Colombia: Protecting Early Childhood from Violence

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

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

Project Purpose

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

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

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

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

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

“I want to transform the mentality of young children, youth and adults (if possible) to develop their capacity to resist the bad that surrounds us.”
Female Youth, 15

Current Key Partners:
- Centro Internacional de Educacion y Desarrollo Humano (CINDE)
- International Child Development Programme (ICDP)
- International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD)
- Childhood Observatory of the University of Colombia
- University of San Buenaventura
- Buen Comienzo, Municipality of Medellin
- Subsecretaria de Espacio Publico-Goverment Office, Municipality of Medellin
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- UBS Optimus Foundation
- Canacol Energy Limited
2. Increase capacity of families/communities/institutions to strengthen protection of young children and to create better conditions for the prevention of violence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meetings with the Municipality of Medellin

For more information, contact Manuel Manrique at CINDE - mmanrique@cinde.org.co or Philip Cook at IICRD - pcook@uvic.ca