

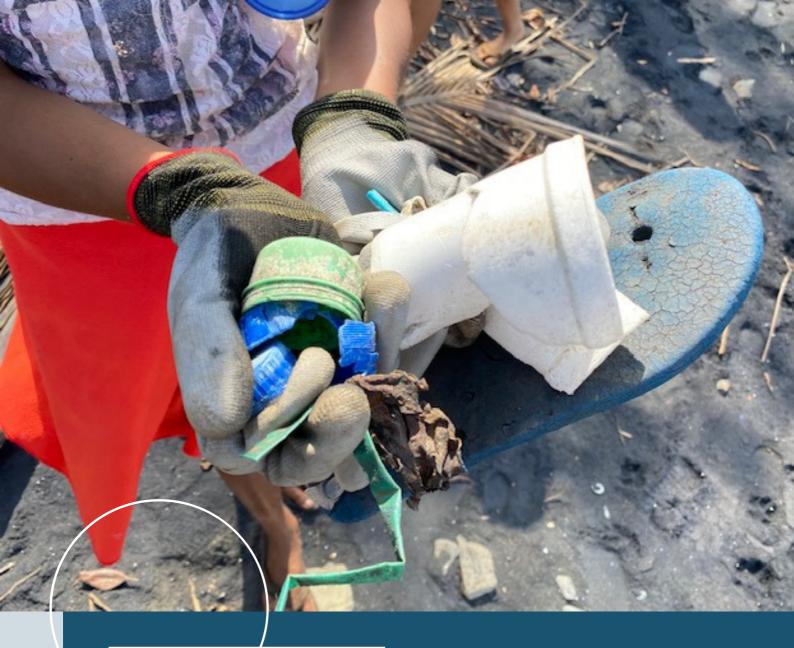




### MEDELLÍN

A new environmental education proposition

www.plasticaware.co
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### Introduction:

For our team, bringing our mission to the coastal areas of Colombia and Nicaragua was an important success. Our goal in these projects was to offer a wonderful program involving the whole community by not only making people aware of our objectives and strategies but most importantly taking time to visit every household and leaving a message of hope for future generations. Our biggest wish is to generate awareness and invite people to take care and protect our natural resources in a respectful way by sorting waste effectively. This process involves a lot of management and follow up efforts through connections and alliances, which granted us experience in such topics.



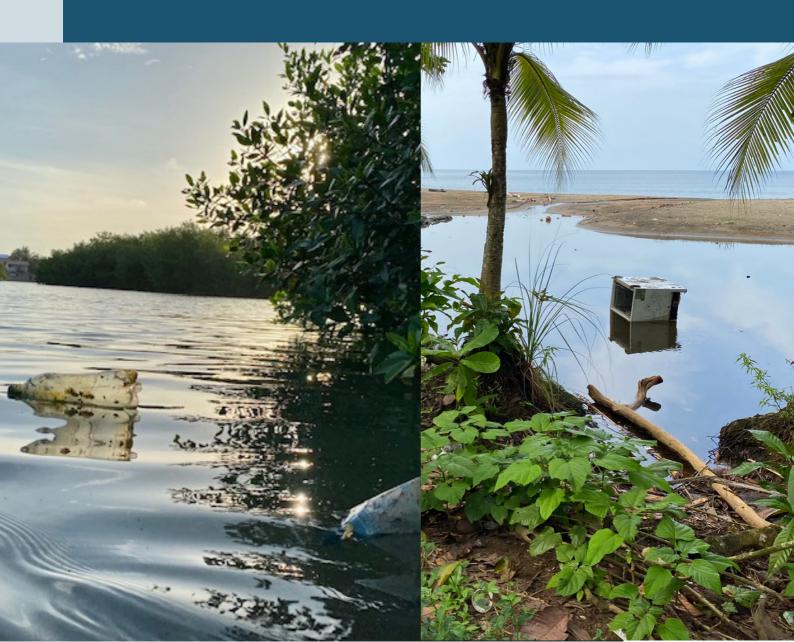
However we realised that educational environment has become a necessity in each and every region, for example cities, where the big waste collection companies are located. Those companies aim at an organised and ecuational waste separation but they only benefit from a limited reach in the suburbs and communes.

