

# Support

## Program for Ex-Combatant Children, Colombia

Sixth Quarter Report  
July - September 2002  
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Niños, Niñas y Jóvenes Desvinculados  
del Conflicto Armado



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United States Agency for  
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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite a changing national political and institutional context, the assistance provided through the program to former child soldiers during this reporting period was not negatively affected. At the national level, the new President, Mr. Alvaro Uribe took office and immediately called a State of Internal Commotion, allowing him to implement a series of strategies to address the acute crisis caused by the armed conflict. At the same time, the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF by its Spanish acronym) named a new Director, to whom a presentation of the Program was made, resulting in agreement between the Institute and IOM on the future guidelines and coordination. Internally, IOM also experienced some changes; a new Program Officer and a new Program Coordination Officer were assigned to the Program. USAID also designated a new Program Manager.

During this quarter, 92 former child soldiers entered the Program. As of September 30, 280 former child soldiers are being assisted in the Transit Homes, Specialized Attention Centers, Half Way Houses and protection institutions (hospitals, centers for adolescent mothers) of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) of the Program. The Support Program for Ex-combatant Children has assisted 546 former child soldiers: 483 of them through the IOM-ICBF-SC UK Agreement and 63 indigenous and Afro-Colombian ex-combatant children through IOM's Agreement with the Cauca's Governor's Office.

The capacity to assist former child soldiers was expanded through the opening of two additional Half Way Houses in Cali, where 7 children are already being assisted. At the present time, the Program has an installed capacity to assist 240 former child soldiers: 40 in Transit Homes, 160 in the Specialized Attention Centers and 40 in the Half Way Houses. ICBF's protection network assists 38 additional ex-combatant children who deserted and present particular characteristics such as bullet wounds, pregnancies or serious drug addiction.

Compared to the previous quarter, there was a 12% decrease in the number of children who entered the Specialized Attention Program (92 during this quarter, compared to 104 in the previous period). The monthly average of children entering the program was 31 during this reporting period. During this quarter, the profile of the beneficiaries did not vary significantly from the past: 71% are boys and 29% are girls; 66% have demobilized from the Revolutionary Army Forces of Colombia (FARC), 14% from National Liberation Army (ELN) and 10% from the Self-Defense Groups (AUC). ELN desertion decreased by 10% compared to the previous quarter, which was distributed in children who participated in order smaller armed groups. Voluntary demobilization increased to 79% (tendencies from previous quarters represented 70%) and captures decreased 11%, representing only 21% during this quarter. The majority of children still desert between the ages of 15 and 17 (82%) and their educational level is low. 60% have some primary level education, while 11% have no education at all. The departments reporting the largest number of demobilized children are: Cundinamarca, Meta, Santander, Antioquia and Caquetá.

During the reporting period, 49 family encounters were carried out in Bogotá, Cundinamarca, Cali and Bucaramanga. This represents 31% out of a target population of 160<sup>1</sup>. Various income-generating activities were approved: 5 in indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and 2 in Half-Way Houses in Bucaramanga. Advances were also made in the education component: 92 children have benefited from vocational or formal education scholarships, 70 provided by the Ministry of Education and 22 from the Program's scholarship fund. In the health component, 137 children are accessing public health services through the government subsidy system. Also, an agreement with the NGO Profamilia was made for reproductive health services and education.

In the legal component, the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office trained 524 civil servants in 19 workshops on the *'Ruta Jurídica'* (Legal Route for Ex-combatant Children). Where ICBF also held 6 workshops for 200 military and public defenders.

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<sup>1</sup> The target population for family encounters are the children in phase II of the Program: Specialized Attention Centers

The Contingency Plan was distributed in a CD-ROM to ICBF's Regional Offices and other public agencies relevant to the Program. A diagnosis was carried out on the objective and subjective reasons that children join the armed groups. The results are being used as a basis for designing the strategic plan for the prevention component.

## II. CONTEXT

During this reporting period, Colombia witnessed the transition from the Pastrana administration to the new government lead by the independent liberal Alvaro Uribe. The new administration has already presented its political program called "**Firm hands, big heart: The road to trust**", which has the restitution of "democratic security" as its main objective. To achieve this the government has outlined five main strategies: security, democracy, educational revolution, employment generation and a strong anti-corruption campaign. This ambitious program aims to cope with the deterioration of the economic, political and social living conditions of Colombians as reflected in the following figures:

Almost 23 million people live in poverty and 7.4 million are below the poverty line; 60% of the population cannot afford the basic basket of products and family services; 20% of the poorest receive only 4% of GNP. Additionally, one out of five people willing to work cannot find a job. 28% of the population does not have access to potable water and 40% access to sewage systems.

However, to finance its strategy the government will have to cope with a fiscal deficit higher than that forecasted during the presidential campaign. In contrast to the earlier target of 2.3% for the fiscal deficit agreed to with the IMF, the deficit this year is now expected to be at least 4%<sup>2</sup>. The main causes of the growing deficit include decreased tax revenues from the economic recession, low coffee prices and a significant increase in the government's budget inherited from the former administration. In order to comply with the IMF target and to finance its program, the government has decreed a one time special tax on the assets of the wealthiest 300,000 Colombians. It is expected to raise \$800 million. Also, President Uribe has announced austerity measures including fiscal, labor and social security reforms in addition to a reduction of government expenditures on social programs<sup>3</sup>.

### 1. Armed Conflict

The new national security policy comprises a set of measures attempting to re-establish state control over Colombian territory. Security forces currently control only about half of the country. Of the 1,110 municipalities, 180 lack police or army presence. The goal is to provide security to all of them. In this regard, the government needs 40,000 additional troops. To reduce costs, the army will recruit 15,000 part-time conscripts subject to military regulations, but who will live in their own homes. Another measure entails obtaining civilian cooperation with the army by providing rewards to informers willing to pass on information on rebel movements and attacks. The goal is to incorporate 1 million civilians to this informers' network<sup>4</sup>. A third tier is to equip and train 5,000 extra soldiers and 10,000 police, financed through the recently levied wealth tax.

Mr. Uribe will complement these operational measures with a more flexible legal framework to implement its policy. As its first step, the government declared state of "**internal commotion**", a constitutional provision (article 213) which allows the government to decree a range of security measures, bypassing normal legislative procedures when there is disturbance of public order that threatens institutional stability, national security and citizens' co-existence, and cannot be solved by the police.

The government has created "**rehabilitation areas**", which will be ruled by the military. Within them, war zones can be declared, freedom of movement curtailed and foreigners excluded. The following municipalities have been included in this category: Mahates, María La Baja, Calamar, El Guamo, San Juan de Nepomuceno, San Jacinto, Carmen de Bolívar, Córdoba y Zambrano, in the Department of Bolívar; San Onofre, Colosó, Chalán, Ovejas, Tolú Viejo, Sincé, Galeras, El Roble, San Pedro, Corozal,

<sup>2</sup> Its worth noting, that part of the economic problems can be attributed to the conflict itself. For 2002 costs are estimated in 5.8 points of GNP, equivalent to \$4,696 million dollars.

<sup>3</sup> <http://mensual.prensa.com>

<sup>4</sup> The Economist, September 19 2002.

Sincelejo, San Juan de Betulia, Los Palmitos, Morroa y Buena Vista, in the Department of Sucre; and, Arauca, Arauquita y Saravena in the Department of Arauca.

Both the national Ombudsman and Human Rights organizations have expressed concern regarding the emphasis of the new security policy, alleging that it will convert civilians into military targets, foster paramilitaries and weaken guarantees for the respect and enforcement of IHL and human rights accords.

These measures have been taken within a municipal governance crisis, produced by a fear campaign sponsored by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)<sup>5</sup> which has tried to force at least 175 mayors to abandon their posts. So far, 100 mayors have done so, managing their local governments from the departmental capital cities<sup>6</sup>.

The quarter ending on September 30 saw an increase in direct confrontations between the guerrilla, mainly the (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC).

## 2. *Victims*

According to Amnesty International, the Colombian conflict has a running death toll exceeding 60,000 persons from 1985 through 2001; about 8% of this number is accounted for in 2001 with a total of 5,000 violent deaths (approximately 80% of whom were civilians) and there is no room for serious doubt that death toll this year will outnumber last year's figures.<sup>7</sup>

Excluding Vaupés, San Andrés and Providencia, all departments and 819 of the municipalities are affected by internal displacement. Bogotá, Medellín, Valledupar and Cartagena are the main receptor communities. CODHES talks about 2.7 million IDPs. The Colombian government has 800,000 registered IDPs and the director of the Social Solidarity Network (the public agency in charge of them) acknowledged that Colombia has around 2 million IDPs.

Ten journalists were killed.<sup>8</sup> In 2001, 140 union leaders were killed; in the first six months of 2002, 98 union leaders had been killed.<sup>9</sup>

In 2001, 1,700 persons were kidnapped – as of September 2002 the count for this year had reached 2,200.<sup>10</sup>

During the first nine months of 2002, 459 mine-related accidents were recorded with 129 victims, showing a 70% increase over the same period of 2001<sup>11</sup>. It is considered that there are 411 municipalities and 1,806 areas at risk of mine-related accidents. Mines have been detected in the urban areas of Barrancabermeja, Bogotá, Arauca and Medellín.

In the last few months, the FARC has issued more than 200 death threats to mayors who do not abandon their posts. The Government is not accepting resignations.

Insurgent or paramilitary groups attack eight communities every month.<sup>12</sup>

The armed groups murdered 150 indigenous people during the first six months of 2002 while during 2001, a total of 210 were killed. Although they are only 2% of the population, 8% of the displaced are indigenous. The most affected communities by the armed groups are located in seven departments:

<sup>5</sup> During the Pastrana administration 50 mayors were assassinated.

<sup>6</sup> El Tiempo, August 29, 2002

<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International Report on Colombia, May 9 2002

<sup>8</sup> Idem

<sup>9</sup> USLEAP Website

<sup>10</sup> Figures of País Libre.

<sup>11</sup> Mines Observatory Report, sponsored by IOM under the OTI Peace Program in coordination with the Vice-Presidential Office for Human Rights and the NGO Justapaz

<sup>12</sup> Figure reported in Medios para la Paz Website, sponsored by IOM under the USAID Mission Peace Program

Norte de Santander, Chocó, Cauca, Valle, Tolima, Putumayo y Vaupés. Of every 100 IDPs, 11 are Afro-Colombians and 8 are indigenous.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Blue Helmets Supporting Return of Displaced Persons

Mr. Uribe's request to the UN for the certification of Colombian soldiers as a special peace-keeping force to protect the families that return to their places or origin was denied. The idea of the petition was to implement a mechanism to guarantee the safety of returning IDPs and prevent attacks by armed groups either guerrillas or paramilitaries.

### 4. Peace initiatives of Civilian Resistance

According to the national Ombudsman, civilian resistance is a legitimate means of popular, voluntary avoidance of direct or indirect participation in the armed conflict. It merits recognition and decided support by the State as well as by society in general, given that the participants are promoting restitution of the social fabric caused by forced displacement, the promotion of livelihood projects and the exercise of ethnic and territorial rights.

