EVALUATION OF UNICEF PROGRAMMES TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES

COLOMBIA COUNTRY CASE STUDY
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Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies Colombia Country Case Study.
United Nations Children’s Fund
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This report for Colombia constitutes part of a global evaluation titled UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies which includes four country case studies. The Colombia case study report was prepared by independent consultants Viktoria Perschler and Margaret Brown. Inputs were provided by a national evaluation team that included Maria Isabel Castro Velasco, Mario Quitones Noriega, Manuela Gaviria Serna and Tania Garcia. Krishna Belbase, Senior Evaluation Officer, managed and led the overall evaluation process in close collaboration with the UNICEF Colombia Country Office where Sergio Riaga, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, was the lead counterpart.

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ACRONYMS

CAP  Consolidated Appeal Process
CCC  Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action
CCCM  Campaña Colombiana contra Minas (Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines)
COALICO  Coalición contra la vinculación de niños, niñas y jóvenes al conflicto Armado en Colombia (Coalition against the Involvement of Children and Youth in Armed Conflict in Colombia)
CONPES  Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (National Council for Economic and Social Policy)
CP  Child protection
CPIE  Child protection in emergencies
CPWG  Child Protection Working Group
ELN  Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (Army of National Liberation)
EPL  Ejército del Pueblo (People’s Army)
ERW  Explosive remnants of war
FARC-EP  Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, Ejercito del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
GBV  Gender-based violence
GIZ  Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IASC  Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICBF  Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Family Welfare Institute)
ICRC  International Committee of the Red Cross
MRE  Mine risk education
MRM  Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
MTSP  Medium-term strategic plan
NGO  Non-governmental organization
OCHA  Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
OECD-DAC  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR  Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAICMA  Programa Presidencial para la Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal (Presidential Programme for Comprehensive Anti-Personnel Mine Action)
SC  Security Council
SENA  Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (National Learning Council)
SG  Secretary-General
Sida  Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA  United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSG  United Nations Secretary-General
WASH  Water, sanitation and hygiene
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The case study of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies (CPiE) in Colombia is part of a global review commissioned by UNICEF. The framework for the evaluation is based on the global Child Protection Strategy and Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), considering the effectiveness of the protective environment strategy in pre-emergency, response and recovery phases. The evaluation aims to identify key successes and gaps in child protection programming and draw out lessons learned in the context of armed conflict and natural disaster.

In Colombia the review covered aspects of the programme over the period 2011-2012, with a focus on protection issues arising from armed conflict. While protection issues facing children of all ages were addressed, the case study focused on the adolescent age group, since adolescence is the period of greatest risk of protection violations, especially recruitment and gender-based violence (GBV).

Field work took place over two weeks in October 2012. One international consultant and two national research assistants visited the department of Putumayo, and one international consultant and two national researchers visited the department of Norte de Santander, for one week each. Data collection included interviews with key informants from the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at national, departmental and municipal level. In addition, 142 children and 45 adults participated in focus groups addressing protection issues and the effects of programmes.

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance and Appropriateness of Programmes

The case study addressed the extent to which the programme addressed priority issues for children and adolescents identified through focus groups and as reflected in data; whether the programme built on existing systems; whether it was in line with the global Child Protection Strategy; and whether the programme was built on an explicit theory of change (how change comes about in a community).

The programme design was found to be highly relevant to the priority protection issues identified by adolescents and community members, and no major gaps were identified. However, five areas were found to need strengthening in relation to the protection issues identified: (a) gender-based violence, especially in relation to children; (b) support for government services to reach remote areas, to prevent recruitment of children; (c) inclusion of younger children in programmes aimed at preventing recruitment, since the age of recruitment has been falling; (d) attention to the socioeconomic conditions, through professional training and educational grants, that encourage children to join armed groups; and (e) psychosocial support to families in conflict areas, to increase their resilience and ensure they can adequately protect their children.

The programme was found to be closely aligned to the Child Protection Strategy. Though there is no clear theory of change underpinning the programme, the programme logic is evident. It is based on the assumption that strengthening state systems (protective legislation, policies, institutional capacity-building at central and decentralized levels) and linking them with less formal non-State and community-based systems, together with building the resilience and self-confidence of children, will enhance child protection in the context of armed conflict.

All the CCCs had been addressed directly except CCC 1, i.e. leadership in the child protection and GBV areas of responsibility and links to other cluster/sector coordination mechanisms. The reason for this is that the clusters had not actually been activated in Colombia due to widespread resistance to creating another coordination mechanism.

While no comprehensive assessment on child protection was made, the overall programme is based on government-collected data and evidence-based studies. Support to partners is based on local situation analyses and needs and capacity assessments and on evidence presented in project cooperation agreements and provided in government data.
Achievement of Outcomes

The programme achieved significant outcomes against planned intermediate results:

- **Technical assistance for implementation of the National Policy to Prevent Recruitment:** UNICEF has achieved strong results in supporting the development of municipal-level action plans for implementation of the policy to prevent recruitment. By March 2012, 37 municipalities in 6 departments had action plans, which include roadmaps for prevention using alerts on recruitment attempts. As a pilot project for implementation of such plans, UNICEF has supported the development of the departmental plan for Putumayo, which specifies the roles and responsibilities of each sector and of some civil society organizations.

- **Capacity building to prevent recruitment to illegal armed groups:** In zones of major recruitment, the child protection programme is creating protective environments for children by applying a prevention model based on strengthening institutions and community capacity to reduce the risk factors associated with recruitment. Beneficiary numbers are high for these interventions: by March 2012, 13% (48,203) of all children aged 12 to 17 in the prioritized municipalities had been reached, which corresponds to 87% of the targeted programme result within the 2008-2012 country programme.

  The case study assessed two interventions in particular: Golombiao (Game of Peace) and Retorno a la Alegria (Return to Happiness). Golombiao, an educational methodology based on a sports game, promotes peaceful co-existence and conflict resolution and gender equality among 14- to 25-year-olds. Retorno a la Alegria aims to strengthen the skills and self-esteem of younger children and their families. Both initiatives strengthened the capacities of families and community members to better protect children. Between June 2011 and April 2012, 150 parents, 2,000 community members, 68 public officials and 99 police were reached through education, community cultural events and training.

  Golombiao, which was highly valued by all focus group participants, was found to have made impressive achievements in terms of influencing the perceptions of adolescent and youth participants on promoting peaceful co-existence, conflict resolution and gender relations and in leadership capacities and positive family relations. However, it was not fully articulated how Golombiao could contribute to prevention of recruitment, given that its focus is on 14- to 25-year-olds, whereas the age of recruitment is falling and is around 11 years.

- **Internados (boarding houses at schools)** provide a home for students away from conflicted-affected areas and thus serve as part of the protective environment. Key informants from implementing and partner organizations felt that the programme had reduced the risk of exposure to landmines and of recruitment to armed groups. The project also included capacity-building of children and involved communities and municipal authorities in preventing recruitment through Golombiao.

- **Technical assistance to the Colombian military forces and police:** This initiative works to raise awareness among military and police officials and trains them on the application of international human rights and humanitarian law with reference to children in situations of armed conflict. The results have been very positive. The armed forces have assumed ownership of the programme, which is being managed from their internal training unit. For that reason, coverage was outstanding. According to the military forces, 100% of troops were reached in 246,000 personnel in total. According to entry and exit surveys given to 145

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1 UNICEF Results Framework, CP3 Tabla Indicatores Final
2 Ibid
3 UNICEF Colombia, Protection of Children Affected By Armed Conflict And Violence In Colombia, Project Funded by the Government of Sweden, Progress Report, July 2011 – April 2012, page 14
training participants and to the statement of armed forces representatives, attitudes towards children have changed as a result of the training, which created understanding of child protection issues. This process of strengthening the law enforcement institutions contributed to fulfilling the recommendations from the Secretary-General’s report on children and armed conflict in Colombia.

- **Mine risk education:** UNICEF support to the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM), a national NGO, had good outreach with mine risk education (MRE) in some of the most mine-affected departments. The initiative aimed to strengthen capacities to prevent accidents among children, adolescents, families, communities and institutions. By the end of 2011, 26,475 children and 8,813 parents had benefitted from MRE and 950 teachers were trained as trainers. This corresponds to 81% of the targeted result to be reached by 2012. The strategy of working with community members and making them ‘multipliers’ of MRE was successfully implemented, and UNICEF-designed didactic materials were highly appreciated by government and NGO partners.

- **Technical assistance to draft national MRE guidelines:** UNICEF provided technical assistance to national institutions for drafting the national guidelines on MRE and strengthening the mine action system. The Presidential Programme for Comprehensive Anti-Personnel Mine Action (PAICMA) was the main partner. UNICEF also assisted PAICMA in strengthening the mine action system and coordination among actors by establishing departmental mine action focal points and strengthening the capacities of mine action actors.

- **Acceptance of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism:** In December 2008, the Government voluntarily accepted the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, mandated by Security Council resolution 1612, currently functional in certain departments only. The MRM task force was established subsequently. UNICEF maintains the MRM database and serves as secretariat of the task force. In 2012, UNICEF contributed to the second Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia, and to the Global Report on Children and Armed Conflict. Also in 2012, input was provided for six global ‘horizontal notes’ that were sent to the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict of the United Nations Security Council. UNICEF was instrumental in disseminating knowledge to various regional and local organizations on resolution 1612 and assisted with capacity-building on protection issues and prevention of recruitment.

### Strategies

UNICEF has applied the following strategies in the CP programme: (a) monitoring the living conditions of children and adolescents; (b) strengthening the capacities of duty-bearers to comply with their obligations; (c) influencing public policies and laws; (d) designing demonstrative or pilot projects; (e) strengthening strategic alliances; and (f) providing timely and adequate humanitarian response in situations of natural or complex emergencies.

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4 Ibid, page 23
6 Global Horizontal Notes are a means by which information on grave violations reaches the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG) informally. These notes cover several different country situations, and are produced by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG/CAAC) in coordination with relevant country task forces or teams, with comments from UNICEF-HQ. A Horizontal Note is presented to the SCWG by the Secretary-General at each of the Working Group’s bimonthly meetings (Humanitarian Practice Network, Nr. 62, 2008).
Programme Quality


Costs and Efficiencies

The psychosocial and MRE activities are being implemented at very low cost. Given the involvement of volunteers/multipliers, costs of the MRE programme could decrease further.

Funding Allocations

The child protection programme receives no regular resources from UNICEF and is also affected by declining donor commitment. In view of the multiple and serious protection issues that affect vast parts of Colombia, the child protection programme is implausibly underfunded, which also has left it without sufficient staff.

Coordination

UNICEF participates actively in the protection cluster at national level. However, the lack of UNICEF child protection staff in most regions remains an important challenge for effective coordination at local level. The child protection sub-cluster has not been activated, despite the scale of child protection violations and issues. The GBV sub-cluster has likewise not been activated.

Scaling Up

UNICEF was able to successfully scale up various programmes and projects through partnerships, due to advocacy and the presence of experienced partners in the Government and NGOs. Some of the strategies UNICEF has been supporting are also part of national policies, thus promising sustainability and future scale-up by the Government, without further UNICEF support.

KEY SUCCESSES

(a) The government’s voluntary acceptance of the MRM and the subsequent establishment of the MRM task force, with a key role for UNICEF

(b) Establishment of stable relationships with government institutions, enabling UNICEF to contribute to legislation, policies and strategies

(c) UNICEF’s contribution to a common understanding and approach among key institutional actors regarding prevention of recruitment

(d) Development of psychosocial programmes, which have helped to build self-esteem among adolescents

(e) Strengthened self-protection capacities among children and adolescents due to the MRE programme

(f) Involvement of communities in MRE and engagement as volunteers/multipliers

(g) Institutional strengthening on mine action and strengthening of coordination at departmental and municipal level, resulting in inclusion of mine action in several municipal and departmental development plans

(h) Knowledge of children’s rights and humanitarian law among military forces and the police
GAPS AND WEAKNESSES
No major gaps were identified, but the programming emphasis was weaker in:

(a) Gender-based violence
(b) Economic support to young people, especially in terms of vocational training, in areas with high levels of child recruitment.

OTHER FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS
(a) Activation of the child protection sub-cluster could create a framework for inter-agency assessments, lead to joint strategies with NGOs and strengthen advocacy.
(b) The protection cluster could provide a link between the MRM and promotion of responses to cases identified by the MRM.
(c) Participation of a UNICEF child protection specialist in the Inter Cluster mechanism would help to mainstream child protection within humanitarian action.
(d) Building on progress in raising the issue of child recruitment, it will be important to drive towards development of action plans on preventing recruitment and on the release of boys and girls currently with armed groups as soon as the situation permits.
(e) Links between psychosocial programming and prevention of recruitment need to be further developed.
(f) Gender-based violence, both directly and indirectly related to conflict, needs to be addressed in child protection programming.
(g) Residential units in schools are seen as protective spaces for children but should be only a short-term solution and should be closely monitored.
(h) The potential demobilization of children from FARC demands cooperation of multiple actors leading to drafting of a contingency plan.
(i) The inclusion of children with disability has not been documented.
(j) Widespread child protection violations across the country necessitate a field presence by UNICEF child protection staff, as requested by all key informants.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Recommendation 1: Prevention of recruitment to illegal armed groups
- Continue to strengthen government and NGO capacity to implement municipal-level plans for prevention of recruitment, extending services into the interior. Consider including economic opportunities for young people by engaging SENA in planning and encouraging implementation in the interior.
- Continue to support Golombiao as an important component of prevention of recruitment, but (a) review the prioritized municipalities relative to the municipalities prioritized in CONPES 3673 and by UNICEF; (b) include municipalities from Putumayo in the prioritized municipalities as part of the pilot programme; (c) develop a robust monitoring system that includes process and outcome indicators and systems for data collection and analysis; and (d) review the target age for services with Colombia Joven, especially for the municipalities prioritized under CONPES 3673.
• Boarding schools/internados can only be seen as a short- to medium-term solution. In the longer term, UNICEF should focus on advocacy and support for expanding the reach of schools into remote areas, rather than having children from remote areas move away from their parents and communities to internados.  

**Recommendation 2: Institutional strengthening on mine action**

• Continue advocacy efforts on humanitarian demining and inclusion of MRE in school curricula
• Roll out MRE into other affected departments
• Include peer education in MRE strategies
• Advocate to simplify the process for victim assistance (which is currently complicated and bureaucratic) and conduct broad awareness programmes on accessing benefits due under Law 1448.

**Recommendation 3: Coordination and technical support**

• Invite the Child Protection Working Group in Geneva to visit Colombia to review CPIE issues with the UNICEF CP team and partners. The invitation could be to the CPWG; ideally key NGOs within it should also be invited. The CPWG is likely to have funding available for such a visit.  

Issues to be discussed include:

(a) The possible advantages and feasibility of activating a child protection sub-cluster, in view of the many complex child protection issues in Colombia, the diversity of actors and the demand for better coordination and information sharing on child protection issues.  

(b) Development of a contingency plan covering the requirements and suggested processes to accommodate a possible surge in child release and reintegration from armed actors. The plan should draw on experiences from the previous demobilization programme to apply lessons learned. In addition, possible development of action plans for release and reintegration under the MRM with armed groups (which requires a DDR expert).

(c) Ways of strengthening work in gender-based violence in armed conflict, building on UNICEF’s specific strengths and mandate. As part of a comprehensive focus on all forms of GBV, including sexual violence, attention should be paid to domestic violence and the linkages between armed conflict and intimate partner violence and conflict. (This would require a GBV expert.)

(d) Review of options for fund-raising for CPIE with a view to increasing the number of staff and placing staff in the field.

**Recommendation 4: Advocacy with the military:**

• Based on UNICEF’s well-established relationship with the military, advocate with officials to:

  (a) Avoid use of schools for any purpose, including rest and recreation, water and electricity;

  (b) Have civilian organizations carry out removal of landmines and ERW around schools.  

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7 Since December 2012, the National Ministry of Education (NME) is receiving support from UNICEF to build a detailed analysis of the situation of all internados in Colombia and based on the findings, improve their status through the promotion of appropriate standards and their conversion in effective protective scenarios in which children and adolescents fulfill their right to education, even within the context of conflict and natural emergencies. The NME took this initiative after receiving key information provided by UNICEF about the current conditions of the internados in Putumayo and the necessary actions that were urgent to adapt them as friendly spaces that provide quality education and effective protection in contexts of violence and natural hazards.

8 Interview with Katie Barnett, Coordinator, CPWG.

9 Interview with UNHCR
Recommendation 5: Funding and staffing issues:

- Given the fact that donors perceive Colombia as a middle-income country, UNICEF can further use its comparative advantage as a child rights organization to advocate for funding for child protection, arguing that Colombia is still in a situation of armed conflict and children are suffering from multiple protection violations. Additional funding is needed to ensure that the child protection section is equipped with sufficient personnel to tackle the challenges, and in particular to deploy officers in the field.

- If multiple child protection issues are to be addressed effectively by the UNICEF CP programme, it is imperative for UNICEF to expand its field presence to strengthen the role of departmental and municipal governments and to support civil society organizations that engage in child protection, as well as local humanitarian teams.

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10 This recommendation should be linked to the recommendation in the United Nations Security Council. Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia. S/2012/171. 21 March 2012, 78, prohibiting the involvement of children in civil-military activities, which may expose civilians — especially children — to violence and/or reprisals by parties to the conflict.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 UNICEF’s Approach to the Protection of Children in Emergencies

UNICEF’s approach to child protection action in emergencies is framed by the Child Protection Strategy (2008) and the Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs, 2010). The Child Protection Strategy aims to create a protective environment through a continuum of protective interventions in pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis phases.

The Child Protection Strategy sets out three pillars. The first two, ‘strengthening national protection systems’ (formal and less formal) and ‘supporting positive social change’ (in relation to harmful practices), work in tandem to create a protective environment for girls and boys. They should both be strengthened simultaneously to be effective. Taken together, they reinforce the protective environment and reduce protection risks that occur during natural disasters and complex emergencies. Strengthening national protection systems involves a range of actors, including children and youth, families, communities, government and civil society and private organizations.

The effectiveness of child protection depends on (a) laws, policies and standards; (b) services and service delivery mechanisms; (c) human and fiscal resources and management; (d) communication and advocacy; and (e) evidence and data for decision-making.

The third pillar, ‘child protection in armed conflict and natural disasters’, interprets how to adapt the systems approach to child protection in emergency and transition contexts. This can be, for example, through mechanisms at camp level that identify vulnerable children and provide front-line support and referral to support services (psychosocial support, family tracing, access to education). The aim is to work with existing systems, even if they are weakened during a crisis. The Strategy points out that opportunities and entry points may emerge during crises that can be used to catalyse system strengthening or social change in the recovery phase. An example would be using the imperative of providing tracing and reunification services to separated children in the emergency to strengthen longer term systems for protection of children without adequate parental care.

In addition to the three pillars are two cross-cutting areas: (a) evidence-building and knowledge management and (b) convening and catalysing agents of change. Evidence-building and knowledge management seeks to ensure that adequate data and information are available to plan and monitor results and outcomes for children. Convening and catalysing agents of change refers to strengthening partnerships with other actors to coordinate and scale up programming and advocacy in child protection.