This is the case in Medellín, a metropolitan area located in a valley surrounded by mountains and which has been populated very quickly over the years.

"Medellín is home to 2'533'000 inhabitants approximately, separated in 16 communes, 249 districts and 5 rural areas townships."

When we throw any type of waste away into water sources, it can be transported over hundreds of kilometres until it finally reaches the oceans. That is why it is vital to teach environmental education from where the waste generation cycle begins.

In Colombia we find rubbish dumps near water sources; not only plastic waste can be seen there, but also industrial waste, construction waste and household appliances among others, turning these spaces into hotspots, sources of infection and outbreaks of insects and rodents.





This has been one of the most valuable reasons why the North-eastern library of the commune 1, which belongs to the public library system of Medellín, invited us to be part of their process, articulating an alliance between the environmental education provided by Plasticaware and the programme "Library in the neighbourhood" (Mobile library).

Formerly called the library España, this beautiful rock-shaped building bears this name, because the Spanish government helped finance the project in the Santo Domingo Savio neighbourhood.

It has three areas of management:

- promotion of reading,
- social and cultural management,
- and management of circulation and lending of bibliographic and audiovisual material.

After seven years of service, due physical failures in the structure, the building was closed, but the library reinvented itself and opted for a beautiful itinerant methodology called "Library in the neighbourhood", which is precisely responsible for bringing the entire library offer to the community, extending throughout the length and breadth of the North-eastern commune.



### Before

Pictures taken from Internet





"In the articulations that have been developed by neighbourhood leaders and other institutions and with community processes already underway, Plasticaware arrives with a proposal that fits to the reality of the territory. It answers an urgent need for people to know the process of waste disposal, taking into account that the whole city requires it but some sectors present greater vulnerability because of how they were built; invasion neighbourhoods with unauthorised construction, without basic sanitation, with greater risk of flooding, landslides and with very low awareness of the waste disposal.

When the library immerses itself directly in the neighbourhoods, it identifies the different players and factors that make up the community, and through a conversation with them, makes it possible to invite other collaborators to create more assertive participation, impacting a child audience with whom the recycling culture needs to be strengthened.

We have developed mobile book activities near large centres of rubbish and the integrated itinerant methodology between the library and Plasticaware has allowed us to have a much wider range of action with reading and environmental education."



Andrea Sierra, Mediadora social y cultural



#### **Mobile book:**

Among the many approaches that the library develops in commune 1, the Mobile Book was the activity that allowed Plasticaware to make itself known in the territory by being part of the itinerant library that takes the literary offer to parks, UVAS, metro stations, courts and other spaces. In turn, this offer is integrated with Plasticaware playful methodology, which combines perfectly with reading, recreation and learning by playing.

We visited: Aranjuez, Sinai, Santo Domingo neighbourhoods, Lecturas a la hamaca, and UVAS La Armonía, La cordíalidad, and La Esperanza among others.





#### **Learning by playing**

We strongly believe that the best way for children to learn is through games:

The environmental hero, the plasticonscious made with recycled material, origami, the environmental hopscotch, story writing with the 3Rs, observation races, masks, bowling with recycled plastic bottles and all the games we brought stayed in the children's mind because they succeeded in capturing their interest.

During these activities we donated more than 250 bamboo brushes, metal bottles and/or snacks.







#### **Links and alliances**

Undoubtedly, the mediation of the library opened the doors to new allies who, from different angles, became interested in our offer of activities and took part in them.

Connecting with community actions in different neighbourhoods of the city, Bibliometros, UVAS and through other events developed along the way made it possible during this semester to offer a substantial quantity of new activities that had not been proposed so far in the projects on the coast.

#### **Comunal action:**

With the Comunal action and Mrs. Nini Restrepo, diverse training workshops, naming of Plastic heroes and learning games led by the LOBOS group were held for more than 100 children from the Santo Domingo Savio neighbourhood.