### 5. Paeces and Guambianos Indigenous Tribes

On July 11, 2002, the FARC attacked the Páez indigenous tribe in Toribío, Cauca. During 20 hours of combat, the police forces were out of ammunition and surrendered. At the end of the battle, the guerilla commander agreed to leave the uniformed men in the hands of the local population. Although the local inhabitants had exhibited massive popular support for the mayor, Gabriel Pavi, also an indigenous person, the guerrillas demanded his resignation. The Paeces and Guambianos of Cauca have opted for the route of civil resistance, with proposals linked to social processes.

### 6. Women's march

On July 25, 2002, many thousands of women marched on Bogota from various points of origin throughout the country. These women's organizations, including the Popular Women's Organization (known as OFP by its Spanish acronym), showed their discontent regarding the conflict and promoted policy dialogue as a viable alternative.

### 7. Youth for Peace National Assembly

Youth for Peace is a nationally representative group of Colombians who are committed to constructing a new Colombia. In September, the group organized the first protest movement in defense of the rights of youth and the promotion of a politically negotiated solution to conflict.

### 8. Children's Participation In The Armed Conflict

Both the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) and different local authorities, such as the Human Rights' Ombudsman Office have denounced an increase in the recruitment of children. The Colombian Family Welfare Institute mentioned an increase up to 1.200 children involved. The Human Rights' Ombudsman denounced the recruitment strategy used by the FARC (the largest guerrilla group) in the department of Chocó. Indigenous authorities in the northern parts of the department of Cauca have also denounced the forced recruitment of children in their communities. Additionally, reports have been received on AUC recruitment of children and their strategy to maintain them by giving monthly wages.

Since 1994, ICBF has registered 1025 former child soldiers. However, since the beginning of the Agreement between IOM-ICBF-SCUK for the Support Program for Ex-combatant Children (March 21, 2001) 428 demobilized children have been assisted. During this quarter, 92 former child soldiers entered ICBF's Specialized Attention Program. Unfortunately, there are more children with injuries deserting in these days, due to the conflict's intensification. This has caused physical limitations and permanent

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<sup>13</sup> UNHCR, September 2002 report

psychological damages. Worrying facts on the impact of violence on children is increasing, for example, the kidnapping of 1,162 children or the forced recruitment by the FARC guerrilla of at least 35 minors in Puerto Alvira in the department of Meta.

The newspapers report on AUC forced child recruitment, abuse and physical in the departments of Santander and Bolivar. Equally the high number of children leaving the school system shows the serious effect that the war has on this population. Generally in the country around 7% of children drop out of school; 17 % in rural areas and up to 50 % in war zones.

#### 9. Public Opinion

During the reporting period, various high visibility efforts contributed to informing public opinion about former child soldiers. The events and products are briefly described below:

On July 9, 2002, the TV channel Caracol reported on a seminar carried out on children in armed conflict. In this program, the ICBF director was interviewed about the work being done with former child soldiers, especially the plans to increase services and find the mechanisms necessary to end children's participation in armed conflict.

On the 20th of August, the Coalition Against the Use of Child Soldiers issued a publication that compiled the information that had been published by the media, including the ICBF program for former child soldiers. The report also provided data on child kidnappings, children injured or killed, attacks and raids against internal refugees, and the forced recruitment of children.

On the 26th of August, the newspaper El Tiempo published an article on the program, considering the year 2002 as an historical year concerning demobilization of combatants.

In its 34<sup>th</sup> edition, the weekly paper "**Number**" (Número) published four life histories of former child soldiers who have entered the ICBF program. It will soon be published in a book about former child soldiers, by the editorial Planeta.

In its 36<sup>th</sup> edition, the weekly magazine "Semana" published a central page article "Colombian Children Victims of the War". It talks about the children as the most affected victims of war and who is taking care of them.

The second event "cultural expression " was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, with the participation of 80 children from the CAEs.

### III. SUMMARY PROGRAM STATUS (MARCH 2001 – SEPTEMBER 2002)

Components	Initial Goals of the Grant Agreement	Achieved goals (March 21, 2001 - September 30, 2002)
Direct beneficiaries	Support to 800 former child soldiers	483 former Child Soldiers supported through IOM-ICBF-SC UK Program 63 Indigenous and afro-Colombian former child soldiers supported through the Program's Agreement with Cauca's governorship.
<b>SOCIAL NETWORK AND CONTINGENCY PLAN</b>		
Workshops	Development of one national workshop during the first year and another one during the second year.	The first National Workshop was carried out. Additionally, 5 Regional Workshops and 2 Seminars have been programmed to introduce the Program to other institutions.
Baseline and additional opportunities	Development of program's baseline.	Developed a baseline for the Program. A map of agencies that could offer assistance has been developed for 13 departments where such demobilization seems possible. Space for 965 potential demobilizing children has been identified in 36 institutions. This information has been distributed in CD-ROM to all of ICBF's Regional Offices and other relevant agencies.
<b>STRENGTHENING OF THE EXISTING PROGRAMS</b>		
Improvement of ICBF's Information System	Building of the Program's information system, through the hiring of a specialist.	A database was designed where all information of the children assisted is systematized (sex, age, educational level, etc.). ICBF's central and 5 Regional Offices were furnished with office equipment. Additionally 16 professionals were hired (for operative, legal and social reintegration strengthening).
Existing Specialized Attention Centers	Support to 4 existing centers	Support has been given to 4 Specialized Attention centers (La Bella, Melquíades, Arco Iris and Agarta), through furnishing, financial aid for rent, salaries, Christmas bonus and mobile phone's services. Professionals have been hired to strengthened areas of reading and writing. Regular education and income-generating activities have been developed.
New Centers (equipment)	Opening of two new centers	3 new Specialized Attention Centers y and 1 Transit Home were opened.
New Centers (2001) month/child Costs	Cost of 40 month/child covered	Cost of 80 month / child is covered in the three Specialized Attention Centers and in the Transit Home (Buendía, Puertas Abiertas, Nueva Vida y Luna)

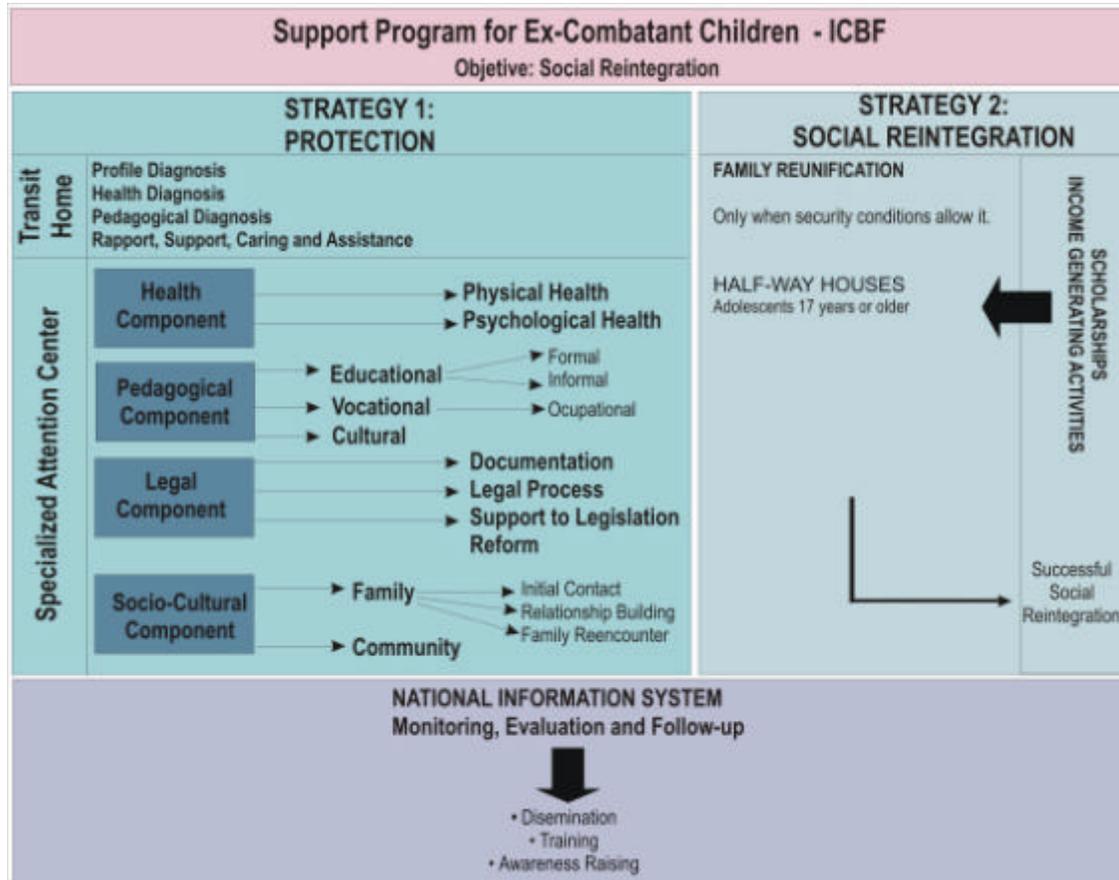
Family reunification opportunities	Cost of 200 year/child	47 year/ child costs have been covered in Half Way Houses (20 in Bogotá, 17 in Cali y 10 in Bucaramanga). The Program has also furnished 9 Half Way Houses that have been created and has assumed the monthly cost for the 4 Half Way Houses located in Bogotá. Income-generation and education (scholarships and launching of a school) projects have been supported; health assistance has also been given. A fund has been reserved in case of a massive demobilization.
Family Reunification	Carrying out 200 family encounters and/ or family reunifications.	83 family encounters and 30 family reunifications have been coordinated. 14 family encounters will be carried out during the next quarter. A revolving fund for income generation projects and a scholarship fund have been designed.
Technical Assistance. Sub-grant to Save the Children United Kingdom	Technical assistance for the strengthening of the Specialized Attention Centers	Institutional strengthening for the Specialized Attention Centers and the implementation of the social network has been carried out. Additional community leaders have been trained on the existing legal framework for ex-combatant children. Contingency plan was formulated.
Information Dissemination	Activities related to the improvement of the acceptance of ex-combatant children in society.	Dissemination of information has been carried out through a video, seminars and publications (Baseline of the Program, Program's pamphlet, institutional folder, etc.). Additionally, two cultural events have been carried out.
<b>RESEARCH ON THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND PUBLICATIONS</b>		
Research Team	Hiring of 4 researchers for the evaluation of the legal framework	The Human Right's Ombudsman Office carried out the Legal Framework evaluation. A document on the Legal Route that outlines the legal standing for ex-combatant children was developed.
Publications	Publishing of 200 copies	The design, publication and dissemination of the " <b>Ruta Jurídica</b> " (Legal Route). To date 2,500 copies of the " <b>Ruta Jurídica</b> " have been published. Additionally, financial support was provided for the edition and publication of 1,500 samples of the book " <b>Warriors Without Shadow</b> " and " <b>Children, Youth and the Armed Conflict</b> "
Training to Legal and Institutional Authorities	Development of 11 workshops.	Support has been given to ICBF to carry out 6 workshops, in which 200 people (judges, military, community leaders, teachers and family counselors) have been trained on the contents of the " <b>Legal Route</b> ". Five more workshops are scheduled to train 200 more people.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE CONTINGENCY PLAN**

