestic violence in Colombia are also alarming, with 37% of women reporting abuse. In terms of work, the unemployment rate of 10.4% is one of Latin America's highest. 9% of children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in child labour, which can interfere with their ability to attend school and expose them to dangerous situations.

Education is free and compulsory for five years in Colombia; however, children living in rural areas have less access to education, with displaced children also affected by a lack of rural services. Every year, hundreds of children are regularly turned away at the school gates because they don't have the right uniform, textbooks or pen and paper. As only 5% of GDP is spent on education, school drop-out rates remain high. The percentage of children attending state primary and secondary schools increased only marginally from 84 percent in 2002 to 89 percent in 2007. ⁱⁱⁱ

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a significant problem in Colombia. Between 2011 and 2013 Colombian Social Services removed 2,135 children from situations where they were being sold for sex. 45% were under 11 years old. Organisations working in this field have estimated that over 35,000 children are involved in CSEC in Colombia. It is difficult to give any more exact figures than this, as the stigma attached to CSEC means that large numbers of cases go unreported. ^{iv}

PLANNED INTERVENTION

INTERVENTION	Prevention and child protection training in Colombia
LOCATION	Department of Magdalena, in north Colombia
RESPOND NUMBER	CO-187320
BENEFICIARIES	5,076 Compassion-supported children
FUNDING	£27,525
START DATE	June 2017

The department of Magdalena, located on the northern coast of Colombia, is ranked as the fifth most poverty-stricken department in Colombia.^v Sexual exploitation often occurs in the poorest communities, where violence and abuse are common and where dysfunctional and fragmented families feel powerless to prevent it and have become de-sensitised to its impact. Yet the harsh physical and psychological damage it does to the children who experience it is real and lasting. The Colombian National Family Welfare Institute has stated that 38 percent of sexual abuse victims are under the age of 6, and in 2002, the Institute of Forensic Medicine and Forensic Sciences conducted 20,284 medicolegal reports on children under 18 years old; 48.5% for which were child abuse, 44.8% for sexual abuse and 6.55% for domestic violence.ⁱ

Whilst child sexual abuse is rife in the area, many cases go unreported as locals see it as a family matter which does not require third party involvement. In 2013, the Judicial Branch took a sample of 325 child sexual abuse cases in Colombia to identify the characteristics of the victims and their perpetrators. In terms of the relationship between abuser and abused, ties were often found to be close between the two. 21% of the children were abused by their neighbours, 13% by their stepfathers, 9% by an uncle, 8% by a cousin, 7% by a brother and 4% by a parent.^{vi}

In light of this reality, 26 Evangelical Christian churches in the department of Magdalena sought to respond by developing 24 abuse interventions to prevent all forms of child abuse. These interventions reached 8,037 children who attended child development centres in the municipalities where the interventions were held. Once the specific needs of the families of the participating child development centres had been identified, the following activities were carried out:

- ④ Education on the prevention of sexual abuse for parents and guardians of the children, which was developed by the centre directors.
- ④ Church services coordinated by the church leadership for families to attend.
- ④ Home visits by centre staff to homes in which violence and abuse had not been reported.
- ④ Psychological support given by mental healthcare professionals who helped children and their families.

However, because speaking openly about child sexual abuse is not common practice, the efforts that the centre staff have made to prevent the maltreatment of children and combat the psychosocial risks of abuse need to be reinforced. To that end, they have developed this intervention to provide more in-depth support and education on the prevention of child sexual abuse for local families in Magdalena, and have enlisted professionals to help them carry out the programme.

The proposed activity is a 12 month training programme which will target 2,538 caregivers and 2,538 children aged 6 and below in the 26 child development centres in Magdalena. Workshops and seminars will be held to disseminate information; children will be taught about self-care and self-esteem among other values, and parents and guardians will be provided with information on the harm and risks of child sexual abuse, as well as education on how to recognise and report cases, and how to prevent them from happening in the future. There will be three phases to this intervention, all of which will take place with the support of the local churches.

Phase one

- ④ A multidisciplinary team will be formed to disseminate the programme training. This will include two lawyers who will elaborate on how to communicate cases of child abuse and how to prevent them from happening in future; four psychologists who will conduct workshops on child abuse prevention; two social workers who will provide different tools for abuse prevention; and the centre directors, church pastors and child development centre health advisors to oversee the intervention and facilitate its operation.
- ④ The material to be used for training will be reviewed by the multidisciplinary team and is based on material provided by the World Health Organisation and Family Welfare.
- ④ Every member of staff across the 26 child development centres will be trained by professionals on the prevention of child abuse. They will also study child advocacy; why it is necessary for individuals to speak up about child abuse, and how they can best do that.
- ④ Consequently, the 26 centres will proceed to implement the programme of prevention strategies against physical abuse.

