Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

COLOMBIA
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Bogotá: La paz, la reconciliación y la democracia desde la perspectiva de narrativas generativas de niños y niñas.”

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<tr>
<td>3M Evaluation</td>
<td>Multi-Agency, Multi-Country, Multi-Donor Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CINDE</td>
<td>International Center for Education and Human Development</td>
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<td>CLAIJ</td>
<td>Childhood and Youth Local Support Committees</td>
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<td>CPST</td>
<td>Colombia Partnership Steering Team</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>CYC</td>
<td>Children and Youth in Context</td>
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<td>CYP</td>
<td>Child and Youth Peacebuilding</td>
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<td>FARC</td>
<td>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>Global Partnership</td>
<td>Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding</td>
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<td>GPST</td>
<td>Global Partnership Steering Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICBF</td>
<td>Colombian Institute of Family Welfare</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<td>JOPPAZ</td>
<td>Youth Provoking Peace</td>
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<td>LET</td>
<td>Local Evaluation Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>PATRIR</td>
<td>Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPP</td>
<td>Reflecting on Peace Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFCG</td>
<td>Search for Common Ground</td>
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<tr>
<td>SODF</td>
<td>Standard Observation and Documentation Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>UNOY Peacebuilders</td>
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Executive Summary

Colombia has endured a five-decade-long internal armed conflict. The country’s context of violence and war is complex and involves multiple armed groups and actors, including guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups and their successors, other organized crime groups, and governmental armed forces (IDMC 2014). Since October 2012, the government and the country’s largest guerrilla force, the FARC, have engaged in peace talks held in Havana, Cuba. Ending the 50 year-long conflict with the FARC is one of numerous steps necessary to build sustainable peace in the country.

Different types of violence, not directly related to the confrontations between armed groups and government forces, are constantly threatening children and young people’s rights and integral development. Beyond the armed conflict, children and youth are exposed to multiple forms of abuses fuelled by both direct and structural violence. In the face of these challenges, over the last 20 years Colombia has gained significant experience engaging children and youth as peacebuilders. Many Colombian children and youth work to break this culture of violence and promote a culture of peace. Their efforts as agents of peace are reflected through their individual actions and their involvement in peacebuilding initiatives and organizations. The present report highlights the significant impact of their efforts within peacebuilding initiatives, organizations, and movements, and explores factors influencing their impact.

The Global Partnership for Child and Youth in Peacebuilding (Global Partnership) works collaboratively to support effective child and youth participation in peacebuilding at all levels. The Global Partnership initiated a multi-agency, multi-country, multi-donor (3M) evaluation in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Nepal to: 1) Map who is doing what, and where to support child and youth peacebuilding (CYP); 2) Nurture durable partnerships to increase CYP quantity, quality, and impact; 3) Assess the quality and impact of child and youth participation in peacebuilding and variables influencing CYP impact; 4) Build the capacity of children and youth to meaningfully participate in CYP evaluations; 5) Present key findings and recommendations to stakeholders to help increase the quantity, quality, and impact of CYP work.
The evaluation was primarily qualitative. Mixed methods were applied, including Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) using visual participatory evaluation tools with different age groups, online mapping, interviews, drawing, stories and analysis of secondary data.

The evaluation was overseen by the Global Partnership Steering Team consisting of representatives from World Vision International, Save the Children Norway, United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders), Search for Common Ground (SFCG), and Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR). Save the Children’s representative also served as the overall project manager.

In September 2014, a Colombia Partnership Steering Team was established involving Asociación Sembrando Semillas de Paz (Sembrandopaz), Fundación Antonio Restrepo Barco, Fundación Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano (CINDE), Fundación Escuelas de Paz, and World Vision International Colombia Office. The Colombia Steering Team hired a Country Evaluator, identified four regions in which to complete the evaluation, established Local Evaluation Teams (LETS) including child and youth peacebuilders, and helped organize a 4-day Capacity Building Workshop. A 4-day Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop was completed in the latter stages of the process.

LETS were formed in each of the four regions: Eje Cafetero (Armenia-Manizales), Cali, Bogotá-Soacha, and Montes de María. Altogether, LETS included 11 children and adolescents, 21 youth, and 7 adult evaluators. Global Evaluators and members of the Global Partnership Steering Team supported a National Capacity Building Workshop for LET members and the Colombia Evaluator to enhance their knowledge, values, evaluation ethics, and skills to undertake the participatory evaluation.

Between February and April 2015, 90 FGDs were conducted involving 451 participants (313 children and adolescents, 103 youth, and 35 adult supporters.
CYP Impact

Evaluation results revealed that CYP had two major peacebuilding impacts. They contributed to: (1) the development of aware and active citizens for peace, and (2) increased peaceful coexistence and reduced violence and conflicts.

Child and youth peacebuilders often became more aware and active citizens for peace. They emphasized that they experienced a change in mindset, acquired new knowledge and skills, and became more committed to peace. Their involvement in peacebuilding helped them develop as individuals and become more responsible citizens. Their peacebuilding practice not only allowed young people to improve their peacebuilding skills, it also contributed to more effective positive involvement in their communities more broadly. Participants highlighted that individual changes and actions resulted in positive impacts at the individual, family, school, and community levels.

Participants maintained that coexistence improved, and that violence and conflicts decreased at the family, school, and community levels. Participation in peacebuilding enabled children and young people to find non-violent alternatives to conflict—such as dialogue and respectful communication.

Bringing together communities, groups, and families significantly reduced conflicts and stigmas. It was noted that many communities were affected by gang violence, drug trafficking, invisible borders, and sexual exploitation. Leading strategies used by children and youth to impact their communities and increase peaceful coexistence included helping different communities and neighborhoods bond through cultural and sporting events, and involving local people in marches for peace and campaigns against violence.

Factors Influencing CYP Impact

Data analysis identified several key factors influencing CYP impact. To varying degrees, each of these factors can influence CYP both positively and negatively, depending on the context and how the factor is addressed or neglected. In Colombia, five factors were identified:

- 273 females and 178 males). Ten peacebuilding initiatives supported by 7 organizations were evaluated. All of these organizations focus their work on peacebuilding. Two types of initiatives were included in this study: 1) Organizations promoting child and youth participation in peacebuilding, and 2) Child and/or youth peacebuilding movements.
1 Children and youths’ attitudes, motivation, and commitment
2 Children and youths’ capacity, knowledge, skills, and experiences
3 Culture, Sports, Theatre, and Arts as a means of engaging children and youth
4 Awareness raising, sensitization, and campaigns among key stakeholders
5 Key stakeholders’ motivation, commitment, and support

Children and youths’ positive attitudes and motivation increased CYP impact. Conversely, the lack of commitment and willingness of some individuals presented significant hurdles to successful implementation of peacebuilding programs. Development of these largely internal realities helped young people become more aware, active, and effective citizens for peace. Such participants demonstrated a deep sense of responsibility towards their role as peacebuilders, beyond the organization and implementation of peacebuilding activities. They became aware of the need to keep positive attitudes and motivation to build peace and involve additional children and youth.

Through their participation in organized groups and movements, girls, boys, and youth have increased opportunities to express their views, access information, share problems, and discuss solutions. When children and youth had more peacebuilding knowledge, skills, and experience, they appeared to practice peacebuilding actions more frequently and more effectively. With less practice and interface, frequency and implementation suffered.

Culture, sports, theatre, and arts are effectively used by children, youth, and supportive adults as creative methods to engage and sustain the motivation of children and youth in peacebuilding. They also help promote awareness and messages on peacebuilding and issues concerning conflict and violence. In some regions, sports and dance were recognized as key enabling factors to unite and reconcile communities dramatically affected by the armed conflict and violence.

Significant awareness raising and sensitization have been necessary to change attitudes regarding the positive roles that children and youth can play in peacebuilding, and the attitude and practices of the different stakeholders that contribute to violence and conflict. A lack of awareness among key stakeholders has contributed to barriers which, if not overcome, result in blocked or less effective efforts.

Evaluation participants considered the support and involvement of other children and youth, parents, local authorities, and civil society to be fundamental to program success. In many cases, these stakeholders were either acknowledged as already supportive of, or were insufficiently involved in the peacebuilding processes. When there is a general lack of community
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and institutional involvement and support for child and youth peacebuilding efforts, there tends to be lower morale among children and youth, and less active participation.

Quality of CYP

Evaluating the quality of child and youth participation in peacebuilding was a central evaluation objective. Eight principles relating to the quality of child and youth participation in peacebuilding were assessed:

1. Participation is transparent and informative
2. Participation is relevant and respectful to children and youth
3. Participation encourages diversity and inclusion
4. Participation is sensitive to gender dynamics
5. Participation is safe and sensitive to risks
6. Investments are made in intergenerational partnerships in young people’s communities
7. Participation is accountable
8. Young people are involved in all stages of peacebuilding and post-conflict programming

Of these principles, CYP initiatives evaluated in Colombia were fairly strong in ensuring that child and youth participation in peacebuilding:

- Is relevant and respectful to children and youth (principle 2);
- Encourages diversity and inclusion (principle 3);
- Is sensitive to gender dynamics (principle 4);
- Is accountable (principle 7).

CYP initiatives received mixed scores in participation being transparent and informative (principle 1); and in opportunities for children and youth to be involved in all stages of peacebuilding and post conflict programming (principle 8).

Furthermore, significant weaknesses in CYP initiatives were identified in relation to child and youth participation in peacebuilding that:

- Is safe and sensitive to risk (principle 5): Participants appeared to be aware that they were not sufficiently prepared to assess and confront risks. The safety issues reported were mostly related to a lack of capacity-building and information provided to children and youth. The lack of preparation in emergency and high risk situations also contributed to this low score.
Investments are made in intergenerational partnerships in young people’s communities (principle 6): Children, youth and adults in Colombia identified a lack of involvement and interaction with community members, municipal authorities, and adult agencies. Participants suggested getting more support from municipal units and involving parents as essential approaches to increase intergenerational partnerships within their peacebuilding initiatives.

**Recommendations**

Throughout the evaluation and during the Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop, participants formulated key recommendations for the following stakeholders:

1. Agencies supporting CYP
2. Public and Private Donors
3. Community members
4. The Media
5. Child and Youth Peacebuilders
6. Political authorities

Overall, children and youth requested prioritization of peacebuilding in all levels of society. Increased support is needed to enable children and youth to effectively build and promote peace in their communities, families, and schools. Roadblocks need to be removed to ensure children and young people’s motivation and impact. The promotion of violence, the lack of commitment and support towards peacebuilding initiatives, and the lack of meaningful engagement of children and youth considerably obstruct CYP.

In summary, there is encouraging evidence that child and youth participation in peacebuilding is having significant, positive impact. Support and commitment from different stakeholders need to be made to guarantee more effective CYP.
PART ONE:
Introduction and methodology

This report is organized in three parts. Part 1 provides a brief introduction to the present state of child and youth peacebuilding (CYP) globally and in Colombia. It then introduces the evaluation’s methodology, its application in Colombia, and what was learned about the evaluation process. Part 2 shares key evaluation findings. It introduces the types of CYP initiatives evaluated, their impact, factors influencing their impact, and CYP quality and overarching findings. Part 3 offers CYP recommendations to different stakeholders, recommends future research, and concludes the report.

Part One Roadmap

After briefly examining the importance and present state of CYP, Part 1 explores the Colombian context and its CYP history. Next, Part 1 introduces the Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (Global Partnership) and explains this evaluation’s objectives and methodology, including, how methods were developed, shared, and adapted in partnership with child and youth peacebuilders. Key considerations for ethical evaluations with children and youth are also highlighted. Then it introduces the Colombian Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding and explains how four diverse regions of Colombia were chosen for Local Evaluation Teams (LETS) consisting of child, youth, and adult evaluators. The evaluation tools are introduced, including, an online mapping platform (www.GPCYP.com/map), participatory focus group tools, case studies, and stories, art and poems. Part 1 then details the quantity and quality of data collected in Colombia and how data was documented and analyzed by child, youth, and adult evaluators. It concludes by exploring strengths and weakness of this participatory CYP evaluation process.

This report’s authors have intentionally taken significant space to explain and critically analyze the evaluation’s unique and inclusive methodological approach. Very little CYP research and few evaluations exist. Much more CYP research and evaluation is urgently needed, particularly using participatory approaches. Therefore, learnings about our methodological approach are some of the most significant contributions that can be offered to the CYP field at this point in time.
Brief Background to Child and Youth Peacebuilding

Today, 43% of our world’s population is under 25 years old (UNICEF, 2014; United Nations, 2012, p.1). Two point two billion are under 18 and .85 billion are between 18 and 24. Notably, 88% of the world’s children live in developing nations (World Bank, 2013) and 1 billion children live in countries or territories affected by armed conflict – almost of the total world population (European Commission, 2014).

Over the last half-century, there has been a dramatic increase in armed conflict within the Majority World, the vast majority of which are intrastate conflicts rather than conflicts between states (Bracken and Petty 1998, 3, 9; UNICEF 2004, 163). Most of the poorest nations are experiencing a “major civil war” presently or have in their recent past. There is an unfortunate but compelling correlation between children, poverty, and ongoing cycles of intrastate armed conflict (UNICEF, 2011).

Research on “youth bulges” brings even greater clarity to these connections. Youth bulge theorists use demographic and historical evidence to show nations with large portions of their population between the ages of 15 and 24 (or 19)—as a portion of their population older than fourteen—have significantly increased risk of armed conflict (Ludwig, 2013; Urdal 2011a, 2011b).

An increase in youth bulges of one percentage point is associated with an increased likelihood of conflict of around 7%. Furthermore, countries experiencing youth bulges of 35% run three times the risk of conflict compared to countries with youth bulges equal to the median for developed countries, all other variables at mean (Urdal 2004, 9).

Urdal’s research reveals that poor economic performance, combined with a youth bulge, can be particularly dangerous (Urdal 2004). Other youth bulge research shows that about eighty-six percent of “all countries that experienced a new outbreak of civil conflict had age structures with 60 percent or more of the population younger than 30 years of age” (Cincotta and Leahy 2006). Nearly 65% of the Middle East is younger than 30 and has represented an area of particular concern for many years (Dhillon 2008; Dhillon and Yousef 2009). Thirty percent of the Middle East’s population is between the ages of 15 and 29, representing over 100 million people.