Common concerns in all contexts are (a) addressing gender and other power imbalances, (b) strengthening coordination between sectors, (c) increasing support through social protection and rule-of-law initiatives and (d) ensuring that socially excluded or invisible groups are included.

The CCCs complement the Child Protection Strategy by presenting a set of key commitments, benchmarks and actions in each phase of preparedness, response and early recovery. Taken together, the eight CCCs in child protection are intended to serve as a framework for rapid, predictable response.

UNICEF is also responsible for implementation of key Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1612, which required the establishment of a monitoring and reporting mechanism on six grave violations against children in armed conflict and Security Council resolution 1888 that strengthened the requirements on monitoring of sexual violence against women and children in armed conflict and combating impunity.

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1 The violations are: (i) killing and maiming of children; (ii) recruitment and use of child soldiers; (iii) rape and other forms of sexual violence against children; (iv) abduction of children; (v) attacks against schools or hospitals; and (vi) denial of humanitarian access to children.
Within the cluster system for the coordination of humanitarian response, UNICEF is the focal point for the child protection area of responsibility and leads on the establishment of a child protection sub-cluster (of the protection cluster) or child protection working group in partnership with government agencies, NGOs and academics. CP sub-clusters aim to ensure that child protection is more predictable, effective and accountable in emergencies. Since early 2008 UNICEF has also been co-lead, with UNFPA, of the gender-based violence (GBV) area of responsibility. UNICEF is further responsible for dissemination of the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) ‘Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings’ and the gender-based violence area of responsibility ‘Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings’.

Addressing GBV in emergencies is a core commitment for children. Child Protection Commitment 5 (Programming) underscores the importance of combating violence, exploitation and abuse of children and women from both a prevention and response perspective. In addition to addressing GBV from a programme perspective, Child Protection Commitment 1 (Coordination) recognizes the importance of GBV-related coordination. This commitment aims to ensure that effective leadership is established for both the child protection and GBV areas of responsibility, with links to other cluster/sector coordination mechanisms on critical inter-sectoral issues.

Finally, UNICEF is responsible for dissemination of the IASC ‘Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings’ and for ensuring that mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is mainstreamed into cluster work. Further, the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups and the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups (both 2007) set out the agenda for prevention of child recruitment, release and reintegration, ending impunity and ensuring justice and for follow-up. UNICEF plays a leading role in advocating for implementation of the Commitments.

1.2 Background to the Evaluation

UNICEF’s Evaluation Office commissioned this first global evaluation of programmes to protect children in emergencies (armed conflict and natural disasters) in the light of the Child Protection Strategy and CCCs (see framework in Annex 1). The purpose of the global evaluation is to strengthen child protection programming in the context of emergencies by assessing UNICEF’s performance in recent years across the continuum of pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis phases. Both preventive and responsive perspectives were considered, in line with the CCCs.

More specifically, the global evaluation reviews the performance of programmes against the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) and investigates how far interventions in longer term CP systems-strengthening coupled with preparedness actions from the CCCs actually lead to more effective response in crises. In terms of supporting positive social change, it considers whether it has been possible to challenge negative attitudes and practices in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability, among others, and contribute to a culture of peace in before and during crises. Finally, the evaluation reviews programme performance against the CCCs and identifies successes and gaps in terms of what works, what does not work and how to better protect children.

The evaluation of UNICEF programmes to protect children in Colombia is one of the four country case studies; the others cover South Sudan, Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A desk study is addressing child protection in an additional eight countries affected by disaster and/or armed conflict. The evaluation covers UNICEF’s work during the period of the current medium-term strategic plan, with a principal focus on the last two to three years.

Impact or intermediate results, relevance/appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, connectedness/coordination, sustainability and scaling up.

The evaluation comes at a crucial time in Colombia’s history. In October 2012 peace talks began with the largest armed group (FARC-EP)\textsuperscript{14} with a view to finding a way forward to end one of the world’s longest standing conflicts. Colombian children and adolescents have consistently been targeted for recruitment to armed groups, been subject to extreme violence and experienced high numbers of landmine casualties and loss of access to education. In view of the timing, the evaluation also aims to reflect on UNICEF’s potential role in the context of the potential peace process.

1.3 The Impact of Armed Conflict and Natural Disasters on Child Protection

Colombia has experienced armed conflict across much of the country since the 1960s. Many scholars identify its origins with \textit{La Violencia}, a period of deep violence between the two traditional political movements (liberalism and conservatism) from 1946 to 1966. Two of the ‘insurgent’ groups that were formed in the early 1960s as peasant self-defense groups, originally aligned with the Liberal Party, survive today as the two main guerrilla organizations: the FARC and the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, known as ELN).\textsuperscript{15} The conflict, initially rooted in political exclusion, poverty and profound inequalities\textsuperscript{16,17} has become highly complex and involves multiple actors: national military forces,\textsuperscript{18} FARC-EP, ELN, post-demobilization groups and armed gangs. The latter, the so-called \textit{bandas criminales}, have regrouped themselves from the 20,000 paramilitary combatants (Auto Defensas Unidas de Colombia/AUC) after attempts to demobilize them as part of the peace process that started in 2003.\textsuperscript{19} All of the armed actors have been responsible for human rights abuses\textsuperscript{20} and FARC-EP and the ELN are listed by the United Nations Security Council for recruitment and use of children.\textsuperscript{21} Today, the circumstances that preserve the conflict go beyond political or ideological issues. They include proceeds from drug trafficking, land control, rent-seeking and the collapse of the judicial system, all contributing to a highly complex situation.

There are equally complex issues surrounding the relations of these non-State armed groups with State institutions, drug traffickers and private companies of the extractive (mining) industries. In parts of the country, State presence is weak and illegal armed groups have filled the vacuum. There are also allegations of State corruption\textsuperscript{22} and of links between politicians and multinational companies and the paramilitary groups.\textsuperscript{23} ‘Confinement’ of communities, resulting from the actions of both non-State and State actors,\textsuperscript{24} isolates communities and prevents people from reaching productive areas for growing crops or fishing, causing considerable psychological and economic pressure on children and caregivers.

This complex situation renders children vulnerable to multiple forms of abuse including recruitment, use for illegal activities, child labour and sexual exploitation. They are also victims of anti-personnel
landmines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive devices used during much of the conflict by all parties and still used by non-State actors.

To counteract these profound problems, the military forces are working to regain control of affected areas, destroy illegal crops and stabilize affected areas to the point that government services can be installed.

Importantly, peace negotiations between the Government and the FARC-EP were initiated in October 2012, but human rights violations, including child recruitment, increased before and during the negotiations throughout 2012. Data from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) show a 32% increase in attacks against civilians in September 2012 compared to previous months. UNICEF and all non-State partners, with the exception of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), are prohibited from engagement with non-State armed groups. (The ICRC is authorized to engage with these groups for humanitarian purposes.) This has made it impossible to draft an action plan linked to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) with the FARC-EP or other groups. The demobilization of children is not on the official agenda of the peace negotiations but may be addressed during discussion of the ‘end of the conflict’. The number of child soldiers with the FARC-EP is unknown.

In addition to armed conflict, Colombia is also subject to serious natural disasters. In 2010, 2.7 million people were affected by floods as were an even higher number, at least 3 million, in 2011. Colombia also experienced an earthquake in 1999 that affected 1.2 million people. Natural disasters have exacerbated issues of poverty, livelihoods and protection, affecting populations already displaced and vulnerable as a result of the armed conflict.

As a result of the armed conflict and natural disasters, Colombia has one of the highest displaced populations in the world, estimated at between 3.7 million and 5.2 million people. In addition, Colombia (together with Afghanistan and Cambodia) is one of the States parties to the Mine Ban Treaty with the highest number of annual casualties over the past decade. In 2011, Colombia had 538 casualties, the third highest number.

1.4 The Context for Child Protection in Colombia

Colombia has a strong legislative and policy framework in place, aimed at protecting children and specifically children in armed conflict. Furthermore, there are extensive government social services designed for strengthening families, providing alternative care where necessary and reducing poverty through social protection measures, including conditional cash transfers. However, the armed conflict hinders access to services by the people most in need of them, and impunity for child protection violations persists.

The Colombian Penal Code, Article 162, criminalizes recruitment of children for direct or indirect participation in hostilities. Colombia has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2005) and endorsed the Paris Principles and Guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups (2007). Although Colombia is not

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25 Colombia has ratified the Ottawa Treaty in 2000 which bans the Colombian Armed Forces from using landmines
26 Representatives of the Armed Forces in interview for the evaluation.
27 www.colombiassh.org/site, Monthly Humanitarian Bulletins: Interview with UNHCR
32 The Humanitarian Response Index, Focus on Colombia, 2011, http://daraint.org
34 Ibid
on the country-specific agenda of the Security Council, in December 2008 the Government voluntarily accepted the establishment of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict (MRM). Furthermore, two initiatives, both at the level of the President’s Office, are particularly important to protect children in armed conflict: the National Policy on the Prevention of the Recruitment of Children and Use of Children by Illegal Armed Groups (CONPES 3673, 2010) and the National Policy for Comprehensive Action against Mines (2010).

Commitment to this framework was strengthened when the new government, which came to power in 2010, took the step of acknowledging the status of armed conflict (as opposed to terrorism) and accepting the international conventions applicable to countries in conflict. President Juan Manuel Santos introduced reforms that have strong support from the Congress, including the Law for Victims and Land Restitution (Ley 1448). It contains specific measures to assist child and adolescent victims (Titulo VII) and adopts the Victims of Enforced Disappearance Law. Health and justice reforms were also initiated, and the Code for Children and Adolescents (Ley 1098, 2006) was reviewed in relation to the age of criminal responsibility, which remained at 18 years.

The Policy on the Prevention of Recruitment aims to provide a comprehensive protective environment (Entornos Protectores) for children by engaging state institutions together with communities in a prevention, alert and response system. The Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of Recruitment of Children, established by Decree 4690 in 2007, is responsible for coordinating actions of all State entities, at both national and local levels, and initiatives of social organizations and international aid, that are meant to prevent illegal recruitment of children. In 2012 Decree 0552 was issued, which addresses sexual violence against children and adolescents by organized groups outside the law and organized criminal groups. The Commission’s technical secretariat, with assistance from UNICEF, supports the corresponding departmental and municipal level plans. These define pathways and referral systems for early detection of attempts to recruit children, launching of rapid alerts and mobilization of all sectors to prevent and respond to recruitment. By April 2012, 27 territorial entities (4 departments and 23 municipalities) had established plans of action in response. The respective contributions of sectors and programmes are as follows:

- **Prosperidad Social** (Social Protection department): Oversees poverty reduction programmes, especially conditional cash transfers through the Familias en Acción (Families in Action), intended to keep children in school and out of any form of child labour.

35 Política De Prevención Del Reclutamiento Y Utilización De Niños, Niñas, Adolescentes Por Parte De Los Grupos Armados Organizados Al Margen De La Ley Y De Los Grupos Delictivos Organizados, 2010, Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (CONPES), 3673. The document CONPES 3673, 2010, responds to the problems of recruitment and use of children and adolescents by armed groups. It provides comprehensive protection of children and adolescents as a platform for prevention of recruitment República de Colombia Departamento Nacional de Planeación

36 Approved by Congress in 2011 and enacted in June 2011

37 The Code for Children and Adolescents outlines a set of actions for the State, also involving society and the family, to ensure the full protection of children and adolescents.


• **De Cero a Siempre (from Zero to Forever):** The national strategy and inter-departmental programme for comprehensive early childhood development. It promotes access to health, nutrition, education and other services for the most vulnerable people (including Afro-Colombian and indigenous groups), with a goal of reaching 1.2 million children.

• **ICBF (Colombian Institute for Family Welfare):** Well-being programmes, including a life skills after-school programme (Generaciones con Bienestar) aimed at the 6-17 age group. Inaugurated in 2012, ICBF also provides foster families for children at risk and supports the reintegration programme for children released from armed groups, involving support to families or foster care where required.

• **Ministry of Education:** Promotion of access to and retention in school. This includes establishing boarding schools (internados) to ensure that children from remote areas are in school and to remove them from the risk of recruitment, landmines and work in illicit cultivation. UNICEF provides direct assistance to the internados.

• **Comisaría de Familia (Family Commissariat):** Addresses family violence and sexual abuse, perpetrated by family members or strangers, and referrals for services.

• **Personería (Public Ministry):** Provides compensation for conflict-related displacement or injury.

• **Colombia Joven (Young Colombia):** The Presidential Programme for the National System of Youth. It designs policies, plans and programmes that promote the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of youth. It offers integrated services for youth and an entrepreneur forum as well as psychosocial strategies, especially **Golombiao**, the ‘game of peace’, aimed at peaceful resolution of conflict. It helps young people acquire and apply experiential knowledge and skills, both individually and collectively, for adolescents as rights-holders.

• **Retorno a la Alegria (Return to Happiness):** Aims to strengthen the skills and self-esteem of younger children and their families (see also section 1.5).

These initiatives are primarily focused on the long term, but all except Familias en Acción and De Cero a Siempre, also provide emergency response. The Government takes the lead in these initiatives, with support from national civil society organizations and international aid agencies. However, the State has limited access to some parts of the country due to the armed conflict, the hazards of landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), and lack of infrastructure. These issues remain key impediments to reaching the children most in need of protection.

Another major national policy to protect children is the National Policy for Comprehensive Action Against Anti-Personnel Mines. It aims to prevent the use of landmines and ERW in line with the Ottawa Treaty. The Presidential Programme for Integral Action against Anti-personnel Mines (PAICMA; 2002) covers regulation of action against landmines. It also serves as technical secretariat of the National Authority of Anti-personnel Mines (CINAMAP).

Colombia has a broad and vibrant network of civil society groups. At least four coalitions represent 1,214 organizations tackling poverty and inequality and working towards peace and respect for human rights. Some of UNICEF’s main non-governmental partners in child protection in emergencies are the Coalition

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41 “Informe alterno al informe del estado colombiano sobre el cumplimiento del Protocolo Facultativo Relativo a la Participación de Niños en los Conflictos Armados”, COALICO, CCJ, 2009; “The State can’t provide continuous presence in the areas of greatest need. The army is not there all the time while illegal armed groups can be.” Interview with representative of the military, Putumayo.

42 The Mine Ban Convention, ratified by Colombia in 2000.

43 [http://www.accioncontraminas.gov.co/Programa/Paginas/QuienesSomos.aspx](http://www.accioncontraminas.gov.co/Programa/Paginas/QuienesSomos.aspx)

against Child Recruitment (COALICO); Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM), which works on mine risk education, victim assistance and advocacy; and Pastoral Social, a Catholic NGO providing community-based child protection services.

1.5 UNICEF Colombia Programme to Protect Children and Adolescents in Emergencies

The approach to UNICEF programmes for child protection in emergencies was set out in the country programme document 2008-2012 (extended to 2014), and specifically in intermediate result 3 (defined in table 1) of the rolling workplan.

Coupled with humanitarian action, child protection is one of four components of the country programme. The others are child survival and development; quality education, adolescent development and prevention of HIV/AIDS; and evidence-based public policies. Within protection and humanitarian action, the principal goal is to promote a gender-sensitive protective environment for children and adolescents affected by violence through four subcomponents:

(a) Prevention of recruitment of children by non-State armed groups
(b) Landmine risk education and care for victims
(c) Protection of displaced and confined children
(d) Protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse.

The first three sub-components concentrate on child protection in emergencies. To operationalize them, intermediate result 3 of the rolling workplan refers to child protection in the context of armed conflict (see table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme results</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Departments covered</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building of children and adolescents and their families, communities and institutions in zones of major recruitment to prevent recruitment to illegal armed groups</td>
<td>$1,928,707</td>
<td>Antioquia, Nariño, Montes de María, Córdoba, Putumayo, Meta, Chocó and Cauca</td>
<td>Per cent of children aged 12-17 in the 58 prioritized municipalities who participate for the first time and for a minimum of two years in processes of building protective environments to prevent their recruitment by armed groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance for the implementation of the national policy to prevent recruitment</td>
<td>$560,000</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Number of municipalities in the departments of Antioquia, Choco, Meta and Nariño that include prevention measures against recruitment of children in their development plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance to ICBF to protect children from recruitment by illegal armed groups</td>
<td>$290,000</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Number of departments where Hogar Gestor (foster home programme) is implemented, with both girls and boys having equal access Number of departments that implement the strategy on promotion of children’s rights and prevention of children’s victimization by armed groups, through psychosocial assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening the capacities of children and adolescents and their families, communities and institutions</td>
<td>$788,000 ($200,000 unfunded)</td>
<td>Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Meta, Arauca, Córdoba</td>
<td>Number of persons with the capacity to prevent accidents with landmines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Principal Programme Activities within Intermediate Result 3 for 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to prevent accidents with landmines and ERW through MRE for populations living in risk areas</td>
<td>Cauca, Nariño, Chocó, Cesar, Antioquia, and national level (CAP)</td>
<td>Per cent of new civilian victims of landmines and ERW who know their rights and how to access integrated services. Number of departments that implement the national policy of integrated action against mines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance to national institutions to assist children, adolescents and their families and communities who are victims of landmines and ERW according to the Law on Victims and Land Restitution</td>
<td>Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Meta, Arauca, Córdoba, Cauca, Nariño, Chocó, Cesar, Antioquia, and national level (CAP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information system regarding children and adolescents affected by armed conflict and grave violations of their rights with reference to Security Council resolution 1612</td>
<td>National (regional emphasis in Córdoba, Antioquia, Chocó, Nariño, Cauca, Meta, Arauca, Putumayo, Norte de Santander)</td>
<td>Number of global notes sent; bimonthly notes, input to CARIII, inputs to the global reports⁴⁵; Follow up plan to recommendations and number of actions taken to comply with recommendations of the UNSG and the Working Group on the Security Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance to the military forces of Colombia to ensure the application of international human rights with reference to children</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Number of officers, subofficers and soldiers sensitized and trained in international humanitarian and human rights law.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian assistance to populations affected by the armed conflict, within the basic commitments of the CCCs</td>
<td>Putumayo. Municipalities: Mocoa, Villa Garzón. Puerto Asís, Puerto Caicedo, Orito, Valle del Guamuez, San Miguel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate result 3</td>
<td>Funded</td>
<td>$4,750,865 (unfunded $200,000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total required for intermediate result 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,950,865</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In further support of intermediate result 3, the child protection programme focuses on the development, promotion and support of protective environments for children by addressing two key elements of the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy:

(a) Strengthening national protection systems by:
   - Advocacy for and support to the development of child-friendly legislation
   - Technical assistance for implementation of the national policy to prevent recruitment
   - Technical assistance to ICBF to protect children from recruitment by illegal armed groups
   - Technical assistance to national institutions to assist children, adolescents, families and communities who are victims of landmines and ERW according to the Law on Victims and Land Restitution.

