

"la Caixa" Foundation presents its CaixaProinfancia programme, a pioneer in the fight against child poverty in Spain, before the UN

At the ECOSOC Forum 2023, accompanied by the Government of Spain's High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty and Save the Children, the Foundation presented the methodology and results of its programme, aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty which today affects more than 2.4 million children in the country.

New York, 1 February 2023.- As an organisation with consultative status on the United Nations Economic and Social Council, **"la Caixa" Foundation** presented the CaixaProinfancia programme, a pioneering model of social intervention launched in response to the situation of child poverty in Spain. The Spanish Government's High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty and Save the Children Spain, the Foundation's partners in developing the programme, also participated in the presentation, highlighting the effectiveness and importance of public-private partnerships, involving both public administrations and organisations engaged in the field of childhood.

Antonio Vila Bertrán and **Marc Simón**, Chief Executive Officer and Assistant Chief Executive Officer of "la Caixa" Foundation respectively, presented the CaixaProinfancia programme at the forum. The programme has been operational in the main Spanish cities since 2007, providing assistance to more than **61,500 children and adolescents** from 0 to 18 years of age and over 38,000 families every year. Applying an **innovative intervention model** based on networking, **consolidated over more than 15 years' experience in vulnerable environments**, "la Caixa" Foundation works with more than **400 social organisations** which provide direct assistance to families, prioritising aid and monitoring each case. The programme operates in 128 cities and towns and is present in all the provinces of Spain.

CaixaProinfancia seeks to **break the line of transmission of poverty from parents to children** and to promote equal opportunities. The programme is

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aimed at children and adolescents in situations of economic poverty and social vulnerability, promoting and assisting their integral development in a personalised way, favouring and supporting policies aimed at increasing social equality and cohesion.

Based on a **methodology and with proven results**, the programme shows that **81.4%** of participants complete compulsory secondary school at similar levels to the rest of the population. Within the same social strata of CaixaProinfancia children, the percentage of children successfully completing secondary education is **48.8% of the total**. Among low socio-economic contexts, the **Spanish average of early school leaving is close to 30%**, **while only 4%** of the programme participants leave school at the compulsory secondary education stage.

Moreover, **76% of participants** improve their **school performance** and **65.6%** make progress in the acquisition and development of communication and language, logical-mathematical and social skills. Families also show improvement: **78%** increase their attention to homework, attendance, involvement and participation of parents at school. It should be noted that **49% of the families are single-parent households**, 71.1% of parents received no education or have at most attended primary school, and 59.6 % are unemployed.

Poverty affects 28.9% of children in Spain

At the forum, **Ernesto Gasco**, the Spanish Government's High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty, and, **Andrés Conde**, CEO of the NGO Save the Children Spain, also described the situation regarding child poverty in Spain. They reported that **28.9% of children in our country** are at risk of poverty and exclusion. A total of **more than 2.4** million children are in situations of poverty.

Moreover, in its recent report, *La Garantía Infantil a Examen* ("The Child Guarantee, Put to the Test"), Save the Children Spain notes that **a third of the families the NGO assists live on 100 euros per month per person** and that **almost 5%** have no income at all. Around **64%** of minors live in families that

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survive on monthly income of **less than 1,000 euros** and nearly half of all parents are unemployed.

According to **Antonio Vila Bertrán**, Chief Executive Officer of "la Caixa" Foundation, "Public-private partnerships and networking have proven to be very effective in improving inclusion and breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty, which is a major challenge for Spanish society. When schools, social services and social organisations work together, the impact of socio-educational action is multiplied".

Along the same lines, **Marc Simón**, la Caixa" Foundation's Assistant Chief Executive Officer, added that: "the CaixaProinfancia programme promotes great social innovation through its community focus. This strengthens the territory thanks to the common methodology, which is shared and evaluated, as well as promoting empowerment for inclusion and the elimination of stigmas and connecting families with their environment".