Training on the Legal Route that outlines legal standing for ex-combatant children	Development of 11 workshops	18 workshops have been carried out. The Human Rights' Ombudsman Office has trained 524 public officials (public defenders and General Attorney's Office). 500 more public official are scheduled to be trained during the next quarter.
Children's transportation and travel expenses	For the second year of the project (2002) transportation for 600 ex-combatant children. (This number refers to the number of potentially demobilized children)	Support for the transportation of 8 children has been given, according to ICBF's requirements.
Transit Homes	Creation of 4 new Transit Homes for the second year.	Three Transit homes have been created, of which two are operating. Support with furniture and with the month/child cost (only for one Transit Home) has been given. Additionally, 10 extra month/child costs are financed in one of the Specialized Attention Centers and a fund has been reserved for this end.
Observation Centers	Assistance to 400 children in case of massive demobilization.	24 extra month/ child cost have been financed in the Specialized Attention Centers, according to ICBF's request.
Support to Indigenous and Afro-Colombian former child soldiers	This component was not foreseen in the original Grant Agreement.	<u>Cauca:</u> A prevention project is being carried out with indigenous and afro-Colombian communities in the department of Cauca. 360 children are direct beneficiaries. Assistance is also given to 63 already identified ex-combatant children providing them with access to a revolving fund for income-generating activities. <u>Choco:</u> A prevention project in Chocó started its implementation at the end of this quarter. It will benefit Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children. 115 children will be direct beneficiaries. Income-generating activities for ex-combatant are also stipulated.
Prevention	This component was not foreseen in the original Grant Agreement.	Prevention strategy at this time could include: i) a strategy incorporating awareness and social communication, ii) training of local officials, iii) broad-based information campaigns, iv) access to education for children in high risk of being recruited and v) a domestic violence prevention project.

#### IV. STRENGTHENING THE ICBF SPECIALIZED ATTENTION PROGRAM FOR EX-COMBATANT CHILDREN

##### 1. Assistance Model



The assistance provided under the protection component encompasses a comprehensive set of strategies to restore rights. The main objective of the component is to achieve integrated child development by identifying which rights have been violated and working to restore them.

The social reintegration phase offers two options: family reunification or half-way houses. In both alternatives, this phase seeks to provide the child with the tools necessary for his/her social reintegration. The main strategies are scholarships and income-generating activities. Transit Homes, Specialized Centers and Half-Way Homes are located in four departments.

##### 2. Assistance Data<sup>14</sup>

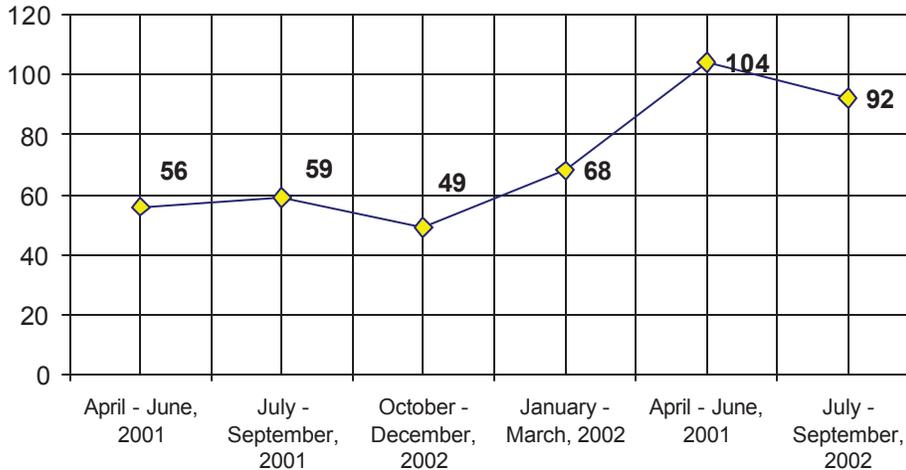
The Colombian Institute for Family Welfare has reported child soldiers demobilization from the armed groups, since November of 1994. The accumulated data on the information system, reports 1054 former child soldiers from November 1994 to June 2002.

A total of 570 former child soldiers have been assisted from November 16<sup>th</sup> 1999 to September 30<sup>th</sup> 2002, the beginning of the ICBF's Specialized Attention Program for Ex-combatant Children. Of these, 428 ex-combatant children arrived to the Program after March 21<sup>st</sup> 2001, when the strategic IOM-ICBF-SCUK

<sup>14</sup> See Annex 2: Tables on Assisted Data

Agreement for the Support Program for Ex-combatant Children was launched. Additionally, before the Agreement, 55 former child soldiers were already being assisted and continued benefiting from the program's new financial support. So far, a total of 483 former child soldiers have been supported through ICBF Specialized Attention Program.

Graph #1: Assistance Data by Quarter



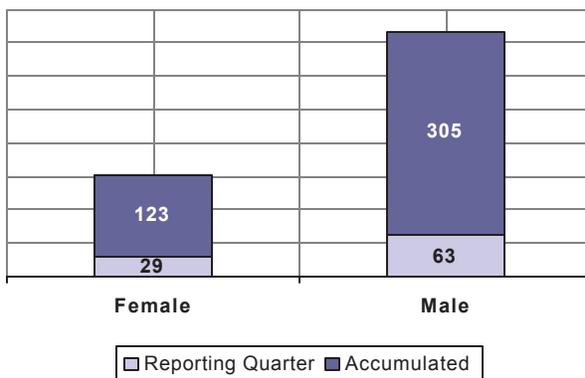
As can be observed in the above graph, all previous quarters have shown an increase in children that join the program, except the third quarter (October-December, 2001). The highest assistance number is presented during last quarter (104 children), which represents 24% out of the total (428) number of children assisted since April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001. As for this quarter, there were 92 demobilized children, 12 less if compared to the previous quarter. This represents 21% out of the total, which compared to first quarter (56 former child soldiers) represents a 64% increase in the number of children assisted.

Table #1: Data on incoming children

Data on incoming children during July -September 2002	
July	32
August	31
September	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>

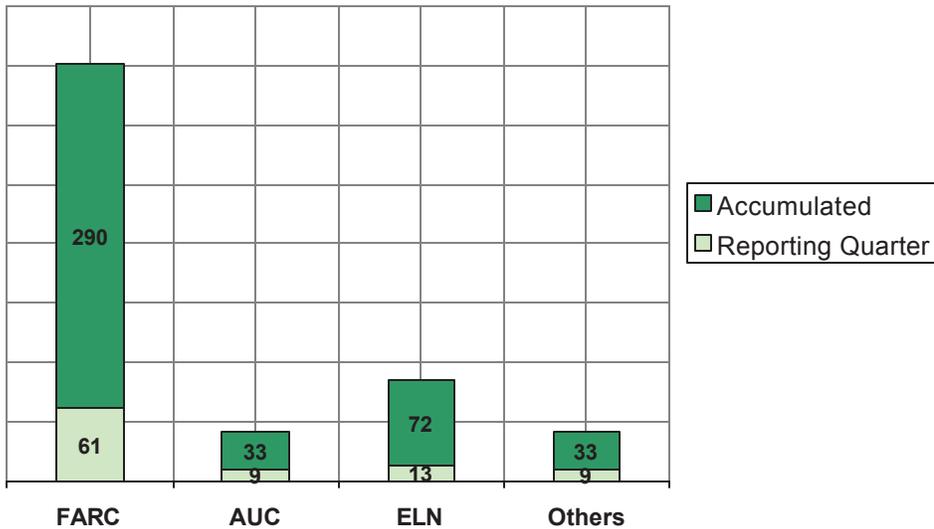
The table on the left presents the number of incoming children per month during the reporting quarter. The average monthly rate is 30.6, which represents a decrease of 4 compared to the previous quarter

Graph #2: Data on incoming children by gender



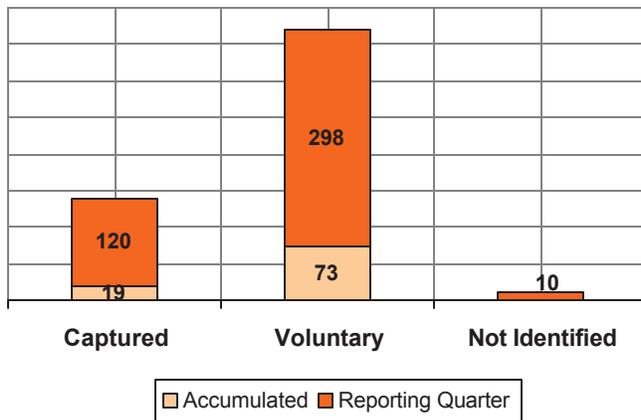
The tendencies by gender presented by the assisted population have been 30% female and 70% male approximately. During this quarter these tendencies do not vary significantly. 32% female and 68% male. Out of the 422 child soldiers assisted, 123 (29%) are female and 305 (71%) are male.

Graph #3: Data on Incoming Children by Armed Group Membership



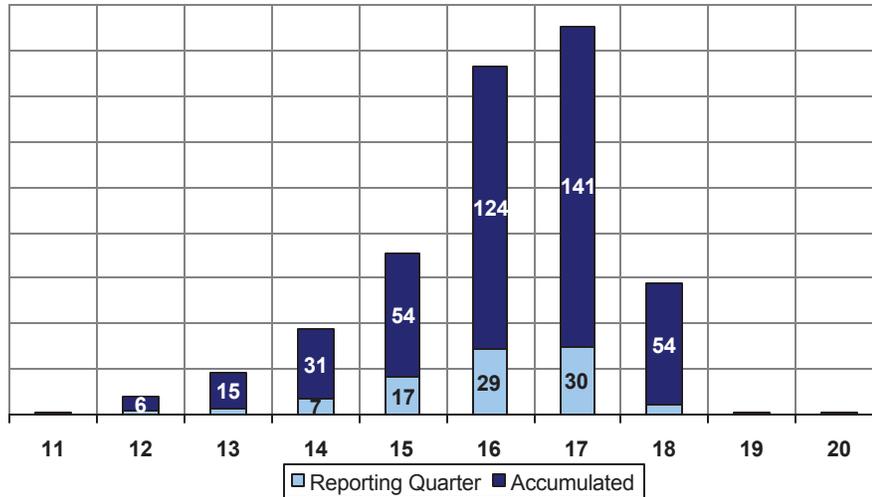
As reported in other quarters, FARC membership has presented the highest tendency. During this quarter, FARC membership (61) accounts for 66%, ELN for 14% and AUC for 10%. Compared to last quarter, FARC and AUC membership remains constant, while ELN membership decreases this quarter by a 10%. This decrease is due to a surprising 10% corresponding to the “**Others**” category, which comprises various small-armed groups such as Popular Liberation Army (EPL by its Spanish acronym), Popular Resistance Army (ERP) and United Self Defense Peasants of Córdoba (ACC). Compared to last quarter (where only 2% was reported under this category) this 10% increase could mean that these small groups are increasing their recruitment of minors and/or fighting activity has intensified, which has led to an increase in desertion either voluntary or by capture.