⁴⁵ Global Horizontal Notes are a means by which information on grave violations reaches the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG) informally. These notes cover several different country situations, and are produced by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG/CAAC) in coordination with relevant country task forces or teams, with comments from UNICEF-HQ. A Horizontal Note is presented to the SCWG by the Secretary-General at each of the Working Group’s bimonthly meetings. (Humanitarian Practice Network, Nr. 62, 2008).
(b) Supporting social change through capacity development initiatives that UNICEF coordinates with institutions, communities, families, children and adolescents in order to:

- Build capacity and resilience of children, adolescents, families, communities and institutions in zones of major recruitment to prevent recruitment to illegal armed groups
- Strengthen the capacities of children, adolescents, families, communities and institutions to prevent accidents with landmines and ERW through mine risk education for people living in risk areas
- Provide technical assistance to the military forces of Colombia to ensure the application of international human rights with reference to children.

The child protection programme equally considers:

(a) Promotion of child protection in conflict and natural disasters, through humanitarian assistance, within the basic commitments of the CCCs

(b) Evidence-building and knowledge management, through support to development of information systems on children and adolescents affected by the armed conflict and grave violations of their rights with reference to resolution 1612.

For reasons elaborated above, the case study focused on prevention of recruitment and mine action, which includes:

(a) Technical assistance to develop the national policy on prevention of recruitment and technical and financial support to the National Commission for the Prevention of Recruitment of Children and its secretariat

(b) Promotion of plans at departmental and municipal levels to prevent recruitment in risk zones. UNICEF’s main partners are the National Commission, ICBF and Pastoral Social plus all State departments engaged in service provision.

(c) Direct interventions with children and adolescents:

- Technical and financial support to Golombiao, a presidential programme based on an educational methodology that promotes peace through sports coupled with reflection on seven principles: gender equality, freedom of speech, non-discrimination, non-violence, taking care of others and oneself, care for the environment and active participation. UNICEF provides about half of the budget for Golombiao, which was launched in 2000. The majority of participants are aged 13-18, and it strives to include girls and boys. In addition to the game itself, there is a dialogue committee that discusses key topics including the prevention of recruitment. Around 200,000 children and youth have participated since it began.

- Retorno a la Alegria, a psychosocial programme aimed at younger children, aged 7-12 years. It has a long history in Colombia and an established curriculum of activities implemented by Pastoral Social. It aims to provide psychosocial ‘first aid’ by training young people (9th grade) to hold recreational, sporting and life-skills activities with younger children. Parents and teachers are also encouraged to understand the importance of keeping children busy, to recognize aggression and isolation in children, and to involve children in family decisions. Participating families are identified by young facilitators through outreach visits to households. About 3,866 children and adolescents participated between July 2011 and April 2012.

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46 In the Departments of: Antioquia, Nariño, Montes de María, Córdoba, Putumayo, Meta, Chocó and Cauca.
47 With support from GIZ.
• Support to boarding schools (internados) through support to the development of capacities in schools and communities to protect children and enhance their abilities to build lives away from violence. UNICEF also supports internados in rural areas, where they are seen as one way to reduce risks from recruitment, landmines and involvement in illicit cultivation. The schools also ensure access to education for children living in dispersed areas.

(d) Support for MRE, victims’ assistance and strengthening of departmental and municipal management and systems. UNICEF is providing technical assistance to PAICMA on policy issues and co-drafted the national standards on MRE and the national MRE plan. Since 2010 UNICEF has supported various national NGOs, including the Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM) in implementing projects on MRE, victim assistance and development of territorial management skills and systems. The principal strategy is to strengthen children’s and adolescents’ capacities to protect themselves from mine accidents. Community members and volunteers are fundamental to the sustainability of these activities.

The programme also supports:

• The MRM task force, for which UNICEF is the technical secretariat. This involves collating data, training on MRM data collection and submission of information for reports to the Security Council.

• Training on child rights for military forces and the police, with the objective of ensuring they respect human rights in general and children’s rights specifically. The training was designed and delivered by Sergio Aboleda University through a model of training trainers from within the armed forces and police. UNICEF provides technical and financial support.

All of the above components are included in the case study with the exception of Retorno a la Alegria, as community visits focused on participants in Golombiao and the mine action programme and the internados. UNICEF also supports strengthening of the capacity of national institutions to respond to natural disasters in the context of the CCCs. However, this component was not a focus of the evaluation due to time limitations.

1.6 Programme Management and Funding

The UNICEF Colombia child protection programme does not receive any funding from UNICEF regular resources. The main funding comes from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Canada, the Netherlands and the Central Emergency Response Fund. For 2012, the budget for child protection was $6.5 million, of which $6 million was funded.

At the time of the evaluation, the child protection section had a team of seven staff (three international, four national) covering both long-term work and child protection in emergencies. (For more discussion of staffing see section 3.4.) The CP section participates in numerous coordination forums that address child protection, including:

• The protection cluster, which comprises 34 members, mostly NGOs, and is led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with the Norwegian Refugee Council. The cluster functions at national and departmental levels where there are sufficient organizations addressing protection to justify coordination. The possibility of establishing a CP sub-cluster was discussed in 2011 but it has not been established yet.

49 UNICEF is the Cluster Lead of the Clusters of Education in Emergencies and WASH and the Co-Lead of the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster.
• The dialogue group on children and armed conflict, an informal group of stakeholders, mostly NGOs, that focuses mainly on rights and legal issues of children affected by the armed conflict.\(^{50}\) UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) are part of it.

• The task force on the MRM, co-chaired with the UN Resident Coordinator, which has about 10 members (UN agencies, national NGOs and the Ombudsman’s Office).

• The mine action sub-cluster of the early recovery cluster.

• The Interagency Gender Working Group and the Gender Working Group of the UN System and international cooperation agencies, which address gender violence and access to justice by women and girls.\(^{51}\) A GBV sub-cluster has not been established in view of the existence of the groups referenced.

In relation to governmental partners, UNICEF provides technical assistance to PAICMA and has a strategic alliance with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute/ICBF on protection programmes for children and adolescents. At provincial and municipal levels, UNICEF supports mayors’ offices in prevention of recruitment and mine action. Technical cooperation agreements exist with the Colombian Army and the National Police on internal training to strengthen capacity to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law, in conjunction with the University Sergio Arboleda.\(^{52}\)

The CPiE programme has a small number of NGO partners. In prevention of recruitment, operational partners are the Catholic Church and three NGOs.\(^{53}\) Seven NGO operational partners support MRE work, and the United Nations and ICRC are strategic partners.

\(^{50}\) OHCHR, COALICO, Humanidade Vigente, Mercy Corps, War Child, Defensoria del Pueblo, Canadá ACDI, Union Europea

\(^{51}\) UNICEF Colombia 3rd progress report to Canadian International Development Agency, Grant SC090361, June 2012

\(^{52}\) UNICEF Colombia Annual Report 2011

\(^{53}\) Fundacion Quiero, Cooperacion Infancia y Desarrollo, CEDAVIDA.
2. CASE STUDY SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Scope of the Case Study

The case study assesses work before, during and after conflict, ranging from preparedness planning to recovery, and the roles and linkages with regional and global partners. In terms of timing, the evaluation analysed progress towards intermediate results for child protection in emergencies over the period 2010-2012. The focus was on armed conflict more than disaster although some of the protection issues are influenced by disasters.

Globally, the adolescent age group is most vulnerable to protection risks in armed conflict (recruitment to armed groups, explosive remnants of war, GBV), so focus groups were aimed at children aged 10-14 and 15-18. However, data was collected on risks to all age groups. The time period covered in the case study is principally 2011/12.

The case study focuses on the following programme components within intermediate result 3:

- Prevention of recruitment and protection from violence in Putumayo, specifically on:
  - Contributions of government departments engaged in preventing recruitment and in child protection
  - The strategy of Golombiao
  - The contribution of the internados to child protection
- Mine action programming in Norte de Santander, including:
  - Mine risk education
  - Support to mine victims
  - Systems strengthening and coordination
- The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

2.2 Case Study Objectives and Questions

The case study objectives were to:

- Analyse specific programme components (prevention of recruitment/protective environments, mine action and the MRM) against the OECD-DAC criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, impact (where feasible) and sustainability; and against the CCCs, taking account of emergency preparedness, response and recovery phases;

- Identify key successes and gaps in child protection programming, coordination and advocacy based on evidence gathered, and provide recommendations for policy and management.

At the time of the field work, the Government of Colombia was engaged in peace talks with FARC-EP, so the following objective was added:

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54 http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/EAPRO_2001_AdultWars.pdf  UNICEF report indicating that the average age for recruitment is 12 – 14 years and 67% joining voluntarily.

See also for TACRO - Colombia with average age 12.7


See also for ESARO public domain statement indicating 14 – 18

http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5480_child_protection.html

55 UNICEF’s country office had prepared all field work (including documents, meetings, visits and interviews) to support research objectives a), b) and c). Since the issue regarding the possible effects of peace talks was not originally included in the ToRs of the evaluation or the preparation for the field visit, this subject was only considered by the evaluators in their own specific interviews with selected stakeholders.
• To analyse the protection of children and adolescents in the current context of peace talks specifically in relation to (a) a possible demobilization and reintegration process and (b) potential acts of violence perpetrated by the post-demobilization groups during a phase when changes could prompt violence to intensify.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

Following is a summary of the questions addressed in the case study (see annex 2 for the full version).

- **Long term or intermediate results** – What are the key results achieved in key phases of preparedness, emergency relief, response and recovery? What are the key measures to improve CP results in the context of emergencies?

- **Relevance / appropriateness** – What approaches and tools are used in situation analysis/needs assessments before, during and after the emergency? Is the information adequate for programme development, monitoring and evaluation? How explicit was programme design in relation to a theory of change (i.e. how change comes about)? How relevant and responsive are programmes/interventions to the needs of children and women? To what degree do CP interventions in preparedness, early response and recovery build on existing systems and mechanisms?

- **Effectiveness** – Relative to the CCCs, how systematically has UNICEF engaged with national government and other partners in child protection? Has UNICEF delivered on its commitments to preparedness planning? How effective is UNICEF’s CP response in various emergency contexts? Which strategies/interventions are most/least successful? To what extent have UNICEF programmes succeeded in developing national capacities at central and decentralized levels? How effective is UNICEF’s advocacy and communication strategy with respect to CPiE? To what extent have CP interventions provided an opportunity to strengthen systems for protecting children?

- **Efficiency** – To what extent do CP services meet quality standards? How adequate was the funding allocation across different phases? How were funds used across different strategies and interventions? What conclusions can be drawn on value for money? Is there any evidence of any innovation that contributed to the CP response?

- **Connectedness/coordination** – To what extent has UNICEF met its commitment to country-level coordination in various phases? How effectively has UNICEF’s child protection programme coordinated with other sectors, notably with education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition, early childhood development and HIV and AIDS during various phases?

- **Sustainability and scaling up** – How systematically and effectively have partnerships been mobilized to contribute to programme expansion and scale up in various phases of an emergency? Are there clear plans for scale-up and phase-out of CP programmes?

- **Cross-cutting issues** – How effectively have CP programmes integrated UNICEF’s commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women? Have the distinct needs, vulnerabilities and capabilities of girls and boys (including adolescents) been identified and addressed? To what extent are age- and sex-disaggregated data collected, monitored and analysed? To what degree have women, girls and boys participated in the design, delivery and monitoring of UNICEF interventions? How has the distinct impact of the complex emergency/natural disasters been taken into account in the design and implementation of CPiE
interventions? How relevant and adequate are data collection/management in M&E and use in policy and other decisions in emergency response?

2.3 Evaluation Methodology

**SAMPLING DESIGN**

The evaluation aimed to review programmes beginning with planning at national level through to implementation at departmental and municipal levels. The selection of sites was based on (a) accessibility, (b) departments where protection violations have been proven and were cited in the MRM report, (c) departments that have implemented some aspects of the National Policy for the Prevention of Recruitment to Illegal Armed Groups, (d) departments and municipalities where MRE and victim assistance have been implemented, and (e) departments where UNICEF has active partners that could mobilize focus groups.

The sites selected were as follows:

- Programme to Prevent Recruitment: National level and in the pilot department of Putumayo and the municipalities of Puerto Asis and Mócoa
- Mine Action Programme: National level and in the department of Norte de Santander and the Municipalities of Cúcuta and Tibú.

**Data Collection Methods, Tools and Sources of Data**

Four methods were used for data collection:

(a) Semi-structured interviews at central level in Bogotá, Putumayo and Norte de Santander with:

- UNICEF staff of child protection, education, child survival and development, and monitoring and evaluation, and field consultant in Putumayo. Two structured meetings were also held with the CP team and meetings took place with the Representative and Deputy Representative.
- Government officials of key institutions engaged with prevention of recruitment and protective environments in Putumayo (the Ombudsman, or Defensoría Pública); the department addressing compensation claims (Personeria); education at departmental and municipal levels; social development; Colombian Institute for Family Welfare; department addressing intra-family violence and links to social protection (Comissaria da Família) and those engaged in mine action programming
- Military forces engaged in child/human rights training (in Bogotá and Putumayo)
- UN agencies: UNHCR, OCHA, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Principal NGO implementing partners: Pastoral Social, CCCM
- ICRC, Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP-OAS)
- Sida, as the main donor to UNICEF’s CP programme.

(b) Semi-structured group discussions with:

- Dialogue group on children and armed conflict
- MRM task force
- UNICEF child protection team (two sessions)
- A group of teachers in Putumayo, as key informants on issues for children of all ages.

(c) Visits to project sites: For the prevention of recruitment programme, research assistants visited the schools while the international consultant focused on key informant interviews. For the mine action programme, the international consultant was able to observe the areas where the programme is being implemented (see table 2).

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List of Interviewees in Annex 2
Table 2: Project Sites Visited for Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Province visited</th>
<th>Municipalities visited</th>
<th>Project sites visited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of Recruitment</td>
<td>Putumayo</td>
<td>Puerto Asis, Mócoa</td>
<td>Puerto Asis: Boarding schools Villa Victoria and La Paila Valle del Guamez: Boarding schools Santa Rosa and Jordán Guisía School in city of Puerto Asis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mine Action</td>
<td>Norte de Santander</td>
<td>Cúcuta, Tibú</td>
<td>Municipality/district Tibu: Schools in Casco Urbano, Pacelli, Petrolea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Focus/activity groups: 22 focus group discussions were held with adolescents, women, teachers and community members. The focus group meetings had two principal objectives: (a) to identify programme participants’ priority child protection issues, as input to the analysis of the relevance of programmes, and (b) to identify which activities were most important to participants and what had changed in their lives as a result. Participants were also asked if they had any recommendations to strengthen protection in the future. In addition to getting answers to the evaluation questions, the aim was to capture the richness of the debate during meetings.

Measures were taken to ensure that focus group participants were selected on a random basis and that partners sought informed consent to participation (see annex 3). All focus group meetings were held in schools. In Putumayo, virtually all participants were playing Golombiao. The participants considered to be within the programme were boarders while the control group was in a school in the community. In Norte de Santander four of the groups were held with children who had attended MRE and four control groups with children who had not been exposed to MRE (see table 3).

In both locations, control group meetings were held with children in a similar school environment who had not participated in programmes, with the objective of assessing differences in risks identified and how they had been mitigated. To triangulate community information, teams of research assistants also met community leaders or parents in each location.

Table 3: Participants in Focus Group Discussions by Age Band and Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 10-14</th>
<th>Age 15-18</th>
<th>Teachers, community leaders</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS, PP</td>
<td>Put., PP</td>
<td>NS, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NS = Norte de Santander; Put = Putumayo; PP = programme participant; C = control group.

(e) Analysis of documentation: The main documents reviewed for this evaluation were (a) UNICEF reports (annual reports, progress reports to donors); (b) partner and NGO documentation (proposals and reports to UNICEF, plus other reports and research); (c) government documentation (national policies and reports); (d) UN reports (to the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, OHCHR reports); and (e) external evaluations of UNICEF-supported projects.
DATA ANALYSIS

The focus group data were analysed by grouping similar responses on protection risks and programme priorities in ranked order. A score was given to each ranking (5 for top ranking). Each score was multiplied by the frequency of citation and then percentages were calculated. The focus group data were also reviewed against type of respondent by age and gender. Finally, the comments were drawn out to enrich the data. The principal programme components were reviewed against the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (GPC, 2012) and the UNICEF MRE toolkit (2008). The semi-structured interview data were consolidated by theme and analysed against the evaluation questions and trends identified.

2.4 Evaluation Team and Reference Group

The team comprised two international evaluators and four research assistants, who were contracted in-country to conduct focus group discussions, two in Putumayo and two in Norte de Santander. An evaluation reference group was established at national level to support the evaluation by ensuring that the most relevant questions were addressed and that key informants were engaged in data collection. The reference group validated initial findings at the end of the visit and reviewed the draft report.

The visit to Colombia took place between 15 and 26 October 2012.

2.5 Limitations of the Evaluation

The country case study had three limitations: One, security issues forced a change from the original selection of Arauca department to Norte de Santander. However, the team was still able to conduct focus groups and interviews, and it was an area of strong MRE programming, so it was seen as equivalent.

Two, despite multiple efforts to follow up, it was not possible to meet with UNFPA and OHCHR.\(^5\) The team attempted to mitigate this gap by reviewing reports. Due to time constraints, it was also not possible to have a follow-up meeting after the initial meeting with the UNICEF child development and survival specialist.

Three, time limitations led the international evaluator to prioritize key informant interviews over participating in focus groups, limiting the capacity to triangulate responses from official government sources on the development of protective environments with those of community members.

\(^5\) OHCHR was part of the meeting of the Dialogue Group on Children and Armed Conflict, but the staff member representing the OHCHR in that meeting could not be met for a follow-up meeting.
3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance and Appropriateness of the Response

This section assesses the relevance and appropriateness of the programme, and any possible gaps, in relation to:

- Priority issues for children and adolescents, identified through focus groups and data
- The extent to which programmes were designed based on situation analyses, needs and capacity assessments and the adequacy of the information for programme development, monitoring and evaluation
- To what degree programmes were designed to build on existing child protection systems and mechanisms (through preparedness, early response and recovery)
- The global strategy and whether there is an explicit theory of change.

PRIORITY ISSUES FOR ADOLESCENTS, WOMEN AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

The protection issues identified by adolescents, women and community members in Putumayo and Norte de Santander are presented separately in this section, as the issues are different. Next is a review of data on the main protection issues, followed by conclusions on the relevance of the programme in relation to issues raised.

Box 1: Risks and Threats Expressed by Adolescents in Focus Groups in Putumayo*

What are the major threats and risks you have faced?
1. Armed conflict/fights between guerrilla and army
2. Illness, death of family member
3. Violence
4. Landmines
5. Forced displacement/misappropriation of land
6. Deforestation
7. Guerrilla/FARC
8. Loneliness and discrimination
9. Problems with teachers and student
10. Drugs
11. River and floods
12. Food, economic situation
13. Recruitment
14. Rights violation and rape by AG
15. Early pregnancy and abortion
16. Sexual abuse
17. Weapons
18. Disrespect
19. Lack of university access
20. Sadness, fears, doubts*

*Linked to landmines and ERW

Protection Issues in Putumayo

Adolescents in Putumayo ranked concerns about armed conflict in first, third and fourth places (see box 1). They referred to the military violating women, non-State armed groups recruiting children and violence, explosions, threats and minefields. One participant said, “When there is fighting we cannot go to school. Sometimes the way to school is too dangerous because of the guerilla presence and if the army is also present there will be fights.”