It is clear that before every youth bulge there is a child bulge, and that a child bulge may occur concurrently. It is also clear that a large portion of our world’s children live in contexts impacted by, or at high risk of armed conflict. If something does not change, this reality appears likely to continue or even increase, perpetuating the destruction it brings with it. The authors believe that findings herein help build an understanding of how to better leverage the capacity of young people in higher risk contexts to avert the violent future that some predict for their nations and help build a more durable peace.

Too many countries are currently caught in cycles of violence that can last for decades (e.g. Burundi, Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia, Afghanistan, Iraq) (Brainard and Chollet 2007; Collier 2003; Ndogoni et al. 2002). Majority World nations impacted by or at high risk of armed conflict are places where great changes in thoughts and actions are needed in order to break or prevent cycles of violence and the suffering it brings. Much research and everyday experience shows clearly that children and youth are more likely than adults to change their ideas and behavior. A growing body of evidence suggests that, when given a chance, young people are able to make a valuable contribution for the benefit of themselves and their communities, and furthermore, they desire to do so (Hart 2004, 4; McGill, 2012; O’Kane,
Nevertheless, most assistance given to conflict affected countries goes toward providing basic relief aid and changing the behaviors of adult leaders (Veso 2008, p. 107; Boothby et al. 2006, p. 143; Hart 2004, p. 4). Such efforts are important, but they neglect to leverage an enormous natural resource that is abundantly available within these contexts—the young people themselves.

Children and youth’s demographic abundance and greater malleability, along with powerful child and youth peacebuilding examples, suggest that they may be able to provide peacebuilding energy and actions that significantly accelerate the shifts needed to achieve and sustain durable peace in contemporary contexts impacted by or at high risk of armed conflict. In this way, young people may serve as a demographic bonus or dividend even if dependency ratios in their country have not yet decreased.

Regrettably, young people in these contexts are too often primarily viewed as the problem, at least a large part of it, rather than as valuable assets for peace. Seeing youth as the primary violent actors in armed conflict can contribute to the misconception that they are primarily a problem, that is, if one simultaneously disregards the fact that the large majority of young people in these contexts are not violent actors. With the scope of the challenge before us, it is worth seriously considering a paradigm shift in the way we go about addressing most contemporary conflicts and post-conflict contexts. An important beginning is to cease viewing young people “negatively, as problems to be dealt with rather than potential to be tapped” (Brainard and Chollet 2007, p. 12-13).

Development workers, researchers, and even governmental and intergovernmental institutions are beginning to see the potential of children and youth as valuable resources to prevent violence and build peace (Magnuson and Baizerman 2007; Kamatsiko 2005, p. 12; Brainard and Chollet 2007, p. 13; McEvoy-Levy 2006; Feinstein et al., 2010; Schwartz 2010; Save the Children 2008; Save the Children 2012; McGill 2012; O’Kane et al, 2013). Boothby et al acknowledged the complexity of conflict affected contexts and argued that, “The agency of youth in war and postwar situations is multidimensional and extremely influential. Young people’s actions, and their collective narrations of those actions, influence how conflicts are experienced, remembered, transmitted across generations, and, potentially, transformed” (2006, p. 133-134). The conflict-transforming power of young people is not only in their demographic abundance and learning abilities, but also in their energy, “their natural idealism and innovation,” and their creativity, that is actually nurtured as they seek survival in “vulnerable and precarious situation” (Boothby et al. 2006, p. 149).

The tide is just beginning to turn toward a more normative acceptance of the critical role youth participation in peacebuilding, though, regrettably, acceptance of the valuable role of child peacebuilders lags slightly behind. For example, the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) has an active Working Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding, co-chaired by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and Search for Common Ground. In 2014 the working group developed the Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding.1 This working group consists of members representing a number of UN entities, non-governmental organizations, academicians and youth-led organizations. There is also a growing push for a United Nations Security Council Resolution on Children, Youth, Peace and Security (Save the Children 2012; UNOY Peacebuilders 2013).2 Additionally, in August 2015 a Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security will occur in Amman, Jordan convened by

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1 Read more on the guiding principles here: https://www.sfcg.org/guidingprinciples/

HRH Crown Prince of Jordan during the Security Council Session on Youth, Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Peace. These are just a few global level examples of the growing wave of support for child and youth peacebuilding. There are many more national and local level examples. At the same time, there remains a great gap in documentation of CYP impact and which CYP practices work better than others. This report seeks to help fill that gap.

Background to Child and Youth Peacebuilding in Colombia

Colombia has endured a five-decade-long internal armed conflict. The country’s context of violence and war is complex and involves multiple armed groups and actors, including guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups and their successors, other organized crime groups, and governmental armed forces (IDMC 2014). For decades, Colombian civil populations have been dramatically affected by raging confrontations and nearly 6 million persons have been internally displaced (CODHES 2013; UNHCR 2013; HRW 2014; IDMC 2014). Most internally displaced persons (IDPs) have moved from rural to urban centers, although intra-urban displacements have increased in recent years due to increased urban violence (UNHCR 2013).

In several regions of the country, populations are constantly terrorized by confrontations between armed groups and criminal bands -such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army, paramilitary groups, government forces, and others. Criminal bands and other organized groups have gained increasing power. They are engaged in a variety of illegal and criminal activities, including drug-trafficking, extortion, human trafficking, forced recruitment, mining, etc.

Since October 2012, the government and the country’s largest guerrilla force, the FARC, have engaged in peace talks held in Havana, Cuba. Despite the progress of the negotiations, both parties continue to perpetrate human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. Such abuses and violations mostly affect indigenous people, afro-descendant communities, peasant communities, women, children, youth, human rights defenders, unionists, and community activists. These abuses include forced displacement, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, abductions, and unlawful killings, among others (Amnesty International 2015; HRW 2014).

Civil society groups have voiced their concerns as to the necessity of addressing “the root causes of the conflict of socioeconomic exclusion, security, good governance and justice.” (ABColumbia 2015, p. 7). Ending the 50 year-long conflict with the FARC is one of numerous steps necessary to build sustainable peace in the country. Different types of violence, not directly related to the confrontations between armed groups and

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3 After the demobilization of the largest paramilitary group in 2005, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), several of its members did not demobilize and were re-organized in several criminal groups. As a result, several groups continue to collude with Government forces and local officials. They are called Criminal Gangs by the Colombian Government and Post-Demobilized Paramilitary Groups by others (ABColumbia 2015:3).

4 Colombia ranks second only to Syria in the scale of internal displacement (Ferris 2014; Bilak et.al 2015, p. 7-10).

5 The negotiations are following a six-point agenda out of which four have been partially covered: rural development, FARC integration into the political process, drug-trafficking and transitional justice and the rights of victims. The two remaining items “...are the laying-down of weapons by potentially 8,000 FARC guerrillas, and issues of ‘implementation, verification and countersigning’” (ABColumbia 2015, p. 7).
government forces, are constantly threatening children and young people’s rights and integral development.

To understand the Colombian context of violence, it is crucial to discern direct violence from structural violence. Direct violence is fuelled by barbarous actions undertaken by the above mentioned actors, in both rural and urban settings. Added to this, structural violence affects the society as a whole and is provoked by the unequal political, economic, social, and cultural structures of the country. Different types of abuses, symbolic violence, hunger, and unemployment are all driving factors of structural violence (Alvarado et al. 2012, p. 30-31). Whether through mass media, or directly in their communities, families and schools, children and young people are too often exposed to violence. It is argued that direct and indirect exposure to violence can lead to normalization and increased levels of violence, particularly at the family level (Santos 2015).

While the current peace talks are mostly focused on the rural sector, Colombia has shifted from a rural to an urban society where nearly 80% of the population lives in cities and urban peripheries. It is therefore crucial to understand that most of the issues affecting the Colombian majority are not directly linked to the armed conflict (Patiño 2013).

Beyond the armed conflict, children are exposed to multiple forms of violence and abuses. They are often deprived of their fundamental right to be protected from violence, exploitation, and abuse. They are victims of intrafamily violence, bullying, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, child labor, lack of adequate health coverage; they are recruited by illegal armed groups and organized crime organizations; they are victims of sexual abuses and assassinations; they are abandoned in the streets with sometimes resort to engaging in delinquency, drug-addiction and begging. In many cases, violence, exploitation, and abuse take place in homes, schools, and in the care and justice systems (World Vision International Colombia Office 2015a, p. 63-85; Kemper 2012; Alvarado et al. 2012, p. 29).

**Child and youth participation in peacebuilding as a right and a practice.** In the face of these multiple challenges, over the last 20 years Colombia has gained significant experience engaging children and youth as peacebuilders (Riaño-Alcalá 2006; Cabannes 2006; Guerrero and Tinkler 2010; Human Rights Watch 2010; McGill 2012). Colombia ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. Law 115 of 1994 (General Law of Education) established participation mechanisms by means of Students Councils and Representatives; thereby, providing a significant opportunity for CYP. Student representatives are responsible for promoting, protecting, and defending children and adolescents’ rights within schools.

Child rights gained increasing importance in the civil society sector. In 1996, several international and national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), together with UNICEF, created the ‘Children for Peace Movement’ with the objective of elevating the role of children in Colombia, considering them as citizens capable of participating in matters that affect them (UNDP 2006). It was the first large-scale initiative in Colombia promoting children as subjects with rights and not only objects for protection. One of the movement’s major achievement occurred when more than 2,800,000 children under 18 voted for peace and for their rights (World Vision International Colombia Office 2015b). This catalyzed adults to organize a vote supporting the children’s mandate for peace. On October 26, 1997, over 10 million turned out to vote for peace (Arias 2012).

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6 More than 30% of the victims of the armed conflict are boys, girls and adolescents (World Vision International Colombia Office 2015a, p. 86).
At the political level, Law 375 of 1997 established Youth Councils as autonomous organisms responsible for advising municipal, departmental, and national administrations in the preparation and implementation of youth policies and programs. They also have the right to participate in the design, co-implementation, follow-up, and control of municipal, district, and departmental Development Plans (Interinstitutional Working Group on Child and Youth Participation 2008, p. 11-13).

In 2006, Colombia enacted Law 1098 containing the “Code for the Infancy and Adolescence.” The enactment was a milestone as it established children and adolescents’ rights to participate in activities of their interests in families, schools, associations, state programs, departments, districts, and municipalities. Several national legal frameworks also addressed the rights of children and youth to participate primarily at the school and political level.

More recently, Law 1732 of 2015 mandated the incorporation of the topic of ‘peace’ in all school curriculums (Colombian Ministry of Education 2015).

Despite the existing legal frameworks and numerous CSOs working with children and youth, substantial efforts are needed to ensure more significant and respectful participation of children and youth. A report of the Interinstitutional Working Group on Child and Youth Participation emphasized how non-autonomous and misrepresented practices of participation prevailed in the country. The report indicated that children and youth are sometimes manipulated by adults and not provided with transparent information. They can be used as “decoration” without being made aware of the purpose of their participation. The report also indicated that symbolic participation was a major issue as children and young people were not provided with spaces to express their voices and be heard (Interinstitutional Working Group on Child and Youth Participation 2008, p. 13).

According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2015) around 35% of the Colombian population is between 10 and 29 years old. Many Colombian children and youth work to break this culture of violence and promote a culture of peace. They contribute to peacebuilding at the community, family, school, and social levels. They promote human rights, peaceful coexistence, and a culture of peace. They advocate and take action at different levels for the protection of their rights against violations; including sexual abuses, recruitment into armed conflict, and other modes of violence affecting their development and the fulfillment of their rights. Their efforts as agents of peace can be reflected through their individual actions as well as in their involvement in peacebuilding initiatives and organizations. This report highlights the significant impact of some of their efforts within peacebuilding initiatives, organizations, and movements.

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7 Recent estimates show that there are nearly 16,000 child soldiers in Colombia (Forero 2013). Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children and youth in rural communities are particularly at risk. The FARC, ELN and paramilitary groups all recruit and use children, and these respectively constitute 44%, 42% and 40% of their soldiers (Springer 2012:30).
The Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding

This multi-country evaluation of CYP was initiated by the Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding. Launched in 2012, the Global Partnership is a community of practice bringing together large international NGOs, national and international child/youth-led or child/youth-focused organizations, scholars and champions who believe in the key role young people play in peacebuilding processes around the world. The Global Partnership works collaboratively to support effective child and youth participation in peacebuilding at all levels. The partnership's vision is to create a safe and enabling environment for children, adolescents and youth to contribute meaningfully to sustainable peace by influencing peace processes and initiatives.

3M Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

The Global Partnership seeks to improve CYP practices and impact and strengthen the evidence supporting CYP and related best practices. Toward this end, this multi-agency, multi-country, multi-donor evaluation (3M evaluation) was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. Map who is doing what and where to support CYP.
2. Nurture durable partnerships increasing CYP quantity, quality and impact.
3. With children and youth, assess the quality and impact of child and youth participation in peacebuilding and variables influencing CYP impact.
4. Build the capacity of children and youth to meaningfully participate in CYP evaluations.
5. Present key findings and recommendations to stakeholders to help increase the quantity, quality and impact of CYP work.