Graph #4: Data on type of demobilization



Voluntary desertion is generally higher than demobilization by capture. This quarter is not the exception; voluntary desertion represents 79% out of the total 92 incoming children. However, compared to last quarter captures decreased by a 12% during this quarter. Given the fact that children are preferred by armed groups because of the courage and ability they display during combats, a low number on captures is worrisome.

Graph #5: Data on demobilization age



Age of demobilization generally remains constant. The higher tendencies are usually between 16 and 17 years of age. As with other of the assisted population's characteristics, this one does not vary during the reporting quarter. Desertion at 17, represents 33% and at 16, represents 32% out of the total 92. In the cumulative data 124 (17 years old) and 141 (16 years old), age 17 represents 33% and desertion at age 16 represents 29%. Desertion between ages 12 and 14 has also remained constant at 13%, compared to previous quarters and the accumulated data. Finally, during this quarter 4% (4 cases) of the youth that joint the Program were 18 years old.

Table #2: Data on Assisted Children by Educational Level

Data on Assisted Children by Educational Level		
Educational Level	Reporting Quarter	Accumulated
Illiterate	10	29
First	3	20
Second	9	40
Third	9	57
Fourth	11	43
Fifth	23	84
Sixth	9	48
Seventh	9	25
Eight	2	11
Ninth	3	12
Tenth	2	5
Eleventh	2	3
Not Defined	0	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>428</b>

The data on educational level, unlike the other statistics presented above, does change to some degree. Two trends have been altered in the educational level compared to the previous quarter: the percentage of children with primary education (60%) diminished by 6% and the percentage of children with secondary level (29%) increased by 9%. This change means that the relationship between recruitment and educational level (and therefore age) is relative. In other words, one cannot be certain which age group is in the highest risk of being recruited or which grade represents higher school desertion.

In the accumulated data, 66% have a primary level education, 23% have secondary level education and 7% are identified as being illiterate.

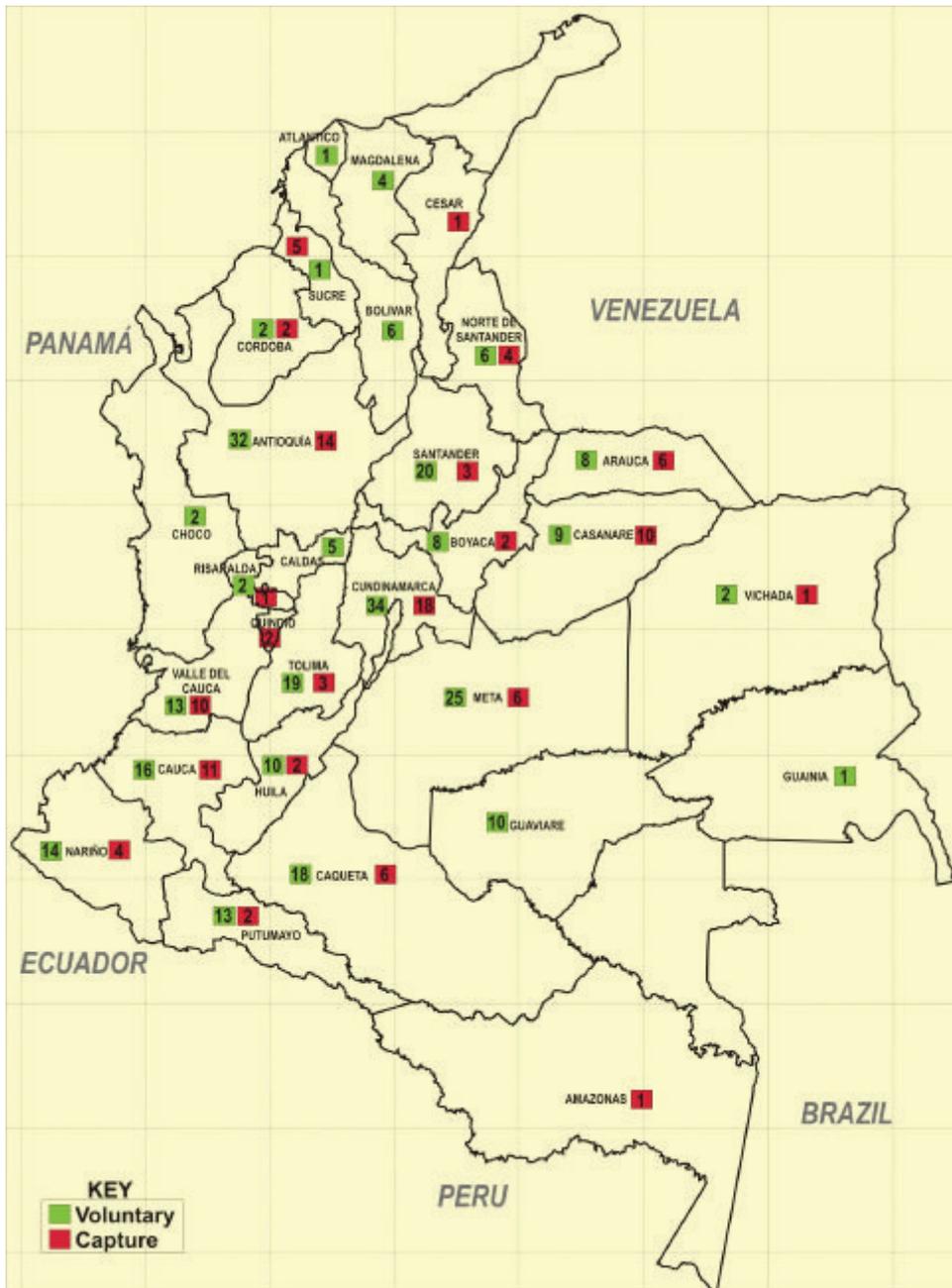
Table #3: Demobilization by Department

Demobilization by Department			
Department	Reporting Quarter	Previous Quarter	Total
ATLANTICO	1	0	1
ANTIOQUIA	8	14	22
ARAUCA	3	6	9
BOLIVAR	0	0	2
BOYACA	2	3	3
CALDAS	2	0	2
CAQUETA	8	8	16
CASANARE	7	3	10
CAUCA	6	5	11
CHOCO	0	1	2
CORDOBA	1	1	2
CUNDINAMARCA	9	5	14
GUAINIA	1	0	1
GUAVIARE	2	1	3
HUILA	4	4	8
MAGDALENA	2	1	3
META	9	3	12
NARINO	0	2	2
NTE. DE SANTANDER	2	2	4
PUTUMAYO	3	3	6
QUINDIO	1	1	2
RISARALDA	1	2	3
SANTANDER	9	9	18
SUCRE	4	1	5
TOLIMA	6	8	14
VALLE	0	8	8
VAUPES	0	1	1
VICHADA	1	1	2
Not Identified	0	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>197</b>

During this quarter the main departments which reported demobilizations were: Cundinamarca, Meta and Santander. Of these three, only Santander remained constant with the previous quarter in the number of reported cases. The departments of Antioquia and Caquetá received the second highest number of demobilized children. Caquetá, like Santander remained constant compared with the previous quarter in the number of reported cases. The number of departments reporting has remained almost the same during both quarters.

Throughout the semester (April – September), the departments with most reported cases are Antioquia, Santander, Caquetá, Tolima and Meta.

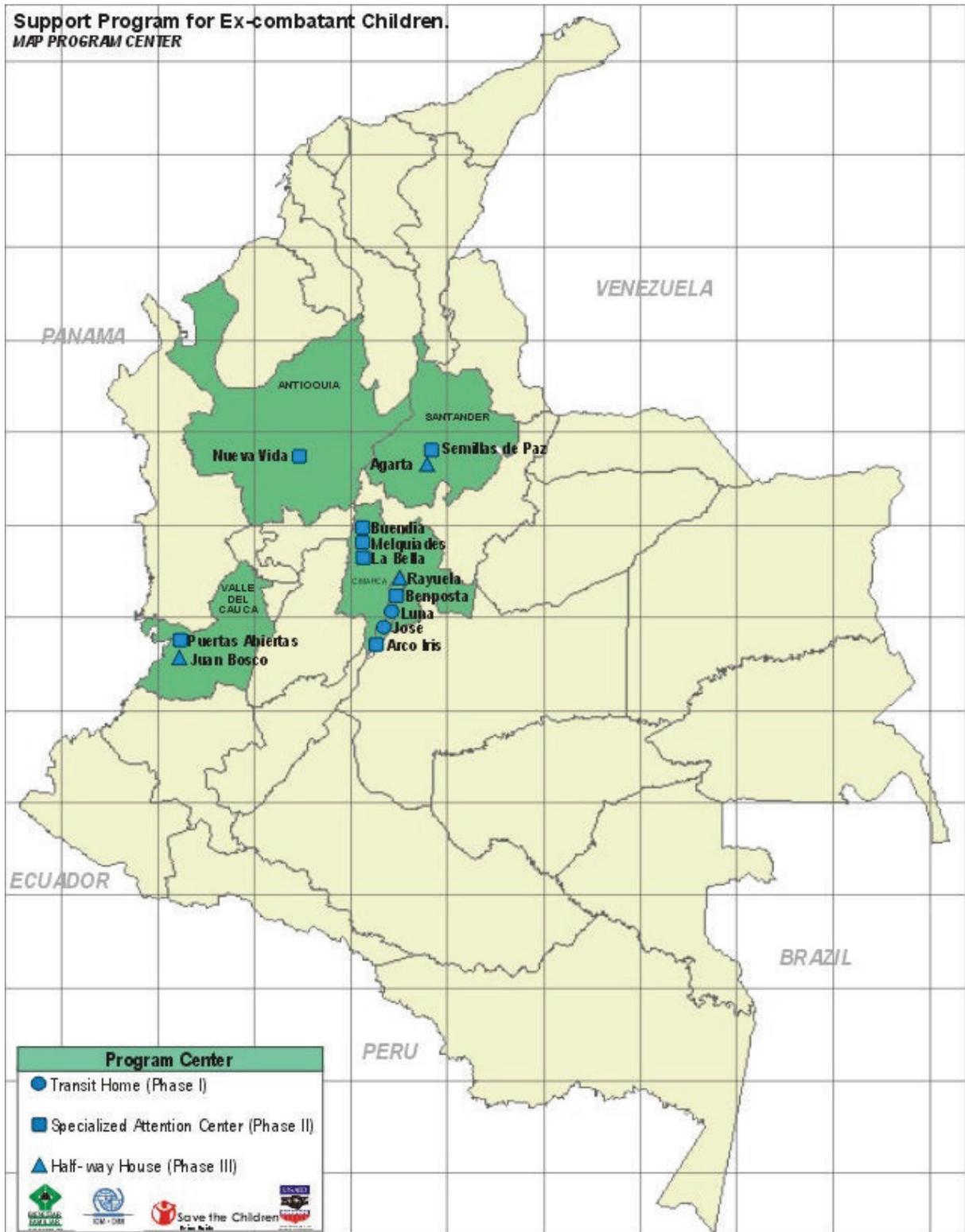
Map #1: Type of Demobilization by Department<sup>15</sup>



Based on the accumulated data (April 2001 – September, 2002) the departments, which report a great disparity between captures and voluntary recruitment, are: Cundinamarca, Antioquia, Santander, Tolima Caquetá and Meta. These departments also represent the highest number of cases reported. On the other hand, the departments of Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Casanare, which have reported a significant number of demobilized child soldiers, show a smaller difference between those captured and those who have deserted. These data, can lead us to conclude where awareness raising of the Program’s existence must be done and also were training on the legal route of former child combatants is needed the most.