Girls aged 10-14 in Putumayo, in two groups, prioritized issues of family relations, studies and issues of hurtful rumours about children in the boarding schools. The conflict ranked in second place, but a participant in one group commented that “We are especially afraid of attempts to recruit girls and boys after armed strikes in this area.” Girls in the urban area talked about early pregnancy and drug use.

Of girls aged 15-18 years, two groups in Putumayo named the principal risks as the direct consequences of armed conflict, forced displacement and psychological trauma. One group prioritized indirect issues including family relations, loneliness, discrimination, rejection, sadness, doubts and fear. One girl expressed anxiety about pregnancy following rape and others talked about the possibility of family members dying, which could happen “any time”. Children’s concerns also included natural disasters, especially floods.
Two groups of boys aged 10-14 years prioritized fear of the river, including floods and contamination, together with the risks of direct violence through the armed conflict, including fear of landmines. They also talked about the sexual abuse of women and general abuse of children. One group of boys aged 15-18 in Putumayo prioritized the ‘limpieza social’ (literally, social cleansing), which refers to selective assassination of young people considered to be a problem by society due to drug use or theft. They ranked fear of the guerrilla movements in second place. In joint first place they referred to anxiety about HIV/AIDS and argued that much greater investment in awareness-raising is needed. Several groups talked about the shortage of adequate food and problems of water and energy. There were no significant differences in the perception of risks between the group of children who had participated in Golombiao and the comparison group.

Relevance of project intervention

Putumayo has been suffering from the presence of illegal armed groups, especially FARC, for more than three decades. Illegal coca cultivation, the international border and the presence of natural resources contribute to ongoing disputes that affect the lives of civilians, including children. The population of Putumayo is constantly exposed to risk of forced displacement and high rates of homicide, sexual violence and abuse. Land mine accidents are frequent, and landmine contamination is a serious concern since non-State armed groups lay mines to deter coca eradication programmes and deter military operations. As a result several communities face severe mobility restrictions and lack access to assistance and basic services.

The state has given priority to the military over socio-economic development, and programmes for children and adolescents in the department are almost nonexistent. Hardest hit is lower Putumayo (Puerto Asis, Orito, San Miguel, Guamez Valley). Child recruitment is also significant, with 60 cases reported between 2010 and 2012. The UNICEF CP programme appropriately selected this department for interventions to strengthen the protective environment for children and for specific interventions to protect children from recruitment.

Protection Issues in Norte de Santander

Adolescents in Norte de Santander participated in the UNICEF-supported MRE initiative, implemented by CCCM. Out of eight focus group discussions with adolescents, six were held with adolescents who had

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58 “Ficha de Proyecto, Pastoral Social Mocoa”, 2/2/2012, Apoyo a la construcción de entornos protectores en el Departamento del Putumayo como estrategia para la prevención de la vinculación y uso de niños, niñas y adolescentes al conflicto armado y los efectos de la desnutrición y la falta de acceso a servicios, con énfasis en población indígena
59 According to Social Action Department, from 1998 to March 31, 2011, reported 146 514 people were expelled, of which 59,394, i.e., 40% were children and adolescents.
60 National Institutional Forensic Legal Medicine, the Human Rights Observatory of the Vice President of the Republic
61 According to figures from PAICMA, from 1990 to July 2011 there have been a total of 245 victims.

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participated in the MRE programme and two were control groups, with children living in the same areas and attending the same schools as the programme participants. The priority issue for all children in Norte de Santander was mines and explosives (see box 2). Their feedback on the MRE programme was very positive, and the appropriateness of the programme was reaffirmed as they reported that risks are constant in their close environment. “Yes, the programme has helped, but we need more prevention activities since the risks are getting bigger every day,” one participant said.

Children were especially concerned about mines and explosives, armed conflict and clashes between the military and non-State armed groups. Children in one of the villages where the focus groups discussions were held described experiencing this level of conflict every weekend. They were worried that explosives could hit the petrol tank, placed in the midst of their village, and that consequently the whole village would explode. They were still experiencing anxiety as a result of a recent attack against the police station, which is only a few hundred metres from their school. Comments included: “I am afraid of the presence of the army in the village…. there was an attack against the police station and the army is too close to my home…..our school is near the combat area ….. the army roaming the village is a risk for us, to be hurt by a bullet in the middle of the combat, or explosive cylinders hitting the oil tank”.

The focus group participants and the school principal informed the team that landmines are frequently found around their school. Mines and explosives were also ranked as the highest threat by adolescents who had not participated in MRE. Children are afraid of losing an arm or a leg or of dying in an explosion. They worry about going off the main roads and generally do not feel safe on minor roads and paths. Children also worry about being recruited by non-State armed groups, about sexual violence and abuse in their homes, and about recurrent flooding and the potential loss of their homes. Boys and girls across the age groups, in both locations in Norte de Santander, worry most about landmines, bombs and combat. Even though girls fear recruitment, boys ranked it higher, whereas sexual abuse and rape were a concern only girls raised. Natural disaster was mentioned as a threat in one of the two locations.

According to adults from both Putumayo and Norte de Santander, the main risks for children under 5 included a shortage of early childhood development possibilities, a lack of parenting skills (especially among fathers), abuse of children and leaving children alone or unattended and at risk of attack by animals, drowning in the river or sexual abuse. For children aged 6-10, adults mentioned sexual abuse as a risk, resulting from children being left unattended and from a lack of legal consequences and impunity for perpetrators. Malnutrition and orphanhood were also mentioned. There were no significant differences in the perception of risks between the group of children that had participated in MRE and the control group.

From the adult perspective, the major risk for boys aged 11-18 was being enticed into working on illicit plantations and getting involved in drug use, and consequently dropping out of school. For girls that age early pregnancy and sexual exploitation were referenced. Focus group participants claimed that girls engage in sex in exchange for clothes, cell phones and money, due to poverty. The lack of affection and abandonment by parents as well as a lack of prospects due to limited educational possibilities were considered to be key factors. In turn, poor parental care was considered to be due to parents’ own lack of hope, limited economic prospects and use of drugs and alcohol. Domestic violence and discrimination against girls were also raised.

Relevance of project intervention

Norte de Santander, bordered by Venezuela to the east and north, has become a new centre of Colombia’s civil conflict with FARC, given the presence of illegal armed groups. Their presence is explained by the coca cultivation in the area, the minimal control of the State and its proximity to Venezuela, now the principal transit nation for cocaine heading to the US and Europe. This region also

63 This is clearly only a superficial comparison and a full knowledge, attitude and practice survey on MRE is underway.
has some of the main resources in the country (oil, gold, coltan, coal). Task Force Vulcan of the Colombian army, with 7,000 troops, is now engaged in nearly daily combat. Violence is increasing, putting communities in the midst of the conflict. According to the national database Norte de Santander is one of the most mine-affected departments. UNICEF appropriately included it in the mine action programme.

PROGRAMME RESPONSE ON ISSUES RAISED

The data are organized according to the grave violations listed in the MRM, followed by conclusions on the relevance of CP programmes.

Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers

Evidence shows that recruitment of children into armed groups is widespread and systematic, the age of recruitment is falling and the experiences of recruited children remain extremely violent. Although no reliable statistics exist, estimates of children with armed groups and paramilitaries range from 5,000 to 14,000 children. Cases have been verified through the MRM in 23 of the country’s 32 departments.

In a 2006 study by the Ombudsperson’s Office and UNICEF of 350 released or escaped children, the average age of recruitment had fallen to 12.8 years, a decrease of one year from the average age found in a similar study carried out in 2001. There are subsequent claims that the age may have fallen further to 11.8 years. Both girls and boys are recruited; the 2006 study estimated that 27% are girls. Around 80% of recruited children are enticed to join the armed groups; there was a consensus among interviewees that very few children are abducted. Social and economic conditions are viewed as the root causes, and children from rural areas and indigenous and Afro-Colombian families are especially vulnerable to recruitment. Boys stated that their “attraction to weapons” was the most important reason for joining the groups, while girls referred to ill-treatment at home. Once part of the armed groups, children were found to stay for an average of over two years. While guerilla groups tend to recruit children

65 www.the-monitor.org
66 Excluding the abduction of children, which is not directly targeted by the CPIE Programme.
68 Caracterización de niños, niñas y adolescentes desvinculados de los grupos armados ilegales: Inserción social y productiva desde un enfoque de derechos humanos. Defensoría del Pueblo and UNICEF. Bogotá, Colombia, November, 2006
70 Ibid
73 Ibid
74 Ibid
75 Some 27% of children separated from illegal armed groups were girls.
mainly in rural areas, other non-State armed groups do so mostly in urban settings. In terms of the use of children by armed forces, reports cite incidents of Colombian military personnel using children for intelligence purposes and involving children in civil-military campaigns and similar activities.

**Killing and Maiming of Children**

In 2010, 31 of 32 departments were affected by landmines and ERW casualties. Between January and December 2012, 69 children were victims of landmines, making up 13% of the victims, an increase compared to 44 children in 2011. Overall, children made up almost 10% of the 10,160 mine victims between 1990 and December 2012. Of these 992 children, 77% were boys and 22% were girls. Children have also been casualties during massacres and in combat between Colombian military forces and non-State armed groups.

**Attacks on Schools or Hospitals**

Schools are frequently targeted during confrontations. They are damaged and used by the army and non-State armed groups as shelters. Non-State armed groups have also attacked teachers, causing fear and dropout among students. Respondents in interviews stated that armed groups as well as the Colombian military forces use schools to stay overnight and/or to rest and recharge their telephones.

**Rape and Sexual Violence**

Evidence from the Institute of Forensic Medicine demonstrates that the extent of sexual violence is rising and that a growing percentage of survivors is under 18. According to its statistics, use of medical services by survivors of sexual violence have increased from 14,421 cases in 2002 to 22,597 cases in 2011. Of these, 94% of male cases were boys and 85% of female cases were girls. More than three quarters of perpetrators (77%) are known to the survivor (family member, friend, partner). Only 109 cases were reportedly related to armed conflict. These statistics are thought to represent significant under-reporting; the true incidence of sexual violence is likely much higher. A prevalence survey of 2,693 women across 407 municipalities in 2010 by the Corporacion Casa de la Mujer and Oxfam found that 3.4% of the female population aged 15 to 44 had been raped between 2001 and 2009. This extrapolates to an estimate of

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78 Civil-military campaigns/operations are activities of a military force to minimize civil interference and maximize support to military operations; e.g. soldiers dressing up as clowns to attract children, portraying to children the army, soldier life and battle as something positive, desirable, engaging children in military/battle “games”, etc.


80 Explosive remnants of war.

81 www.accioncontraminas.gov.co

82 The most affected Departments are Antioquia, Meta, Caquetá, Norte de Santander and Narino; www.accioncontraminas.gov.co


84 Ibid, p 10

85 National Institute for Legal Medicine and Forensic Science, [www.medicinalegal.gov.co](http://www.medicinalegal.gov.co)

95,000 women raped in surveyed conflict-affected areas over that period.\textsuperscript{87} The reasons for under-reporting are both fear of repercussions from perpetrators and lack of confidence in the justice system.\textsuperscript{88} In contrast to the statistics on sexual violence overall, a much lower percentage of the rape cases (about 25\%) concerned minors.\textsuperscript{89}

Sexual violence is also systematic against children within the non-State armed groups. The 2006 study on children released from non-State armed groups\textsuperscript{90} reported that two thirds of the girls interviewed had had their first experience of sexual intercourse before the age of 14.\textsuperscript{91} Of 93 interviewed children who had stated that they were pregnant or knew that one of their partners had been pregnant, 29 said that they had lost one of their children before birth.

**Denial of Humanitarian Access**

According to the Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia of 2012, “restrictions on humanitarian access due to non-State armed group activity, the presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance, and ongoing hostilities continued to have a negative impact on the delivery of humanitarian assistance and access to basic services”.\textsuperscript{92} Denial of humanitarian access is an issue, in addition to denial of access to essential services as a result of displacement, confinement and paros armados, or armed strikes, referenced by many children in Putumayo. These situations affect much of the displaced population. Since 1996 the Government has registered 3.7 million internally displaced people. An average of 200,000 people are newly displaced every year due to conflict and violence,\textsuperscript{93} and 51\% are children.\textsuperscript{94}

**CONCLUSIONS ON PROGRAMME RELEVANCE RELATIVE TO ISSUES RAISED**

The programme’s central focus on prevention of recruitment is highly relevant, as is the focus on mine action. More specifically:

(a) Relevant aspects of the prevention of recruitment programme:

- The focus on psychosocial efforts to prevent recruitment, given that adolescents suffer from uncertainties about their educational and professional future due to the armed conflict and a lack of self-confidence that they can overcome the situation, which can lead them to join illegal armed groups. The relevance of this component is reinforced by the fact that, after participating in extra-curricular activities aimed at strengthening life skills, the majority of boys and girls reject violence and illegality, despite the context of conflict and insecurity.

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\textsuperscript{87} A third of survivors were aged 15 to 24 years. While 46\% of perpetrators were family members, 31\% of violations were committed by an unknown person. 82\% of female survivors never reported the incident, and almost 74\% identified the presence of armed actors as an obstacles to doing so.

\textsuperscript{88} Between April 2008 and September 2010, there were only four convictions in the 183 cases that the Constitutional Court requested the Attorney General to investigate.


\textsuperscript{90} Caracterización de niños, niñas y adolescentes desvinculados de los grupos armados ilegales: Inserción social y productiva desde un enfoque de derechos humanos. Defensoría del Pueblo and UNICEF. Bogotá, Colombia, November, 2006.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, p 168

\textsuperscript{92} Particularly affected Departments are Antioquia, Arauca, Cauca, Caquetá, Chocó, Guaviare, Huila, Meta, Córdoba, Nariño and Norte de Santander.

\textsuperscript{93} www.ocha.where-we-work/colombia

\textsuperscript{94} Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2011, Global Overview, Geneva, IDMC and Norwegian Refugee Council.
• Efforts to reach confined populations, given the degree of frustration and additional psychosocial risks to children in those areas.

• Equal emphasis on girls and boys, given that both are vulnerable to recruitment.

(b) Relevance of the mine action programme, in view of the scale of child casualties from landmine incidents.

(c) Relevance of the programme to train the military forces and police on children’s rights to protection, given the need for protection from zones of combat and from use of children to provide security information, and the occupation of schools. The importance of this aspect was endorsed by the feedback from children in focus group discussions.

However, the following caveats were identified in relation to:

(a) Gender-based violence was addressed within efforts to promote a protective environment through the role of the Comisaria de Familia, which is responsible for responding to sexual and domestic violence. UNICEF is part of the Gender Working Group addressing GBV, including girls’ access to justice, and of the national team for resolution 1820 (on sexual violence as a tool of war). However, given the scale of GBV, there needs to be much greater emphasis on this issue, especially in relation to children.

(b) The programme for prevention of recruitment through protective environment is predicated on strengthening the role of each government department in relation to children affected by the armed conflict and on promoting linkages with the community. However, there is a major issue concerning the extent to which State services actually reach the areas most affected by the armed conflict (see section 3.2).

(c) Given the finding that the age of recruitment is falling, this should be considered in the design of projects, including Golombiao (see section 3.2).

(d) Given the fact that many children join the illegal armed groups due to a lack of educational and professional opportunities and socioeconomic difficulties, it is a concern that the programme does not include economic interventions such as vocational training and educational grants and bursaries for adolescents.

(e) The focus group participants described the extent of stress on families and caregivers caused by the armed conflict, a situation that limits their capacity to protect their own children. Retorno a la Alegria and ICBF include family strengthening initiatives, but this area requires further analysis to determine if the existing programmes are strong enough to adequately support families.

CONCLUSIONS ON PROGRAMME RELEVANCE RELATIVE TO THE CHILD PROTECTION STRATEGY

The principal question is whether there was a clear theory of change for the CPIE programme (i.e. how change happens) and whether it was aligned to the global CP strategic framework in terms of protecting children in emergencies.

Though there is no clear theory of change underpinning the programme, the programme logic is evident. It is based on the assumption that child protection will be enhanced in the context of armed conflict when state systems are strengthened (in terms of protective legislation and policies and institutional capacity-building at central and decentralized levels) and links are formed with less formal non-State and community-based systems, together with efforts to build the resilience and self-confidence of children. While this logic is appropriate and in harmony with the global strategy, it has not been elaborated in an explicit form that also considers how to effectively protect children in a context of confinement and limited state presence.
The UNICEF child protection section has used the CCCs to plan activities. During the field visit to Putumayo, the evaluator could verify that the CCCs were very much in evidence as a reference tool for CPIE, and many of the preparedness actions had been addressed. More specifically, all the CCCs had been addressed directly within the CPIE programme with the exception of CCC 1 (‘effective leadership is established for both the child protection and GBV cluster areas of responsibility with links to other cluster/sector coordination mechanism on critical inter sectoral issues. Support is provided for the establishment of a mental health and psychosocial support coordination mechanism.’) In relation to CCC 4 on separated children, there was no evidence that the type of conflict or disaster had prompted separation.

Situation Analysis, Needs and Capacity Assessments

There have been no comprehensive assessments of child protection, but project cooperation agreements demonstrate that local situation analysis, needs and capacity assessments are considered in project design by implementing partners and that the CP programme supports projects based on evidence presented in project cooperation agreements and provided in government data. Overall, the CP programme is based on government-collected data and evidence-based studies. The Government is coherently collecting data in several areas and it is published on websites, providing systematic data on landmine incidents, incidence of sexual violence and human rights violations, including recruitment to illegal armed groups (the Observatory of the Vice Presidency on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law). All that data informs the development and adaptation of the CP programme. The MRM also provides crucial information informing the programme and advocacy priorities. Yet despite the government’s national data collection mechanism, big gaps in data exist concerning remote and confined geographical areas.

Evaluations on the programmes Retorno a la Alegria, Prevention of Recruitment and Colombiao were carried out in recent years. It is not clear if the results of these evaluations were used to adapt programme approaches. At the time of the evaluation visit, a knowledge, attitudes and practices study was soon to begin in communities affected by landmines and ERW.

Extent of Building on Existing Systems and Mechanisms

The UNICEF child protection programme has engaged closely and effectively with government structures at national and decentralized level, especially with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), National Army, National Police, Office of the Vice President of the Republic, PAICMA, Presidential Programme Colombia-Joven and Inter-sectoral Commission for the Prevention of Recruitment.