Implementation Structure and Evaluation Methodology Development

The 3M Evaluation was overseen by a Global Steering Team consisting of representatives from World Vision International, Save the Children Norway, United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR). Save the Children’s representative also served as the overall project manager. The 3M Global Steering Team hired two, Global Evaluators. These evaluators worked with the Global Steering Team to design and agree

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8 Founding members include Action Aid, PATRIR, Save the Children, Search for Common Ground, UNICEF, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) and World Vision as well as a number of individual experts on the topic. Visit www.GPCYP.com for more on the Global Partnership.
the methodology to be used in Colombia, Nepal and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The evaluation methodology supported a participatory evaluation process involving children, youth and adults as evaluators in Local Evaluation Teams (LETs). The evaluation was primarily qualitative. Mixed methods were applied, including Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) using participatory evaluation tools with different age groups, online mapping, interviews, drawing, stories and analysis of available secondary data. Visual participatory evaluation tools including a Timeline, a before and after Body Map were adapted (Save the Children, 2014) and applied to help “capture complex social change processes and illuminate interactions between interventions and the context” (OECD, 2012, p.32). Visual participatory tools used during FGDs offered increased opportunities for participants of different ages, especially younger participants, to interact and share their views, experiences and feelings concerning child and youth participation in peacebuilding (O’Kane, 2008; Kitzenger, 1994). The Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) approach (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2009) also provided useful frameworks for analyzing the impact of CYP initiatives evaluated as case studies. Furthermore, the Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding (Sub Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding, 2014) and Basic Requirements for Quality Children’s Participation (Save the Children, 2014) informed the development of 8 indicators that assess the quality of child and youth participation in peacebuilding.

The Global Evaluators enabled the development of Country Partnership Steering Teams in each of the 3 countries. These Country Steering Teams took on the responsibility of developing Country Partnerships for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding and an initial project conducting the 3M Evaluation in their country. The 3M Evaluation process included: hiring a fulltime Country Evaluator, considering the necessity of hiring a Partnership Coordinator, identifying 3 to 4 regions within each country in which to complete the evaluation, establishing Local Evaluation Teams (LETs), identifying LET Coordinators, organizing a 4-day National Capacity Building Workshop to launch the process and in the latter phase organising a 5 day Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop to process all the data collected.

An Evaluation Protocol, ethical guidelines, participatory evaluation tools, forms, information leaflets and other documents were provided to support Country Steering Teams and evaluators when implementing the methodology. All evaluation participants were required to sign Informed Consent Forms and all evaluators were required to sign the Evaluators Code of Conduct and Behavior Protocol. Furthermore, Global Evaluators helped facilitate National Capacity Building Workshops, and had regular calls with the Country Evaluators, to mentor and support the evaluation process, paying particular attention to quality and ethical evaluation practice.

Evaluation Limitations

The evaluators recognise a number of limitations to the methodology including:

- In Colombia, researchers only evaluated initiatives focused on engaging children or youth as peacebuilders. An organization could have more than one CYP initiative.
- Most initiatives evaluated, lacked baseline data on CYP quality and impact. Furthermore, limitations did not allow for gathering data from control groups to better evaluate the cumulative impact of multiple CYP initiatives and the impact of additional variables. In the absence of baseline data and control groups, the importance of triangulating data from different sources and evaluation methods was crucial to ensure valid and robust findings.
- There was limited sub-context conflict analysis. However, a conflict analysis problem tree tool was used by LET members to provide insights and analysis into conflict and
violence issues affecting them. Furthermore, Country Evaluators were chosen partly because of their contextual knowledge. They also reviewed conflict analysis reports and CYP initiatives' conflict analysis documents.

- A user updated online platform was intended to broadly map and analyze the location, type, quantity and quality of CYP initiatives across each country. As described below, a web platform was developed for such purposes, but technical challenges led to delays that prevented its effective use during this evaluation.
- Time and financial constraints greatly limited the amount of data collected, the number of initiatives evaluated, the number of countries in which the evaluation was conducted, and more quantitative data analysis. Saturation within each age grouping for each initiative was not reached. Furthermore, enough CYP initiatives in each country were not evaluated to ensure findings are representative of CYP initiatives in each country.

Evaluation Terms and Participants Defined

**Peacebuilding:** work to prevent, stop, or heal the occurrence of any form of violence. Peacebuilding includes reconciliation, non-violence, or conflict-transformation efforts and preventing or limiting violence.

This evaluation uses the above definition of peacebuilding while recognising that it can be carried out at the individual, family, community, sub-national, national and global levels. This evaluation focused upon Majority World contexts affected by armed conflict.

Recognizing different cultures and organizations define groups of young people differently, this evaluation refers to child and youth peacebuilding (CYP) generally as peacebuilding efforts of any person under the age of 30.

Evaluation participant data was organized in the following four groupings. FGDs were conducted separately with these groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT GROUPINGS DEFINITIONS</th>
<th>TERM USED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) 10 - 14 year old girls and/or boys participating in peacebuilding initiatives</td>
<td>child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) 15 - 17 year old girls and/or boys participating in peacebuilding initiatives</td>
<td>adolescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 18 - 29 year old female or male youth participating in peacebuilding initiatives</td>
<td>youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) 18+ year old adults supporting child or youth peacebuilding initiatives</td>
<td>adult supporters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this report, the term “evaluation participants” or “participants” refers to participants from all four groupings above. “Child participants” refers to those 10 to 14 year old those alone. “Adolescent participants” or “Adolescent” refers to those 15 to 17 year old alone. “Youth participants” are those from 18 to 29 year old alone. “Adult supporters” are participants 18 and older who support child and/or youth peacebuilders. However, “Child and youth participants” refers to all evaluation participants ages 10 to 29 year old, including the 15 to 17 year old adolescent participants.
Efforts were made to include an equal number of boys and girls in FGDs and to reach children and youth from the most marginalized backgrounds, including those from ethnic or social minorities.

Furthermore, Body Map FGDs were conducted separately with female and male children and youth to ensure space for gender sensitive expression of views and experiences. Body Maps were conducted in male and female mixed groups with CYP adult supporters. Disaggregated data analysis and triangulation of data from different sources and methods helped increase reliability and validity of findings, with attention to gender, age, and other diversity factors.

### Key Considerations for Ethical Evaluations with Children and Youth

- Ensure effective communication and coordination systems are in place with all stakeholders from local to international levels
- Ensure Country Partnership Steering Team members have understood and signed their organization’s Child Protection Policy or a similar Code of Conduct
- Assess the risks to participants before you begin the research and make sure you have strategies to deal with or minimize any risks
- Plan research and evaluation activities at times that suit participants and do not interfere with their school work or other important responsibilities
- Ensure evaluators have access to the materials and support they need to carry out their research and evaluation activities safely and effectively
- Ensure all participants have given their informed consent to their involvement, and understand how their contributions will be used, and that they can withdraw their consent at any point
- Ensure parents/guardians understand, accept and support the process that their children are involved in and that they give their consent
- Seek necessary permission from key community elders to organise evaluation activities with children, youth and/or adults in their community and sensitise adults about the important roles children and youth are playing as evaluators
- Respect the privacy and anonymity of participants during the evaluation processes – while being prepared to deal with any disclosures
- Ensure participant’s views and experiences remain anonymous and confidential in written documents or reports – particularly if negative experiences are shared
- Prepare to make referrals when participants need immediate support or protection, especially in relation to distress or disclosure of traumatic events
- Ensure methods are used which allow each participant to actively participate according to his/her age and abilities
- Ensure issues of discrimination are dealt with and that the research is conducted in a non-discriminatory and inclusive way allowing voices of marginalized groups to be heard on an equal basis
- Wherever ambiguous, confirm the intent of participant’s spoken or written words or drawings
- Address issues of material or symbolic rewards and potential costs for participation in a transparent and fair way and that manages expectations well
- Give quality feedback to all those involved, including the wider community
The Colombia Partnership For Children and Youth in Peacebuilding

As a national structure of the Global Partnership, the Colombia Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (Colombia Partnership) was formed in September 2014, involving district-level youth organizations, national and international organizations supporting child and youth peacebuilding (CYP) in Colombia. It included Asociación Sembrando Semillas de Paz, Fundación Antonio Restrepo Barco, Fundación Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano, Fundación Escuelas de Paz, and World Vision International Colombia Office. They formed together the Colombia Partnership Steering Team (CPST).

The Colombia Partnership was established as a long term sustainable structure to support collaborative learning, information sharing, joint programming and advocacy towards increasing value and space for meaningful CYP at different levels (in families, schools, communities, local governance, sub-national, national, regional and global). The Colombia Partnership Steering Team (CPST) coordinates with the Global Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding to enhance information exchange and effective programming and advocacy at all levels.

One of the initials tasks of the Colombia Partnership Steering Team was to support the 3M participatory evaluation. With support from the 3M Global Partnership Steering Team and the Global Evaluators, the overall responsibility of the Colombia Partnership Steering Team was to:

- Rigorously implement the 3M evaluation to ensure a substantive and valid country report;
- Provide opportunities to hear and coordinate research, evaluation, action and advocacy efforts and initiatives to support child and youth participation in peacebuilding;
- Assist in overcoming methodological challenges or other concerns associated with the 3M evaluation;
- Support analysis and action planning on emerging findings from the evaluation;
- Identify and follow up on key advocacy messages and venues to increase support for more effective and efficient CYP;
- Promote the vision and activities of the network, recruit and support members as well as foster a sense of care, belonging, and collaboration while drawing in local NGOs, international NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental bodies.

Colombia Selection of Geographic Areas and Local Evaluation Teams (LETs)

As explained previously, the Colombian context of conflict and violence is complex, and involves multiple stakeholders at multiple levels. The types of conflict and violence affecting children and youth vary in different geographic areas of the country as they are influenced by different socio-cultural, historical, political and economic factors. In order to make strategic choices about geographic areas to form Local Evaluation Teams, the CPST mapped where Colombia Partnership member organizations and other allies were implementing and/or supporting CYP initiatives. In this respect, the CPST acknowledged the fact that each region had its own particularities, in terms of both the types of violence and actors involved, and the existing varieties of child and youth peacebuilding initiatives.

Four main criteria were used to identify the regions for the 3M evaluation in Colombia: (1) diversity of peacebuilding initiatives, (2) rural and urban settings, (3) presence and willingness of organizations and partners to support the evaluation, and (4) diverse community representations. Child and youth-led movements and organizational
peacebuilding initiatives were evaluated in both urban and rural settings. Efforts were also made to undertake the participatory evaluation in ethnically, socioeconomically and culturally diverse communities. In this respect, IDPs, afro descendant populations, communities historically directly affected by the armed conflict, as well as communities affected by other types of violence, were involved in the evaluation process.

(Map of Colombia LET Areas, 2015).

See appendix 2 for a description of the initiatives involved in the 3M evaluation and their locations)

Following is an overview of the key issues affecting children and youth in the four regions selected for the evaluation. It is important to highlight that in each of these cities, numerous child and youth peacebuilding initiatives concentrate their efforts to cope with violence and promote peace. Some of these are highlighted in this report.

**Eje Cafetero** (Prepared by Juliana Santacoloma). The Eje Cafetero (Colombian Coffee Growing Axis) comprises three departments: Quindío, Risaralda, and Caldas. The area has not suffered the consequences of the armed conflict in the same way than other regions of the country, such as Cauca or Chocó, mainly because the war has mostly occurred in the Colombian countryside, far from the central part of the country and the big cities (GMH 2013, p. 22). However, the region’s children and youth are significantly affected by the presence of armed actors and other types of violence such as drug trafficking, criminal organizations, gangs, youth delinquency, and sexual exploitation (Defensoría del Pueblo 2012 in Caracol Radio 2012). The lack of education and employment opportunities, and insufficient governmental support to promote culture,
art, sports, and citizenship are driving factors of direct violence in the region. The 3M evaluation was conducted in Armenia (Quindío) and Manizales (Caldas).

**Bogotá-Soacha** (Prepared by Johan Camilo Lombo A.). The populations of southern Bogotá and the municipality of Soacha, where the 3M evaluation was conducted, are amongst the most vulnerable of the country. The region is characterized by uncontrolled settlement growth due to continuous population displacement from conflict-affected areas. Children, youth, and their families suffer from a lack of access to social services, employment, education, housing, healthcare, and high levels of environmental degradation. People face multiple forms of violence and youth are particularly at risk of recruitment by criminal gangs. The lack of educational and economic opportunities contribute to increased youth involvement in illegal activities—such as drug trafficking, the use of weapons, and delinquency (UNDP 2011; Developing Minds Foundation 2015; UNTFHS 2012, p. 1-4). The 3M evaluation was conducted in: Bosa, Ciudad Bolivar and Cazuca.

**Cali** (Prepared by Milton Fernando Muñoz and Julio Andrés Cortés). Cali is the country’s third largest city and one of the most violent. The city is particularly affected by the presence of different criminal groups and gangs. Children and youth from vulnerable areas of the city are particularly at risk of recruitment. They experience different forms of violence, abuse, and challenges, including intra-family violence, invisible borders, lack of educational and employment opportunities, gang violence, and high school dropout rates (El Pais 2014; Verdad Abierta 2014). The 3M evaluation was conducted in Potrero Grande and Comuna 20.

**Montes de María.** The Montes de María región is located between departments Bolivar and Sucre. Starting in the 1990s, the region was highly affected by the armed conflict with the presence of guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and government forces. The high levels of violence resulted in massive population displacement towards urban centers on the Caribbean coast. The region’s strategic location close to the Caribbean coastline transformed it in an important corridor for drug traffickers exporting to other countries and fighting for the control of this strategic territory. From the four regions selected for the 3M evaluation, the Montes de María has been the most affected by direct violence from the armed conflict. As a consequence of the war and the state’s neglect, communities are left without protection of their socio economic rights. They lack of access to health care, education, electricity, housing, and proper sewer systems, among others. The lack of social investment in the region resulted in significant challenges for children and young people’s development due to the lack of educational infrastructures, limited employment, and professional opportunities; which resulted in massive displacement to major Caribbean cities to find better opportunities (Fundación Antonio Restrepo Barco 2012, p. 11-12; JOPPAZ 2013; UNDP et.al 2006, p. 14-16). The 3M evaluation was conducted in Bajo Grande, El Carmen de Bolivar, Guamanga, Macayepo, Ovejas, and San Onofre.

In each region, a Local Evaluation Team (LET) was formed and composed of children, youth and adults from different peacebuilding initiatives. CPST member organizations and other partners involved in the evaluation were invited to identify participants for a January 2015 National Capacity Building Workshop. LET members were trained to use and implement participatory evaluation tools between January and March 2015 in their own initiatives as well as in other CYP initiatives within their region. Similarly,
organizations were invited to identify candidates to assume the role of LET Coordinator during the entire evaluation process.