<sup>15</sup> The area of disengagement of 30 former child soldiers has not been identified.

Map #2: Location of the Program's Institutions



### 3. *Main Advances*

Table #4: Location of the children by phase and institution

Phase	Name of the Institution	Children staying in the Program till June 30th, 2002	Incoming children during this quarter	Children staying in the Program till September 30th, 2002	Total
Transit Home	Luna	15	45	23	44
	José	16	39	21	
Specialized Attention Centers	Arco Iris	20	0	20	159
	Benposta	7	6	17	
	Buendía	20	0	20	
	La Bella	20	0	20	
	Puertas Abiertas	20	0	20	
	Semillas de Paz	24	1	22	
	Melquíades	20	0	20	
Half Way Houses	Rayuela	20	0	20	39
	Juan Bosco	0	0	7	
	Agarta	11	0	12	
ICBF institutions	Protection Network	17	1	38	38
Total		231	92	280	280

As the table above shows, of the 92 children that joined the Program during this quarter, 91% were transferred to a Specialized Attention Center. The remaining 9% have been transferred to some other ICBF's protection institutions. The latter is due to an increasing number of children arriving with psychiatric conditions, physical disabilities or pregnancies.

Out of the total 45 spaces available in Half-Way Houses, 39 are being occupied. However, the children who will fill the remaining 6 spaces have already been identified.

To date, the Program has installed capacity to assist 245 former child soldiers, of which 242 or 98.77% are being used.

#### 3.1. Health Component

During the reporting quarter, a great advance was made regarding the restitution of the children's right to medical care. USAID signed an agreement with Profamilia, to cover health and reproductive prevention and treatment for ex-combatant children. Profamilia is an NGO with national coverage and leadership in sexual and reproductive health. The agreement includes an initial evaluation (through focus groups) on the children's sexual and reproductive imaginaries and knowledge, also, educational workshops and health treatment services. Additionally, it includes educational workshops for the technical teamwork in each Specialized Attention Center.

In the psychological area, two activities were initiated to create spaces of reflection on the assistance given and the models of intervention.

- A two-day workshop where all the psychologists of each institution of the Program participated. The themes discussed among others were: Role of the psychological attention, effects of war in children, crisis handling. A document with the memories of the workshop was developed, in order to promote debate on the achievements and limitations of the psychological attention in general.

- An investigation, on the profile of the children and the professionals assisting them. To that effect, an analysis was done on the Program's and every institution's guidelines and intervention models. One of the first results of the study is the recommendation that all work should be centered on an ethical and political dimension that reflects restitution of rights and defense, not only in the theory, but also in the practice. This investigation will be finished in October.

### 3.2. Pedagogical Component



During the reporting quarter energies were dedicated to strengthening the pedagogical component, due to weaknesses identified in the previous quarter. The hiring of a team of pedagogical professionals was initiated at the end of June and was finally carried out during this quarter.

For the pedagogical professionals and for the other consultants hired as part of the institutional strengthening strategy, OIM-ICBF-SCUK organized a two-day introductory seminar. The event main result was a joint Education Strategic Plan. Also, to inform them of the other work areas (health, income generation, etc.) of the program and the synergies among them. The Program's General Strategic Plan on Education was handed out to each center, together with the memories of the event and with the forms to use for its construction.

The results obtained from the seminary are a valuable tool for the creation of a reviewed education strategy. This should be ready to be implemented at local level as well at national level by the end of next quarter.

### 3.3. Institutional Strengthening Component

SC UK carried out 20 workshops to the different technical teams in order to build a protection and equity policy inside each institution and inside ICBF's team. In each workshop, one former child soldier was invited to participate and approximately 8-12 people attended each workshop.

#### 4. General Advances In The Protection Phase

##### **4.1 Protection Phase # 1: Transit Home<sup>16</sup>**

###### 4.1.1. Health Component

###### 4.1.1.1 Physical Health

Since this phase is where children first arrive after deserting from the armed groups, health services provided to them are of great importance. Children in this phase require an immediate diagnosis on their physical and psychological health conditions.

Part of the technical team in each Transit Home comprises of 1 doctor, 1 nutritionist and 1 psychologist. “Transit Home Jose” has also 1 nurse in charge of the medical check-ups for wounds or infections. The children also receive access to health services in public health agencies, for example Guavio and Victoria hospitals in the case of “Transit Home Jose”.

The most common illnesses presented by the children in Transit Homes are: skin infections, bullet wounds, stomach maladies such as ulcers and gastritis, among others. Many children also present eyesight problems.

As part of the Transit Home’s assistance, educational activities and workshops on health, hygiene, and nutrition have been developed with the aim of teaching the children about their body, how to take care of it and to respect it.

During this quarter these educational activities and health services have been strengthened by Profamilia’s intervention.

Under this agreement, a Focus Group has been carried out in two Transit Homes (Luna and Jose y Tania), which gave us insight on the strategies to implement during the educational workshops. The main results from this initial evaluation are the following:

1. The idea of respect was generally referred to as respect for oneself, and not as respect for the other.
2. Children express the need to communicate with their partners or with another person of the opposite sex.
3. There is evidence of homophobia and in some cases children went as far as expressing the need for social sanctions to correct this behavior, which is believed to be a main cause of violence.
4. Although both girls and boys share a helpless view of the future, girls have been able to imagine themselves in a future apart from the problems they face today. This is not the case with the boys, which generally tend to focus their expectations for the future on issues related to social and political conflicts.
5. Children possess knowledge on the different birth control methods, but there is lack of clarity on the symptoms and the difference between the various sexual transmitted diseases (STD).

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<sup>16</sup> See Annex 3: Project Cards



Also, 2 educational workshops (10 hours each) and outreach health services activities were carried out. A team of health professionals visited each Transit Home and performed general health evaluations for each child and filled out a medical history. Additionally, 8 professionals from Luna and José (4 from each one) have started with the sexual and reproductive educational workshops specifically directed to the technical teams of all the institutions (Transit Homes, CAES and Half Way Homes).

#### 4.1.1.2. Psychological Health

Transit Homes rely on the psychologist for this matter. He/she is in charge of the psychosocial support, such as the child's welcome, the diagnose of his or her psychological and emotional state, his or her integration and adapting process, as well as each child's future projection, weather he/she is transfer to the next phase of the Program or to another institution. Transfers depend on each child's profile.

During the reporting quarter all children who entered the Program have had an initial psychological evaluation, help in their adapting phase and also had their transfers defined.

#### 4.1.2 Pedagogical Component

Transit Homes have developed two main activities. First, an initial evaluation on educational and occupational abilities of each child, in order to visualize his or her potential; and second, the carrying out of educational activities combined with recreational, cultural and sports activities, as a strategy to open the child's mind to another world different from that of the armed conflict and help him to explore his / her freedom.

In general, as with other reporting quarters, educational levels are low, with a period of absence from school usually of more than a year. However, children have shown great interest in reading, writing and storytelling.

#### 4.1.3. Legal Component

The following considerations have been taken into account for each case of the arriving ex-combatant children:

- As soon as the child enters the Program through a Transit Home or another institution (such as Benposta<sup>17</sup>), the assigned legal authority has initiated the legal procedures necessary to grant the child the convenient protection measures.
- The child's transfer has obeyed the measure ordered by the competent legal authority (Judge or Family Counselor).
- The information provided by the child, has been handled with strict confidence, as well as the institution's location.

Additionally, 3 workshops have been carried out in order to familiarize the children with the legal procedures and the Program's objectives.

<sup>17</sup> During this quarter, 6 children entered the Program directly through Benposta.

#### 4.1.4. *Institutional Strengthening*

Monitoring was performed to the Program's implementing partners. This activity was carried out with a public official from the ICBF, in order to have a more comprehensive evaluation. The main strengths and weaknesses found during this quarter were:

Strengths:

- Welcoming and assistance to 84 ex-combatant children.
- Medical assistance provided to 84 children.
- Development of a weekly plan of activities, which includes recreational, educational, cultural and vocational activities.
- Good team's handling of the relationships and difficult situations. Strong evidence of the lessons learned during the process.

Difficulties:

- Some Transit Homes are handling more children than their installed capacity allows.

#### 4.2 Protection Phase #2: Specialized Attention Centers<sup>18</sup>

##### 4.2.1. *Health Component*

##### 4.2.1.1 Physical Health

Activities were focused in finding a solution to the difficulties in gaining access to medical care. Specialized Centers worked on the children's registration to the Health Beneficiary Social Information System (SISBEN by its Spanish initials). To date, the following figures show the number of children that have been able to access public health services:

Table #5: Children Accessing Public Health Services

Specialized Attention	Hospitals / Health Clinics	Children accessing Public Health Services
Arco Iris, Bogotá	Cami de Chapinero	18
La Bella, Cundinamarca	Hospital de Cota	20
Buendía, Cundinamarca	Chía Hospital	20
Melquíades, Cundinamarca	Cota Hospital	20
Don Bosco, Cali	Carlos Holmes Centro de Salud el Diamante	20
Semillas de Paz Bucaramanga	Florida Blanca Hospital	20
Nueva Vida, Medellín	San Juan de Dios Hospital Gilberto Mejía Hospital	19

Thanks to the USAID-Profamilia Agreement, sexual and reproductive health services will begin in seven Specialized Attention Centers located in four departments (Valle del Cauca, Santander, Antioquia and Cundinamarca) and Bogotá.

By end of the quarter, Cundinamarca/Bogotá was the most advanced region in the assistance process with Profamilia, having developed one Focus Group and initiated the educational workshop in 1 Specialized Attention Center. In the other departments the process has been slower, but they have all established a timetable for the development of the activities for the next quarter.

Additionally, 13 professionals from 4 Specialized Attention Centers in Cundinamarca and Bogotá attended the sexual and reproductive educational workshop for the technical team.

<sup>18</sup> See Annex 3: Project Cards

#### 4.2.1.2. Psychological Health

All the children who entered this second phase have received individual psychological sessions and group therapy on their adaptation process and life projection. Additionally, teamwork was also established between the psychological and psychoanalytical areas regarding a number of children transferred to the psychiatric institution “**Casa Carlinda**”. This has promoted constructive debate on the concepts used and the intervention models applied.

#### 4.2.2 Pedagogical Component

##### 4.2.2.1 Education

During this quarter work was focused on strengthening the process to restore the right to education within the Specialized Attention Centers. To that effect, seven pedagogical advisors were hired for a 6-month period. According to their Terms of Reference, they should improve the Program’s Education Strategy in coordination with IOM’s specialists.



