

For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY



UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION COLOMBIA IN 2008



CORE COUNTRY DATA

Population under 18 (thousands)	16233
U5 mortality rate (2006)	21
Infant mortality rate 2006)	17
Maternal mortality ratio (2000-2006, reported)	78
Primary school enrolment ratio (2000-2006, net, male/female)	87/87
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3)	86
% population using improved drinking water sources (rural/urban)	71/99
Estimated no. of people (all ages) living with HIV, 2005 (thousands)	160
% U5 suffering moderate and severe underweight/stunting	7/12

Source: *The State of the World's Children 2008*

Colombia has been affected by more than four decades of violence generated by illegal armed groups, and is especially vulnerable to natural disasters deriving from its geographic conditions. UNICEF is working in close coordination with other UN agencies and within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to meet the needs of children and their families affected by these situations. In 2008, UNICEF's assistance will reach 231,000 children and their families as part of its humanitarian action.

Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2008

Sector	US\$
Assisting and protecting children affected by internal displacement and other complex emergencies	1,000,000
Emergency assistance	2,500,000
Humanitarian mine action	750,000
Prevention of child recruitment and protection of children demobilized from armed groups	1,000,000
Total*	5,250,000

* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7 per cent. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

As a consequence of more than four decades of armed violence, the complex humanitarian situation that prevails in Colombia has a profound impact on children and women.

Internal displacement is the most evident humanitarian consequence of this situation. Based on official records, 1,976,970 persons have been internally displaced over the past 10 years – of which 2 per cent are indigenous people and 5.5 per cent Afro-descendants.¹ On average, at least 400 persons flee their home every day. Official data indicate that 48 per cent of the displaced are women and 36 per cent children.² However, as per unofficial data, there are an estimated 3 million internally displaced people in Colombia today.

The effects of the violence generated by the illegal armed groups on indigenous communities are especially severe. The conflict has gradually caused the expulsion of indigenous communities from their ancestral territories, breaking the tie between territory and culture.

The presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) represents a serious and growing threat in Colombia. Official government statistics show a cumulative total of 6,426 victims between 1990 and 1 October 2007, with approximately 29 per cent of civilian³ casualties being children. It is worth noting that 46 per cent of the aforementioned 6,426 victims were involved in incidents that occurred in the last 34 months.⁴ Currently, 31 of Colombia's 32 departments (655 municipalities from a total of 1,098) are contaminated, with rural areas being most affected by the conflict at every level.

There are no official estimates on the number of children recruited by illegal armed groups, although the recruitment of under-18-year-olds is common practice.⁵ The average recruitment age is estimated at 12.8 years. Recruitment by the Colombian armed forces is prohibited by law. Following the demobilization of part of the illegal armed (paramilitary) groups between 2005 and 2006, 'emerging bands or groups' have appeared, also recruiting children and adolescents.

Colombia's geographic and climatic conditions make it especially vulnerable to natural disasters. During 2007 various areas of the northern part of the country have been ravaged by severe floods. In the first eight months of 2007, 692,000 persons were affected by flooding, landslides or storms with high winds.⁶

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Coordination of humanitarian action among UN agencies and main international and national actors has significantly improved in 2006 and 2007, with an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) established at the national level. A common needs assessment has been carried out for protection, and the Thematic Groups on i) Protection, ii) Basic Services and iii) Early Recovery are participating in joint missions to assess different humanitarian crises. Regional IASCs have been established in six zones and have begun to coordinate specific humanitarian assistance responses.

Within the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) framework, an inter-agency response was provided to the flooding emergency in northern Colombia, with support from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF).

Assisting and protecting children affected by internal displacement and other complex emergencies.

UNICEF Colombia has continued carrying out humanitarian interventions in areas severely affected by the armed conflict. The strategy is mainly directed at families that have been forcibly displaced or are at high risk of displacement, as well as at conflict-affected communities. The programme includes integrated interventions that address crisis recovery and capacity-building needs to dealing with and overcoming crises. UNICEF supported the provision of health-care services and education for children and adolescents in

¹ Registro Único de Población Desplazada, Acción Social, Presidencia de la República, Febrero 2007.

² Percentages sourced from Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation (for the period June 2002-31 May 2006).

³ Of the total 6,426 victims, 2,198 were civilians.

⁴ Presidential Mine Action Programme, 18 October 2007.

⁵ *Informe Defensorial sobre niñez vinculada a grupos armados ilegales*, Defensoría del Pueblo de Colombia, 2006.

⁶ Dirección de Prevención y Asistencia a Desastres.

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communities with high levels of violence and destruction deriving from the conflict, through the distribution of supplies, such as edukits and hygiene kits, the implementation of awareness-raising activities and technical assistance to state institutions responsible for the care of displaced populations. These activities increased education coverage, facilitated school access and improved the quality of education with a rights-based perspective in the departments of Chocó, Córdoba, and Norte de Santander.

The provision of psychosocial support to displaced children has been another main focus area. UNICEF has worked in the departments of Chocó, Antioquia, Córdoba and Cauca with youth groups trained as psychosocial therapists.

Emergency assistance. UNICEF provided emergency assistance to the Mojana region, in the department of Sucre, in northern Colombia, the area most affected by the rainy season which began in April. From a total of 27,000 flood-affected people, 11,000 were direct beneficiaries (of which 2,450 boys and 2,550 girls). Specific recovery activities included child protection, civil registration as well as psychosocial and educational support for 15,000 children and their families. Inter-agency response to this emergency was coordinated with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and international non-governmental organizations, within the framework of the Government's response.

In April 2007, UNICEF assisted 520 indigenous people of the Nasa ethnic group from the Cauca department after the eruption of the Huila Volcano. New stocks of plastic sheeting, edukits, blankets and other provisions were supplied for use in the provisional shelters of the most seriously damaged municipalities. Two hundred children benefited from psychosocial care.