Once the LET areas were decided, a Colombia Evaluator was hired to help inform, adapt and implement the participatory evaluation process supporting meaningful participation of children and youth as evaluators, advisers, respondents, documenters and analysts.

**TABLE 1:** Number of LET Members by Area, Gender, Age and Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>10-14 years old</th>
<th>15-17 years old</th>
<th>18-29 years old</th>
<th>18+ Adults</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>M F</td>
<td>M F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eje Cafetero</td>
<td>1 3 3 2 1 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cali</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogotá-Soacha</td>
<td>2 1 1 1 2 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montes de María</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 3 1 1 1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0 3 4 4 13 8</td>
<td>2 5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Colombia Capacity Building Workshop**

Together with the CPST and Global Evaluators, the Colombia Evaluator organized a 4 day “listening and learning - National Capacity Building Workshop” in which Global Evaluators, Global Partnership Steering Team (GPST) members and CPST members supported the facilitation. They also helped consolidate the country partnership and represent the GPCYP to potential national strategic partners.

It is important to highlight that, as planned, several additional children and youth became active LET members. They were not present at the Capacity Building Workshop but they were trained by their peers and thereafter supported the evaluation in their region. Their contribution was extremely valuable. Some of them participated in the Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop that took place at the end of March 2015.

Although LET members continuously expressed their interest and motivation in being part of the evaluation, most importantly to ensure a transparent and respectful process, the Colombia Partnership Steering Team organized a session during the Capacity Building Workshop to clarify the responsibilities of being a Local Evaluation Team member, and the commitment that this would represent in the coming months. A lot of emphasis was put on the freedom of each LET member, whether children, youth or adults, to opt out from the evaluation at any time. In this respect, it is interesting to highlight that out of thirty participants trained during the capacity building workshop, twenty-nine participated actively in the evaluation by implementing participatory evaluation tools. As will be further explained, the same LET members also participated in a Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop (March 2015) where they supported the

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9 Time did not allow for local trainings such as the one provided during the Capacity Building Workshop. Newcomers initially supported the facilitation in terms of logistics and most importantly as observers. Once they felt comfortable with the methodologies, they facilitated sessions and were always accompanied by a member who was trained during the Capacity Building Workshop.

10 Some LET members could not participate in the Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop and were replaced by other LET members who had played an active role during the evaluation.
analysis of the data collected as well as formulated key recommendations to improve the quality and impact of child and youth participation in peacebuilding.

During the Capacity Building Workshop LETs developed an action plan to carry out the evaluation within their respective regions considering the following:

- time availability of LET members and evaluation participants (school, university, work, etc.)
- venues available to conduct evaluations
- diversity in gender and age groups of respondents
- risks and security measures
- financial and material resources needed
- confidence using the tools and need for training

Overview of 3M Evaluation Tools

**Online mapping.** In addition to using the Participatory Evaluation Tools the Global Partnership collaborated with other agencies to expand an existing web platform to allow users to add information on who is doing what and where to support children and youth as peacebuilders. The platform allows users to record information on different types of CYP work, when and where the work was conducted, and the number of young people from different age groups involved. It also allows importing of peace and violence indicators. Development delays prevented use of the platform until the end of our evaluation process. See more and register CYP initiatives here www.GPCY.com/map.

**Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).** Several evaluation tools were designed for focus group discussion (FGD) facilitated among a group of 4 – 12 participants involved with a particular CYP initiative.¹¹ The Timeline and Body Map were intended to be essential tools facilitated in FGDs, multiple times with each different evaluation participant group, for each CYP initiative evaluated. The Children and Youth in Context and Pots and Stones FGDs were primarily intended for use with case studies. The boxes below provide greater descriptions of each tool. Evaluators were encouraged to: (1) complete FGDs in approximately 90 minutes, (2) give participants individual quiet reflection time before each question was then considered as a group, and (3) have 2 to 3 facilitators conduct each FGD together.

¹¹ The tools were adapted from Save the Children (2014) A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children’s Participation. Save the Children, Plan International, Concerned for Working Children, World Vision and UNICEF.
**Essential Tool: Timeline FGD**

The Timeline FGD explored the history, developments, successes, and challenges of a CYP initiative over time. Participants identified success factors and shared their ideas to improve the impact of their peacebuilding initiatives. A initiative timeline was drawn horizontally on a long paper. The initiative's name and start date was noted near the left end of the line and the current date near the right end of the line. A short group conversation revealed 3 - 4 key peacebuilding activities of their CYP initiative. Activities were then placed on the Timeline as reference points to help consider key successes, challenges, and impact.

Qu1. *What have been your main activities to build peace or reduce violence?*
Qu2. *What are this initiative's peacebuilding successes?*
Qu3. *What were this initiative's peacebuilding challenges?*
Ask participants to identify one to three successes they think are most significant.
Qu4. *What made these successes so successful?*
Qu5. [If time] *What would increase [children's/youth's] peacebuilding impact?*

**Essential Tool: Body Map FGD**

The Body Map FGD used body parts to explore changes in child and youth experiences before and after their participation in a particular peacebuilding initiative. It explored positive, negative, and unexpected outcomes and impact of their participation. A participant’s body was outlined on paper and a vertical line was drawn down the middle of the body. The left-hand side represented the child or youth peacebuilder BEFORE participation in this particular peacebuilding initiative and the right-hand side represented him/her now, AFTER participation in the peacebuilding initiative. Questions were adapted for adult supporters to focus on changes of the CYP initiative participants.

Qu1. *What are the changes due to child and youth participation in peacebuilding?*
  *HEAD:* What are changes in your knowledge or thoughts or what others think of you?
  *EYES:* What are changes in the way you see your family, community, school or society?
  *EARS:* What are changes in how you are listened to, how you listen to others, or what you hear?
  *MOUTH:* What are changes in the way you communicate with peers, parents, caregivers, teachers or others?
  *SHOULDERs:* What are changes in your responsibilities?
  *HEART:* What are changes in your feelings or in the way other feel about you?
  *HANDS & ARMS:* What are changes in your activities? What are changes in how adults or children/youth treat you?
  *FEET & LEGS:* What are changes in where you go?
  *OTHER:* Feel free to write or draw changes to any other parts of your body.
Qu2. *Which changes built the most peace or prevented the most violence? Why?*
Qu3. *What can children/youth do to improve the impact of their peacebuilding initiatives?*
Children and Youth in Context FGD

Children and Youth in Context used a diagram of children and youth in the context of their families, schools, community/district and national contexts to help identify their peacebuilding impact. This tool helped: (1) identify objectives of CYP initiatives at different levels; (2) analyse positive or negative, expected or unexpected impact at different levels; and (3) identify other data sources to verify CYP impact.

Concentric circles were drawn on very large paper representing different impact levels. 2-4 objectives were placed in the most relevant circle as reference points to consider impact.

Qu1. What are this initiative’s peacebuilding objectives at different levels?
Qu2. What changes has your CYP initiative made at different levels?
Qu3. What is the nature of the change - negative change, no change, some positive change, or much sustained change?

Negative Change or harm from CYP
No change from CYP
Some positive change from CYP
Much sustained positive change from CYP

Qu4. What evidence is there for the most significant changes noted?
Qu5. Which children and youth have most or least benefitted from this peacebuilding initiative? (optional)
Qu6. What can children/youth do to improve the impact of their peacebuilding initiatives? (optional)

Pots and Stones FGD

The Pots and Stones FGD was used to discuss and score eight principles relating to CYP quality and share ideas to improve quality. Pots and Stones was to begin in 4 working groups, so each group could explore 2 principles, and conclude in plenary discussion agreeing final scores for each principle. See Appendix 12 for the FGD handout with the 8 principles, their related questions, and the scoring scale.

Qu1. How well is the principle met in your CYP initiative? What is your score and your reasons?
Qu2. What can be done to improve this principle’s score?

Draw and Write, Poems and Stories on “Peace and Violence: Choices and Change” was an optional individual activity that allowed participants to share more

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12 Eight basic principles for CYP were identified by the Global 3M Steering Team and Global Evaluators based primarily upon two key international documents: The Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.12, The Right of the Child to be Heard (CRC/C/GC/12, July 2009) which outlines nine basic principles for effective and ethical participation of children and young people; Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding (2014) developed through an inter-agency initiative.
about their CYP experiences and feelings, choices they faced to engage in peace or violence, or changes arising from peacebuilding or violent experiences. Participants could draw and write more about a FGD or interview question, their own question, or one of those given below.

“If we dream peace, we can achieve it” 13 year old girl

- What are your personal motivations and choices to engage in peacebuilding or violence in your community, school, family, workplace, or nation?
- What child and youth peacebuilding efforts bring the greatest peacebuilding impact?
- What changes occur when children or youth participate in violence?
- What would increase the peacebuilding impact of children and youth?

Case Studies provided more detailed information and analysis of the quality and impact of key CYP initiatives identified through the initial evaluation process. The LETs, Country Evaluator, Country Partnership Steering Team and Global Evaluators were involved in a participatory process to select CYP initiatives considered “most effective” in building peace, and possibly, initiatives considered least effective. All tools described herein were used to collect data for case studies. Additionally, the Reflecting Peace Practice Matrix (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2009) was also applied to better understand conflict issues addressed, the vision and the extent to which: (a) individual and socio-political changes were supported through the initiative; and (b) whether more people and key people were involved.

A 4 Day National Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop in each country brought together LET members, Country Partnership Steering Team members, 3M Global Partnership Steering Team members, the Country Evaluator and Global Evaluators. Children and youth were supported and encouraged to play active roles as facilitators, presenters, analysts and advocates in this workshop. Workshop objectives were to:

- Reflect on key learning from the participatory evaluation process
- Present, dialogue, and analyse key data concerning each evaluation topic
- Analyze data disaggregated by gender, age, and other relevant factors to better identify significant findings concerning CYP quality and impact
- Identify key messages from participants on gaps and needs to strengthen CYP
- Develop key practical and strategic recommendations to strengthen CYP
- Plan ongoing efforts to strengthen the Colombia Partnership for CYP with support of the Colombia Partnership Steering Team
- Plan evaluation feedback, dissemination, advocacy and action planning at a range of levels
**Applying 3M Evaluation Tools in Colombia**

Between February and March 2015, LETs implemented the two essential participatory evaluation tools to assess the quality and impact of child and youth participation in peacebuilding, namely, Timeline and Body Mapping.

The Timeline tool was implemented in all four LET areas and proved to be a very useful tool, not only to assess the above mentioned elements, but also to evaluate the impact of peacebuilding activities and initiatives on children and young people’s lives.

Participants were asked to draw around the shape of a person on a large sheet of paper to create a body map. It was used as a before/after tool to explore individual changes as a result of being part of a peacebuilding initiative.

In Colombia, the following parameters were taken into account to identify the case studies:

- Diversity of cases
- Results of the first round of evaluation using the Timeline and Body Map
- Capacity of the initiatives to further organize evaluation activities
- Regional diversity

Children and Youth in Context and Pots and Stones were implemented by three LETs which evaluated four peacebuilding initiatives in three different regions. Due to time and financial constraints, less FGDs were conducted using case study tools than essential tools. Yet, significant results and contributions were collected. Case studies allowed very precise analysis of crucial factors that influenced both positively and negatively the quality and impact of child and youth participation in peacebuilding. The tools also allowed for identifying evidence based changes and impact of children’s participation in peacebuilding.

**TABLE 2**: Number of FGDs and Draw and Write Activities Completed by Tool and Participant Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOOL:</th>
<th>10-14 years old</th>
<th>15-17 years old</th>
<th>18-29 years old</th>
<th>18+ Adult supporters</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Map</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pots and Stones</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Youth in Context</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FGD TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Draw and Write</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>121</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3: Number of FGDs and Interview Participants by Gender, Age and Location (excluding Draw and Write). Participants are only counted once in this table though some participants participated in multiple evaluation activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>10-14 years old</th>
<th>15-17 years old</th>
<th>18-29 years old</th>
<th>18+ Adult Supporters</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eje Cafetero</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cali</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogotá-Soacha</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montes de Maria</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FGD TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>63</strong></td>
<td><strong>103</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children, Youth and Adult Engagement in Documentation and Analysis Process

The participatory nature of the 3M evaluation supported the active role of children and youth as evaluators. Training and mentoring was provided to all LET members to ensure an efficient and meaningful documentation and analysis process. LET members were trained and provided with several tools and methods to ensure a rigorous documentation and analysis process:

- **Systematic use of individual codes.** Every participant of the evaluation, whether respondents or evaluators, was required to use an individual code that provided their age, gender, name initials and city/village where the person primarily participated in peacebuilding initiatives. Individual codes were crucial as they allowed more efficient comparison of results from different tools, as well as easier inclusion of diversity factors such as age groups, gender and geographic scopes. Each participants’ contribution or evaluators’ observations were accompanied by their codes.

- **Activity codes** were used to help file, find and cite evaluation activities during evaluation and analysis. Activity codes consist in a unique ten digit code including the country number, initials of the tool used, participant age group, gender of participant(s), initials of the city/village where the activity took place, and the number of times the tool was used in this particular city/village. Using codes increased analysis quality by offering easier comparative analysis across cities, regions and countries.

- **Transcriptions of evaluation results.** LET Coordinators ensured every evaluation activity was accurately transcribed and every response included an individual code. On several occasions, LET members actively participated in the transcription of evaluations.
they conducted. Such practice gave them opportunity to directly observe data quality and assess their evaluation performance.

- **Standard Observation and Documentation Forms** completed during each activity kept track of participants involved, activity details such as venue and date, the peacebuilding initiative being evaluated, and environmental factors that may have influenced the evaluation process.