The pedagogical advisors main task is to assure that by the end of his/her contract, each CAE can count on the pedagogical advisors begun to draft the minimum of standards of quality in the educational opportunities offered to former child combatants. Additionally, they began surveying the educational institutions, in each of the center’s neighborhoods, in order to broaden the “**educational portfolio**” of services with flexible and updated costs.

The teachers are advancing in the creation of the appropriate model for each CAE, according to the general focus of the education strategy<sup>19</sup>, approved in June by ICBF-IOM-SCUK and depending on what the local area can offer for these children, in terms of education. Some centers are focusing on sending all the children to a nearby school for Primary and Secondary education such as NGO Agarta in Bucaramanga. Other centers have found it better to create a school curricula within the center, (NGO Punto de Luz in Bogotá), some prefer to receive support from a nearby school (NGO Macondo in Cundinamarca), and others have a mixed system, where a preparation and leveling for further entry into the regular system is carried out in the center. (Don Bosco en Cali)

The idea is to provide quality education, but also to gradually open up the child’s perspective and knowledge on the world outside the CAE, in his / her process of reintegration into the civil society.

According to the diagnosis that the teacher carries out each month on every child in the educational area, the pedagogical work is designed, as personalized as possible, within the available framework. The pedagogic component is matched with the other ones – psychological and health, so that assistance is given in a holistic and comprehensive way.

The centers are functioning according to a timetable, in terms of the non-formal education. This means that they carry out organized activities, like sports and cultural activities. It is important to have the children occupied with appropriate activities, giving and efficient use the time spent in the Program.

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<sup>19</sup> See Annex 4: Pedagogical Component

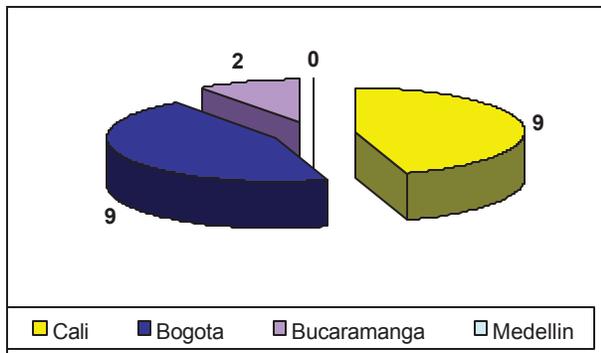
Due to the short time each child will spend in the Program, it is extremely important to have a written plan – the route to follow – which implementation starts immediately after a child enters a center, so that no time is wasted in getting to know what to do with a new child, taking into consideration that every child has to be treated individually. This applies for every area of assistance: education, health, therapeutic and judicial issues. All consultants have drawn their action plans.

There is a big effort in the centers to stimulate children to join the regular education system. Most of the cases the goal is getting the children to finish Primary School, with accelerated education programs, since their age and education levels are no longer adequate for the regular education system.

According to recent information provided by the CAES, during this quarter, 140 children have attended formal education programs. Out of these 140 children, 39 are in cycle 1 (1-3<sup>rd</sup> grade), 44 children are in cycle 2 (4-5<sup>th</sup> grade) and 48 children are in cycle 3 (6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> grade). 9 children attend grade 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>.

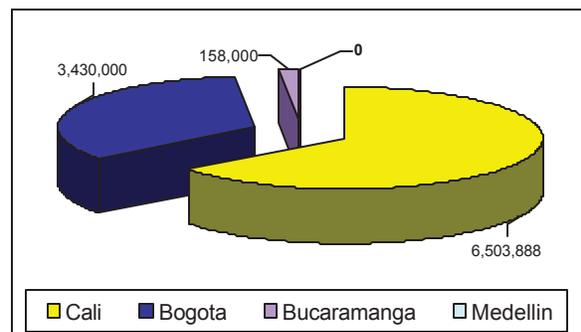
Half of the children have their costs covered by a scholarship program that ICBF negotiated with the Ministry of Education, implemented through a governmental entity – ICETEX – (Colombian Institute of Credits and Technical Studies Abroad). This means that these children have the possibility to continue their formal studies, and even apply for a technical course.

However some initial obstacles have to be solved concerning the Ministry of Education scholarships. For instance payment delays to educational institutions where children are already registered must stop. If the payments are not transferred on time, many institutions will not allow the children to keep on attending.



The other half of the children cannot access the ICETEX-ICBF program, due to lack of identification documents. However, the Program is trying to influence public policy in order to get educational institutions to receive children without them. On the other hand and foreseeing that this problem will not be solved soon enough, the Program created a scholarship fund. A pamphlet on the scholarship program has been prepared to inform the child and the family, especially at family gatherings about the possibilities to obtain a scholarship and the procedures on how to apply.

Benposta is a protection institution, which began assisting former child soldiers at the end of this quarter. So far, it is taking care of 20 children. This institution's strength is education and the Program is supporting the construction of an educational model. Benposta's philosophy is based on respect for children's rights and their responsibilities. Benposta practices self-governance among the children, involvement in the community work. Also favors diversity in the assisted population.



#### 4.2.2.2 Vocational Courses

The children are attending different vocational training courses in order to explore the labor market and to get to know which vocational area interests them. The majority of the courses are done outside the CAEs, but some are offered inside. Often they are organized in the form of workshops. Examples of the courses are: bread making, handicrafts, electricity, plumbing, and childcare.

#### 4.2.2.3 Culture

CERLALC's project "***Escojo la Palabra***" implemented in the Specialized Attention Centers of Semillas de Paz in Bucaramanga, Punto de Luz in Bogotá and Buendía and La Bella in the department of Cundinamarca, continued carrying out its activities during this quarter.

During this quarter, work continued focusing on the memory recovery, identity and respect for the individual. To this purpose, various activities were developed in which children were given the opportunity of expressing their dreams, perspectives, fears, imaginaries and representations. In the houses, a journal was built in which children wrote the daily events or emotions they considered important or relevant.

In general work has been a combination of recreational activities, reading and writing, training in audiovisual management, with which the children have been able to discover new expression techniques, points of view and cultural and artistic abilities.

During this quarter, CERLALC has also dedicated a lot of work analyzing their experience with the children and in systematizing the lessons learned and important aspects of the children's history and present. The final report is expected to be finished in November.

A second cultural expression day was carried out in the city of Bogotá this past 23 of July; 80 children from the different institutions participated. In this event, many important personalities from Colombia's political sectors: members of the new government, embassies, international organizations and the media attended. This event gave the possibility for people in the country's decision-making levels to get near the children's reality, not only from the war perspective, but also from their abilities and creativity.

#### 4.2.3 Legal Component

Aiming to speed up the children's legal processes, a team of attorneys was hired for a period of two months, July to August (one for each department where the Program has presence: Cundinamarca/ Bogotá, Antioquia, Valle and Santander)

Among the activities carried out by this team are:

- Established contact with the various legal authorities that are in charge of doing the follow up of each child's legal process (Judges or Family Counselors).
- Contacted the national, regional or local Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil (Colombian INS) to speed up the process to obtain identification cards for the children.
- Follow up on the rights of the children who left the armed groups voluntarily to receive certification and a remuneration (\$CO 8 million) Colombian from the Comité de Dejación de Armas – CODA (Demobilization Committee) at the Ministry of Interior
- ICBF initiated workshops with the children, where the legal route and the International Convention of the Rights of the Child were presented and discussed.

#### 4.2.4 Socio-Cultural Component



Family Reencounter in Bogotá



Family Reencounter in Bogotá

After a decision to handle this area directly with ICBF, a group of consultants were hired to work in the regions; a coordinator (sociologist) and 4 business administrators. According to their scope of work they will focus on restitution of children's rights to have a family. They will evaluate and recommend family reunification when possible. To date, they have organized family gatherings for 49 families throughout the country.

The two following tables show the number of families that attended in each region.

Table #6: Participation in Family Reencounters

Department	Children			Family Members			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Children	Total
Cundinamarca	14	10	24	14	25	6	45
Valle del Cauca	8	3	11	15	10	0	25
Bucaramanga	9	5	14	9	25	0	34
Total	31	18	49	38	60	6	104
	49			104			

#### 4.2.5. Institutional Strengthening component

During this quarter a total of 14 follow-up visits were carried out to monitor the progress made in each area by the CAE's (2 for each).



Follow-up visit in Bucaramanga

#### Strengths:

- Professional teams have been consolidated.
- Strengthened children's access to health services.
- Improvement in the efficiency of the legal procedures to obtain identification documents.
- Higher rates of school assistance.

#### Weaknesses:

- On average there is a 10% deficit per month.
- Some of the Specialized Attention Centers still have not obtained ICBF's functioning license.

5. General Advances In The Reintegration Phase

**5.1 Social Reintegration Alternative #1: Half Way Houses<sup>20</sup>**

Table #7: Data on Children's Exit from the Protection Phase

Type of Institution	Name of the Institution	Escaped	Half Way Houses	Family Reunification	Social Reintegration Program	Total
Transit Home	Luna	7	0	1	0	8
	José	2	0	1	1	4
Specialized Attention Center	Arco Iris	2	1	2	1	6
	Benposta	1	0	0	2	3
	Buendía	0	1	1	1	3
	La Bella	0	0	3	1	4
	Puertas Abiertas	3	5	2	0	10
	Semillas de Paz	3	1	1	1	6
	Melquíades	0	0	0	1	1
	Nueva Vida	1	0	0	0	1
ICBF's Institutions	Protection Network	2	0	3	0	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>51</b>

During the reporting quarter 51 children left the protection phase. Out of the total, 41% runaway during the first phases (Transit Homes and Specialized Attention Centers) and the fact that none of these escapes have occurred in Half Way Houses show that a great achievement has been done in the process. However, this also shows that the first phases have to be strengthened. On the other hand, 31% have been transferred to a social reintegration phase: Half Way Houses and Social Reintegration Program, while 28% have had the possibility of a family reunification.

5.1.1. Health Component

5.1.2 Physical Health

Half Way Houses have also been included in the agreement with Profamilia. However, the activities have not been carried out yet, but will be developed during the next quarter. A timetable for the activities has been agreed on and 5 professionals from the Half Way Houses in Bogotá have started assisting the sexual and reproductive educational workshops for the technical team.

5.1.3. Psychological Health

The need for strengthening the therapeutic area in the program was identified. A professional was hired temporarily for the following activities: i) to support the children in their social reintegration process, ii) to advise the personnel at the houses and to give them therapeutic guidelines to work with the children, iii) to advise on how to promote community participation, iv) to facilitate coordination and promote active participation of the personnel in the social integration process

<sup>20</sup> See Annex 3: Project Cards

A different approach was used depending on the type of interaction with the children. If the intervention was individual, the focus was to strengthen their personal and collective social process. If the interaction was in groups, the approach was advice to motivate participation and reading. Also, to support their academic process and their initiatives in the vocational and productive area.

### 5.1.2 Pedagogical Component

The pedagogical component in this phase of the program is concentrated on strengthening the vocational area, and to go on with the formal studies the child started in the previous phase, as a part of the social reintegration process.

