

Cali Como Vamos: Key Findings and Recommendations

Key findings

What do the indicators tell us?

- **3 out of every 10 inhabitants of Santiago de Cali are children** (aged between 0 and 17 years), and, as such, their constitutional and legal rights “take priority over the rights of others”. The state has a duty and obligation to use “all of the funds at its disposal” in order to guarantee children’s rights on an ongoing basis, and to ensure that these funds are targeted in such a way as to yield positive results.
- **In 2015, around half of all children (307,212) in Cali were registered under the Colombian Beneficiary Identification System (SISBEN-III).** Poverty, understood in terms of income level and material living conditions, poses a number of serious risks for the people of Cali.
- **8.9% of the city’s children can be classified as being among the poorest of the poor** (58,644 children in extreme poverty, defined by a score of ≤ 23.4 on the SISBEN-III Welfare Index). These children should be regarded as the priority population for local policy action.
- **Falling at the first hurdle: registration of births.** According to the available data for 2015, 1 in 6 infants under the age of one year has not been registered and so is effectively invisible to the state. This presents a challenge in terms of ensuring that their rights are recognized.
- **Progress in immunization coverage.** In 2015, immunization coverage surpassed the target of 95% established by the EPI; in fact, in 8 of the city’s 22 *comunas* (administrative precincts), 100% of children under the age of 6 were confirmed to have received all recommended vaccinations.
- **The Child Mortality Ratio (CMR) (applicable to children < 5 years) in the city was 10.3 per 1,000 live births in 2015;** this remains higher than the target envisaged by the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 (8.8). Cali’s CMR was, however, below the national average (12.8) and significantly lower than that of the capital, Bogotá (17.02).
- **Around two thirds of all deaths of children under the age of 5 are preventable.** 60.3% of under-five deaths occurring in 2015 resulted from problems arising in the

perinatal period, and could have been avoided with a package of measures including preventative intervention, early diagnosis, and improvements in socio-economic conditions.

- ***The incidence of chronic undernourishment among the under-fives increased from 7.6% in 2014 to 9.7% in 2015.*** It is striking that no targets for this indicator are included in the 2012-2015 Municipal Development Plan, or in the current National Development Plan.



- **The triple burden of malnutrition: Chronic undernourishment, overweight, and obesity occur side by side.** Data for the school-age population (grades 0, 1 and 2) held by public institutions in Cali for 2014 confirm that 5.14% are chronically undernourished, while 16.97% are classified as overweight and 10.10% as obese.
- **In 2014, approximately 37% of mothers aged between 15 and 19 lived in 4 comunas in the east of the city.** Teenage pregnancy is concentrated in *comunas* 13, 14, 15, and 21.
- **93.2% of pregnant women attended 4 or more prenatal checkups.** This means that there were 1,840 babies born alive in 2015 whose mothers had not received the number of prenatal checkups recommended by the WHO. Prenatal checkups are an important and cost-effective strategy to help ensure early diagnosis of illness and complications during pregnancy and birth.
- **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is unacceptably high.** In 2015, the Maternal Mortality Ratio in *comuna* 15 was 132.3 — four times higher than the average for Cali as a whole (32.7). According to UNICEF, the majority of maternal deaths can be prevented if women have access to quality obstetric care at the right times.
- **Progress in childcare and early education coverage.** In 2015, the number of children receiving help from Colombia's Comprehensive Care Program for Early Childhood (PAIPA in Spanish) increased by 32% with respect to 2014. Nevertheless, there remains a significant gap between supply and demand: out of the 38,819 children eligible for the program, there were 6,422 whom it failed to reach.
- **Difficulties in assessing education coverage.** There are substantial discrepancies in the school enrollment data reported by the different institutions: the Ministry of National Education (MEN), the Municipal Education Secretariat (SEM), and the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE). However, all data sources agree that the Gross Coverage Rate for transition (5-6 years), primary, and mid-secondary education declined between 2014 and 2015.
- **Gross Coverage Rate for mid-secondary education was found to be low (60% in 2015).** This indicates that the transition between basic secondary and mid-secondary education is by no means inevitable. This has a damaging effect on young people's chances of going on to university, as well as on efforts to increase human capital by raising education standards.
- **From the information available for 2015, it is not possible to draw any conclusions regarding children's immediate environments.** Only one quality of life survey has been carried out in the city, between 2012 and 2013.