- **LET meetings and exchanges.**
  Three of four LETs met to look at preliminary results in order to adjust their evaluation plans and strategies at the local level. Issues addressed during these meetings were mostly related to factors hindering the evaluation process, such as logistical challenges, insufficient planning on behalf of the facilitation team and lack of participants. These meetings were often an opportunity for evaluators to travel to another area and evaluate new initiatives. This increased the objectivity and quality of the evaluation process. Traveling to nearby cities and villages to lead FGDs with children and youth from different peacebuilding initiatives and backgrounds allowed local evaluators to practice their facilitation skills and ensure more objectivity in the evaluation process as they assessed initiatives they did not know beforehand. Local evaluators expressed their satisfaction as these exchanges improved their communications skills and confidence. Additionally, they insisted on the fact that it was a very efficient way to get to know about other initiatives and get inspired. As will be outlined in the next sections of this report, the exchange of experiences was considered by children, youth and adults as crucial for improving the CYP processes and that it should, therefore, become a priority for future CYP initiatives.

- **A Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop** was organized at the end of March 2015 by the Colombia Evaluator and the CPST. The workshop gathered LET members that participated in the initial Capacity Building Workshop as well as additional active LET members (23 LET members participated - a total of 8 children, 10 youth and 5 adult supporters of which 15 were female and 8 male). A Global Partnership Steering Team member and several CPST members were also present to support the facilitation and further develop the Colombia Partnership action plan. Children, youth and adults were supported and encouraged to play active roles as facilitators, presenters and analysts in this workshop. All data collected up to that point was organized, analyzed and presented by the participants. Data was clustered by themes and disaggregated according to diversity factors such as age groups, gender and geographic scope. Additionally, participants formulated a set of key recommendations to improve the quality and impact of child and youth participation in peacebuilding. These recommendations were the result of a thorough analysis of the data collected as well as of a reflection process during which LET members worked to convey recommendations to key actors such as policymakers, the media and donors, among others. The Colombia Evaluator analyzed and integrated additional data collected after the workshop.

- **Use of data analysis tables to build upon emerging themes.** Following the National Data Analysis and Reflection workshop, the Colombia Evaluator, in collaboration with the Global Evaluators developed a set of data analysis tables. These tables built upon “emerging themes” identified by LET members during the workshop, and enabled a more
systematic review of the raw data to identify and record evidence for each theme, while also adding any new “themes” that had been missed.

- **A Global Evaluators Meeting** took place from May 11 - 15 in Brussels enabling Country Evaluators from Colombia, DRC and Nepal to work together with the Global Evaluators and a Global Partnership Steering Team member to compare key findings and to identify common themes, as well as differences related to different contexts.

**Reflections and Lessons Learned on Involving Children and Youth in the Evaluation**

Ensuring the involvement of children and youth throughout the evaluation process was a core value of the 3M evaluation. This helped guarantee meaningful and quality participation. Children and youth have reflected that, as evaluators, they were able to gain knowledge of the participatory evaluation methodology and adapt methods to the local context. They received opportunities to plan effective local implementation of the evaluation. Children and youth expressed how their involvement in the process improved their communication, facilitation, documentation and analytical skills, and thereby, further enhanced the quality and impact of their participation in peacebuilding.

Not only involving them at different stages but also taking all their opinions into account was described by the participants as a unique opportunity to evaluate CYP in a meaningful, inclusive and respectful manner.

“The dynamic of the Local Evaluation Team allowed us to feel confident in front of other initiatives”

“The participants of the evaluation recognized themselves as proactive subjects in peacebuilding”

Reflections provided by LET members during the National Data Analysis and Reflection workshop.

A session at the National Data Analysis and Reflection workshop provided LETs, the Colombia Evaluator, and CPST an opportunity to evaluate the entire evaluation process (January-March 2015). To do so, participants collectively identified a set of categories to assess:

1 Knowledge of the participatory evaluations tools
Factors enabling an ethical and effective evaluation with and by children and youth. Following is a list of 3M evaluation attributes, across the aforementioned categories, that supported children and youth’s ethical and effective participation as CYP evaluators.

- **Appropriation and internalization** of the different evaluation tools and methodologies;
- **Efficient coordination** and leadership at the national and LET levels;
- **Intra- and interpersonal skills’** development and strengthening;
- **Successful implementation** due to: good planning at national and LET levels; effective communication between the LET members and the coordination team; optimizing use of materials and resources; confidence gained conducting evaluations first in LET members’ own initiatives, adapting to different contexts (methodologies, age groups, logistical details, participants skills and/or difficulties, participants and evaluator’s time availability), implementing in both urban and rural settings;
- **Informed and inspired** by other initiatives and new contexts;
- **Opportunity to evaluate internal processes and identify weaknesses** of evaluators’ own peacebuilding initiatives;
- **Empowerment**, self-confidence, leadership, facilitation and evaluation skills gained as a result of evaluators’ involvement;
- **Ownership of the evaluation** by the participants and respondents: A feeling of ownership began developing in some regions where participants’ motivation increased as a result of their continuous involvement in the evaluation;
- **Efficient documentation process.** Consistent implementation of documentation guidelines by LET members, including informed consents forms (signed by participants and parents/caregivers), photos of all written contributions, use of individual codes, standard observation and documentation forms filled in during each FGD. In some regions, LET members also supported their LET Coordinator by transcribing and clustering the data collected by questions and themes across multiple FGDs. Several LETs considered the documentation process an occasion to get closer to the data and strengthen their ties as a team;
- **Introspection and internal reflections.** Several LET members described how implementing evaluation tools helped participants understand how peacebuilding was both an individual and collective process;
- **Proactive peacebuilders.** The evaluation helped children, youth and adults recognize themselves as proactive peacebuilders.

Factors hindering an ethical and effective 3M evaluation with and by children and youth. Following 3M evaluation attributes hindered children and youth’s ethical and effective participation as CYP evaluators.

- **Time constraints** hindered LETs from knowing more about the other CYP initiatives and conflict affected communities. Moreover, their involvement in the transcription of data process would have been much higher. Some informed consent forms were not filled in on time due to time challenges informing parents. The CPST also identified that time was a major challenge and that more time would have allowed inclusion of many more children and youth as evaluators, as well as include more peacebuilding initiatives and
geographic areas. Children and young evaluators continuously expressed their interest to know about other peacebuilding initiatives and to get the opportunity to visit these and conduct evaluations. But due to time constraints as well as coordination issues at the local and national level, two out of four LETs were not able to organize these exchanges that were so valuable and meaningful for the other regions.

- **Contextual Risks.** In some areas, LET members got the opportunity to evaluate the peacebuilding initiatives in which their LET peers were participating. In some cases, this implied moving to new areas and unknown communities and contexts. To minimize risks, LET members always accompanied each other to new areas in order to ensure that a member from the specific peacebuilding initiative and community was always present. Still, risks are always present and an interesting dialogue on this issue took place during the Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop. Participants acknowledged the fact that some risks are almost impossible to avoid due to the specific contexts and added that peacebuilding initiatives usually take place in contexts of violence where these type of initiatives are much needed.¹³

- **Challenges in terms of transportation.** In one of the geographic areas (Montes de María), local evaluators faced some difficulties in reaching remote rural areas. In some occasions, LET members had to walk for several hours as well as take ‘chalupas’ (small boats). Their efforts to overcome these challenges illustrate a key priority of the 3M evaluation, namely its inclusiveness. Reaching these areas often meant spending entire days of work, including several hours walking under heavy sun. Yet, young evaluators considered these areas as a priority to ensure that children and young people’s opinions from rural areas would be heard and taken into account.

LET members from the Montes de María reaching Maso to conduct FGDs

- **Participation of children and youth.** Very few participants were present during some FGDs. Several reasons were identified: lack of motivation or interests, distance to the

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¹³ As an example, one LET had to cancel a planned evaluation due to a violent and armed incident that happened in the community couple of days before the activity.
venues,14 and the lack of time to invite participants. Evaluation participants explained that this issue illustrated challenges some CYP initiatives faced, including, decreasing participation and lack of continuity in their projects.

### Adapting the methodology

Some 10-14 year old children had difficulty understanding some of the evaluation questions. LET members explained that it was sometimes complex to adapt the methodologies and language, taking into account the different age groups, literacy levels and participants’ years of experience within the peacebuilding initiative.

### Documentation process

LET members noted difficulties documenting data while also avoiding misinterpreting participant contributions. The different venues and composition of the FGD facilitation team often influenced the course of an evaluation and occasionally led to disorganized information which made it more challenging to transcribe evaluation activities.

### Commitment of all the organizations involved

Several children and young evaluators expressed their frustration related to the different levels of commitment of the different organizations involved in the evaluation. Due to the organization’s agenda, it was sometimes hard for them to provide LETs with the accompaniment and support needed to reach more participants and solve other local logistical issues.

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14 In the Montes de María region, some of the participants from rural areas often had to walk two hours to reach the venue of the evaluation. The choice of the venue often was a central point for participants from several villages who all participate in the same peacebuilding initiative. Due to time and resources limitations, it was impossible for the evaluators to reach all villages and therefore a central meeting village was often identified. While funds were made available for travel, there were often no other means of transport than walking to reach the evaluation venue.
PART TWO: Findings

Part Two shares key findings from the evaluation. An overview of different types of CYP initiatives evaluated is provided. Findings concerning the impact of child and youth participation in peacebuilding are presented under three key impact areas: 1) Aware and active citizens for peace, 2) Increased peaceful coexistence and reduced violence, and 3) Increased support to vulnerable groups. Part Two then describes five key factors which hinder or enable CYP impact. The quality of child and youth participation in peacebuilding is then assessed by eight key quality principles: 1) Participation is transparent and informative; 2) Participation is relevant and respectful to children and youth; 3) Participation encourages diversity and inclusion; 4) Participation is sensitive to gender dynamics; 5) Participation is safe and sensitive to risks; 6) Investments are made in intergenerational partnerships in young people’s communities; 7) Participation is accountable; and 8) Young people are involved in all stages of peacebuilding and post-conflict programming. The final section of Part Two on overarching findings shares other significant themes concerning the quality and impact of CYPs.

As illustrated in the introductory chapter, this 3M evaluation included 451 participants in Colombia. The following findings were derived from 1,869 responses during 90 FGDs, and 121 drawings and poems, all conducted between February and April 2015, as well as from several interviews conducted with key informants from the evaluated initiatives, and analysis of secondary sources.

FIGURE 1: Number of responses collected during 90 FGDs separated by participant groups (n=1,869)
Overview of CYP Initiatives Evaluated

Children and youth contributed to peacebuilding in many different ways and at various levels. Their peacebuilding role and impact highly depended on their context. In Colombia, the socio-political, geographic, and cultural contexts significantly influenced children and youth peacebuilding efforts. Children and youth engaged in peacebuilding through individual actions, as well as through organized groups. Several intervention types were developed based on the numerous CYP activities participants identified. The types below reflect some of the main ways in which CYP initiatives evaluated in Colombia work to build peace. See the appendix for descriptions of each CYP initiative and the number of FGDs used to analyze each.

Culture and sports. All participating initiatives highlighted the importance of using cultural practices and sports as strategies to promote peace and reduce violence. For several organizations, “culture” represented a central protection factor for children and youth that helped strengthen protective environments (Fundación Restrepo Barco, 2008).

Culture and sports comprise a wide range of activities and strategies that can be helpful in more meaningfully including and motivating children and youth. These types of activities can also be applied at different levels—such as community or school levels. In most CYP initiative evaluated, children and youth organized and participated actively in cultural and/or sports activities through:

- **Organized sport events** for peace involving different age groups, genders, ethnic groups, neighboring communities, etc. Children and youth considered that these activities created opportunities to improve communication between individuals and groups, and helped decrease violence in school and community settings. “It was important because people cared more about football than fights,” expressed a 14 year old boy.

- **Music, dance, scenic arts and folklore**, which are also considered to be very important for children, youth, and communities in general. These activities, with their geographical variations, are a central pillar of Colombian culture. Some of these peacebuilding activities include traditional music festivals, community dance groups, peace murals, and theatre performances reflecting on peace and violence.

Community mobilization and advocacy. One of the strategies used was mobilizing community members and organizations around activities and campaigns aimed at raising awareness on specific issues and promoting change. Children and young peacebuilders mobilized their communities through:

- Local, regional, national and international campaigns on topics such as poverty, sexual and reproductive health, violence against women, and hunger eradication;

- Pacifist protests and marches against violence and pro-peace;

- Community workshops on a series of issues, including gender equality, environmental protection, and children’s rights;

- Open-air activities, such as theatre performances, art exhibitions (graffiti and murals), speeches, and traditional and folkloric festivals, etc.

> “These activities help break invisible borders between communities” said a 16 year old girl from Cali.

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15 Invisible borders are delimited public spaces in areas dominated by criminal groups such as gangs. These space limitations aim at establishing domination in territorial spaces. They are characterized by gang-violence, micro traffic and illegal arm use. Individuals and/or groups are denied access or transit to specific areas limited by ‘invisible borders’. If the border is crossed, the person or group can be killed.
Environmental protection. Intensive exploitation of natural resources and natural hazards such as droughts and flooding have greatly affected many regions of the country. Children and youth can easily observe how these environmental issues affect their lives and that of others. A variety of initiatives evaluated implemented activities to cope with these issues and raise awareness about the importance of protecting the environment, including:

- Planting trees
- Using arts to raise awareness
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) campaigns at school and in communities
- Workshops on strategies to preserve natural resources
- Community cleaning brigades
- Ecological beauty contests (see Box)
- Micro-projects aimed at protecting the environment

**Youth Provoking Peace (JOPPAZ) Ecological beauty contest**

Each year, young peacebuilders from the youth-led movement JOPPAZ (see case study 2) organize an ecological beauty contest gathering different communities of the High Mountain region. The event is the culmination of several months of work during which young people developed and implemented ecological projects in their communities. During the contest, each community presents an ecological queen and king, dressed in ecological materials, who present their project to all communities. The best ecological project is awarded a collective price for all the youth involved in the project. Awards include the improvement of public spaces such as parks and sport fields as well as computing trainings for youth.