#### Menstrual cup

After acknowledging the latent need of women to live a conscious menstruation that is eco-friendly and after the success in Rincón del Mar, we received a group of 35 young women invited by the library team in the Granizal neighbourhood. In partnership with Copa Free, we provided these women with a very special donation of menstrual cups to accompany them in the process of leaving behind the fears and taboos that exist around menstrual care alternatives. This process represents a giant step in the decision to give up sanitary towels that can't be reused and that pollute landfills or even worse open dumps without any appropriate treatment.



# Movie night UVA LA CORDIALIDAD Popular neighbourhood

What is a UVA?

"The Articulated Life Units, (Unidades de Vida Articulada) UVA, are urban neighbourhood interventions for citizen encounters, promotion of sport, recreation, culture and community participation".

As we have done in the projects near the ocean, we invited children to a movie for which the ticket was empty plastic bottles. More than 80 children answered to our call for awareness and participated in the raffle of various gifts. They all enjoyed a fun movie while eating popcorn they received as a prize for the delivery of more than 300 bottles.











#### Plogging San Cristóbal:

"Plogging is an event combining a race with the collection of abandonned waste. It started in Sweden as an activity organised around 2016 and extended to other countries in 2018 due to the rising concern about plastic pollution."

A plogging event has been organised in the rural township of San Cristobal, 40 minutes away from Medellín, in partnership with the environmental committee, community actions and territorial corporations. This was the first time that this activity was taking place in the city of Medellín or nearby and in celebration of the World Environment Day.

Plasticaware supplied with T-shirts for the event the organising team and 20 high school students, who have to complete social work hours. Plasticaware also gave a workshop on environmental education focused on the separation and disposal of waste planned to be collected during the race.

More than 80 people attended the event. There were no restrictions to participate; everyone contributed with their own physical and cognitive capacities. At the end of the event, 200 kilos of non-usable waste and 150 kilos of recyclable material such as plastic, cardboard and cans were collected.

See the complete document:

https://www.plasticaware.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/English-Plogging-San-cristobal.pdf







#### **Bibliometro:**

Bibliometro are 6 spaces dedicated to culture, conversation, connectivity, art, literature and reading, located in 6 different stations of the Medellín Metro system.

Plasticawarevisited three of them where we interacted with children and adults from nearby neighbourhoods:

Bibliometro Santo Domingo: Playful activities and environmental stories.

Bibliometro Acevedo: Presentation and evolution of Plasticaware during the two first years.

Bibliometro El Pinal: Every second 60.000 plastic bags are consumed in the world. In order to reduce its consumption, in collaboration with the bags brand Colina and with the authorization of the parents, Plasticaware shared with a group of children of the neighbourhood El Pinal an afternoon of crafts painting Eco bags that will be sold later on. The children who become creators and artists for the occasion will receive new reusable bags.

















#### Eco Fem Guajira:

Eco Fem is a sustainable menstrual education programme, developed in collaboration with the Colombian Environmental Movement, Copa Free, Plasticaware and Wardiana. During this first pilot, 30 women (teachers and students of the ethnoeducative centre Nuestra Señora del Carmen in Kuisa-Alta Guajira, were provided with a series of workshops on female empowerment, menstrual cups as a hygiene alternative and the impact of waste on the environment.

26 cups were donated by Plasticaware and the organisation's own supporters and delivered directly to these beautiful women who now have the possibility of living a dignified and conscious menstrual cycle.

See the complete document: https://www.plasticaware.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/English-EcoFem-Guajira.pdf





#### Aurora project:

The Aurora project is a popular school of environmental education that brought together more than 300 people and finally selected and connected 30 organisations and community leaders with experience in different environmental issues. The goal is to strengthen knowledge, create networks and visit strategic points related to flora and fauna, water sources and waste, which allows the articulation of new processes in the city of Medellín.

The participation of Plasticaware to this project allows for new connections and alliances with other organisations and people in the environmental sector.