Children in Half Way Houses have had the opportunity to access the Program's scholarship fund. Depending on the child's needs, the scholarship can cover: enrollment tuition, monthly tuition, nutrition, and transportation. The organization in charge of the children has the responsibility to support the child in the fulfillment of the studies, according to the plan. During this quarter, 11 children in Half Way Houses attended to vocational courses. This was possible through the Program's scholarship fund. Two of them benefit from the so-called mixed scholarship, which means that they receive support for both vocational training and formal education<sup>21</sup>.

#### 5.1.2.1 Education

According to recent information provided by the Half-Way Houses, thirty-eight children in the Half Way Houses in Bogotá, Cali and Bucaramanga are attending formal education; twenty of them are at Primary level and will graduate in December. One child in Bucaramanga is applying at the moment for university studies, in the area of psychology.

Additionally, with the extra support from a new advisor, NGO Rayuela in Bogotá is now providing a much more individualized educational assistance to the children. It is also implementing a methodology that is principally based in letting the child lead the process, providing information on the areas that motivate her/him. Planning is not done as strictly as in other systems. The team of employees noted an increased motivation from the children. They have also noted that this method means more of teamwork and interaction between the adults. They are investigating other pedagogical models existing in the country, being CAFAM – Program on Continued Education- a system on accelerated formal education one of the most promising for the children's special conditions. They have also found didactic material, which stimulates the child in learning. An effort made possible due to OIM funding.

#### 5.1.2.2 Vocational Training

The child is stimulated by various methodologies to take vocational courses, if possible with a period of practice as part of the training, and with a guarantee to obtain a certification. Actions are also being implemented in order to provide the children with labor opportunities.

The length of the training courses varies between 25 hours to 600 hours, distributed within a week up to 10 months. The average course has a 3 months length.

The project aims to make a small enterprise out of the centers, where the children gain competence in the vocational area/s installed at the center, and the idea is also that they can receive some remuneration for what they produce if sales are successful.

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<sup>21</sup> See Annex 4: Pedagogical Component

### 5.1.3 Income-generating Activities



In the area of income-generating activities, the first advance during this quarter was the inauguration of the Cultural Coffee "**La Maga**". 4 former child soldiers of the Half-Way Houses in Bogotá work there. General progresses made with the children in these 3 months have been an increase in commitment, acquired knowledge on the products and business management and teamwork.

Sales in September were of \$CO 2.203 million (\$801.00)<sup>1</sup> nearly reaching the balance point.

As pilot experiences, "**La Maga**" and the other formulated income-generating activities, have given valuable lessons which invite to reflect what is being thought of as social reintegration and what challenges lay ahead. For the latter reason, at the end of this quarter the construction of a new model for former child soldier's reintegration has begun, in which a more realistic way of thinking social reintegration and strategies more adequate to the children's abilities and needs will be proposed.

### 5.1.4. Legal Component

Based on the right to have a name and to be recognized as a person with rights and duties the Program has made a strong effort in the Half Way Houses to obtain the personal identification documents for those children who didn't have any. By the end of this quarter the 20 children at the Half Way Houses in Bogotá obtained their identification documents. Also, an 18 year old received his military certification papers. Educational Institutions usually require identification documentation; having acquired the identification documents for the 20 children made it possible for their assistance to nearby schools.

### 5.1.5 Socio-cultural Component

#### 5.1.5.1 Family

In this field, in Bogotá, various activities were carried out for the children in renewing contact with their families, even if there was not a favorable prognosis for this process. A process was started where 4 children were able to meet with their families, coming from various parts in the country, as Guaviare, Cundinamarca, Antioquia and Arauca.

The encounters have insightful and realistic information regarding the viability of a family reintegration. It also informs us on the conditions under which the families are living. In this context, the recruitment is not the only factor to take into consideration, but also forced internal migrations have a great impact on the child's process towards integration in the society. There is a theory that the child is viewed as a mean of protection for the family and not the other way around. The fact is that the child lives in a urban area, has possibilities for education, vocational training, and has a potentiality to generate income. It means an opportunity for the family to end with the misery life of forced migrations, poverty and despair, that the armed conflict has brought to all of them.

### 5.1.6. Institutional Strengthening Component

The follow up on the work being done in the Half Way Houses fall into two streams. On the one hand, there were monthly meetings with the technical group at the centers, discussing each child, visualizing the progress made, the legal processes, the emotional situation and projections for the social reintegration. On the other hand, special attention is given to the fact this phase of the program is the last one, and needs specific focus on the progress in the technical, administrative and financial area.

## **5.2 Social Reintegration Alternative #2: Family Reunification**

As the table above shows, 67 children have left the centers to family reunification since April, 2001. During the reporting quarter 14 have had the opportunity of being reunited with their families. Due to the armed conflict intensification and the State's capacity weakness to respond to this population, support to these children has been difficult to provide. One main difficulty is the task of locating these children who are spread all around the country, sometimes in far away villages, where means of communication are inefficient or inexistent.

Another issue to be considered is the legal condition of former child soldiers who have turned 18 years and above. ICBF, by the Colombian legislation is only responsible for former child soldiers under 18 years old. However, IOM's policy is to still support those children who have finished their process in the CAES. Without ICBF's collaboration in the following of these former child soldiers the task of locating them becomes even more difficult.

### 5.2.1 Education

Considering the difficulties to locate children that are older than 18 years, the number of them who currently access the scholarship program is low. However, due to the support from IOM's Regional Office in Cali, during the previous quarter 5 children benefited from the scholarships fund. This quarter, two additional children have also started in their educational formation.

### 5.2.2 Income-generating Activities

As well as the problems faced by the children to access the scholarship fund, the income-generating activities have suffered some setbacks during this quarter. In the previous quarter some projects were developed, however their carrying out has been delayed due to unexpected events in the children's situations (pregnancies, displacement, family instability, among others). However, it is worth mentioning that three children in Cali began a training process for labor insertion.



## 1. "Ruta Jurídica" (Legal route for ex-combatant children)

### Legal Route training<sup>22</sup>



An Agreement was signed between the Ombudsman Office and IOM for the training on the "**Ruta Jurídica**" (Legal Route) of 1050 General Attorney's Office Officials nationwide at the end of June.

For the training, a team of 2 lawyers and 2 social scientist professionals were hired to dictate workshops in each of the country's departmental capitals. These workshops have been designed with an emphasis on a participative methodology, with the aim of gathering ideas and proposals on prevention and social reintegration. Up until now, 524 Public Ministry Officials have been trained, which in turn have agreed on the compromise of multiplying the information on the "**Ruta Jurídica**" and on the process and problems faced by former child soldiers once they demobilize.

### 1.1 Save the Children- UK

As well as the Human Right's Ombudsman Office, Save the Children has also started disseminating the "**Ruta Jurídica**" through workshops. However, Save the Children has focused its workshops on communities with the aim to raise awareness on the responsibility of society to prevent children of recruiting and help former child soldiers reintegrate into society.

So far, a workshop pilot experience was carried out in Bogotá and later 2 more workshops were carried out in Villavicencio and Antioquia.

### 1.2 Colombian Institute for Family Welfare

ICBF has developed a workshop with the Governments Military Forces during this quarter. The main objectives have been: 1.) To train and disseminate the Legal Route, which in one of the components states that former child soldiers, who have been either captured or who have disengaged voluntarily, must be turned in to the Colombian institute for Family Welfare in less than 36 hrs; and 2.) To promote child rights protection and DIH.

## 2. Publications

During the reporting quarter little advance was made on the initiated projects for publication like the Initial Diagnosis on the Program's Status and the Program's Booklet. However, during this quarter a book on the situation that face Colombian child soldiers was finally published. The name of the book is "Warriors Without a Shadow" and is written by members of the ICBF and an Office from the Public Ministry. Up until now, 1500 samples have been distributed.

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<sup>22</sup> See Annex 3: Project Cards

### 3. Cinemateca Distrital

An Agreement has been made between IOM and the Cinemateca Distrital. A national contest opened on August 29 in which 2 directors will be chosen for the production of a short film and a documentary on war effects on Colombian children. This project's aim is to raise awareness on the situation faced by child soldiers and former child soldiers in a creative and artistic way.

### 4. Universidad De Los Andes

During this quarter a short term Agreement has been made with Universidad de Andes University. This Agreement comprises of a Forum, which aims to analyze, debate and disseminate the child soldier issue, specially the legal frameworks implemented for their protection. As a second objective, it also aims at developing research on the ways in which harmony and coherence can be achieved between the National Legislature for children and adolescents and the Convention on Children's Rights.

## VI. SUPPORT TO INDIGENOUS AND AFRO-COLOMBIAN EX-COMBATANT CHILDREN

### 1. Cauca<sup>23</sup>



The Colombian conflict affects the most vulnerable people, which in this case are minorities groups and rural population. As a way of supporting these vulnerable populations during the reporting quarter IOM's Support Program initiated prevention and a social reintegration project in 3 indigenous and 1 afro-Colombian community in the Department of Cauca.

#### 1.1 Prevention

The prevention project has been carried out in the four communities, through the development of workshops on themes such as: Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, Children Rights, Conflict Resolution and Peace Processes. These workshops are directed to children in schools, Youth organizations (which include children who are not currently studying) and teachers. Therefore, each workshop implements a recreational and artistic methodology, which includes activities such as painting, dancing and theatre. This methodology and the team's ability to build trust relationships in the community have resulted in the benefiting of more than the 366 stipulated children, since other members of the community have also shown interest in them. So far, 18 workshops of 9 hours each have been developed, for an approximate of 4 workshops in each community.

<sup>23</sup> See Annex 3: Project Cards

The final objective of these workshops is to develop awareness raising on the related themes, but also to gather material for the inclusion of a course on DIH, Children's Rights and conflict management in the schools of the communities.



## 1.2 Social Reintegration

The social reintegration area has been carried out through income-generating activities for 63 identified former child soldiers in two municipalities Caloto and La Maria. These income-generating activities are: blueberry fields, chicken barn and pig breeding. The development of these projects has been an interesting process, above all in the children's attitude towards the community and vice versa. With their carrying out, has come an improvement on the community acceptance of these children and in return a better disposition from the children to collaborate and succeed in their income-generating activities.

Additionally, during this quarter the need of a project extension was identified. Thus, 4 new income-generating activities were formulated for 23 new identified ex-combatant children in the communities of Río Blanco and Guachané; and 2 new components to the prevention project were added: the production of a video on life alternatives for ex-combatant children and the elaboration of an Indigenous and Afro-Colombian Legal Procedures' Guide.

Finally, 100 former child soldiers will benefit from the IOM-Profamilia Agreement for sexual and reproductive health. Up until now 83 have been identified, but quotas have been left for other new ex-combatant children entering the Program. The workshops in this area will have to take into account each community's culture and traditions.

## 2. Chocó<sup>24</sup>



Having seen the positive results in the prevention and social reintegration project in the Department of Cauca, during the months of August and September, IOM's team worked on the elaboration of a prevention and social reintegration proposal for the department of Chocó. As a strategic ally, Human Rights' Ombudsman Office will be in charge of implementing the future proposal.