- **The homicide rate among under-18s fell between 2014 and 2015.** However, homicides remain significantly more prevalent than in other cities, with Cali's homicide rate being 8 times higher than Bogotá's and 3 times higher than Medellín's.
- **It is clear that the city of Cali receives significant numbers of people who have been displaced and victimized by conflicts in the region.** This is reflected in the victimization rates for the child population registered in 2015 by place of incidence and place of reporting, and clearly indicates a growing demand for social services among children and families in those areas.
- **The highest number of cases of domestic and sexual violence towards children were reported by four comunas in the east of the city (13, 14, 15, and 21).** In 2015, 35.6% of cases where children were abused within households affected by domestic violence, and 22.1% of cases of sexual violence, occurred in these comunas.

Some recommendations

Action Points

- There is an urgent need for an **integrated, up-to-date system of indicators for child well-being that could serve as a guide for public policy decisions.** The lack of availability of current, reliable, disaggregated, and consistent data at city and comuna level continues to pose a challenge.
- Closer attention must be paid to the **obstacles to registering births** and to the limitations of the information systems used in this process. Registration is the first rung on the ladder of child development, and an essential stepping stone towards the recognition of other rights.
- **A municipal strategy aimed at reducing the negative impact of socio-economic factors on children's well-being, particularly in four eastern comunas (13,14,15, and 21)** is also needed. In these comunas, poverty and vulnerability overlap with high incidences of homicide, sexual violence, and abuse perpetrated against children. There is undoubtedly a need for greater and more systematic coordination between the various actors, i.e. local government, academia, community leaders, NGOs, and private organizations.
- A periodic **Quality of Life Survey** for the city should be carried out, at least biannually, with information recorded at the comuna level. This would allow for a more accurate assessment of children's living conditions and familial environments, and of the communities in which they live.

- ***It is important that the targets established in the 2016-2019 Municipal Development Plan (PDM in Spanish) be reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted.***
We can see that some of the plan's targets have been weakened in comparison to the previous version. For example, the 2012-2015 PDM proposed a target Child Mortality Ratio of 8.5 per 1000 live births, whereas in the current plan this target is set at 9.1.
- ***Including the voices of children themselves*** is the key to achieving a more thorough analysis of child well-being. Objective indicators should be complemented by subjective ones — i.e., indicators that capture children's own perceptions of their quality of life. In the short term, this recommendation could be put into practice by including a set of questions aimed at children in the citizen's perception survey carried out by the Cómo Vamos City Network.
- It is recommended that ***certain specific and pertinent aspects of the local context be monitored and explored in more detail***, for example: childhood inequality and poverty, malnutrition, teenage pregnancy, violence against children, and the lack of adequate spaces for play and recreation. A number of other issues that have not been addressed in this report due to insufficient data, such as disability, should also be examined. This could take the form of a series of bulletins or reports written to high academic standards, offering policymakers and a wider audience the tools to understand the measures that the city must take in order to safeguard and promote children's well-being in all of its dimensions.
- The ***various institutions need to work together effectively in the best interests of children***, and to approach this sector of the population in a comprehensive manner. By comprehensive, multi-sector policy measures for children, we mean those that, among other characteristics, are aimed at a "unique and complex" socio-economic context, within which programs for health (both preventative and educational), physical infrastructure (quality housing, public utilities, public hospitals, child development centers), and public safety are implemented in a coordinated way to bring about improvements in children's well-being. The municipality's recently established Undersecretary for Early Childhood is expected to play an important role in coordinating and integrating public policies aimed at children at the local level.

 Cali, ¿Cómo Vamos en Niñez?

Background

Our report, “**Cali, ¿Cómo Vamos en Niñez? Priorizando la niñez en la agenda urbana**”, forms part of the second phase of a project for measuring and monitoring children’s living conditions and analyzing childhood inequality that is being implemented by the Cómo Vamos City Network, led by the Corona Foundation and Equidad para la Infancia.

The first phase consisted of establishing a baseline for monitoring early childhood living conditions for the year 2013 in 7 Colombian cities (Minujín, Bagnoli, Osorio & Aguado, 2015).

Data and Information Sources

Creating a battery of indicators based on reliable, comparable and up-to-date information remains a key challenge. In order to understand and interpret the indicators included in this report correctly, it is important to bear the following points in mind:

- At the municipal level, we have based our analysis on information provided by the relevant secretariats and government offices.
- At the national level, the data derives from the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), the Unitary Child Well-Being Indicator System (SUIN), the Colombian Institute of Family Well-being (ICBF), the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Science (INMLCF), the National Ministry of Education (MEN), the National Information Network at the Victims’ Unit (RNI), and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection’s Comprehensive Social Protection System (SISPRO).
- Preference was given to finalized figures, and, in the case of provisional data, the most recent information deriving from official sources was used.
- Aggregated figures draw on national data wherever possible in order to allow for comparison with other cities.