

Colombia: Protecting Early Childhood from Violence

The **Colombia Protecting Early Childhood from Violence (CPECV)** is a partnership with local governments, universities, NGOs, daycares, schools, youth and parents to protect children (0-8) from the devastating impact of violence in Colombia – ranging from drug trafficking, gangs and armed groups to domestic violence.

Indicators and curriculum for this three-year project (2009-2012) are being developed in Comuna 13 in Medellin and will be piloted in 5-8 communities across Colombia.



Graffiti wall translation: We are a new world filled with love, respect and hope - Happy Day

Project Purpose

To enhance Colombia's system for protection during early childhood by improving prevention and protection mechanisms, especially those related to violence, and to ensure that public policies, including opportunities for broad community participation, are fully implemented.

The Colombia Protecting Early Childhood from Violence (CPECV) project is focusing on strategies to achieve three broad objectives. Partners are also linking up with other projects and policy initiatives for greater traction and impact at community, regional and international levels.

1. Develop locally contextualized indicators and processes to effectively monitor and evaluate violations of children's rights during early childhood.

Strategies

- Facilitate participatory action research
- Document and interpreting indicators with stakeholders
- Disseminate key findings

Emerging Results

- Increased understanding of risk and protective factors
- Improved family and community relationships
- Young training participants are seeing themselves as key agents of change



CURRENT KEY PARTNERS:

- Centro Internacional de Educacion y Desarrollo Humano (CINDE)
- International Child Development Programme (ICDP)
- International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD)
- Childhood Observatory of the University of Colombia
- University of San Buenaventura
- *Buen Comienzo*, Municipality of Medellin
- Subsecretaría de Espacio Público-Government Office, Municipality of Medellin
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- UBS Optimus Foundation
- Canacol Energy Limited

"I want to transform the mentality of young children, youth and adults (if possible) to develop their capacity to resist the bad that surrounds us."

Female Youth, 15



Workshop with Early Childhood Corferrini School-La Divisa, February 2011



“A stray bullet can kill a child, so we do not let them out at inappropriate times, such as at night... but the bullets can also enter our houses. The chances are greater in the street though, so we should stay at home.” - Community stakeholder on protecting young children

KEY PRIORITIES:

- Facilitate a community process to interpret information on violence and early childhood from over 240 participants
- Pilot the indicators and development process (including risk and protective factors) in new communities
- Develop early childhood development violence prevention curriculum
- Engage a network of facilitators to provide training to roughly 2,500 stakeholders including government, community organizations, caregivers, teachers, etc.
- Link indicators and community data to local and national policies on early childhood development and violence prevention
- Build stronger Colombian and international partnerships, including additional funding support

2. Increase capacity of families/communities/institutions to strengthen protection of young children and to create better conditions for the prevention of violence

Strategies

- Develop curriculum
- Train local and municipal facilitators
- Mentor and deliver training with partners
- Publish and share capacity building materials

Emerging Results

- Communities are identifying capacity building priorities to protect young children from violence
- Community workers are engaged in the training process and expansion to other communities
- Growing interest from families to use the training and resources (e.g. positive discipline)
- Young people are beginning to see potential alternatives to violence and conflict

“Emma is a role model for the community mothers group...She is much more involved in caring for her daughter and other children in her community.” -Diana Sarmiento, Rapporteur, ICDP workshop



3. Strengthen collaboration (partnership and policy implementation) across the child protection spectrum

Strategies

- Integrate findings and indicators into existing programs and services
- Build relationships with key decision makers, including local and national governments and private sector actors
- Host policy roundtables
- Write policy papers
- Link local indicators to national and international processes on early childhood and violence prevention

Emerging Results

- Instructors are integrating specific methodologies into teacher training
- Partnerships are developing with CINDE and Municipality of Medellin, *Buen Comienzo para la Vida*)
- Strengthened collaboration between the Municipality of Medellin, community organizations, universities and other partners (e.g. letter of agreements)
- Interest from national organizations and private sector actors to support implementation in communities



Meetings with the Municipality of Medellin

“The project has gained strength through the alliance with the Buen Comienzo para la Vida (and its significance) for the Protegiendo a la infancia de la Violencia. The alliance with the Municipalidad de Medellin has been a turning point in this Project.” – Manuel Manrique, CINDE and IICRD Advisor

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