Phase two

5 'Prevention against Childhood Maltreatment' seminars will be held for the 2,538 caregivers by a lawyer, social worker and psychologist. These seminars will cover the following:

- ④ 1. 'A glimpse into childhood maltreatment':
 - Typology of violence.
 - What is child treatment and types of maltreatment?
 - Social, community, and individual aspects as risk factors in child maltreatment.
 - Violence is not discipline - avoiding situations that favour abuse.
- ④ 2. 'What can we expect from our children according to their age?':
 - 0-2 year olds.
 - 2-5 year olds.
 - 5-11 year olds.
 - 11-18 year olds.
 - How to discipline children without violence.
 - Types of punishment that become maltreatment.
- ④ 3. 'Overview of child sexual abuse':
 - What is child sexual abuse?
 - Sexual abuse as violence against children.
 - Similarities and differences of sexual abuse against other types of violence.
 - Identification of sexually abusive behaviours.
- ④ 4. 'Parenting functions and positive discipline':
 - Concept of good parenting.
 - Components of good parenting skills.
 - Parenting models.
 - Basics of positive discipline.
 - Benefits of positive discipline.
- ④ 5. 'Obtaining assistance':
 - Regulations and legal aspects of child maltreatment.
 - Institutional assistance.
 - How to obtain assistance in cases of child maltreatment.

After these seminars have been conducted, there will be a family closing day that children and caregivers will attend, where the pastor will speak about family integration, forgiveness, interior healing and the strengthening of the family unit.

Similarly, four workshops shall be held for groups of 25 children in different age groups by the lawyer, psychologist, programme specialist and centre staff. They will be taught how to avoid abusive situations and protect themselves from them. Children will be taught that their body is their own, that they are the ones who should be in control of deciding what happens to their body, and that there are different types of physical contact. In this way, the children will be able to learn how to react to an adult when he or she asks them to do something they dislike. The subjects shall be as follows:

- ① 1. 'Knowing my body and my identity.'
- ① 2. 'I learn to say NO.'
- ① 3. 'I tell someone what happens to me.'
- ① 4. 'Taking care of my body.'

Phase three

The third phase will take place in the form of follow-ups. Home visits will be conducted by social workers to offer support, training and information to both children and their caregivers. These home visits are also vital in the detection of abuse cases and in establishing possible risk factors that could jeopardise the safety of the children.

The social workers will also monitor how effective the training programme has been as they conduct their home visits, and will report their findings back to the child development centres and Compassion Colombia.



Children and caregivers from Herederos del Rey [Heirs of the King] and Lámpara a Mis Pies [Lamp to my Feet] Child Development Centres, two more of the centres that will benefit from this intervention.

BUDGET

	ITEM	AMOUNT REQUIRED	LOCAL CONTRIBUTION*	AMOUNT REQUESTED
General services	Bank transactions	£118	-	£118
	Transport	£294	-	£294
	Stationery	£2,657	£2,657	-
	Support staff	£709	-	£709
	General services	£797	£797	-
	Food for caregiver workshops	£3,607	£1,258	£2,349
Recruitment	Recruitment of two lawyers	£1,134	-	£1,134
	Recruitment of two psychologists for caregivers' workshop	£4,534	-	£4,534
	Recruitment of two psychologists for children's workshop	£4,534	-	£4,534
	Recruitment of social worker	£5,035	-	£5,035
Workshops	Five workshops conducted by the multidisciplinary team	£236	-	£236
Family Day	Decoration	£80	-	£80
	Lunch for caregivers and children	£2,922	£674	£2,248
	Commemorative cards for parents	£749	-	£749
Administration	Administration	£5,505	-	£5,505
	TOTAL	£32,911	£5,386	£27,525

*Although the centres do not have the resources to complete this intervention alone, local funds raised will make up £5,386 of the cost. All Compassion RESPOND interventions include a local contribution, to encourage ownership by local communities.

FINAL REMARKS

Thank you for taking the time to read this proposal. As you can see, this intervention will reach thousands of children and their caregivers. Compassion Colombia anticipate that through the activities overseen by the psychologists, lawyers and social workers, not only will caregivers be able to identify cases of child sexual abuse and alert the authorities, but children themselves will be taught that their bodies are their own and how to seek help when necessary. This intervention will better protect the children physically and psychologically.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mark Preston on 07830 791 899 or at MarkP@compassionuk.org.

ⁱ Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, *Lineamientos técnico administrativos y estándares de estructura de los servicios de bienestar en protección*. Available from: <chrome-extension://gbkeegbaiigmenfmjfcldgdpimamgkj/views/app.html>

ⁱⁱ UN, *Sustainable Development Goal 1*. Available from: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/

ⁱⁱⁱ America's Quarterly, *Education is a Key to Reducing Poverty in Colombia*. Available from: www.americasquarterly.org/colombia-education-poverty-reduction

^{iv} Children Change Colombia, *Commercial Exploitation of Children*. Available from: www.childrenchange colombia.org/en/projects/supporting-families+&cd=9&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk

^v Seguimiento, *Magdalena*. Available from: www.seguimiento.co/magdalena/magdalena-el-quinto-departamento-mas-pobre-de-colombia-prosperidad-social-2996

^{vi} Colombia Reports, *81% of child sexual abuse cases in Colombia never make it to court*. Available from: www.colombiareports.com/81-of-child-sexual-abuse-cases-in-colombia-never-make-it-to-court/