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97 Informe De Evaluación, Proyecto, “Evaluación de la metodología Retorno a la Alegria como estrategia de recuperación psicosocial y como componente de la estrategia de prevención de la vinculación de los niños, niñas y adolescentes a los grupos armados ilegales”, Oscar Solano Forero, Consultoría contratada en la ciudad de Bogotá D.C., Colombia, directamente por el Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia, UNICEF, Abril de 2009
100 One recommendation from the “Golombiao” evaluation was to improve monitoring. There was no evidence that this recommendation was followed up.
3.2 Programme Outcomes

This section assesses programme outcomes or achievements in protecting children against the objectives established in intermediate result 3: “In December 2013 children, families, communities and institutions in zones most affected by the armed conflict will have reinforced their capacities to protect children and adolescents from the effects of the armed conflict and provide victims with the necessary integrated care according to national and international law.” It is structured around the three programme elements the evaluation considered:

(a) Prevention of recruitment (with a focus on Entornos Protectores)
(b) Mine action (with a focus on MRE)
(c) Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

PREVENTION OF RECRUITMENT

Technical Assistance for Implementation of the Policy to Prevent Recruitment

UNICEF has achieved strong results in supporting the development of municipal-level action plans for implementation of the National Policy to Prevent Recruitment. By March 2012, 37 municipalities in 6 departments had action plans within the framework of CONPES 3673,\(^{101}\) exceeding the target by 23%.\(^{102}\)

The plans include roadmaps for prevention of recruitment using alerts on recruitment attempts through the Defensoría Pública (Ombudsman) early warning (SAT) system.\(^{103}\) Based on information received, the system launches an alert that recruitment attempts are being made in a specific municipality and should trigger a response to prevent recruitment by all sectors, including education, health and well-being, food security, cultural and sports programmes. Between 2011 and September 2012, 72 warnings had been issued covering 138 municipalities in 20 of the country’s 32 departments.\(^{104}\)

The case study found that while it is possible to reduce the risk of recruitment by the rapid alert system and a strong State presence during the risk period, the real challenge is to increase State presence as a permanent measure.

In Putumayo, UNICEF had supported the development of the departmental plan to prevent recruitment; no municipal level plans had yet been established. The departmental plan specifies the roles and responsibilities of each sector and of some civil society organizations. UNICEF’s role has been to ensure that all sectors are fully aware of the plan and motivated to mobilize rapidly in the case of alerts issued by the Ombudsman’s Office. The one UNICEF consultant based in Putumayo has been extremely active in mobilizing sectors around the plans, articulating how each role could be framed more effectively to prevent recruitment without being an additional burden and how sectors can interact. It was evident in interviews across all sectors (education, ombudsman, social welfare, family commission, social development) that they were aware of their roles and that UNICEF’s drive and mobilization were appreciated. A representative of the education sector in one municipality commented that “the support between all agencies to prevent recruitment has been excellent … we have had training on how to face the situation and on ways of dealing with communications to prevent recruitment”.

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\(^{101}\) Meta, Boyacá, Narino, Choco, Bolivar, Cauca
\(^{102}\) UNICEF Results Framework, CP3 Tabla Indicadores Final
\(^{103}\) Sistema de Alertas Temprana (Early Warning System) in which the Ombudsman’s Office uses any reliable information on violations against citizen’s human rights in the armed conflict to launch an alert to other sectors and ensure a speedy response to risks.
In practical terms, some effective action had been achieved. For example, in July 2012, in Putumayo, UNICEF and government colleagues received information that FARC-EP had announced plans to draft children into their ranks through a local census. The Personaria, education sector and ICBF (family/social welfare) were mobilized to visit the area jointly and meet with the community on how to prevent recruitment and gain access to services. The show of institutional presence caused FARC-EP to back down and later to deny the claim of attempted recruitment. No children were taken on that occasion, and it was clear from all actors interviewed that a visible institutional presence reduced the risk.

However, the challenge is to strengthen the presence of the State permanently, and this is clearly much more difficult to achieve. Most sectors interviewed recognized that they lacked resources or sufficient security to work in many of the areas most vulnerable to recruitment. Some departments noted that people feel abandoned by the State. A representative of schools in the interior observed that “UNICEF and Pastoral Social are always with us … they were the first to respond after the floods … but not the State”.

There are also challenges regarding the extent to which the plans are financed. Some government interviewees from different sectors argued that co-financing projects through mayors' offices would be the most effective option, while others felt that private funding from the extractive industries presented an opportunity. Overall, the main issue appears to be the extent of political commitment to extending State services and reducing inequalities.

Finally, the State and non-State actors participating in the plans tend to focus on psychosocial rather than economic interventions, despite the fact that unemployment is a major issue. The inclusion of vocational training in plans through the government agency SENA could be a valuable addition to current work.

**Capacity-building to Prevent Recruitment**

The UNICEF Colombia child protection programme has been applying a prevention model based on strengthening institutions and community capacity to reduce the risk factors that lead to recruitment of children. The work is carried out through prevention projects implemented by local partners with technical and financial support from UNICEF and the involvement of the public institutions present in the territory. This case study looks into two components of UNICEF’s direct work with children and families to build capacity for prevention of recruitment: (a) psychosocial interventions through Colombiao and Retorno a la Alegria and (b) material support to dormitories in schools/internados. In addition are hogares familiares, foster homes for children released from illegal armed groups who cannot live with families, which are implemented by ICBF with UNICEF support.

These interventions reached a high percentage of targeted beneficiaries. By March 2012, 13% (48,203) of all children aged 12 to 17 in the prioritized municipalities had been reached, which corresponds to 87% of the targeted result. Both Colombiao and Retorno a la Alegria also strengthened the capacities of families and community members to protect children. Between June 2011 and April 2012, 150 parents, 2,000 community members, 68 public officials and 99 members of the police were reached through parenting education, community cultural events and training.

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105 UNICEF Colombia Progress Report to Sida, “Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Violence in Colombia”, July 2011 – August 2012
106 UNICEF Results Matrix, CP3 Tabla Indicadores Final
107 UNICEF Colombia CP Indicator Table. In 2011, 23,461 girls and 26,673 boys between 12 and 17 years from the areas most affected by recruitment of children in Antioquia, Chocó, Cundinamarca, Bogotá, Nariño and Putumayo participated in the process to build protective environments against the armed conflict. Out of these, fifteen thousand also participated in “Colombiao”, UNICEF Colombia Annual Report, 2011
The remainder of the section focuses on outcomes from the largest scale interventions, Golombiao and support to internados.

**Golombiao**

Golombiao was found to have made impressive achievements in terms of influencing the perceptions of adolescents and youth on peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution, gender relations, leadership capacities and family relations. However, Golombiao does not focus directly on prevention of recruitment or on the municipalities prioritized by the Commission for the Prevention of Recruitment, though this was recommended in an evaluation in 2010. Further, the average age of participants is 13-18, while the average age for recruitment has fallen to 11-12 years.

These findings draw on evidence from the 2010 evaluation, which included interviews and participatory ranking exercises with 234 Golombiao respondents. Participants reported on aspects of their lives that had changed before and after participation in Golombiao. The most significant changes were found in family relations, peaceful resolution of problems, relationships with people of the opposite sex, focusing time on studies, engagement in what happens at municipal level and developing friendships, self-esteem and a positive outlook. However, in relation to the goal of ‘keeping myself away from gangs and armed groups’ the change had been relatively low.

The case study found similar results through focus groups and interviews. Golombiao is highly valued by girls and boys who participate and by parents and by the sectors engaged in preventing recruitment. In focus groups, adolescents identified many useful lessons learned, including respect for others, gender equality and the importance of dialogue in the resolution of problems. Overall, they felt that participation in Golombiao had given them a more positive outlook for the future. Particular reference was made by both girls and boys to the way in which it challenges gender stereotypes: “Boys are less machisto now”.

It was evident that Golombiao is extremely important as a form of psychological release and self-expression for girls and boys living in internados and confined areas. These benefits are closely aligned to the CCCs for psychosocial support, serving as an important component of the prevention of recruitment programme even if it is difficult to prove a direct linkage.

With UNICEF support, 7 departments and 54 municipalities have been prioritized for implementation of Golombiao (see annex 5). However, only 18 of the 54 are municipalities prioritized in the national policy for prevention of recruitment (CONPES 3673, annex 5). Further, the list agreed with Colombia Joven for implementation of Golombiao did not include municipalities in Putumayo, although that department is the pilot for the prevention of recruitment strategy. The 2010 evaluation of Golombiao recommended alignment of municipalities with the national strategy, so it is disappointing that this has not taken place.

A similar issue arose concerning UNICEF priorities. In 2012, UNICEF developed a strategy for the country programme that focuses on 50 municipalities in 10 departments. But of the 54 municipalities prioritized for implementation of Golombiao, only 10 correspond to UNICEF’s 50 priority municipalities, and 5 departments prioritized by UNICEF are not represented.

The municipalities selected for Golombiao may be the most appropriate, possibly in view of changing scenarios in terms of the risk of recruitment, or there may have been a decision to share the load with co-

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109 According to the experience of CEDA VIDA, member of the Advisory Group and a UNICEF implementing partner, in the process of Opportunities for Peace, actions that allowed to strengthen psychosocial and cultural conditions of children and adolescents, their families and schools, did achieve a reduction of vulnerability of children and adolescents against illegal armed groups in Ciudad Bolivar in Bogota over the past years.

110 Puentes et al. 2010, “Evaluacion multi proyecto para la prevencion de la vinculación de ninos, ninas y adolescentes a grupos armados ilegales y la atencion de ninos, ninas y adolescentes desvinculados de los grupos armados ilegales “. Enero 2006 a Marzo 2010, Bogotá, UNICEF.

111 Amazonía, Arauca, Chocó, Cauca, and Putumayo.
funder GIZ in that way. However it is important to justify the selection. Based on a recent review of the selection of departments and municipalities by Colombia Joven and UNICEF, two of the seven prioritized departments, Nariño and Córdoba, were felt to be at special risk of recruitment, and there were also indications of armed actors in Antioquia.

Golombiao focuses on young people aged 14-25, as required by the Presidential Programme of Colombia Joven. However, the age of recruitment, which is falling, is now around 11 years, while the majority of Golombiao participants are aged 13 to 18. It is important to reach younger children through Golombiao. This has taken place, for example in Cartagena, where the game was adapted for children aged 8 to 12, using more visualization of images representing values. This is important in the context of preventing recruitment, and how to reach younger children is an aspect that requires further review.

Finally, Colombia Joven is aware that the monitoring system could be strengthened to provide more detailed data for planning and evaluation. Specifically, the programme would benefit from more effective process indicators to assess whether the most appropriate groups are being reached, whether they remain in the programme for a sufficient period of time, whether they are addressing useful topics in the off-pitch activities etc. as well as outcome indicators, reviewing what has changed for young participants during Golombiao and over time.

Internados

The boarding houses at schools function as part of the protective environment. Their construction and rehabilitation is part of the Putumayo departmental development plan for 2012-2015, and UNICEF has supported Pastoral Social to rehabilitate 24 of the 62 internados in Putumayo. There is considerable demand for places, with many children obliged to sleep two to a bed, and places are prioritized for children from remote areas, some of whom live three to four hours from school. Pastoral Social and the Education Department believe the internados programme has reduced the risk of exposure to landmines and the risk of recruitment.

The project also worked to build capacity among children and involve communities and municipal authorities in efforts to prevent recruitment through Golombiao. UNICEF’s material support (mattresses, bunk beds etc.) has been essential for their functioning, since many of the boarding houses are poorly equipped and dependent on external support. According to the education officer in Valle del Guámez, demand for internados exceeds supply, and most children are in them because of lack of schooling in their area, rather than poverty. Focus group discussions showed that children in institutions were struggling with feelings of loneliness and discrimination and face issues with other students and teachers.

Technical Assistance to the Military on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law

UNICEF cooperation with the Colombian Army and National Police for technical assistance on training has been successful. Since 2009 this assistance has been provided in partnership with the University of Sergio Arboleda. It works to raise awareness of human rights and humanitarian law applicable to children in situations of armed conflict for officers of the armed forces. The training material developed by the University of Sergio Arboleda with UNICEF support is excellent and the reach of the training has been extensive:

114 Ibid
115 Information from UNICEF consultant in Putumayo.
116 No views on Golombiao and/or Retorno a la Alegria were expressed by parents in focus group discussions.
117 Loneliness was also raised as a major issues of children in one FG held with children not in Internados.
In 2010 UNICEF supported the training of 6,854 members of the armed forces on child protection. A total of 120 high-ranking army officers undertook a diploma course on international human rights and humanitarian law, with an emphasis on children. Six hundred military instructors from 10 military instruction and training battalions were trained as trainers of trainers.

In 2011, 994 army instructors from 11 military instruction and training battalions were trained in international human rights law applicable to children. They in turn have raised awareness among 58,689 officers and soldiers. In addition, 250 high-ranking officers from the army and police have specialized in child rights and international humanitarian law. Forty police officers have been trained as trainers in child rights, and 2,419 members of the National Police have been trained in child rights.

According to military officials, 246,000 personnel have been reached in total. The process of strengthening the law enforcement institutions contributed to fulfilling the recommendations from the Secretary-General in his 2012 report on children and armed conflict in Colombia.

The training has brought about major changes in the military’s attitudes towards children, creating recognition that children who have left illegal armed groups need assistance and should not be treated as delinquents. A representative reported that violations by the military were reduced by 50% from 2009, when the training started, and in the case of children only minimal violations were reported. The military sees itself as part of the strategy to prevent recruitment. “We try to prevent armed actors having access to children and provide support to the police,” this person reported.

According to before-and-after surveys among 145 participants from the armed forces in 2011, perceptions and knowledge on children’s rights had changed (see table 4).118

![Table 4: Perceptions of Child Rights among Military Personnel Trained in Child Rights](image)

![Source: Final report of UNICEF consultant, December 2011](image)

Regarding complaints related to human rights and international humanitarian law, the 2011 annual report of the National Army shows a reduction from 179 to 136 complaints between 2010 and 2011. A UNICEF staff member in Putumayo stated that he had not heard of the military forces having detained any of the children who escaped from illegal armed groups; instead they had been referred directly to ICBF. However, the Secretary-General’s report on children and armed conflict in Colombia covering the period from January 2009 to August 2011 notes that the military continued to use children for intelligence purposes and kept them for lengthy illegal interrogations. The report, as well as a report of COALICO120 and several of the interviewees, also alleges the Colombian army for attempts of militarisation and for civil military campaigns. There are concerns include that the positive image the army presents of itself and the

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118 UNICEF Colombia, “Protection of Children Affected By Armed Conflict And Violence In Colombia”, Project Funded by the Government of Sweden, Progress Report, July 2011 – April 2012
119 Ibid
120 Informe alterno al informe del Estado Colombiano sobre el cumplimiento del Protocolo Facultativo Relativo a la Participación de Niños en los Conflictos Armados”, 2009
appeal of ‘life in combat’ may make military life seem attractive to children and trigger the idea of joining an armed group.

MINE ACTION

Strengthening Capacities to Prevent ERW Accidents

UNICEF has been conscientious about ensuring that mine action programming targets diverse issues, recognizing that the presence of landmines in communities limits the daily activities of the whole community and affects school attendance and children’s mental health.

UNICEF support[121] to CCCM’s MRE had good outreach in the departments of Arauca, Meta, Norte de Santander, Cordoba and Putumayo, successfully involving teachers, parents, community members and children. In 2010, 803 teachers were trained as ‘multipliers’ (community mobilizers), and 10,781 children and 3,894 parents participated in MRE activities. Training was provided to 115 doctors who treat landmine victims.[122] By the end of 2011, 26,475 children and 8,813 parents had benefitted from MRE, 75% of them in rural areas, amounting to 81% of the 2012 target. In addition 950 teachers were trained as trainers.

Adolescents in focus groups said that MRE has taught them safe behaviour, how to recognize the risks in their environment and how to prevent accidents. They showed accurate knowledge and were explicit about mine risks. Many claimed that it was the community that helped them to understand the risks and adapt their behaviour and that the programme has helped them to prevent accidents but they also wanted more prevention activities. “We put in practice the messages we received, but there are some risks we cannot avoid,” one participant said.

Between January and November 2011, 152 people were victims of mine accidents, of which UNICEF assisted 19. UNICEF also assisted 42 victims who had suffered accidents in 2010, 23% of the total. An additional 73 people were assisted for previous accidents and are in rehabilitation. In total, UNICEF assisted 134 victims with access to services.

UNICEF is still working to improve its strategy to ensure that landmine victims can realize their rights and receive compensation according to Law 1448. The law is relatively new and not yet known either to the majority of the people or those who should implement it. This makes it difficult for victims to realize their rights to assistance, necessitating a coordinated strategy with other actors. So far UNICEF has reached some of the desired outcomes in this area by working through CCCM. However, to guarantee long-lasting and systematic victims’ assistance, UNICEF recognizes that the responsible state agencies have to comply with their responsibilities, so UNICEF’s efforts have been focused on supporting strengthening of systems and coordination at departmental and municipal level. Additionally, UNICEF provides advice and support to victims for travel expenses, food and lodging. These items are not covered by existing legislation but are required to ensure comprehensive rehabilitation. With UNICEF support, CCCM worked closely with victims’ units at departmental level. This has resulted in an agreement with the department of Norte de Santander and the municipality of Tibu to incorporate mine action activities, including budgetary commitments, into departmental and municipal plans.

Technical Assistance in Drafting MRE Guidelines

A main outcome of UNICEF’s technical assistance to PAICMA is drafting of the national guidelines on MRE, with which all organizations involved in MRE have to comply, and the national plan. UNICEF also developed didactic material on mine awareness, which is highly appreciated by partners and adolescents. PAICMA and various NGOs recommended it be replicated and disseminated still more widely. UNICEF also assisted PAICMA in strengthening the mine action system and its coordination through

[121] Since 2010
[122] UNICEF Colombia Annual Report 2010
establishment of departmental mine action focal points and strengthening of collaboration among actors. In 2011, four departments strengthened their capacities on integrated action against landmines. UNICEF also assisted PAICMA technically in regulating the humanitarian demining process within the framework of the United Nations Mine Action Team, composed of UNICEF, United Nations Mine Action Service, OCHA and UNDP, by analysing the draft of national standards on humanitarian demining. UNICEF also participated, together with other UN agencies, in the regulation of Law 1448, seeking to ensure differential and specific care to child victims of landmines and armed conflict and political violence in general.

Implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

In December 2008, the Government voluntarily accepted implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism under Security Council resolution 1612. The MRM task force was established subsequently. UNICEF co-leads the task force, maintains the database and serves as secretariat. In 2012, UNICEF contributed to the second Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia and to the Global Report on Children and Armed Conflict. Also in 2012, input was provided for six global horizontal notes that were sent to the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict of the United Nations Security Council.

There was a consensus among interviewees (UN, NGOs and members of the MRM task force) that good progress had been made in implementing the MRM, but there is still considerable under-reporting. To increase reporting, UNICEF was instrumental in disseminating knowledge to various regional and local organizations on resolution 1612 and in capacity-building regarding protection issues and prevention of recruitment. UNICEF has been involved in rolling out training on MRM among local organizations in departments disproportionally affected by the armed conflict. As of October 2012 formal training sessions had been carried out by UNICEF in five departments, and OHCHR made one address on the subject in Putumayo.

The MRM system is impeded by the government’s prohibition on engaging with non-State armed groups, which makes it impossible to draft an action plan. Despite the ban, UNICEF and the MRM task force have promoted technical meetings with the Government on recommendations of the Secretary-General and the conclusions of a Security Council working group on the MRM. The MRM system is the only systematic child protection monitoring system in Colombia and as such provides a source of knowledge and a tool for advocacy.