UNICEF's initial emergency assistance to several regions, with structural deficiencies aggravated by the conflict and natural disasters, was subsequently complemented by technical support for the improvement of health and education services, as well as the creation of youth and adolescent networks to ensure a protective environment. This was the case in Chocó department, where the conflict and the floods severely affected the 1,050 members of the Wounaan indigenous population and 780 Emberas.

Humanitarian mine action. UNICEF focused on mine-risk education (MRE) activities, comprising community-based and social mobilization programmes, all of which aim at developing strategies to reduce risk and establish communication mechanisms. UNICEF has also developed and implemented advocacy and awareness strategies for the socio-economic reintegration of mine survivors and their families.

UNICEF is currently providing support to mine action activities in some municipalities heavily contaminated with landmines in the departments of Antioquia, Cauca, Nariño, Bolívar, Sucre and Chocó, through mine-risk education (MRE) programmes that include training of trainers and direct intervention in communities. Approximately 75,000 people have been equipped with knowledge on how to protect themselves and others against the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in their daily lives.

UNICEF and its partners have developed community-based methodologies for Municipal Needs Assessment and for relevant MRE data collection (using a specifically designed methodology), as well as a participatory design of MRE activities and materials at the community level.

Eighty-five mine survivors and their families have benefited from psychosocial support and reintegration activities supported by UNICEF and its counterparts.

Prevention of child recruitment and protection of children demobilized from armed groups. UNICEF has supported and promoted activities to prevent the recruitment of children by illegal armed groups, especially in indigenous communities and in populations with high levels of violence generated by illegal armed groups. It also has supported strategies for the reintegration and protection of adolescents demobilized from these groups.

Most important results in 2007:

- The level of vulnerability of 55,654 children and adolescents, residing in the most affected departments and regions of the country and facing the risk of recruitment by and exposure to armed groups and delinquent gangs, has been reduced by increasing their access to recreational, cultural and sports programmes.

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- Sixty per cent of children and adolescents demobilized during 2007 have been attended in family and substitute settings: 164 in the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF) foster home programme (*Hogar Tutor*) and 97 in family settings (*Hogar Gestor*), while receiving additional external support.
- UNICEF has supported the creation of seven ICBF departmental support units for the care of demobilized children and adolescents in six departments.

UNICEF's assistance also included the support to several regional prevention programmes in the departments of Chocó, Antioquia, Cauca, Córdoba and Cundinamarca as well as in the Montes de María, Magdalena Medio, and Urabá Antioqueño regions.

3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2008

Coordination and partnership

UNICEF's humanitarian action is implemented in close coordination with the other UN agencies in Colombia, within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Partnerships have been established with national, local and non-governmental organizations. The Catholic Church and indigenous communities of different ethnicities have been strategic partners of UNICEF.

Regular programme

The 2008-2012 Country Programme will contribute to guarantee children's rights, social inclusion and non-violence, as established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The new programme has four components: child survival and development; quality education, adolescent development and prevention of HIV/AIDS; protection and humanitarian action (which includes all activities related to the protection of children and women in natural or complex emergencies); public policies, communication and mobilization.

UNICEF's humanitarian action planned for 2008 will benefit a total of 231,000 people, as follows:

Assisting and protecting children affected by internal displacement and other complex emergencies (US\$ 1,000,000)

Some 25,000 displaced persons, host communities and impoverished persons will be reached through the following key activities:

- Conclude six coordination agreements with Departmental Governments and other key actors to ensure that forcibly displaced or confined children and adolescents receive care and support;
- Inform 30 per cent of the forcibly displaced or confined families on the mechanisms to access health, education and protection services;
- Provide psychosocial care for 10,000 children forcibly confined or displaced;
- Procure school kits for 5,000 children forcibly confined or displaced;
- Provide temporary water and sanitation solutions for 3,000 confined or forcibly displaced families;
- Provide civil registration documents to 10,000 displaced children.

Emergency assistance (US\$ 2,500,000)

Some 60,000 persons, mainly children and women, will be reached through the following key activities:

- Construct/rehabilitate wells and adequate sanitary facilities in 20 schools;
- Provide 3,000 school kits for children affected by natural disasters;
- Rehabilitate/construct water and basic sanitation systems for 8,000 families affected by natural disasters;
- Implement hygiene promotion activities for 5,000 children;
- Provide psychosocial care to 5,000 children affected by natural disasters;
- Conclude six coordination agreements with Departmental Governments for the articulation of emergency preparedness activities and the care of children affected by complex emergencies and natural disasters.

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Humanitarian mine action (US\$ 750,000)

A total of 75,000 persons living in areas where there is a high risk of landmine/UXO related accidents will be reached through the following key activities:

- Share information among 12,000 families on the dangers of landmines/UXO and how to adopt safe behavioural practices;
- Provide technical assistance for the implementation of 8 departmental and 30 municipal integral mine action plans in high-risk areas;
- Provide information to 45 per cent of all new civilian landmine/UXO survivors on routes to access health care and claim their rights;
- Train public servants and those in charge of landmine survivors' attention on legal procedures governing victim assistance in 11 departments and 50 municipalities.

Prevention of child recruitment and protection of children demobilized from armed groups (US\$ 1,000,000)

Some 71,000 children associated with armed groups and/or at risk of recruitment are targeted through the following key activities:

- Support/implement activities to prevent the recruitment into illegal armed groups of 70,000 children in areas with high levels of violence generated by armed groups;
- Expand to 70 per cent of all officially demobilized children the coverage of national programmes for family and community reintegration of adolescents demobilized from illegal armed groups.