*2014 JOPPAZ Ecological Beauty Contest - Guamanga. Photo by Kristian Sanabria Hernandez*
**Political advocacy.** Children and youth from several CYP initiatives described the ways in which they intended to create impact at the political level. An interesting example is the efforts made by some organizations to provide capacity building to children and youth. These efforts focus on critical legal and administrative issues, including the Colombia Code for the Infancy and Adolescence, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as other national, regional, and local legal and institutional frameworks pertaining to children and youth. These trainings equip children and youth with knowledge and tools to better advocate for their rights.

**Capacity building** and trainings were considered core strategies by most peacebuilding initiatives evaluated. Workshops and other training types were offered continuously to develop children and youth’s potential. Topics included the use of logical frameworks, psycho-social skills and ethical considerations to work with children and youth, environmental protection, and gender equality, among others.

### Impact of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

*Before I was not interested about what was happening to me and I did not care about others. I did not like the way I was and I rejected myself and others. Now, I take more care of myself and I am interested in the common well-being. I can control myself without medication and I am kinder to others. I value myself and others.*

Statement from a 16 year old girl from Armenia

Assessing the impact of child and youth participation in peacebuilding was a chief objective of the 3M evaluation. This report validates the impact of CYP and illustrates significant ways to effectively engage young peacebuilders. By way of analyzing impact across diverse activities, it lays the groundwork for understanding effective ways to engage young peacebuilders. Evaluation findings reveal a deep level of introspection and reflection from children, youth, and adults. Participants from different regions and age groups often experienced the same types of changes and impacts as a result of their involvement in peacebuilding initiatives. In some cases, authorities’ and NGOs’ lack of knowledge, recognition, and real interest in listening to children and youth resulted in inefficient program design and implementation. Accordingly, children and youth recommend to “work with them and not for them, to the extent that they are provided with spaces to participate in the planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the processes.”

Two major impact themes and several sub-themes were identified:

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16 Recommendation formulated by children and youth during the National Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop, March 2015, Bogotá. See Part Three on “Key Messages and Recommendations.”
These themes and sub-themes may sometimes overlap as they are dynamically interrelated. For example, several participants expressed that a change in mindset often lead to reduced violence in their schools and their communities. Similarly, knowledge and skills acquired by children and youth sometimes helped change their mindset or nurture peaceful values. The following pages analyze and categorize the diverse opinions of children, youth, and adult supporters. Views fitting more than one theme were analyzed accordingly.

**Theme 1: Aware and Active Citizens for Peace**

Child and youth peacebuilders, subjects of the evaluation, described how they became more aware and active citizens for peace. This dominant theme covered numerous sub-themes related to impact emerging from individual changes, developments, and actions. Children and youth's involvement in peacebuilding helped them develop as individuals and become more responsible citizens. Their peacebuilding practice not only allowed young people to improve their peacebuilding skills, more broadly, it contributed to more effective positive involvement in their communities. Participants highlighted that individual changes and actions resulted in positive impacts at community, family, and school levels.

**Change in mindset and personal development.**

Responses indicated that CYP initiatives brought changes in children and young people's mindset, attitudes, values and perceptions, which resulted in significant impact at community, family, and school levels. Seventy percent of these types of changes were noted by 10 to 14 year old girls (n=98). “I do not fight anymore at school because I do not like it, and to achieve this change I decided to start dance courses as it helps me overcome this change,” said a 12 year old girl from San Onofre.

At the school level, children emphasized that becoming more respectful reduced fighting. A 14 year old girl from Cali described, “I used to think I was superior and fought at school. Before, I was a girl that fought a lot and I did not want to know about peacebuilding.” Promoting schools as zones of peace was a priority of several CYP initiatives evaluated. As argued by Alvarado et.al. (2012, p. 228-229), schools need
to transform into peaceful spaces in which education becomes a non-violent form of resistance where children are provided with meaningful alternatives to develop their ethical, moral, and intellectual potentials. Evaluation participants underlined how participating in peacebuilding activities in their schools enabled them to understand the value of respect and be equipped to apply it in their daily lives, not only at school but also in their communities and families. More than 50% of participants who identified CYP impact at the school level had been actively involved in peacebuilding activities within their schools.

Frequently, on-school related CYP initiatives also caused positive impact in schools by increasing academic performances, and primarily, by reducing conflicts. Participants from these initiatives pointed out that their changed attitudes resulted in more dialogue and reduced conflicts with their schoolmates. Students and parents added that children and youth increasingly valued education as an opportunity.

**At the family level,** disobedience and disrespect (mostly verbal) were underlined as the main causes of familial conflict. “I did not ask permission from my parents to play in the neighborhood with my friends and, as I was very conflictive, my friends did not pay much attention to me,” noted a 14 year old girl from Manizales. Evaluation participants believed children and youth’s behavioral changes helped diminish conflicts. Respectful communication was identified as a major factor to reduce conflicts.

Two 15 year olds, a boy and a girl from Manizales, described changes in perceptions about peace and peacebuilding. Understanding and experiencing peace were described as key ways their lives had been impacted through their peacebuilding initiative:

“After [engaging in peacebuilding activities], we see peace with more respect and now our feelings include love and respect”

“Before I thought that peace was not important and I was against supporting it or helping do something to improve it.”

**Increased confidence and communication skills.** Children overcame communication barriers due to increased self-confidence. Reduced shyness was identified as a key attitude change experienced by children after participating in peacebuilding initiatives.

“I was very shy. I was a very shy and isolated boy, this prevented me from relating to others and learning about peace,” noted a 14 year old boy from Cali. A 37 year old woman from Bogotá described how “[children] are not shy anymore and now they relate more with their peers, they are happier and they have changed their mindset.”

Participants stressed that participating in peacebuilding had a positive impact on their personal lives. The evaluation shed light on ways in which these changes helped promote and build peace in their communities, families, and schools. Respectful attitudes and communication were recognized as essential aspects and strategies to increase peaceful co-habitation and reduce violence. Respect, as a value nurtured during peacebuilding activities, was regarded as a crucial factor. “We learnt that we all love being respected and we also learned to respect others,” illustrated a 15 year old girl from Cali.

Participants demonstrated a sound understanding of the importance of changing their own attitudes and perceptions to become more effective peacebuilders. The section on Increased Peaceful Co-Habitation and Reduced Violence will further analyze how individual changes can lead to significant reductions of violence and increased peaceful co-habitation.
Peace: It is not about taking away and imposing. It is a decision as well as forgive yourself. Drawing from a 26 year old youth

Acquired knowledge and skills

Children and youth considered that the knowledge and skills they acquired as peacebuilders helped them develop strong leadership skills; gain legal knowledge about their rights and duties; helping them advocate more efficiently and become more responsible citizens. Furthermore, respondents underlined that they gained a better understanding of peace concepts and methodologies, as well as political processes. Lastly, respondents also stressed that better comprehension and experiencing of ‘peace’ increased their awareness of the impact that they could have in their schools and communities.
Leadership skills provided young people with key abilities to train other youth, replicate peacebuilding strategies with their peers, advocate at the local and national political level, and act as role models. “I have now the leadership capacity and I can become a mentor and guide children in the community,” explained a 14 year old girl from Bogotá. Facilitation and leadership skills resulted in increased impact at the community and school levels. For example, peacebuilders in Armenia provided capacity building to student representatives in different schools on crucial topics such as human rights, culture of peace, the 1620 Act regarding school life and coexistence. Their empowerment enabled them to take leading roles and implement this youth-to-youth teaching methodology. Similarly, children and adolescents from Manizales were encouraged to replicate their experiences with other children and groups in their schools and communities which often implied talking in public. Children considered these leadership roles as a major added-value of the program. They appeared in front of their peers as leaders of processes that generate positive transformations in schools and communities.

Capacity-building activities and workshops helped children and youth learn about their rights and duties, and strategies to defend their rights. Knowledge of local, national and international legal and institutional frameworks considerably helped children and young people protecting themselves and promoting other young people’s rights. Participants stressed that such knowledge enabled them to reduce child and human rights violations and impunity in their communities. In this regard, a 14 year old boy from Bogotá expressed, “I have rights as well as duties and I have to fulfill them.” A 16 year old girl from San Onofre stated that “now youth are part of some state entities. Now we youth know where we may file a complaint when our rights are being violated.” A 16 year old boy from San Onofre added that he had an objective to:

achieve that all youth live in support of their communities whether at school, streets, or in all the municipality so that we all live in coexistence. Informing youth about their rights and laws so that youth can recognize when they feel that their rights are being violated.

Experience-based learning is central to encourage reflection, increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values (Kolb 1984 in Arigatou International 2008, p. 28). Children and youth expressed how their peacebuilding experiences helped them have a clearer understanding of peace itself, and how to be more effective peacebuilders. This had an emotional impact, which most probably influenced their commitment and perseverance. It has been recognized that experiential learning is crucial for children and youth to acquire peacebuilding competencies and for their application in peacebuilding processes. To internalize these competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes), children and young people need immediate and significant opportunities to practice peace (Reilly 2012, p.2).

I have a more humane way of thinking and I could understand the meaning of peace and peacebuilding, and it changed my life emotionally, said a 15 year old boy from Manizales.

The most tangible impact of CYP initiatives evaluated was children and youth frequently applied their acquired knowledge and skills to better engage themselves and others in peacebuilding.
Part Two: Findings

Practicing peacebuilding actions.
Children and youth proclaimed that they were more likely to carry out peacebuilding actions as a result of their participation in peacebuilding initiatives. A healthier and safer use of free time was identified as a major impact in children and youth’s lifestyle. Changing bad habits such as prioritizing their school duties over playing in the streets were highlighted as crucial changes. Additionally, participants stressed that protecting the environment and raising awareness on environmental issues were concrete actions with significant impact. Several children also considered that, as peacebuilders, they gained leadership skills that could be used in their communities to positively influence other children.

Children and youth noted that they became more responsible as a result of their involvement in peacebuilding projects. This responsibility was mostly reflected in their daily use of free time and academic or professional development. A 26 year old male asserted that, “children started to perform better academically, as they do not waste their free time.”

Peacebuilding initiatives often sought to protect children and youth from harmful and/or violent activities such as drug trafficking and consumption, and involvement in armed groups. In many cases, involving children and youth in recreational, artistic, cultural and sports activities was a very effective strategy to protect them and promote peace in communities and schools. “Since I started being part of the Peacebuilders Movement, I learnt to use my free time in things that are truly important and not harmful to me,” explained a 17 year old girl from Armenia. The work of peacebuilding initiatives is critical to promote this kind of responsible actions. A 19 year old female from San Onofre stated that “keeping youth with their minds busy in their free time for their healthy coexistence” was a crucial factor to protect their future and avoid their involvement in harmful or violent activities.

Environmental protection.
Many participants highlighted protecting the environment as an imperative priority within their peacebuilding initiatives. Children and youth expressed that protecting the environment was a daily action and that they could play an important role in this area. They pointed out that raising awareness through community and school mobilization was an efficient strategy to promote individual and collective actions. Successful outcomes include recycling habits at the individual, family, community and school levels; planting trees; and increased awareness of the environmental hazards affecting children and youth in other parts of the country and the world. As an example, a 17 year old boy from Cali stated that, “the success was that we managed to make youth aware of protecting the environment; ...and received support from external organizations such as police and universities. We helped youth who wanted to learn about the environment and helped them obtain scholarships.”
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How beautiful is nature when we take care of it - Drawing by a 14 year old boy

**From child peacebuilders to young leaders.**

Empowered children frequently lead to empowered youth with increased skills, commitment, and drive to be active citizens for peace. When children and youth “participate meaningfully to influence processes, policy and practice, as well as take action to change their communities for the better, strong foundations for democracy are laid early on to nurture them into responsible citizens and to build a culture of peace.” They can bring in distinctive local solutions to achieve social change and they have unique ways of exploring opportunities available for them to participate in peacebuilding (Kamatsiko 2011, p. 6).

Long-term involvement in peacebuilding initiatives often resulted in empowerment and leadership. Several evaluation participants who were involved in peacebuilding activities for several years became young leaders in their communities and organizations. Box 3 tells the stories of empowered young people from Armenia and Cali who became leading peacebuilders in their communities.
Part Two: Findings

From child peacebuilders to young leaders

Johan from the city of Armenia has been involved in the National Movement of Children, Adolescents and Youth Peacebuilders for 14 years, since the Movement started in the city. Since the age of 10, he grew up in the movement which “enabled him to develop himself at the individual and academic level.” For all these years, Johan has been actively involved, representing and advocating for the Movement at the local, departmental, and national level. While he is now working as a professional, he continues supporting the Movement and acts voluntarily as an Adviser on Citizenship Participation processes at the national level. He also accompanies children, adolescents, and youth in mentoring processes, strengthening the local branch of the Movement and supporting their involvement in Municipal Youth Councils, among others.

In 2002, several children (10 to 12 years old) from Cali started participating in the Children and Youth Peacebuilders program implemented in their school. Supported and funded by several different national and international CSOs, the program aimed at promoting peacebuilding and ethics in schools. When institutional support significantly decreased in 2004, the program continued being implemented with the support of five child mentors (14 to 15 years old) who organized and implemented courses on ethics and citizenship with children from different grades. When they graduated in 2007, several of these youth wanted to continue engaging children in peacebuilding and promoting peaceful coexistence in the school and neighboring communities that experience different types of violence such as drug trafficking and gang violence. They started seeking partnerships to strengthen and expand their work, and in 2013, they founded their own youth-led CSO, Multipropaz. They teach a course on ethics in which they focus on children’s development potentials. They also engage students in radio programmes, newspaper, ecological projects, art and dance courses. At the community level, they organize campaigns and events to promote peaceful coexistence and environmental protection.

During the FGDs, children and youth emphasized the leadership role they were already playing or their interest in disseminating and applying knowledge and skills. “Raising awareness among students and community members about what it means to be apart of the armed conflict as an individual,” conveyed a 26 year old female from el Carmen de Bolivar. “Because I can have the leadership capacity and become a mentor and guide children of the community,” added a 14 year old girl from Bogotá. Evaluation participants repeatedly stressed their important role to multiply their project’s impact and expand their work. Leadership and individual commitment were identified as vital attitudes and skills in this regard.