3.3 Effectiveness of Strategies Used

The review of effectiveness analyses which strategies and interventions have been most and least successful and the factors that contribute to success or gaps. In the context of phasing, consideration is given to how far preparedness helped to enhance protection programming during the crisis phase and whether opportunities were identified during the response and early recovery phases to strengthen systems for the longer term.

PRINCIPAL CPIE STRATEGIES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

The principle CPIE strategies in Colombia are:

a) Monitoring the living conditions of children and adolescents
b) Strengthening the capacities of duty-bearers to comply with their obligations
c) Influencing public policies and laws

123 In the Departments of Chocó, Nariño, Cauca, Meta and Antioquia
124 Interview with UNICEF MRM Specialist Esther Ruiz
125 As outlined in the UNICEF Country Program 2012, the annual country office reports and in the report to the Canadian International Development Agency.
d) Designing demonstrative or pilot projects  
e) Strengthening strategic alliances  
f) Providing timely and adequate humanitarian response in situations of natural disasters or complex emergencies (implementation of this strategy was not evaluated).

**Monitoring Living Conditions of Children and Adolescents**

The UNICEF country programme for Colombia for 2008-2015 has a strong focus on the most disadvantaged geographic zones and vulnerable population groups (those who are internally displaced, affected by violence, living in rural and/or poor areas, being Afro-Colombian or indigenous). It prioritizes 10 departments (Amazonas, Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar, Cauca, Córdoba, Chocó, La Guajira, Nariño, Putumayo) where social development and child rights indicators are significantly below national averages and where violence and its consequences have had a significant impact on children and families. The child protection programme has taken these geographical priorities and population groups into consideration throughout programme implementation. Even though this selection may need revision in an emergency, the strategy is successful in narrowing down intervention areas according to criteria, which include the percentage of violent deaths among children below 14 years of age and the percentage of children under age 17 who are victims of mine accidents.

**Strengthening Duty-bearers’ Capabilities**

The programme has invested significantly in systematically strengthening the capacities of duty-bearers at various levels, including government officials, non-governmental actors and communities, including children. This strategy has been proven effective in various ways: (a) Mine action is being guided by national guidelines and an action plan that were developed by PAICMA with UNICEF assistance; (b) MRE training materials developed by UNICEF were successfully used by CCCM and other organizations, and requests have been received for replication and use by other actors; (c) UNICEF support to CCCM to carry out MRE led to an innovative strategy involving victims of mine accidents and community members as educators/multipliers; (d) UNICEF has put significant effort into building capacity among the armed forces and the police, both major role players in respecting and protecting children (though it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of this training\(^\text{126}\)); (e) the strategy of creating Entornos Protectores integrates capacity-building in various forms and for different target groups, involving both formal training and on-the-job capacity building for those who implement the Entornos Protectores, who are representatives from various departments and municipalities, NGOs, communities, families and children; and (f) UNICEF has been involved in rolling out MRM training to local organizations in selected departments (six as of October 2012) most affected by the internal conflict.

In all of these areas, UNICEF has significantly contributed to developing capacities for child protection at national and decentralized levels, including government, NGOs, communities and children.

**Advocacy and Influencing of Public Policies and Laws**

UNICEF has advocated for ratification of various international conventions and for a civilian humanitarian demining process.\(^\text{127}\) The child protection team has also influenced the following laws and policies: Victims Law/Ley 1447 (including a special chapter on children); National Integrated Policy on Mine Action; Decree regarding Sexual Violence in Conflict; Code on Childhood and Adolescents 2006; and MRE standards. UNICEF has also advocated for the principle that humanitarian principles must guide the process of demining. Information received via the MRM and reports prepared as part of it have provided UNICEF with excellent tools for advocacy, which have been used in meetings with the ministries of Defense and Education.

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\(^{126}\) The prohibition to carry out humanitarian dialogues with non-State armed groups also hinders advocacy efforts to promote full adherence to international humanitarian law.  
\(^{127}\) Colombia is advancing towards humanitarian demining but currently the only actor in demining is the army.
An important advocacy opportunity presents itself with the possible demobilization of children from FARC through negotiations or as a consequence of a peace deal. UNICEF has used MRM results to advocate for prevention of recruitment and demobilization of children. UNICEF has also been providing direct technical and financial support to ICBF in reviewing and making adjusting its specialized programme for demobilized children and is helping ICBF in designing and implementing a contingency plan for children being demobilized by FARC. According to the Dialogue Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, it was too early for organizations to have contingency plans in October 2012; most were just beginning to analyse how to approach this phase of peace negotiations, which came as a surprise to most international actors.

Human rights violations and conflict-related incidents are rampant and have increased throughout 2012. Illegal armed groups have continued to perpetrate violence against children, including child recruitment and sexual violence. Given the dysfunctional justice system, it is difficult for human and child rights organizations, including UNICEF, to address the issue of impunity.

Design of Pilot Projects

The project in Putumayo, designed by the Technical Secretariat of the Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of Recruitment in collaboration with partners and UNICEF, has proven to be very effective in mobilizing actors and enhancing collaboration on protection issues, especially prevention of recruitment. This is clearly reflected in the Integral Prevention Plan of Putumayo, which includes an action plan that describes the activities to be undertaken by different actors – governmental as well as non-governmental, and UNICEF – in seven municipalities. It provides a good example of how child protection issues can become the responsibility of various departments and how State and non-State actors can jointly draft and be responsible for an action plan. Another pilot project that is being upscaled by CCCM with UNICEF support is the involvement of community members as multipliers in MRE, as presented under capacity-building.

Strengthening of Strategic Alliances

Regarding governmental partners, the most important strategic alliances are with ICBF, the Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of Recruitment and Use of Children to Armed Groups, PAICMA and the Colombian Army and National Police. These alliances allow UNICEF to regularly contribute and give technical input to policies and the development and implementation of action plans and to participate in coordinating mechanisms. UNICEF also has strategic alliances with NGOs, such as CCCM and Pastoral Social, both of which are partners in project implementation, and with other UN agencies. UNICEF is also part of the protection cluster and the dialogue group on children and armed conflict, a working group apart from the cluster system. Neither a child protection sub-cluster nor a GBV sub-cluster have been activated. Interviewees questioned the added value of activating these groups due to the multiple coordination mechanisms in effect and their rather weak attendance, especially by UN agencies.

PROTECTION AND PHASING

Since the conflict in Colombia is chronic, it is difficult to divide UNICEF’s child protection work between preparedness, response and recovery because the stages of pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis can all take place at the same time depending on the department and municipality. According to interviews with the child protection team, UNICEF usually works in all phases at the same time. In one department/municipality the emphasis may be on prevention of child recruitment, while another might be affected by attacks and forced recruitment of children, and still another by natural disaster and/or armed conflict.

128 As observed during the evaluation mission, and evidenced in e.g. the Municipal Plans
129 The group is informal and meets to share information, discuss issues on children and armed conflict, prevention of recruitment and works on a book on children and armed conflict.
130 Interview with UNHCR
following displacement, re-recruitment and mine accidents. However, there may be a political issue here. Politically, Colombia presents itself as in the post-conflict/recovery phase, and it may be difficult for the Government and some donors to accept a child protection programme that addresses preparedness and response to crisis in what generally is seen as a middle-income post-conflict country.

In Putumayo, for example, phasing can be identified in the daily work of UNICEF. Preparedness is reflected in the Entornos Protectores approach and institutional strengthening. The inter-agency preparedness plan incorporates prevention of recruitment plan into the municipal planning process, which reflects the actions and co-responsibilities of local government, focusing on prevention. UNICEF trains staff and partners repeatedly on the CONPES policy. UNICEF is also active in disseminating legal and policy frameworks, like the Children and Adolescent Code. Regarding identification of local partners and services to address exploitation or abuse, including GBV, UNICEF maps service providers and grassroots indigenous organizations.

UNICEF is continuously advocating for minimum age of recruitment with military forces and in the context of CONPES. Response was rapidly activated, emanating from preparedness, when in a community meeting FARC threatened to recruit children. Various actors, such as the Personneria, ICBF and teachers, together with UNICEF, visited the community to raise awareness on prevention of recruitment. Institutional presence reduces the risk of recruitment, and in this case it reduced the pressure that FARC was able to exert on children. Afterward FARC changed its discourse and refrained from child recruitment. Regarding the strengthening of existing coordination mechanisms, UNICEF participates in the Municipal Councils on Social Policy as an advocate for children's issues and in the local Humanitarian Team, chaired by OCHA.

3.4 Quality and Efficiency of Programming

The analysis of the quality and efficiency of programming reviews:

- Programme components against national and international quality standards, identifying which standards were met or not met
- Funding allocations across different phases and interventions
- Cost efficiencies and inefficiencies
- Innovations that have contributed to child protection response.

STANDARDS OF PROGRAMMING

Programme performance is reviewed against the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPWG, 2012) and the UNICEF Mine Risk Education Toolkit (2008), considering the following key areas: children associated with armed forces and armed groups, prevention of recruitment, psychosocial measures and MRE. (See annex 6 for a table comparing standards with UNICEF child protection programme implementation.) The conclusions are summarized here and issues raised are further explored in the conclusions and recommendations.

- Standard 11: “Girls and boys are protected from recruitment and use in hostilities by armed forces or armed groups, and are released and provided with effective reintegration services.”

  The UNICEF programme to prevent recruitment of children complies with Standard 11. Regarding preparedness, UNICEF and partners fulfilled all key actions to ensure that information on recruited children is available; policies are in place; communities are involved and strengthened to be actors in preventing recruitment; and coordination of actors is ongoing. On response, UNICEF has promoted coordination of actors, supported partners to identify and support children who are vulnerable to recruitment; supported training on children’s rights among armed forces to prevent recruitment; and supported efforts to trace families and reintegrate children.

- Standard 10: “Girls’ and boys' coping mechanisms and resilience are strengthened, and severely affected children are receiving appropriate support.”
UNICEF child protection work complies in several aspects with Standard 10. UNICEF is supporting coordination and a referral system, is mapping services in terms of community-based support and supports the strengthening of girls' and boys' coping mechanisms and resilience. It is not clear from documentation how far the programme is in line with other key actions the Standard foresees. For example, except in education, it is not evident to what extent protection and other UNICEF programmes work together and whether UNICEF supports 'psychological first aid'. There may also be gaps in terms of support available for severely affected children, whether UNICEF is involved in setting up a detection and referral system for children or caregivers who need mental health services, and whether UNICEF provides support to caregivers to improve care for their children, deal with their stress and link them to basic services.

- **UNICEF’s Toolkit for MRE**

UNICEF’s mine action work is in line with existing standards, such as the 2010 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, 'A Guide to Mine Action', and the International Mine Action Standards. UNICEF’s MRE programme is in compliance with the UNICEF Emergency Mine Risk Education Toolkit 2008. UNICEF Colombia’s approach may diverge from the main communication channels recommended in the toolkit in terms of its limited use of mass media, but its approach to individual MRE is recognized by the toolkit as an effective way to transmit messages.

**FUNDING ALLOCATIONS**

This section reviews the adequacy of funding allocations across intervention types. The principal question is whether funding allocations were adequate or whether there were major imbalances.

Looking at the multiple and serious protection issues that affect vast parts of the country, the child protection programme was found to be underfunded; it does not receive regular resources from UNICEF at all which makes it dependent on voluntary funding of various kinds. In the current political climate and development discourse, such funding is hard to come by: Donor funding for Colombia has diminished over the past years, as Colombia is now presented as a middle-income country in a post-conflict/recovery phase. In addition, there is strong political will of the Government to show its capacity to handle emergencies, especially natural disasters which further deters funding. UNICEF and other agencies are experiencing a lack of funding, and there is concern about the sustainability of ongoing programmes, especially those to strengthen organizations at departmental and local level.

The UNICEF 2008-2012 CP component 3, Protection and Humanitarian Action, is exclusively budgeted by other resources. Overall, it represents 44% ($15,200,000) of the total ($34,450,000) budget for the Colombia Country Programme. Out of this total, in 2011/2012 alone, the CP budget for intermediate result 3 allocated 67.5% for prevention of recruitment, with most of it (43.7%) spent on Colombiao, Retorno a la Alegria and material support to Internados. More than a quarter of the resources (28%) were budgeted for mine action and 4.5% for the MRM process. No questions were raised by UNICEF or its partners about the adequacy of budget allocations. However, questions were raised about the limited funding available for human resources in all three areas of intermediate result 3.

UNICEF’s main donors in recent years have been the Canadian International Development Agency, which provided $7.5 million between 2009 and 2013, and Sida. Other donors include New Zealand, Spain and the German National Committee. From 2007 to 2012 the Netherlands Committee for UNICEF

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131 The government may have the necessary funds, but not the technical capacity, UNICEF Child Protection team meeting
132 Meeting with Interagency Group on Children and Armed Conflict
133 A table outlining these calculations is attached in Annex 4
134 1,950,000 (2009), 1,600,000 (2010), 1,400,00 (2011), 1,300,00 (2012), 1,250,00 (2013)

In July 2011, Sida and UNICEF Colombia signed a cooperation agreement for $9 million for 2011-2014 to strengthen the protection of children and adolescents from the effects of armed conflict and violence through the construction of protective environments in institutions, families and communities. Sida is developing a new results strategy to be finalized by 2013, and it is not sure if (or to what extent) CP will still be a priority. Sida has expressed its satisfaction with the collaboration with the CP team and has said it would be grateful if UNICEF would continue to challenge the perception of Colombia as a middle-income country by highlighting the consequences of the ongoing conflict and persistent inequalities for children, which makes the middle-income status rather irrelevant for the majority of children.

Overall, the trend in funding is downward, obliging UNICEF Colombia to cut down on staff and secondments. This does not seem to be justified given the high demands of the CP programme. Interviewees, especially those in the field, noted that the child protection programme requires field presence to function effectively.

**COST EFFECTIVENESS**

Cost effectiveness cannot be reviewed in a short evaluation as it would require detailed analysis of each project (see table 5).

Psychosocial activities, via Golombiao, were implemented at very low cost. According to Colombia Joven the kit for the game costs $2,000 and costs per participant are about $6.60. The 10 to 12 facilitators are paid $1,000 per month per facilitator. The costs of MRE were calculated at about $21 per direct beneficiary. Costs can be kept low due to the use of volunteers. Due to ‘multipliers’ the number of beneficiaries will be higher, decreasing the cost per beneficiary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Principal Child Protection Programme Activities 2011/2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity-building of children, adolescents, families, communities and institutions in zones of major recruitment to prevent recruitment to illegal armed groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance for implementation of the national policy to prevent recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance to ICBF to protect children from recruitment by illegal armed groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening the capacities of children, adolescents, families, communities and institutions to prevent accidents with landmines and ERW through MRE for populations living in risk areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance to national institutions to assist children, adolescents, families and communities who are victims of landmines and ERW according to the Law on Victims and Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

135 The current Sida leadership prioritizes youth employment and youth vocational training.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restitution</th>
<th>$200,000</th>
<th>6,845 members of armed forces and police; 250 high-ranking army officers; 1,594 military instructors; 58,689 officers (awareness raising); 40 police trainers; 2419 police trained</th>
<th>$2.90 per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>246,000 in total as claimed by the armed forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>$0.80 per capita</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

Funding constraints have obliged UNICEF Colombia to cut staffing overall from 63 posts in 2012 to 46 in 2013. In the light of the multiple child protection challenges and the child protection budget as a proportion of the overall country programme budget, staffing is far from adequate. At the time of the evaluation visit the post of Chief of Child Protection had been vacant since end August 2012, though the country office hoped to fill it soon. The contract of the international staff member responsible for mine awareness ended at the end of 2012, when the post was transformed into a national position, which has not been filled due to lack of funds. It is likely that in 2013 the mine awareness team will consist of a single assistant. There is currently only one person responsible for MRM, and as of 2013 there will be an assistant post for MRM. One national staff member works on prevention of recruitment, supported by a short-term colleague (ending in March 2013). A National Officer (grade B) is in charge of PVAE, supported by a Junior Professional Officer until December 2012. There is also one person in charge of emergencies, due to a post moving to child survival and development in January 2013. One field-based consultant supports implementation in Putumayo. The lack of field representation of UNICEF child protection staff has been lamented by various UN agencies. The child protection team met during the evaluation has excellent technical skills and, despite some contractual uncertainties, was highly motivated in its work.

### 3.5 Connectedness and Coordination

This section addresses the extent to which UNICEF has met commitments to coordination (sub-cluster and otherwise) and the extent to which its protection programme has coordinated with other sectors. It also reviews the timeliness of UNICEF plans from preparedness to response.

**COORDINATION AMONG UNICEF SECTORS**

UNICEF child protection and education sectors have worked effectively together on various issues: (a) initial assessment of the situation in Cauca, in terms of landmines and attacks on schools; (b) establishment of protective spaces in schools; (c) prevention of recruitment in schools, through Golombiao and Retorno a la Alegria; (d) Internados; (e) ICBF and education collaboration on psychosocial programmes; and (f) participation in PAICMA meetings. It is not evident to what extent child protection has collaborated with other UNICEF sectors.\(^{136}\)

\(^{136}\) No evidence was found in documents and time during the evaluation visit was insufficient for a planned follow up meeting with the Young Child Survival and Development Section.
In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the protection section has been supported in reviewing monitoring systems, including cooperation agreements, donor proposals and reports; in developing local capacities for planning and monitoring; and in preparing situation analysis and research on protection and emergency issues.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ACTORS

As already observed, the protection cluster has been activated in Colombia but the child protection sub-cluster has not, despite the scale of CP violations and issues. The principal reasons are the multiple coordination mechanisms already addressing issues of CPiE and children and armed conflict. These include (a) the dialogue on children and armed conflict, an informal group led by OHCHR and UNICEF that meets to share information on children and prevention of recruitment; (b) the mine action sub-cluster, led by UNDP; and (c) the MRM task force. Nevertheless, UNHCR, as lead of the protection cluster, feels that activation of the CP sub-cluster would be valuable to provide strategic direction among NGOs addressing CPiE issues.

Another reason for the lack of a CP sub-cluster is that UNICEF has limited staff and has not always been present at protection cluster meetings, even when a specific item on CPiE has been on the agenda. (It should be noted that UNICEF was always present for discussions of the MRM). UNICEF would find leading the sub-cluster extremely difficult without establishing new CP specialist posts. It should be noted that the protection cluster is substantial, with 34 participants and sub-clusters in nine departments. However, UNHCR (which leads the protection cluster) has a much larger staff than UNICEF, with 30 protection officers in the field plus a team in Bogotá.

The principal question for UNICEF should be what would be gained from activating the CP sub-cluster that is not already addressed through existing groups. This is discussed in the conclusions and recommendations.

Nor has the GBV sub-cluster been activated in Colombia. However, several UN agencies work on GBV, including UNDP, UNFPA, OCHA, OHCHR, UNHCR, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and UNICEF. Given the widespread impact of armed conflict, the UN system in Colombia decided not to create more inter-agency mechanisms but rather to strengthen existing ones, especially those related to implementation of laws on victims’ rights, land restitution, protection of victims and sexual violence against civilians in the context of the Colombian armed conflict.\(^\text{137}\)

UNICEF also participates in the sub-cluster of the early recovery cluster that deals with mine action and in the UN Mine Action Team. UNICEF participates in the local humanitarian team in Putumayo, chaired by OCHA, on which UNICEF contributes to child protection issues and projects in child protection.