### PREVENTION

Coordination will be initiated with the Human Rights Ombudsman Office and the indigenous organisation OREWA on education about human rights and international human rights, indigenous legislation and orientation on the importance of maintaining the family as society's social base.

Workshops will be carried out on these themes and on indigenous handicraft, weaving etc, to strengthen the ethnic identity of the former child soldiers and their families, and also to focus on community leadership.



Additionally, a diagnosis will be carried out on the situation on former child soldiers in Afro Colombian communities, in the indigenous municipalities of Istmina and Tadó, which aims to result in a project proposal on prevention, education and cultural issues, among others, implementing a program similar to the above mentioned, focusing on create respect for the culture, the traditions and co existence in these communities, giving space to organization, thus strengthening the communities.

<sup>24</sup> See Annex 3: Project Cards

## 2.1 Social Reintegration

The prevention strategy can only be successful if it's followed by a program that takes into consideration the improvement on income generation for the former child soldiers and those in high risk for recruitment, their families and the communities. It is important to promote this change of life, create optimism, and develop productive initiatives that come from the children themselves and their families. The project will begin with 13 already identified former child soldiers, of whom 10 start a small sugar mill, as an income-generating activity (called "trapiche") and the other 3 children will begin pig breeding. For these, the children will receive training.

The handicraft and weaving workshops are also part income-generation strategy for the former child soldiers and their families. A group of beneficiaries have already obtained some contacts with the capital city and even markets outside the country, in Europe, to facilitate the commercialization of their future products.

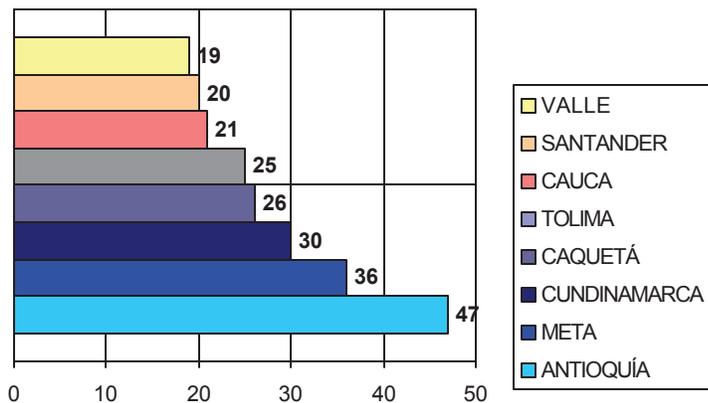
## VII. PREVENTION

Prevention projects were not initially included in OIM-US AID Support Program for Ex-combatant Children. During the previous quarter a pilot experience initiated in the Department of Cauca (mentioned in the previous section of this report), which gave insight on the need to expand the scope of work to this topic.

Advances on this component have been basically two: 1.) A diagnosis on the zones of origin<sup>25</sup> of the majority of the children already assisted, assisted in the ICBF-s Specialized Attention Program and 2.) A review of the agencies working on this subject, which in turn led to the definition of the Program's Strategies<sup>26</sup>.

The results of the diagnosis by Department are represented in the graph below.

Graph #6: Departments of majority of origin of the assisted ex-combatant children.



As the graph on the left shows, Antioquia, Meta, Cundinamarca, Caquetá, Tolima, Cauca, Santander y Valle are the 8 main departments, which out of 343<sup>1</sup> children, accumulate 224 cases, which in turn represents 65% out of the total.

<sup>25</sup> Since information on the place of recruitment is not available, the place of birth was taken as the second best indicator.

<sup>26</sup> See Annex 5: Prevention

The results by municipalities of majority of origin of the assisted ex-combatant children, are represented in the table below:

*Table #8: Data on the Place Origin of the Assisted Children in ICBF's Program*

Department	Municipality	Children
<b>ANTIOQUIA</b>	Apartadó	<b>4</b>
	Medellín	<b>4</b>
	Puerto Berrio	<b>4</b>
<b>ARAUCA</b>	Saravena	<b>7</b>
	Tame	<b>4</b>
<b>CAQUETÁ</b>	Florencia	<b>8</b>
<b>CUNDINAMARCA</b>	Bogotá	<b>9</b>
<b>GUAVIARE</b>	San José del Guaviare	<b>4</b>
<b>META</b>	Granada	<b>5</b>
	Mesetas	<b>9</b>
	Villavicencio	<b>5</b>
	Vista Hermosa	<b>4</b>
<b>SANTANDER</b>	Barrancabermeja	<b>15</b>
<b>VALLE</b>	Cali	<b>5</b>
	Jamundí	<b>6</b>

Of these, it is worth mentioning that the municipality of Saravena in the department of Arauca and the municipality of San José del Guaviare in the department of Guaviare accumulate a significant number of cases individually, and not included as part of the 8 main departments presented in the map above.

Of all the municipalities, Barrancabermeja is the one with more accumulated cases (15).

The Prevention Strategy has been outlined during this quarter taking into account that domestic violence, school desertion, and lack of life opportunities are hinted to be the main causes of voluntary recruitment in Colombia. (source of information)

Based on the above the Prevention Strategies would be directed to four key areas: i) Youth ii) Family iii) School iv) Community and 5) the State. Depending on the target area, different Interventions can be carried out, but the four general strategies are: 1.) Research, 2.) Awareness Raising, 3.) Participation and 4.) Empowerment.

## VIII. LESSONS LEARNED

### 1. Protection

#### 1.1. Protection Phase #1: Transit Homes

- The assistance given to the newly demobilized former child soldiers is more effective. A model of assistance has been developed for the restitution of rights and the social reinsertion.
- ICBF and the NGOs need to ensure that the diagnosis, assistance and communication provided to children during this phase be more qualified, clear, confidential and coherent with their reality, expectations and security situation.

#### 1.2 Protection Phase #2: Specialized Attention Centers (CAE)

- Designed strategies for each phase of the attention process. They are based on the child's process and his/her restitution of rights. These right's restitution should be continued after the child has left the Program through the implementation of monitoring and evaluation system. One of the ultimate objectives of the program is the restitution of children's rights. To achieve this, specific strategies must be designed for each phase of the process. Given the children's continuing vulnerability after they leave the centers, it is important to continue monitoring their progress through the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system.
- All actions must be centered on achieving the children's social reintegration.
- Health should not only be narrowly conceived as providing medical services. The restitution of the children's rights to health also means providing education on sexuality and reproductive health.
- Rights restitution is a program priority. One of those rights is the right to have a family but the reunification process has proven very slow. The process implies many delicate phases: initial contact, recognition, relationship building, mourning the separation and healing. It is important to succeed at the family reunification process, or the risks increase that the child will return to the armed groups. Family encounters are without a doubt a good strategy for psychosocial restoration between the family and the former child soldier but is an intensive and time-consuming process.

### 2. Social Reintegration

#### 2.1 Social Reintegration Alternative #1: Half Way Houses

- Social reintegration is the most difficult phase. Although during the assistance in the previous phase, the CAE tries to give the children tools to facilitate their social reintegration, it is still difficult to find ways in which these young people can earn a living and carry on alone. The income generation model, based on individual small enterprises, is still far from being a realistic approach, given the children's abilities and situation. Thus, the model is being re-evaluated.
- Projects based on creating work opportunities have contributed to the children's motivation to continue with their formal education and technical training.
- The established time-frames for the assistance process do not go mesh with the time-frames necessary for the children's economic and social integration, taking into account the children's educational levels and emotional stability as well as the required legal processes.

#### 2.2 Social Reintegration Alternative #2: Family Reunification

- Without a complete and efficient follow-up system that allows monitoring of individual children's success in the family setting support is difficult to provide.
- Distances and poor means of communication also make it difficult to locate the children.
- Although a social evaluation is used to determine if family reunification is a viable option, unfavorable safety and welfare conditions often reduce the likelihood of successful social reintegration.

### 2.3 Cauca and Chocó

- The social reintegration of ex-combatant indigenous and Afro-Colombian children appears to be very successful. Children in income-generating activities show self-assurance, commitment and stability, enabling them to develop their small enterprises without much difficulty. In this sense, community support and family involvement have been valuable contributions.
- The income-generating activities have been a successful strategy for the prevention of the children's re-recruitment. However, security issues still threaten their long-term success.
- Youth organizations have shown potential as an effective means of preventing re-recruitment. Nevertheless, these organizations need tools and technical assistance to develop effective channels of community participation.
- Cultural and artistic activities have proven to be the most successful methodology to capture the children's interest and increase their participation.

### 2.4 Prevention

- The survey of prevention projects currently being carried out by NGO's focuses on raising awareness and disseminating information on human rights. These strategies help prevent recruitment up to a point. However, without viable livelihood opportunities, war still remains the most attractive option. Prevention projects should aim at providing the children with tools for their life projects, such as education, income-generation and means for peaceful resistance to forced recruitment.

### 2.5 Information Dissemination

- Workshops on the "*Ruta Jurídica*" have provided insight on society's low level of understanding about the child soldiers phenomenon, including their special situation as ex-combatants, their rights and the existence of the Program. Prevention and assistance activities will be difficult to carry out without greater dissemination on the reasons for recruitment, the Program's existence and the existing legal framework for their protection.

## **X. FIFTH QUARTER ACTION PLAN**

For next quarter the following priorities have been identified for each of the Program's lines of work:

### **1. Institutional Network and Contingency Plan**

1. Updating and additions to the Contingency Plan with information on installed capacity in reformative institutions. With the conflict's intensification, reformative institutions in the big cities need to increase their installed capacity to assist children who have participated in the armed groups but through urban militias.

### **2. Improvements to Existing Programs**

1. The consolidation of the assistance process, based on the lessons learned:
2. Design and implement an adjustment plan of the assistance process, based on the lessons learned, in order to strengthen the intervention models.
3. The development of a system for the monitoring and follow up of the Programs achievements, difficulties and sustainability:
4. Review the advances. finish and implement the monitoring system. The latter will be carried out through the hiring of a consultant.
5. To strengthen the children's social reintegration process:
6. Focus actions on Children in Hal Way Homes and in Family Reunification, in order to consolidate their social reintegration.
7. Design strategic plans for the income generation and Pedagogical components:
8. Design plan at a regional level, in order to strengthen income-generating activities and education for Children en Half Way Homes and Family Reunification, according to labor and economic opportunities in the local markets.
9. To initiate the systematization of the Program's experiences:
10. Design and initiate the systematization process already initiated, by work areas carried out with former child combatants in each phase.

### **3. Other Contingency Plan Activities**

1. The development and implementation of the prevention component:
2. Consolidation of the Prevention Plan, coordinating actions with ICBF as well as with Human Rights' Ombudsman Office, Cauca's governorship, and the indigenous representative organizations in Cauca and Chocó.

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## **XII. ANNEXES**

Annex # 1. Financial status report certified by IOM Chief of Mission

Annex # 2. Press Release

Annex # 3. Assistance Data

Annex # 4. Project Cards

Annex # 5. Pedagogical Component

Annex # 6. Prevention