



Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the UK and Ireland

Fact Sheet: **MISSION CHILDREN OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD**

Background

The Mission Children of the Neighbourhood was launched in July 2008 during President Chavez's weekly television programme "Aló Presidente" with the aim of attending specifically to the needs of street children, children at risk and those with social problems such as drug abuse and alcoholism.

The overall objective is to provide comprehensive protection for children and adolescents in a situation of social vulnerability and risk.

The mission aims to offer protection to the following groups:

- Children and adolescents deprived of a family upbringing
- Children and adolescents at risk
- adolescent workers
- adolescents addicted to drugs

Phases of the mission

The mission covers the sector of society of young people from birth to the age of 17. It is divided into two phases.

First phase:

The first sees to the needs of four different groups inside this sector:

- children living on the street

- young children and adolescents living in institutions, more specifically those children in the care of INAM (the former Children's Welfare Office)
- children and adolescents who work
- children at risk - this is the largest group section because it covers all the social sectors

Second phase:

The second phase involves bringing together children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 17 to form the Organisation of Children and Adolescents of Venezuela. This organisation will be led by the children and adolescents. They will work with communal centres of protection to strengthen social values and combat exploitation, harassment, abuse, physical violence and psychological abuse.

Detailed breakdown of all the services provided at Mission Children of the Neighbourhood

Detox and rehabilitation for adolescents addicted to drugs:

Yakó Yauerá, meaning the "House of Happiness" in the indigenous language Warao, is the first national detox centre. It was inaugurated in July 2008.¹

¹ <http://www.idena.gob.ve/index.php/proyectos-y-programas/atencion-terapeutica-y-de-desintoxicacion>



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- Comprehensive detox and rehabilitation programme. Psychosocial therapy.
- Comprehensive programme involving doctors, psychiatrists, social workers and education professionals work together to reintegrate the adolescent back into their family.
- Outpatient treatment, including periodic drug testing and continued support and therapy.

Child protection shelters

A number of child protection shelters have been created to take in children and adolescents at risk. The centres offer temporary care for children who have not been permanently removed from their families.

National Plan for Family Inclusion

Fostering and adoption service for children and adolescents that cannot be placed with their parents. Over 1,500 vulnerable children have been guaranteed their right to a family environment.²

Programme for the protection of child and adolescent workers

This programme is dedicated to eradicating the labour exploitation of children and adolescents. The programme also promotes labour rights, safe working conditions and access to health services for adolescents of working age. Over four hundred children and

² <http://www.vtv.gov.ve/noticias-nacionales/33712>

adolescents have benefitted from this programme.³

Semillero de la Patria (Education programme to promote children's rights)

“Semillero de la Patria”, meaning literally sowing the seeds of the homeland, is a social education programme that teaches children and adolescents about their rights, social wellbeing, social justice, respect for the environment, peace and solidarity. The idea behind the programme is to promote children's development as citizens. Each community has a “semillero” group which is lead by the youngsters themselves with the orientation of specialists from the Mission Children of the Neighbourhood. Over 17,000 children are currently involved in this programme.

As part of the Semillero programme, children are also taught communication skills are produce a weekly radio programme on important issues such recycling, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction and sexually transmitted diseases among others.⁴

Colmenita Bolivariana (Children's Theatre Programme)

Colmenita Bolivariana, a joint initiative between Mission Children of the Barrio and Mission Culture: Heart within the Community, teaches theatre, circus performance and dance to children and promotes positive values.

³ <http://www.vtv.gov.ve/noticias-nacionales/33712>

⁴ <http://www.idena.gob.ve/index.php/component/content/article/2-noticias/820-voceritos-y-voceritas-se-apoderan-de-las-emisoras-comunitarias-de-aragua>



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- Percentage of children with access to primary health care stands at 80%⁵

Mobile social education unit

The mobile unit of Mission Children of the Neighbourhood brings educational, recreational and cultural activities directly to the children

Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LOPNNA)

The Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LOPNNA) was reformed in 2009 involving an institutional rethink of the administrative organs of the system of protection.

The reform affords a number of new rights to Venezuelan children and adolescents:

- The right to be well cared for, incorporating the word love into a legal text for the first time.
- Poverty cannot be a reason for separating children and adolescents from their family environment. By extension, this determines that it is the responsibility of the state to guarantee social inclusion and support families.

Other government advances in the area of childhood and adolescents

- Pre-school enrolment is now at 65.3%
- Primary education enrolment is at 92%
- Infant mortality has dropped from 25.6 to 13.7 per 1000 live births
- Childhood vaccination stands at 78.5

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For more news and information about Venezuela, please visit our website:

www.embavenez-uk.org

⁵ Mission Children of the Neighbourhood:
<http://www.idena.gob.ve/index.php/la-institucion/mision-ninos-y-ninas-del-barrio>