### 3.6 Scaling Up and Sustainability

The question is the extent to which UNICEF has developed partnerships for scaling up in various stages of emergencies and whether there are well-conceived strategies for expansion and phase-out of programmes or projects.

UNICEF was able to successfully scale up various programmes and projects through partnerships. This was made possible through UNICEF advocacy efforts coupled with the presence of experienced partners at governmental and NGO level. Some of the strategies UNICEF has been supporting are also part of national policies, thus promising sustainability and future scale-up by government, without the need for further UNICEF support.

\(^{137}\) Interview, UNWOMEN
The strategy of creating Entornos Protectores through departmental and municipal plans, reflected in the plan to prevent recruitment in Putumayo, is deemed to be sustainable since it is carried out by the State together with local organizations. The work on community capacity-building aims at creating and upholding a protective environment by strengthening families and helping to build children’s resilience and self-esteem. The existence of a national policy framework (CONPES) that reflects the commitment of the Government is also favourable to sustainability.

Another example of a sustainable programme is Golombiao, which is co-funded by Colombia Jóven with resources from the Vice Presidency of the Republic in the amount of $100,000. More than 500 local organizations, municipal institutions, businesses and governors’ offices contribute additional resources at local level. UNICEF local partners in most departments had been trained in the strategy and are in a position to implement it long term, as long as funds are available for the facilitators and the kits. In about half the areas where Golombiao was implemented, networks had been established among the organizations both for scale-up of coverage and to exchange ideas on implementation. There are also demands for implementation of Golombiao from other departments, e.g. Norte de Santander.

On the subject of institution building, the Vice Presidency of the Republic co-funds the Inter-Sectoral Commission for the Prevention of Recruitment, contributing approximately $200,000. By the end of 2012, it was expected that funding for the Technical Secretariat for the Prevention Policy would be entirely covered by the national budget.

Regarding mine action, the UNICEF-supported MRE is carried out by CCCM-trained community volunteers, and their work has been highly regarded in the communities. It is likely that the volunteers will continue raising awareness on mine risks even if CCCM/UNICEF support ends. Some departments have begun to include mine action and MRE in departmental development plans, and CCCM and UNICEF plan to continue their advocacy for more departments and municipalities to follow this example. Also at institutional level, the Government took over full financial responsibility for the functioning of PAICMA in 2010; it had previously been supported by UNICEF for several years.

Clearly, the issue in Colombia is less the financial capacities of the Government than its technical capacities and, above all, access to areas that are controlled by illegal armed groups. UNICEF will continue to have a role to play in providing technical assistance to government programmes as well as in supporting NGOs, like CCCM and Pastoral Social, to deliver services where government services do not reach.

3.7 Cross-cutting Issues

This section addresses issues concerning how far the projects addressed gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women and whether the distinct vulnerabilities and capacities of girls and boys (including adolescents) were identified and addressed. This includes the extent to which data were disaggregated by gender, age, disability or ethnic/religious minority.

The programme has made considerable efforts towards gender equality, empowerment of girls and outreach to indigenous communities. Gender equality has been one of the core issues addressed in Golombiao. According to adolescent focus groups and the evaluation of Golombiao, this has been a strength of this programme, helping to change gender stereotypes.

A gender approach was developed in 2010 as part of the project on prevention of recruitment by illegal armed groups. It was also adapted to the culture of indigenous adolescents from the Awá people, encouraging girls and female adolescents to be recognized as full members of their communities. They have assumed key leadership roles in the process of replicating and multiplying their knowledge in the

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139 However, according to CCCM, volunteers still need support, follow up training and coaching before being able to take over awareness raising unaccompanied.
Awá territories. In 2011, UNICEF promoted active participation by 23,461 girls and adolescent girls in local processes to strengthen life skills and promote their rights under the framework of strengthening the protective environment against violence, abuse and exploitation in the context of the armed conflict.

During 2011 and 2012 UNICEF provided technical assistance to ICBF to develop guidelines for assistance with a gender perspective to child victims of conflict and children demobilized from illegal armed groups. ICBF has also been supported to carry out a study of how children are affected by armed conflict. It has three areas of emphasis: girls and adolescent girls; ethnic communities; and the psychosocial impact of the conflict.

In terms of reaching the most vulnerable, the child protection programme was in line with the UNICEF strategy, which concentrates on 10 departments as a way of reaching the most vulnerable departments and municipalities. It was not always clear whether out-of-school children are reached sufficiently and what strategies UNICEF is using to reach children in remote and confined areas. Also, children with disabilities are not sufficiently included in Golombiao; this has been specifically raised with the programme management.

Except for Golombiao, few data were found on how children with disabilities are included in programme activities.

Regarding participation, children in the focus group discussions who participated in prevention of recruitment and MRE programmes said that they had not participated in planning/designing the programme. There was no other evidence of children participating at any stage of the programme/project cycle.

In knowledge management and use of data, age- and gender-disaggregated data are available in government-collected data and reports and in UNICEF annual and donor reports. Information systems for CP and GBV are not in place.

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140 UNICEF Colombia Annual Report, 2010
141 UNICEF Colombia Annual Report, 2010
142 UNICEF Colombia Progress Report to Sida, “Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Violence in Colombia”, July 2011 – August 2012
143 Interview with Pastoral Social in Putumayo
4. CONCLUSIONS

The findings and conclusions respond to the evaluation objectives, with a focus on key successes and gaps, and highlight special issues that came up during the evaluation. Conclusions are set out in two groups, first those related to programme findings and conclusions followed by those related to management strategies and cross-cutting issues.

PROGRAMME FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: Key successes

The UNICEF child protection programme in Colombia has been working under extremely difficult circumstances due to a shortage of staff, who must support national structures and policies as well as field operations. Despite this situation, UNICEF has achieved impressive results in all areas the evaluation focused on. Key successes identified were:

- UNICEF has built good and stable relationships with government institutions at national level. It has been able to provide inputs into legislation, policies and national strategies, and advocate for the protection of children in various areas, including prevention of recruitment and protection against landmines.

- The strategy of strengthening the protective environment to implement national policy and the programme for prevention of recruitment of children and adolescents was able to involve State and non-State actors around a common understanding and approach. Early warning systems mobilize communities and State actors to act against child recruitment.

- Psychosocial programmes, particularly Golombiao and Retorno a la Alegria, have helped to build children’s self-confidence, tackled gender stereotypes and helped children to develop a positive outlook on their future. These programmes have also made communities aware of children’s rights.

- The principal strategy of MRE, which works to strengthen children’s and adolescents’ capacities to protect themselves from mine accidents, was highly valued by child participants of MRE.

- UNICEFs support to CCCM to involve community members in building a continuum of community networks and volunteers has been an innovative strategy. It has made messages ‘community friendly’ and guaranteed sustainability of mine risk awareness-raising in communities. Volunteers for MRE have also emerged at municipal government level.

- UNICEF has achieved results through supporting institutional strengthening on mine action along with strengthening coordination at departmental and municipal level. The result is that mine action is included in several municipal and departmental development plans.

- UNICEF has recognized the importance of victim assistance in the peacebuilding process and has started to support systems-strengthening at national, departmental and municipal level to address this issue. Additionally, UNICEF provides advice and support to new victims by covering travel expenses, food and lodging. This support was not foreseen by legislation but is a prerequisite for comprehensive rehabilitation.

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144 Other implementing partners in MA are: Paz y Democracia, Fundación Social Valle de Pubenza, Fundación Sueños del Futuro y Pastoral Social Nacional. Due to time limitations the evaluation only looked at the Project implemented by CCCM.
• UNICEF has acknowledged the important role of the police and military forces in reducing human rights violations. It was able to reach both groups comprehensively with training on international humanitarian and human rights law, with a focus on child protection.

• UNICEF’s role in the MRM task force has been significant. UNICEF co-chairs the task force and serves as secretariat for the MRM data collection system, which provides data useful for reports and advocacy. Start here

Conclusion 2: No major gaps in programming were found, but the emphasis of some aspects of programming was weak relative to the protection issues identified.

The areas of programming weakness are:

• Lack of emphasis to prevention of and response to gender-based violence, given its prevalence, directly and indirectly related to conflict
• Insufficient economic support, especially vocational training, to young people in areas with high levels of recruitment
• Non-activation of the child protection sub-cluster.

Coordination is another area of concern. Many coordination mechanisms are in place in Colombia, but time constraints prevent stakeholders from attending all meetings regularly. Thus there is resistance to creating yet more mechanisms. However, activation of the CP sub-cluster would serve a number of specific functions that are not covered at present:

• A more predictable and accountable response, especially for affected populations and to the Humanitarian Coordinator
• A framework for inter-agency assessments and a joint strategy with NGO members
• A structure for joint advocacy on child protection violations and issues by all CP actors within the framework of the cluster system
• Facilitation for developing joint tools and standard operating procedures
• Facilitation of information sharing on funding opportunities for CPIE.

However, activating the CP sub-cluster would not be possible without increasing the size of the CP team. The CP Working Group could provide support with an assessment of the feasibility of activating the sub-cluster; this is further addressed in the recommendations.

Conclusion 3: The acceptance of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism and establishment of the MRM task force is a major achievement.

The acceptance of the MRM by the Government and the subsequent establishment of the MRM task force was a major benefit in drawing attention to the six grave protection violations in armed conflict and strengthening the basis for advocacy. This effort would be further strengthened if it were possible to negotiate an action plan with the FARC-EP (and other armed groups), but the Government currently prohibits direct negotiation with all non-State armed groups. Despite these limitations, UNICEF and partners have made important progress in raising the profile of the issue of child recruitment through persistent dialogue with national and local stakeholders. Nevertheless, it will be important to drive towards an action plan on preventing the recruitment of boys and girls and on the release of those currently with armed groups as soon as the situation permits.

145 However, and as outlined previously, UNICEF Child Protection has been engaged and reached results in advocacy efforts with national government as well as local authorities
146 As the situation is now, these issues are addressed
Conclusion 4: Psychosocial programming was strong, but the link to the prevention of recruitment needs to be further emphasized.

Golombiao upholds several values that promote peaceful coexistence and give adolescents hope for their future, which helps to make them more resilient, and especially more resistant to joining illegal armed groups. But the geographical focus is not currently on the areas prioritized by the policy and strategy to prevent recruitment (CONPES 3673), nor on the municipalities prioritized by UNICEF. In addition, the implementing partner, Colombia Joven, focuses on young people aged 14 to 25, while the average age of recruitment is 11-12 years.

Conclusion 5: CPIE programming does not address gender-based violence related to conflict.

GBV and especially sexual violence have been addressed by the child protection programme through legislation and with reference to sexual exploitation in tourism, but not in CPIE programming.

Conclusion 6: School dormitories have been effective in protecting children from landmine accidents and recruitment, but they have protection risks.

Children from risk areas who board at distant schools are protected from landmine accidents and recruitment or abduction from illegal armed groups. But the boarding units pose risks due to their limited infrastructure, lack of supervision of children’s institutionalization and removal from their families. These make the children vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Boarding schools/internados should only be seen as a short- to medium-term solution.

Conclusion 7: UNICEF is well placed to advocate for demobilization of children, but more expertise is needed to ensure development and implementation of an effective strategy.

At this critical moment of peace negotiations with Colombia’s largest guerilla group, UNICEF has a unique opportunity to advocate for the release of children associated with armed forces and armed groups and for quality reintegration programmes. However, a contingency strategy is needed. To develop it, the UNICEF child protection section in Colombia would welcome external technical support from an expert with field and strategic experience with child release and reintegation in a period of demobilization.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Conclusion 8: Children with disabilities are almost invisible in child protection programmes.

There is no visibility of children with disabilities in any of the programmes except Golombiao, where it was lamented that children with disabilities are not sufficiently included.

Conclusion 9: Staffing and field presence are insufficient.

In all interviews with staff from UN agencies and with UNICEF partners, the UNICEF field presence was seen as critical to addressing child protection issues, but lack of funding unfortunately makes this impossible.
5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Prevention of recruitment to illegal armed groups

- Continue to strengthen government and NGO capacity to implement municipal-level plans for prevention of recruitment, extending services into the interior. Consider including economic opportunities for young people by engaging SENA in planning and encouraging implementation in the interior.

- Continue to support Golombiao as an important component of prevention of recruitment, but (a) review the prioritized municipalities relative to the municipalities prioritized in CONPES 3673 and by UNICEF; (b) include municipalities from Putumayo in the prioritized municipalities as part of the pilot programme; (c) develop a robust monitoring system that includes process and outcome indicators and systems for data collection and analysis; and (d) review the target age for services with Colombia Joven, especially for the municipalities prioritized under CONPES 3673.

- Boarding schools/internados can only be seen as a short- to medium-term solution. In the longer term, UNICEF should focus on advocacy and support for expanding the reach of schools into remote areas, rather than having children from remote areas move away from their parents and communities to internados.\(^{147}\)

Recommendation 2: Institutional strengthening on mine action

- Continue advocacy efforts on humanitarian demining and inclusion of MRE in school curricula
- Roll out MRE into other affected departments
- Include peer education in MRE strategies
- Advocate to simplify the process for victim assistance (which is currently complicated and bureaucratic) and conduct broad awareness programmes on accessing benefits due under Law 1448.

Recommendation 3: Coordination and technical support

- Invite the Child Protection Working Group in Geneva to visit Colombia to review CPiE issues with the UNICEF CP team and partners. The invitation could be to the CPWG; ideally key NGOs within it should also be invited. The CPWG is likely to have funding available for such a visit.\(^{148}\)

Issues to be discussed include:

(a) The possible advantages and feasibility of activating a child protection sub-cluster, in view of the many complex child protection issues in Colombia, the diversity of actors and the demand for better coordination and information sharing on child protection issues.\(^{149}\)

(b) Development of a contingency plan covering the requirements and suggested processes to accommodate a possible surge in child release and reintegration from armed actors. The plan should draw on experiences from the previous demobilization programme to apply

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\(^{147}\) Since December 2012, the National Ministry of Education (NME) is receiving support from UNICEF to build a detailed analysis of the situation of all internados in Colombia and, based on the findings, improve their status through the promotion of appropriate standards and their conversion in effective protective scenarios in which children and adolescents fulfill their right to education, even within the context of conflict and natural emergencies. The NME took this initiative after receiving key information provided by UNICEF about the current conditions of the internados in Putumayo and the necessary actions that were urgent to adapt them as friendly spaces that provide quality education and effective protection in contexts of violence and natural hazards.

\(^{148}\) Interview with Katie Barnett, Coordinator, CPWG.

\(^{149}\) Interview with UNHCR.
lessons learned. In addition, possible development of action plans for release and reintegration under the MRM with armed groups (which requires a DDR expert).

(c) Ways of strengthening work in gender-based violence in armed conflict, building on UNICEF’s specific strengths and mandate. As part of a comprehensive focus on all forms of GBV, including sexual violence, attention should be paid to domestic violence and the linkages between armed conflict and intimate partner violence and conflict. (This would require a GBV expert.)

(d) Review of options for fund-raising for CPIE with a view to increasing the number of staff and placing staff in the field.

Recommendation 4: Advocacy with the military

Based on UNICEF’s well-established relationship with the military, advocate with officials to:

(a) Avoid use of schools for any purpose, including rest and recreation, water and electricity;

(b) Have civilian organizations carry out removal of landmines and ERW around schools.\(^{150}\)

Recommendation 5: Funding and staffing issues

- Given the fact that donors perceive Colombia as a middle-income country, UNICEF can further use its comparative advantage as a child rights organization to advocate for funding for child protection, arguing that Colombia is still in a situation of armed conflict and children are suffering from multiple protection violations. Additional funding is needed to ensure that the child protection section is equipped with sufficient personnel to tackle the challenges, and in particular to deploy officers in the field.

- If multiple child protection issues are to be addressed effectively by the UNICEF CP programme, it is imperative for UNICEF to expand its field presence to strengthen the role of departmental and municipal governments and to support civil society organizations that engage in child protection, as well as local humanitarian teams.

\(^{150}\)This recommendation should be linked to the recommendation in the United Nations Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia. S/2012/171*, 21 March 2012, 78., prohibiting the involvement of children in civil-military activities, which may expose civilians — especially children — to violence and/or reprisals by parties to the conflict.
Annex 1  Evaluation Framework

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework for Global Evaluation Child Protection in Emergencies

**CROSS CUTTING AREAS**

**Evidence building and knowledge management**

**Convening and catalysing**

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**Strengthen National and sub national child protection systems**

- **DRR** Strengthen formal and less formal systems to respond to CP challenges (structures, functions, capacities, policies, legislation, resources)
- **Preparedness**: implement preparedness actions of CCCs
- **Planning and Response**: Build on pre-emergency coping mechanisms and systems. Avoid weakening systems. Strengthen the application of guidance and tools in programming and advocacy
- **Early Recovery**: Use the emergency as way of highlighting gaps and issues in protection to accelerate system strengthening

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**Support Positive Social Change**

- **DRR** Public education and social dialogue on CP, promote culture of peace, understand coping mechanisms. Strengthened role of children/adolescents, families and communities in protection.
- **Preparedness**: actions from CCCs - develop messages, ensure key actors are aware of local values and culture
- **Planning and Response**: Challenge negative attitudes and practices to gender, ethnicity, disability and a tolerance of violence
- **Early Recovery**: Use transition as an opportunity to accelerate positive social change

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**Intermediate Results**

*Measured by the CCCs*

i) Effective leadership ii) MRM grave violations addressed iii) CP mechanisms strengthened iv) child separation prevented and addressed v) violence, exploitation and GBV addressed vi) psychosocial support provided vii) child

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**Long Term Impact**

Result Area 3 of the MTSP - Better protection of children from the immediate and long-term impact
Annex 2  
Interviews Conducted

List of Interviewees Colombia

UNICEF

Miriam R. de Figueroa  Representative
Viviana Limpias  Deputy Representative
Joanna Radziukiewicz  Specialist, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action
Rocio Mojica  Programme Officer, Child Protection
Sandra Salazar  Programme Officer, Mine Action
Olga Lucia Zuluaga  Programme Officer, Prevention of Recruitment
Luis Eduardo Rios  Protection Assistant
Esther Ruiz Entrena  Programme Officer, Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, MRM
Sergio Riaga  Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Claudia Camacho  Chief Education
Catherine Bokkers  Volunteer in Education Section
Luz Angela Artunduaga  Specialist Child Survival and Development
Esteban Muñoz  Protection Coordinator, Putumayo

