Research:

* Colombia underperforms the average in income, jobs, education, health, environmental quality, social connections, civic engagement and life satisfaction.
* Women's rights in Colombia have been gradually developing since the early 20th Century.
* Secondary education is divided into four years of compulsory basic secondary schooling (ages 12 to 15) and two to three years of optional vocational education (ages 15 to 18).
* My data represents women who are forced to leave school early to work and be able to afford a living for themselves.
* My data represents women who are richer and thus are able to choose to go to university and can continue school until 18.
* My data represents women choosing to be independent in different ways.
* The data in the dataset is from 1990-2015, whereas most women’s rights in Columbia were created in 1991.

Women in Columbia need to be able to afford both water and education - it appears as though when more are spending money on higher education, they have less money to have water at home, and thus it takes them longer to achieve it. As water is a human right, how can we make it so that women can have access to water faster and without sacrificing their education?

Data story:

In the town of Filandia in Colombia, Isabella and her mother Valeria live together in a small flat. The air outside is drowning in pollution, and the people aren’t happy either. Valeria has always raised Isabella to work hard for what she wants, and Valeria has always tried her best to make sure she can have it all. Isabella knows how hard her mother has had to work to provide for her, she knows that she had to give up her dreams of being a scientist when she was only 15. Isabella’s grandparents needed help at home, another worker to bring in income for the family, and so Valeria had to leave school after her basic secondary schooling ended, unable to learn more in depth science. She had always wanted to be an astronaut, and physics had been her favourite subject, but it didn’t apply to her new job as a baker.

As Isabella grew up, the air at home always made her smile, smelling like the next cake her mother had made. However, on this specific day it smelled better than ever. As Isabella left her bedroom and headed for the kitchen, her mother’s voice filled her ears:

“¡Felíz Cumpleaños Isabella!”

On the kitchen table was a strawberry shortcake - Isabella’s favourite - and a pile of papers. First Isabella and her mother shared the cake and had a great time. But the papers still had to be addressed.

“I know you don’t want to have to make this decision, but it’s time.”

Her mother’s words made her sad. Today was her 15th Birthday, the day she had to decide whether to continue with school or help her mother at home. She knew they didn’t have much money. She knew they were struggling. She knew that with an extra helping hand they would no longer have to worry so much. But she also wanted to become a writer. She wanted to study literature and the stories of the ancients, so that one day she could be like one of them. But she also knew that if she went on to university, her family would be in debt, and she didn’t know if they could survive that.

Many of her friends’ parents had been to university, however they also hadn’t had drinking water for years after their studies. She watched her friends have to travel to lakes to bring dirty water home for them to boil. She didn’t want that to happen to her future children.

Why should Isabella have to worry so much at the age of 15? Why should she have to make the most important decision of her life at such a young age? Should she not be able to go to university, enjoy her youth, and not feel guilty for causing her family to go into poverty? More help has to be done for Colombian families, so that women can attend university and still live healthy and happy lives.