

COMIC BOOK WARNS AGAINST THE FORCED RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN

In an effort to seek solutions for humanitarian emergency situations and avoid the participation of minors in the armed conflict in Colombia, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supports a project led by the *Maya Nasa Foundation* to avoid the recruitment of minors from strengthening illicit armed groups. This foundation seeks to support the work of both government institutions and civil society to prevent and reduce the vulnerability of the population exposed to recruitment.

The approximate cost of this project is \$430,000. The United States provided \$60,000. This initiative is made up of three elements:

1. The design and distribution of comic books addressed to vulnerable boys, girls and teenagers, and the development of a website www.mayanasa.org,
2. The development of an investigation on the use of minors in the armed conflict, and
3. The creation of demo tapes for radio and a TV soap operas to be produced with the same objective.

In addition to the US Government, other partners in this project include the Italian government and other Colombian government institutions such as the Inspector General's Office, the Ombudsman's Office, the Prosecutor General's Office, the National Learning Service and the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare.



Image of Maya Nasa, main character of the comic book that carries its name. Currently in its third edition, it is distributed in areas of conflict where there is the largest number of reports of child recruitment.

Other characters



Uwa Zee: Intuition



Yuyu Nehl: Healing Power.

MAYA NASA: THE COMIC BOOK

The comic book created by the *Maya Nasa Foundation* is an original methodology that provides minors with information on human rights and international humanitarian law.

The story revolves around *Maya Nasa*, a young girl of multi-ethnic origins born in an imaginary country at war. She coexists with characters from other cultures and faiths, and is dedicated to transmitting messages of non-violence and respect for nature to young boys and girls.

In each chapter leaders of the communities in peril appear and *Maya* receives the advice and constant supervision of the

“Invisible *Maloca* Council”, a council made up of 12 wise ancestors, whose power and identities are linked to the cosmology of *Maya Nasa's* world.

For more information on this comic strip and the *Maya Nasa Foundation*, visit:

http://www.mayanasa.org/home_ingles/mayanasa.html

If you're interested in publishing this story or on obtaining more information on US support to Colombia, please call: (57-1) 383-2625 or write to: AndradeIE@state.gov