Government of Colombia

Emilio Torres Drizo  Chief, Department of Human Rights, Armed Forces Colombia
Alexander Vasquez  Chief, Human Rights Dissemination, Armed Forces Colombia
Carlos Eduardo Guerrero  Special Programmes Officer, Armed Forces Colombia
Elizabeth Tregillo  Support to Special Groups, Armed Forces Colombia
Gabriel Arbelaéz  Director, Colombia Joven
Juan Felipe Barrera  Programme Officer, Colombia Joven
Gladys Fernandez  Chief, Secretariat of Intersectorial Commission on Prevention of Recruitment
Silvia Rinckoar  Programme Officer, Intersectorial Commission on Prevention of Recruitment
Juan Manuel Guewevo  National Advisor, Intersectorial Commission on Prevention of Recruitment
Adriana Gonzalez  Deputy Head ICBF (Institute Family Welfare)
Juan Sebastian Estrada  Director, Office Cooperation, ICBF (Institute Family Welfare)
Javeth Sanchez  Senior Officer, Office Cooperation, ICBF (Institute Family Welfare)
Sebastian de los Rios  Technical Advisor, ICBF (Institute Family Welfare)
Cesar Laverde  Partnerships Officer, Presidential Programme on Mine Action (PAICMA)
Maria Elisa Piuto  Quality Control Officer, Presidential Programme on Mine Action (PAICMA)
## UN Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denise Cook</td>
<td>Peace and Development Advisor, UNDP/DPA, Office of the Resident Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatrice Dhaynaut</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Advisor, Office of the Resident Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria de la Luz Vasquez</td>
<td>National Officer for Information and Reporting, OCHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiara Capozio</td>
<td>Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA</td>
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## ICRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Max Furrer</td>
<td>Protection Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronan Guillou</td>
<td>Protection Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthieu Laruelle</td>
<td>Regional Advisor for Latin America</td>
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## Donors - Embassy of Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catalina Hoyos Mora</td>
<td>Swedish Cooperation, National Program Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Nilenfors</td>
<td>Swedish Cooperation, Head of Development Cooperation</td>
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</table>

## INTER AGENCY MEETINGS

### InterAgency Group on Children and Armed Conflict (Human Rights)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcela Briceño-Donn</td>
<td>Programme Officer, Fight against Impunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariana Medina</td>
<td>COALICO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Zamora</td>
<td>Humanidad Vigente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Fernanda Cruz</td>
<td>Mercy Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentina Collazo</td>
<td>War Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astrid Canãs</td>
<td>Defensoria del Pueblo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia Robayo</td>
<td>Canadian Cooperation (ACDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcela Salazar</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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### Task Force on MRM (Res 1612)

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<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jose Luis Campo</td>
<td>COALICO (Ben Posta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatrice Dhaynaut</td>
<td>Office of the Resident Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Guiterrez</td>
<td>Fundacion Restrepo Barco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keimy Martinez</td>
<td>Ombuds Office (Early Warning System)</td>
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</table>

## Putumayo

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Júlio César Burbano</td>
<td>Director Pastoral Social Diocese of Mocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Plata</td>
<td>Project Coordinator Pastoral Social-UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocio Mejía</td>
<td>Psychosocial Professional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carol Cristina Obando  Psychosocial Professional
Jeferson Obando     Instructor, Armed Forces
José Díaz Mendoza  Technical Advisor, Armed Forces
Juan Pablo Escobar  Director of School in Puerto Asis
Didio Ordones       Coordinator of School in Puerto Asis
Miguel Angel Montillo Docente, CER Vila Victoria, Putumayo
Reinel Gonzales     Secretary Education, Puerto Asis
Maribel Gomez       Personeria, Putumayo
Luz Possoc          Comissaria Familia, Alcaldia Valle del Guamez
Junior Coral Arcos  Coordenador Familias em Accion, Valle del Guamez
Libia Zoraida Santacruz Secretaria Educacion, Valle del Guamez
Rosa Pasuy Miticanoy Defensoria del Pueblo Regional
Marlene Quinchoa    Defensoria del Pueblo Alto-Medio Putumayo
Ana Esther          Secretaria de Desarrollo Social, Gobernado Putumayo
Rosalba Palacios    Coordenadora ICBF, Putumayo
Liz Angela          Directora da Cobertura SED Putumayo
Eliana Maria Figueiroa Dirctora Calidade Educacion, SED, Putumayo

Norte de Santander

Servo Antonio Bacca  President, Assovivir Norte
Luis Arturo Ferrer   Director Territorial, Victim’s Unit (Unidad para la Atencion Victimas)
Rondel Mauricio Contreras Secretario de Victorias, Gobernacion Norte de Santander
Oscar Fabian Cristancho Rector, Colegio Integrado Petrolea
Antonio da Silva      Regional Coordinator, OCHA
Nora Quintero         Secretaria del Gobierno, Gobernacion de Norte de Santander
Ronald Contreras      Secretariado de Victorias, Gobernacion de Norte de Santander
Gustavo               in charge of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law,
                       Gobernanacion de Norte de Santander
Duyerney Pobon        Departmental Advisor, Weapons Contamination, ICRC
Eliana Marcela        Coordinator, Public health, Alcaldia de Tibu
Gerson Hernandez      Coordinator Familias en acción, Alcaldia de Tibu
Gustavo Leon          Alcalde, Tibu
Jairo Alonzo          Secretario, Alcalde de Tibu

Evaluation Reference Group

Karin Kramer         Presidential Agency for International Cooperation
Juan Sebastian Estrada Director, Cooperation, ICBF (Institute Family Welfare)
David Turizo        Deputy Director, Cooperation, ICBF (Institute Family Welfare)
Juan Felipe Barrera  Programme Officer, Colombia Joven
Alexander Vasquez    Chief, Human Rights Dissemination, Armed Forces Colombia
Magda Silva  Intersectorial Commission on Prevention of Recruitment
Juan Pablo Caicedo  OCHA
Catalina Hoyos Mora  National Program Officer, Embassy of Sweden.
Adriana Martinez  CEDAVIDA

**Research Assistants**
Maria Isabel Castro Velasco
Mario Quitones Noriega
Manuela Gaviria Serna
Tania Garcia
Annex 3  Focus Group Protocol

We are very grateful to your organisation for participating in the Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies. The Evaluation is aimed at ensuring that UNICEF programmes are as relevant and useful as possible to children and adolescents affected by emergencies.

This set of notes is intended as a guide to preparing the visit of the Evaluation Team.

We hope that you will be able to help the evaluation in three ways:  a) Organising Focus/Activity Groups with adolescents – to be planned in advance of the visit. You will be informed by UNICEF staff in country how many and which groups to prepare. You will agree on the date/time together with UNICEF staff. b) Organizing a meeting of project staff with the Evaluation Team that will take place at the same time as the Focus/Activity Group and c) Providing key documentation prepared in advance to give to the team.

1. FOCUS /ACTIVITY GROUPS
We will be holding Focus/Activity Groups with the adolescent age group – girls and boys – in view of the fact that this age group is most at risk of key protection issues: gender based violence, trafficking, child labour and recruitment. In addition, we will be meeting with members of child protection committees (or similar) and with some groups of women.

We are calling them Focus/Activity Groups as they will be participatory and engage the participants in activities, as opposed to a more traditional focus group.

SIZE OF FOCUS/ACTIVITY GROUPS

All Focus/Activity Groups will have 10 participants only. In all cases boys and girls will be separated – so there will be 10 boys or 10 girls in each group. Within each group, children will be sub divided by age: 11-14 and 15-18 so they each feel as confident to talk freely with children of a similar age.

LENGTH OF GROUP

Group activities will last 1.5-2 hours. We will provide drinks/snacks during that time.

VENUE FOR GROUP

Please could you try to select a venue that has space to move around and to divide into two subgroups. But it should also have sufficient privacy that the group can work without being disturbed by other members of the community. In particular, we should try to ensure that groups are not watched by others or that others try to join the group.
TIMING OF THE GROUP

Please ensure that the timing of the group is outside of school hours. We do not want to take children out of school for the group.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

*This is where we most need your help.*

We want to ensure that group participants are representative of all project participants. To do that, we request that you randomly select adolescents to participate in groups from the whole beneficiary list.

Please divide the whole beneficiary list by:

- Adolescents **girls** aged 11-14 and 15-17
- Adolescents **boys** aged 11-14 and 15-17

Then randomly select groups of 10 in each category. To do that you could put all the names in a box, shake them up and select 10.

Or if you have a very long list of names (such as 200 in each group) you can divide the total number in each subgroup by 10 (the number you need) and then select names on multiples. For example, with a list of 200 divided by 10, you would select every 20th child.

REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

Each participant should be contacted in advance of the session to ask whether they are willing and interested in participating. It may be wise to contact one additional child from each age group so that if some do not turn up on the day, numbers will not be badly affected.

Please explain in simple language that the purpose is to listen to their views on how best to ensure that they are protected from harm in emergencies and that we also want to talk about the programme they are participating in. We aim to use the information to make sure that the way we work with young people in the future is as helpful as possible to all children and young people when they are displaced from home or have had to live through a flood or similar situation.

They should be told that the exercises they will do are aimed to be enjoyable and interesting and that we are very keen to hear what they think. But that nobody should feel *obliged* to participate.

Please share with them the points on the consent form below:

- That they have been randomly selected to participate – so they do not wonder ‘why me?’
- We will not name the individuals that participated in the group and no photos will be taken so they will not be identified. Their comments are confidential.
- The group will last no more than 1.5-2 hours
- There will only be girls or boys present (they will not be mixed)
If there is anything that concerns them about the group, they can talk to the facilitators at the end of the session and they will be invited to evaluate what they liked/didn’t like and what they found useful so we can learn for the future. All exercises and work will all be in their own local language.

Their parents should also agree to their participation. We have attached a simple consent form for both child and parent to sign (we would be grateful if you could translate the form into the local language).

Finally, we would be grateful if a member of staff who knows the programme participants could be available in case a child gets upset. We hope this will not happen as we are not asking children about their individual experiences of harm but we would prefer to be prepared.

2. **VISIT TO THE PROJECT**

While the Focus/Activity group is being held, we would also be grateful for time to talk to staff of the project about its aims, how it functions, what works well and what has worked less well. We will need about 1 hour of your time for this.

3. **PROJECT DOCUMENTATION**

We would be very grateful if you could prepare any project documentation in advance of the meeting. That means proposals, reports, monitoring data:

- Numbers of children entering/leaving the project (by age/sex, period of participation and type of activity)
- Any information available on hard-to-reach children in the project (children with disabilities or from minority groups)
- Progress against project indicators

**WE MUCH APPRECIATE ALL YOUR HELP**

**EVALUATION OF UNICEF PROGRAMMES TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES**
AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS/ACTIVITY GROUP

I agree to participate in the focus/activity group to discuss how best to protect children and young people from harm in emergencies. I understand we will also talk about the programme I am involved in.

I understand that the aim is to help to ensure that programmes in the future are as useful as possible to children and young people in a situation of emergency response or recovery after emergencies.

I also understand that:

- I have been randomly selected to participate (*please explain the idea of ‘random’*)
- The group should be interesting and enjoyable
- I am not obliged to participate
- No photos will be taken
- It will last no more than 1.5-2 hours
- There will only be girls or boys present (they will not be mixed)
- My name will never be used in the report so nobody will know what I said (except for other children in the group)
- If I am not happy about anything I will be able to say so in confidence to one of the staff
- I will be able to say what I thought of the session at the end (evaluation)

Name:

Signed by ........................................

Date

Parent’s signature ..................................................

Date
# Annex 4 UNICEF Colombia 2011/2012 Budget: IR3-related Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Programs</th>
<th>Program Component</th>
<th>2011/12 Budget, in US$</th>
<th>% of total budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of recruitment</td>
<td>Capacity building of children and adolescents and their family, communities and institutions in zones of major recruitment to prevent recruitment to illegal armed groups</td>
<td>1,928,707</td>
<td>43.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical assistance for the implementation of the National policy to prevent recruitment</td>
<td>560,000</td>
<td>12.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical assistance to ICBF to protect children from recruitment by illegal armed groups</td>
<td>290,000</td>
<td>6.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical assistance to the military forces of Colombia to ensure the application of international human rights with reference to children</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mine Action</td>
<td>Strengthening the capacities of children and adolescents, their families, communities and institutions, to prevent accidents with LM, ERM (MUSE, MAP, AEI), through MRE for populations living in risk areas</td>
<td>788,000</td>
<td>17.86</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical assistance to national institutions to assist children, adolescents, their families and communities victims of landmines and ERW to the Law on Victims and Land Restitution</td>
<td>446,000</td>
<td>10.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism</td>
<td>Information system regarding children and adolescents affected by the armed conflict and grave violations of their rights with reference to Resolution 1612 of the UN SC</td>
<td>200,500</td>
<td>4.54</td>
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<td>US$ 4,750,865</td>
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# Annex 5  Municipalities Prioritized by Colombia Joven and UNICEF

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<th>Region</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
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<td><strong>Bolivar</strong></td>
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<td>Cundinamarca</td>
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<td>El Carmende Bolivar</td>
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<td>Magangue</td>
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<td>La Calera</td>
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<td>Rioacha</td>
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<td>Monte Libano</td>
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<td>Tierra Alta</td>
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<td>San bernardo del Viento</td>
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<td><strong>Oriente Antioqueño</strong></td>
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<td>Arboletes</td>
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</table>
### Annex 6    Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action


**Children associated with armed forces or armed groups and UNICEF Colombia Child Protection Program:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>UNICEF Colombia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparedness</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As soon as possible carry out a joint review of existing information on the presence of children in armed forces or armed groups, and incidents of child recruitment, to be followed by a joint situation or context analysis. Include information on possible community-based disarmament, demobilization and reintegration</td>
<td>Yes (through MRM process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with leaders, communities, families, and youth organizations to prevent recruitment and change norms that favor children’s participation in armed forces or groups</td>
<td>Yes, through Golombiao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that broader disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes and strategies are set up at the national level, and take into consideration children’s specific needs and rights. The DDR process should, where possible, be led by government authorities, and should draw on the expertise and skills of UN agencies, NGOs and local civil society and communities. It should be integrated into schemes aimed at reintegrating other children at risk (with a view to avoiding stigmatization and potential tensions between children formerly associated who may be viewed by their communities as perpetrators of crimes and other vulnerable and affected children at the community level)</td>
<td>Yes, in collaboration with ICBF and the commission on recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that child protection staff are trained on identification of children associated with armed forces or armed groups, and the process of DDR</td>
<td>UNICEF staff is trained and UNICEF trainee partners on MRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map, advocate for and support laws, policies, and national plans of action by both state and non-state actors to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children, when this can be done without risk for the children themselves or for humanitarian staff;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen community-based early warning systems to monitor and report incidents of child recruitment and use/disappearances, and activity of armed forces or groups. Ensure that these systems are linked to local and national child protection or protection monitoring systems</td>
<td>Yes, Pilot project in Putumayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure ongoing and effective coordination between the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, when it does exist (as per Security Council Resolution 1612); other mechanisms for monitoring and reporting human rights violations; and responses and services to victims (see Standard 1).</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote coordination and cooperation among all actors working on prevention of child recruitment and use, on release of children from armed forces or groups, and on providing assistance to their reintegration, in order to ensure all programs complement each other. A key element is the development of standardized tools for managing cases</td>
<td>UNICEF is part of and promotes coordination. Not sure if a standardized tool is in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with local leaders, community groups, schools, and youth organizations to take action to prevent recruitment or voluntary participation in armed forces or groups</td>
<td>Yes, through Golombiao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out accessible public information campaigns, where appropriate, on the risks for children associated with armed forces or armed groups, and the risks of family separation</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and support children who are vulnerable to recruitment (for instance, by providing realistic alternatives to joining armed forces or groups)</td>
<td>Partly through Golombiao and support to Internatos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure access to safe school education for all children, as well as long-term viable livelihood opportunities</td>
<td>Partly, through Internatos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a process for trained child protection staff to identify and verify children associated with armed forces or armed groups</td>
<td>UNICEF has no field staff, but is involved in training on MRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate discussions with the appropriate military and/or political authorities and armed group commanders or militia leaders at local, national, and regional level where necessary, to advocate for the release of children in their ranks</td>
<td>UNICEF is, in collaboration with the MRM task force involved in discussions with political authorities but it impeded by the Government to enter into discussions with AG and AF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take boys or girls verified to be associated with an armed force or group (as well as any of their children) as quickly as possible to a safe, civilian location</td>
<td>Yes, UNICEF supports ICBF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate the family tracing process as early as possible and, building wherever possible on existing services, provide children with interim care, medical services, psychosocial care and counseling, etc</td>
<td>Yes, UNICEF supports ICBF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that a community-oriented approach is adopted during the reintegration phase</td>
<td>Yes, UNICEF supports ICBF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that children who have been injured or disabled receive appropriate medical assistance, care and follow up.</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Psychosocial distress and mental disorders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>UNICEF Colombia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out a joint review of already existing information as soon as possible, to be followed by a joint situation/context analysis, to inform further action</td>
<td>Not sure to what extend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure there is coordination and a referral system between all sectors including education, protection, health and psychosocial support providers;</td>
<td>Yes, through Pilot Project Putumayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map out existing services in terms of community-based support, focused support and specialized services</td>
<td>Yes, through Pilot Project Putumayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection, and work with other sectors (for example, water, sanitation and hygiene – or WASH – camp management, and education) to make sure that their staff are trained on 'psychological first aid'</td>
<td>Not sure to what extend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure there is psychosocial support for national workers who have been affected by the emergency</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen pre-existing community networks to provide psychosocial support to children and their families (for example, providing information on how to cope with stress, and carrying out activities for children)</td>
<td>Yes, through Golombiao and Retorno a la Alegria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support activities for children in the community such as recreational activities, sports, cultural activities and</td>
<td>Yes, Golombiao and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills, to help recreate a routine and help them to build their resilience</td>
<td>Retorno a la Alegria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set up a detection and referral system for children or caregivers who need mental health services, and advocate for strengthening of these services by health actors</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide support to caregivers to improve care for their children, to deal with their own distress and to link them to basic services;</td>
<td>Partly through Golombok and Retorno a la Alegria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that child protection staff is trained on the IASC Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support, and that staff adhere to these and refer to them across agencies and with local partners.</td>
<td>Not sure if this was done</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step to be taken</th>
<th>UNICEF Colombia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify at-risk individuals and groups and ‘unaware’ Communities</td>
<td>Done by UNICEF and CCCM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create awareness about the threat and risk</td>
<td>UNICEF supports CCCM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that communities have adequate knowledge and skills to determine their own behavior (e.g. if women and girls have to collect firework from an unsafe area, ensure they know the location of alternative, safer and cost effective options)</td>
<td>Included in UNICEF supported MRE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address preventable mine risks with humanitarian agencies and enable them to help reduce risk for returnees, etc., in their planning and implementation phases. Perhaps other humanitarian projects have been determining and/or exacerbating risky behavior.</td>
<td>UNICEF by being part in several coordination bodies and CCCM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivate the wider community and local authorities on the need for risk reduction.</td>
<td>Included into MRE strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share data and information gathered on MRE with relevant agencies so that behavioral change can be addressed as a multi-sectorial issue.</td>
<td>UNICEF by being part in several coordination bodies and CCCM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities need to be able to see change so ensure that you communicate any measures taken to improve their situation by minimizing, (and where possible eliminating) the risk.</td>
<td>Communities are closely involved in MRE and information sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage individuals who have experienced or witnessed change to be leaders in behavioral change in other likeminded communities. children who attend school and those who receive MRE outside a classroom setting can be excellent communicators to their families and communities, too.</td>
<td>Implicate in UNICEF supported CCCMs strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>