Individual commitment.
Children and youth became more committed as a result of their involvement in peacebuilding activities. More than 90% (n=38) of the responses under this theme were linked to the responsibilities that children and youth increasingly assumed in their communities and schools as a result of their involvement in peacebuilding processes.

Several participants explained that their involvement in peacebuilding motivated them to be more devoted to caring for others and promoting peace within their
Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

Communities and schools. The answers provided indicate a commitment by children to put in practice their learnings by helping and respecting others. For example, “Love for what I do, motivation to help others,” noted a 17 year old girl from Armenia.

Adults reiterated that empowering and motivating children and youth resulted in their greater involvement in public policy spaces, integrating Municipal Youth Councils, and following up on local governmental policies. These actions were strictly identified by participants from Montes de Maria and Armenia. A 26 year old male illustrated how Local Support Committees to Childhood and Youth (see case study 4) supported the creation of Municipal Youth Councils in Ovejas and San Onofre. As a result, young people engaged in the Councils and advocated for their rights. He further added that in El Carmen de Bolivar, children, youth and adults were following up on local governmental plans.

In Guamanga and Macayepo, young people pointed out that their individual changes resulted in stronger commitment to help others and transform their communities. Several participants expressed that their participation motivated them to further contribute to peacebuilding by integrating more youth to the initiative and participate in political spaces. Young people’s motivation was also reflected in their increased actions to look for academic and professional opportunities. A 20 year old female from Bajo Grande described a key change she experienced as a result of her involvement in peacebuilding: “Now I am a responsible girl with the desire to help and support my community and family.”

Most participants identified school-related responsibilities as a focal positive impact in their daily lives. Doing their homework and integrating with others were believed to be important improvements in their lives. A 13 year old boy from Bogotá reported, “before, I was irresponsible at school.” “I started to [do] homework and each day become more responsible” added a 14 year old girl from Manizales.

A youth is introducing the ecological queens from Guamanga who present traditional agricultural products - Photo by Kristian Sanabria

17 Municipal Youth Councils (Concejos Municipales de Juventud) act as bridges between youth and governmental authorities. It provides youth with a political space to advocate for issues that affect them. According to the Youth Law 375 of 1997 (Ley de Juventud 375 de 1997) Municipal Youth Councils should be established as autonomous organisms. 60% of the members are directly elected by youth while the other 40% are composed of youth organizations. The Law defines youth as individuals aged 14-26 years old.
Theme 2: Increased Peaceful Coexistence and Reduced Violence

Participants maintained that coexistence was improved and violence reduced at family, school, and community levels. Eight of 10 CYP initiatives reported positive changes and impacts in this area.

A clear difference was discerned between participants under 18 and youth participants. There was an observable majority of children and adolescents (10-17 years old) stressing that they had learned to dialogue instead of fighting, to respect their relatives and peers, and to recognize their own emotional feelings. By contrast, youth and adults, directed their responses on impacts that increased integration between communities and improved communication within families.

FIGURE 3: Age groups division - Increased Peaceful Coexistence and Reduced Violence

Reduced violence and conflicts in communities, schools, and families

Non-violent alternatives to conflict.
Children and youth highlighted how their involvement in peacebuilding activities helped them understand the value of family and improved relationships at home. Dialogue, better communication, and respect are considered to be important changes that improved their family lives: “My family and I used to live in a situation where there was no stable communication, we were in conflict. Thanks to the youth network, I have learnt to dialogue with my parents. Now I can say that we are a family living with respect, love, comprehension and most importantly tolerance” said a 18 year old female from San Onofre. “Before, my family considered me as a rude girl” added a 14 year old girl from Cali.

In its National Policy on Peacebuilding and Family Coexistence 2005-2015, the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare18 (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar - ICBF) underlined how preventing and addressing intrafamily violence requires an intersectoral strategy focused on individuals, families, and communities. Promoting values of peaceful coexistence and equipping families with tools to peacefully solve conflicts were highlighted as key strategies (ICBF 2005, p. 9-10). Evaluation participants were part of peacebuilding initiatives working at the community, family, and school levels. They all recognized how crucial it was for them to learn to dialogue instead of

18 The Colombian Institute of Family Welfare is a Colombian state entity, which works for the prevention and comprehensive protection of infancy, childhood, adolescence and well-being of families in Colombia.
fight, and promote peace within their homes. The values and skills acquired during different processes were applied in their homes and significantly improved their coexistence.

Children expressed that their involvement in school-based peacebuilding initiatives helped them find non-violent alternatives to conflict—mostly through dialogue, respect and friendship. Their responses indicated the importance that they attach to how they are perceived by their peers. As an example, a 14 year old girl from Manizales said that “now my vocabulary is better and now I pay attention to how I talk, so that people do not think that I am a bad person.”

More than 50% of answers under the category of “reduced conflicts and violence in schools and families” (n=94) used terms related to ‘communication’ to describe how children and youth had experienced greater peace in their relationships at home and in school. Dialogue, listening to others, using proper language, and expressing their feelings are considered as the main strategies they learned and used through their involvement in peacebuilding activities.

Thanks to capacity building and the meetings, children and youth started to change their way of talking and treating others. Within their families, relationships changed. We started to observe changes at school, as well, affirmed a 53 year old community leader from Cali.

**Decreased bullying.**
Participants from Cali described how bullying significantly decreased in their school and led to decreased school dropout. During an interview, the school discipline coordinator underlined that the work of ‘Multipropaz’ helped nurture the value of respect between students, and decrease cases of bullying which led to decreased school dropout rates.

Children expressed that “there is less bullying towards ethnic and religious groups within the school” (12 year old boy) and that “we have worked as peacebuilders in our school and have demonstrated with examples how to prevent violence and conflicts. In comparison with last year, there is much less bullying” (14 year old girl from Cali).

**Community integration**
Bringing together communities and families, for a variety of activities, appeared to significantly reduced conflicts and stigmas. During the Capacity Building Workshop and several FGDs, child, youth, and adults identified and analyzed different types of violence affecting their communities. These include invisible borders, gang violence, drug trafficking, and sexual exploitation, among others. Participants emphasized and explained how community integration proved to be a very useful strategy to cope with some of these issues. In many cases, bringing together divided communities and groups for cultural events and campaigns lead to increasing peaceful coexistence.

In a recent paper on Youth Violence Prevention in Colombia, Pracher (2014) argues that projects should focus on long-term and collaborative programming, violence prevention, and youth empowerment, and emphasize sports and arts activities. This report highlights how different peacebuilding initiatives effectively implemented these strategies and engaged communities to increase peaceful coexistence and prevent youth violence. Bringing together people and organizations in a community can have a powerful impact to prevent youth violence (Backer and Guerra 2011, p. 31-33). As will be shown in the next sections, when young people themselves lead these initiatives and mobilize their communities, results become increasingly significant.
Raising awareness on social and environmental issues, bringing together different communities and neighborhoods through cultural and sporting events, and involving local people in social campaigns are some of the leading strategies used by children and youth to impact the community. Participants from seven initiatives (n=10) involved in the evaluation documented the use of such activities to support peacebuilding within their communities.

In Cali, participants from the National Movement of Children, Adolescents and Youth Peacebuilders explained that the issue of community violence was dealt with through community mobilization and integration strategies. Significant examples include marches for peace and against violence, campaigns such as ‘vaccinate yourself against violence’ or ‘take your street’, and the use of theatre to raise awareness.

The responses provided by children, youth, and adults help shed light on the different dynamics of violence taking place between neighborhoods, communities, and groups. Breaking invisible borders was considered one of the main successes and goals of the above mentioned activities and campaigns. “The neighborhoods were united as one community,” explained a group of children from Cali when describing a march against violence organized in 2012. Children and young peacebuilders stressed that regardless of the invisible borders created by gangs and other groups, they dared to take advantage of community spaces and promote peace in different neighborhoods.

In the Montes de María region, participants underscored the significant impact of cultural activities to unify communities. “Youth communities have widened their knowledge, their stigmas of mistrust have decreased, and they have reconciled between each other,” explained a 23 year old male from Macayepo.
Increased support to vulnerable groups
The ten CYP initiatives involved in the evaluation mainly focused their work on peace education and promoting a culture of peace. However, some of these organizations and movements engage children and youth in concrete projects to support vulnerable groups—such as the economically disadvantaged and socially excluded.

In the Montes de María region, the Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation created a multi-purpose fund providing child and youth groups, and organizations with crucial support to develop sustainable and income generating projects. These initiatives positively impacted the society by supporting recycling and trash collection youth brigades, creating a playground for disabled children, creating music schools, etc. and by offering economic opportunities for children and youth in a region highly affected by poverty and unemployment (Fundación Restrepo Barco 2008). Children and youth are the main protagonists of these projects. They support individuals, groups, and communities’ integral and sustainable development while at the same time generating their own incomes to sustain their projects and support their families.

Evaluation participants underlined how these opportunities enabled them to develop new life’s projects. Youth from el Carmen de Bolivar, Ovejas and San Onofre have very few employment opportunities. Developing their skills, positively contributing to the society, and generating incomes was recognized as the right combination of inputs to meaningfully build peace.

In Macayepo, several participants noted that, “some youth are taking advantage of the academic opportunities that have become available in their villages or region” (22 year old female from Macayepo). These opportunities often consist of scholarships and other incentives to enroll in academic or training programs. Participants from Macayepo pointed out that young people’s involvement in peacebuilding helped them develop a clearer idea of their life plan. The coordinator of JOPPAZ (Youth Provoking Peace) clarified that many of these young people live in remote rural areas. To promote youth enrollment in academic and professional programs, opportunities are made available to all within the network. Support is also offered to those taking advantage of these type of programs.
Box 3: World Vision International Campaign Stop Hunger

The National Movement of Children, Adolescents and Youth Peacebuilders participated in the regional campaign ‘Stop Hunger’, launched by World Vision International – Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2012. The campaign aimed at engaging children and youth and raising awareness about hunger issues with a particular focus on the Horn of Africa. Children and youth organized public events and marches in their communities and were invited to fast for one day to experience “hunger and giving up their own needs and desires for a day to step into the story of another individual” (World Vision Youth, 2013). Fundraising activities were also organized in order to support World Vision International’s hunger program in Latin America and the Horn of Africa.

Children and youth from the National Movement of Children, Adolescents, and Young Peacebuilders in Armenia, Cali, Bogotá, and Soacha shared their experiences in the campaign. They expressed that such campaigns were successful to raise awareness and unite communities around this issue. Fundraising, informing communities, and bonding children and young people from the movement were identified as the campaign’s major successes.

Factors Influencing CYP Impact

Using multiple tools, the 3M evaluation identified key factors influencing CYP impact. The objective was to find factors hindering and/or enabling CYP impact. As will be further outlined, factors can both positively and negatively influence impact, depending on the CYP’s context and the different perceptions held by participants. Furthermore, there is a strong interplay and dynamic between each of these factors contributing to cumulative success, or conversely, to cumulative barriers preventing or limiting peacebuilding impact.

The following section analyzes five key factors identified. A total of 419 responses were collected to identify enabling and hindering factors.

FIGURE 4: Key factors influencing CYP impact
Children and Youths’ Attitudes, Motivation and Commitment

Participants from nine different cities/towns identified children and youth's positive attitudes and motivation as significant factors increasing CYP impact. Conversely, the lack of commitment and willingness were described as major hurdles to successfully implementing CYP programs. Development of these largely internal realities helped young people become more aware, active, and effective citizens for peace.

Responsibility and commitment were identified as key success factors. Children and youth illustrated the dedication of their efforts to build peace, and their full engagement in the organization and implementation of activities as major achievements. The importance of teamwork, communication and efficient planning by children and youth were also emphasised. For example a 17 year old girl from Armenia, described that, “we dedicate a lot of time to plan and study the issues we discuss [with children and youth].” Participants formulated some key successes of their participation. “Mainly the willingness of the persons we work with and the efficient planning of activities on our behalf,” explained a 15 year old girl from Manizales. “Motivation and support to others,” added a 16 year old girl from Ovejas.

Overall, participants demonstrated a deep sense of responsibility towards their role of peacebuilders. Their responses reveal their strong commitment to build peace in the most efficient and significant way. Their role goes beyond the organization and implementation of peacebuilding activities. They are aware that they need to keep positive attitudes and motivation to build peace and involve additional children and youth.

Evaluation participants expressed that their own attitudes and the ones of their peers could significantly disturb peacebuilding processes and activities. Shyness, rivalry, lack of sharing and disrespectful communication were identified as major hurdles. A 13 year old girl from Manizales explained that her “challenge was to share her ideas with others.” A 15 year old girl from San Onofre added that, “criticism from others,” hindered her participation.

More than 30% of the responses recorded under the theme of ‘Attitudes, Motivation and Commitment’ underlined how shyness prevents children and youth from significantly involving themselves in peacebuilding activities. The issue of shyness was primarily expressed by children and youth from Armenia and Manizales who explained that it prevented them from knowing, sharing, and learning from others. “The challenge I overcame was to leave shyness in order to relate with my peers,” noted a 14 year old girl from Armenia.

Children and youth's lack of continuous participation and motivation negatively affected peacebuilding initiatives. One of the issues raised by participants was the lack of motivation to participate and commit on the part of children and youth outside the initiatives. Participants from Cali, Macayepo, Ovejas, Bogotá, and Soacha reported a major difficulty to increase participation in their processes. The lack of responsibility and commitment were singled out as the main barriers to program recruitment. “Trying to convince children to participate was an endless effort,” explained an 18 year old girl from Bogotá.

Organizing more activities and using better communication strategies were recognized as valuable tactics to attract new participants and increase impact at the community level. A 19 year old boy from Cali described that it was difficult “to raise awareness among young people through methods such as radio programs and presentations on electronic waste.” A 17 year old boy from Bogotá added that the issue of “sustainability in continuing the process within the community,” was complex. Recreational, cultural, and artistic activities were also recognized as effective ways to address this issue.