Taking the floor, **Ernesto Gasco**, the Spanish Government's High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty, noted that "'la Caixa" Foundation is a strategic ally in the Zero Child Poverty Country Alliance, launched by the High Commission. It is a pleasure to play a part in achieving recognition of CaixaProinfancia before the UN, as the programme is a benchmark in the fight against child poverty in Spain".

"Children living in poverty today in a country like Spain have a deficient diet and do their homework with their coat on at home because his family cannot afford to keep it at the right temperature. They can't go to the dentist or the psychologist, or wear glasses, even if they need them. This is a domestic reality, one that we do not always see, but that places a burden on the future of a country. And we cannot allow more than two million children to live in poverty in our country", said **Andrés Conde**, CEO of Save the Children Spain.

CaixaProinfancia, a model of network intervention

One of the main goals of CaixaProinfancia is to ensure the socio-educational development of minors, since their future wellbeing will depend to a large

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extent on this development. To this end, five broad lines of action are established under the programme:

- **Remedial teaching:** speech and psychomotor therapy, assisted study groups, individual reinforcement, open classrooms and aid to purchase school equipment.
- **Free time and leisure:** open centres, camps and summer activities.
- **Family educational support:** family educational workshops, mother and child centres and integrated care for mothers and children who are victims of gender violence.
- **Personal and family psychotherapeutic assistance:** personalised or provided through family and group therapeutic workshops.
- **Promotion of health:** aid for food and children's hygiene, glasses and hearing aids.

CaixaProinfancia not only promotes networking between social entities. The programme also develops coordinated action with other players in the territory (local authorities, schools and health centres, among others) to provide a global, comprehensive response to the needs of children and adolescents and their families. Accordingly, all stakeholders share the work of assessing each case, developing the work plan with its specific objectives, and monitoring and evaluating actions.

In their actions, all these organisations share the vision that the young people of today are the adults who will form the society of tomorrow and that, therefore, the focus on childhood is a determining factor in achieving their wellbeing and for **building a fairer, more equitable and cohesive society**.

ECOSOC, partnerships for post-pandemic recovery

Under the theme of ECOSOC 2023 and the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), "Accelerating the recovery from the

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coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”, the 2023 ECOSOC Partnership Forum brought together the UN member states and stakeholders (representatives of civil society, the private sector, scientists, women, young people, local authorities and many others) to discuss innovative efforts that are driving action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to highlight the contributions that partnerships can make in this regard.

ECOSOC, the UN's main body for coordinating its economic, social and environmental work, granted "la Caixa" Foundation **special consultative status** in 2022. This status – the highest level of accreditation that the UN awards to non-governmental organisations – enables the Foundation to participate in the organisation's work, to give oral presentations and to contribute to the UN's agenda. Accordingly, the organisation took part in the ECOSOC Partnership Forum 2022, presenting its child vaccination programme in cooperation with Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, ISGlobal and IESE; and at the 60th session of the UN Commission for Social Development, introducing Work4Progress, a programme aimed at generating employment opportunities which the Foundation promotes in India, Mozambique and Peru.

At present, 5,003 non-governmental organisations around the world have special consultative status with the UN, 217 of them foundations.

"la Caixa" Foundation: more than a century building a better world

Offering opportunities to the people who need them most with the aim of helping to build a fairer and more equitable society. This is the *raison d'être* of the "la Caixa" Foundation, an institution established in 1904 and which now operates on a budget of more than 500 million euros a year. This makes it the leading private foundation in Spain and one of the most important worldwide.

"la Caixa" Foundation's main mission is to develop social programmes that respond to the great challenges of our time, such as the fight against child poverty, the generation of employment among groups with difficulties, the provision of assistance to people with advanced illnesses and the promotion of active and healthy ageing. Medical research, training of excellence, culture and

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education – all basic pillars in the promotion of progress and equal opportunities – are other strategic lines of action that the Foundation pursues.