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COLOMBIA

SUCCESS STORY

Learning About Justice Through Theater

A USAID-supported justice and human rights education project reaches Colombian children



Photo: FIU, Javier Said

The theater has proven to be an innovative way to educate new generations and increase confidence in the justice system.

More than 39,200 children have viewed the play and afterward, their perception of the justice system is improved.

USAID/Colombia is partnering with the Carrera Theater Foundation to educate Colombia's children about justice and human rights and build their trust in the country's justice institutions. As a result of the partnership, a play was created to teach young children about these values, as well as ways to access justice through peaceful means such as mediation.

The play, *Pataplín Rataplán: Children for Justice*, created by the partnership, has far exceeded the original project goal. After the play opened to an initial target group of 2,000, demand grew and the play ultimately reached over 39,200 children. After initial shows in and near Bogotá, the play was requested by a large number of district schools and companies.

The Mayor's Office of Bogotá and the Bogota Philharmonic Orchestra selected the play to be part of their educational programs to be presented in the city's main sports arena. Approximately 700 buses transported more than 30,000 children to nine showings of the play. Additionally, the play will be filmed in DVD format so that it may be brought to more of Colombia's regions.

Pataplín Rataplán has become a high-impact sustainable education project. A survey conducted of children after they saw the play revealed that the credibility of institutions responsible for imparting justice is growing and confidence in the system is increasing.

After seeing the play, ten-year-old Camilo Rodriguez summed up its success. "Now I know that justice is for all of us. We have rights and we can go to the Justice Houses (regional centers that help with conflict resolution) if we have problems in our homes," he said.