As will be further described below, a lack of adult, organizational, and material support clearly impacts children and youth motivation and active participation.
A recent MercyCorps (2015) report highlights why engaging children and youth is so crucial. When the most vulnerable and excluded children and youth are not effectively engaged, this increases risks of their frustration and exclusion which can contribute to their participation in violent alternatives (MercyCorps 2015). It is therefore crucial to continuously support and motivate children and youth to engage in peacebuilding and become role models for other young people in their communities.

Children and Youth’s Capacity, Knowledge, Skills, and Experiences

Participants identified some key learnings and skills acquired by children and youth which can significantly influence their peacebuilding impact. Through their participation in organised groups and movements, girls, boys, and youth have increased opportunities to express their views, access information, share problems, and discuss solutions. When children and youth had more peacebuilding knowledge, skills, and experience, they appeared to practice peacebuilding actions more frequently and more effectively. The converse was also true.

It is very interesting to detect how children and youth consider themselves as crucial agents of peace. Many of their responses demonstrate the importance given to trainings and capacity building to better promote peace and reduce violence. In most of the initiatives evaluated, children and youth play leading roles as mentors, facilitators, organizers, etc., and are frequently supported by their organizations and movements to improve their skills. Accordingly, they recognize their professional and personal development as crucial to improve the impact of their work.

Acquiring skills to more efficiently disseminate what they learned was highlighted as a crucial issue to improve their work as peacebuilders. Several participants indicated enhancing their facilitation skills and their potential to reach out to more children and youth as key successes. For example, peacebuilders from Armenia provided capacity building to student representatives in different schools on crucial topics such as human rights, culture of peace, the 1620 Act regarding school life and coexistence. Their skills and empowerment enabled them to take leading roles and implement this youth-to-youth teaching methodology. “Training youth so that they can manage to learn and teach what they have learnt to other children and youth in a dynamic and healthy way,” noted a 17 year old boy from Armenia. “The successes were that we managed to incorporate ourselves with different persons, we trained ourselves as workshop facilitators, and we have the capacity to teach youth,” added a 21 year old male from Cali.

Participants emphasized the challenge of acquiring new knowledge and skills to multiply these with other children and youth. A 17 year old girl from Armenia explained that she felt one major challenge was, “to acquire new knowledge in order to disseminate these afterwards.” Similarly, a 26 year old male from El Carmen de Bolivar affirmed that, “acquiring new knowledge and apply it,” was a challenge within his peacebuilding initiative.

Reilly, in a Unicef study entitled “Peacebuilding Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills: Desk Review and Recommendations” argues how and why it is important to equip children and youth with necessary peacebuilding competencies:

Most educational systems are ill-prepared to teach children knowledge, attitudes, and skills through active, experiential learning methodologies. The concepts are abstract. Teachers struggle to model peaceful behaviours and interpersonal skills that they themselves have not mastered. (...) Given the immensity of the challenges (...) we must take a new look at the building blocks of quality peace education. We return to the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of peace education with an adapted end goal in mind. Rather than seeking “peaceful children” the end goal becomes “children as
In Colombia, evaluation participants recognized that they were supported and equipped to play active role as peacebuilders in their communities, families, and schools. Yet, they suggested their organizations equip them with more sophisticated skills to become effective leaders.

Respect was identified as a key value learned and applied during peacebuilding activities. It could be argued that values logically fit into the category of children and youth attitudes that enable or hinder impact. Yet, participants’ responses revealed how respect was nurtured and experienced during activities and thereafter implemented in different contexts. As an example, a 15 year old girl from Cali explained that, “we learnt that we all enjoy being respected and we learnt to respect others.” As presented earlier, respecting others was recognized as a key impact in children and young people’s lives, as well as an enabling factor to increase peaceful coexistence and reduce conflicts in communities, schools, and families.

The evaluation revealed key efforts to be addressed by peacebuilding organizations. Evaluation participants suggested that peacebuilding initiatives review their objectives in order to significantly improve and increase impact. They added that quality evaluation processes were crucial to improve organizations’ work.¹⁹ In this respect, an important recommendation from children and youth during the FGDs was to enhance capacity-building to better prepare children and youth as multiplying agents as well as include them in design, monitoring and evaluation processes.

**Culture, Theatre, Arts and Sports as a Means of Engaging Children and Youth**

These kind of activities are used effectively by children, youth, and supportive adults as creative methods to engage and sustain the motivation of children and youth in peacebuilding, and to promote awareness and messages on peacebuilding and related issues concerning conflict or violence.

Peacebuilders and adult supporters from all the initiatives evaluated recommended prioritizing recreational, cultural, and artistic strategies efficiently conveying peaceful messages and attracting younger children. Children aged 10-14 expressed their wish to participate in fun and artistic peacebuilding activities, for example, by “writing songs about peace with our thoughts,” explained an 11 year old boy from Bogotá, or “organizing more games so that children can have fun,” highlighted a 14 year old girl from Cali. Cultural practices can be powerful catalysts to unite communities and integrate not only children and young people but also adult community members.

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¹⁹ It is interesting to note that six out of the ten initiatives evaluated had implemented an evaluation process before the 3M evaluation.
Part Two: Findings

Children and Youth from Multipropaz in Cali use scenic arts, dance, sports and the media to promote peace in their schools and communities

Benefits of cultural activities for peace, Bajo Grande
(Evaluation interview with coordinator, JOPPAZ)

An 18 year old woman from Bajo Grande describes well how community integrations had significant impact to increase peaceful coexistence: “The change has been the integration between so many communities during a cultural activity, as it was very pleasant.” Bajo Grande and its neighboring communities used to be characterized by high levels of violence and stigmatization between communities. The lack of trust between the different communities due to the presence of different armed actors in the region had generated both direct and stigma-based violence between populations. The reduction of violence in the region has, to some extent, helped reduce stigma and allowed people to start moving to other areas of the region. Cultural integration activities have significantly helped these communities regain trust; as these come together for different events and common cultural traditions. Children and youth from the region emphasized how cultural integration helped community members regain trust and increase visits between communities without experiencing fear.

A chief objective of JOPPAZ is to recover the regional traditional and cultural heritage lost due to the armed conflict. Violence and displacement prevented communities from celebrating and honoring their traditions. Sports and dance were recognized as key enabling factors to reunite and reconcile communities. “Some youth are uniting with other communities to rebuild trust through sport,” illustrated a 22 year old female from Macayepo. The integration of different communities was a key factor to increase peaceful coexistence. In today’s world, in which conflicts occur less between states and more often within them, culture plays an essential part of conflict and conflict resolution (Preis and Mustea 2013, p. 3). Culture is a crucial factor for lasting peace as it enables social cohesion.
The road to inclusive social and economic development, environmental sustainability, peace and security is firmly grounded in culture, understood in its spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional dimensions and encompassing diverse value systems, traditions and beliefs. Culture informs and influences people's relation to sustainable development, conflicts, and reconciliation in a distinct, but direct manner (Preis and Mustea 2013, p. 2).

Overall, participants expressed that dancing, playing sports, singing, acting, painting, etc. were significant strategies as it attracted more people to their activities and conveyed messages in creative and powerful ways. Several participants underlined the importance of applying dynamic and recreational strategies that are more attractive and that, “help breaking educational barriers.”

As described in the introductory chapter, all the initiatives involved in the evaluation frequently implement recreational and cultural activities to promote peace. Once again, participants elucidated that the impact of peacebuilding significantly depended on the strategies and processes used to promote it.

Children and youth insisted on the importance of experiencing ‘funny’ activities and learning to implement these with their colleagues in schools and communities. Recreational activities can positively influence CYP impact as they increase inclusiveness and help convey powerful messages.

Aroni, in an Arigatou International Good Practice Series (2014) entitled “Learning to Play Together,” takes this vision a step further, explaining these key methodologies’ impact:

Physical education and other spaces for play and recreation can provide children and youth with opportunities to learn about themselves in relation to others, practice non-violent conflict resolution, empathize with one another and reconcile their differences in a peaceful manner (Aroni 2014, p. 6).

Several participants added that involving adults in this type of activities was sometimes challenging, as adults would have difficulties immerse completely in the games. Across this theme, several participants explained that teaching through games was not always easy and that improved facilitation skills were needed.
Awareness Raising, Sensitization and Campaigns among Key Stakeholders

Significant awareness raising and sensitization has been required to change attitudes regarding the positive roles that children and youth can play in peacebuilding and other social change processes, and to change attitudes and practices of different stakeholders that contribute to violence and conflict. A lack of awareness among key stakeholders has contributed to barriers which, if not overcome, result in less effective efforts.

The report previously analyzed the impact of awareness raising, sensitization, and campaigns. Such strategies helped reduce violence, conflicts, stigmas, and discrimination within communities, families, and schools. Evaluation participants further examined how engaging key stakeholders—such as communities, public and private institutions, and other children and youth, is critical to their positive and sustained impact.

Participants acknowledged uniting and sensitizing community members and groups to be positive outcomes of peacebuilding initiatives in Armenia, Cali, Manizales, and Montes de Maria. They emphasized the important role that community bonding processes had on successfully reducing conflicts, violence, and discrimination. Children, youth, and adults insisted on the importance of bringing together different community members, and focusing peacebuilding processes at the community-level. For example, peacebuilders from Cali highlighted that the Peace March that they organized in 2013 produced a significant impact as a result of the involvement of various communities and neighborhoods. “With the march we managed to reduce violence and there was a peaceful coexistence between the groups,” explained a 41 year old woman from Cali. A 15 year old girl added that it was successful because “the march went through several communities.”

*Carnaval for democracy organized in the streets of El Carmen de Bolivar - Project Promoting Child and Youth Rights in the Montes de Maria Region.*
In Armenia, they determined that their strategies to raise awareness and to organize campaigns on peace and related issues had helped make their movement dramatically more visible and convince others to join them. For example, participants explained that mobilizing students was a very efficient strategy to promote peace and expand their work. A 17 year old girl from Armenia described how, “in each school, we organised activities related to peace, such as wall paintings, drawings, talks, theatre, among others; so that children, adolescents, and youth can share and learn about peace related concepts and apply these in their daily lives.” In Armenia, the National Movement of Children, Adolescents and Youth Peacebuilders cooperates with different schools to both conduct activities in their premises and to involve them in the movement through the Student Social Service Law. In Cali, youth from Multipropaz underlined the importance of mobilizing students on environmental issues at the school level and thereafter disseminate and apply these learnings in their communities.

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20 Article 97 of the Law 115 of 1994 and Article 39 of the Decree 1860 of 1994 stipulate that all students from the last two grades of secondary school are obliged to provide a social service as part of the curriculum (National Education Ministry 1994).
Children and youth peacebuilders spread peace messages through schools, Manizales

In Manizales, children and adolescents from several schools were involved in the evaluation of the “Children and Youth Peacebuilders” program from CINDE. While the program is being simultaneously implemented in different schools, several participants meet on a regular basis to share their school experiences and learn new skills.

When being asked about strategies to improve the impact of their work, students underlined the importance of replicating their experiences in other schools. To do so, as explained by a 16 year old girl from Manizales, presentations can be scheduled to “talk to other children from other institutions and many other places about the project in which we are involved and tell them what we have learnt in the project.”

Highlighting the potential of expanding their work at the community level, a 17 year old girl from Manizales wrote: “Implement the Emotional Disarmament\(^{21}\) between the neighborhood gangs”

Participants insisted that there was a need to mobilize and partner with public and private institutions and organizations to attract more funds and more significantly promote children and youth initiatives. Sharing their work with community-based organizations and institutions helped increase their impact by way of attracting more community members to partake in their initiatives. Mobilizing public institutions also increased the initiatives appreciation as peacebuilders were able to demonstrate the impact of their work. Propagating concrete outcomes was seen as the best way to involve more members, and thereby, increase impact. Not sharing information about CYP initiatives with others was considered by many to be a hurdle to attracting more participants. Public awareness of CYP efforts was pointed out as an element conducive to success. Exposing their work and being recognized in their communities helped mobilize

\(^{21}\) Emotional disarmament is an activity that aims at enhancing peaceful coexistence within a school by disarming the emotional aspects that negatively affect coexistence within the institution. Project designed and implemented by ‘Aulas en Paz’ a partner initiative of the “Children and Youth Peacebuilders” program.
more people and increase their sense of safety when visiting other communities to organize peacebuilding activities and mobilization efforts.

**Key Stakeholders’ Motivation, Commitment, and Support**

Evaluation participants considered the support and involvement of other children and youth, parents, local authorities, and civil society to be fundamental to program success. In many cases, these stakeholders were acknowledged as already supportive, insufficiently involved, or blocking CYP processes. When there was a general lack of community and institutional involvement and support for child and youth peacebuilding efforts, there tended to be lower morale among children and youth and less active participation.

As mentioned earlier, increasing and strengthening partnerships with public and private entities helped promote the work of children and youth and attract additional funding. Overall, children, youth, and adults identified that there was a lack of involvement and interaction with local authorities and community-based organizations.

In Bogotá, a 17 year old boy explained that they “tried building alliances, but they did not succeed as they would with a solid structure.” The lack of interest and involvement of municipal entities was deemed a major challenge. Participants from Armenia, el Carmen de Bolívar, and San Onofre stressed that alliances existed but needed to improve. Under this theme, a group of adults from San Onofre affirmed that, “governmental institutions involved themselves because they are forced, not because they wish to so.”

In Armenia and Cali, partnerships with schools and universities were highlighted as being essential to the successful promotion of peace, and the recruitment of new children and youth into their initiatives. In Cali, participants from Multipropaz illustrated that alliances with universities allowed them to collaborate on environmental and other campaigns and conduct joint academic research.

Inter-institutional partnerships were identified by most children, youth, and adults to be a critical factor that had a pivotal impact on participation levels and that required strengthening. Participants stressed that institutional support and partnerships were crucial to effectively disseminate their work and reach more people. “Connect new state institutions that contribute to youth’s work at all levels in the country – find more resources to include more young people,” said a 40 year old woman from Bajo Grande. In the Montes de María region, a project’s coordinator explained that local authorities and state institutions were always invited to take part in events. While their support was not very significant at the moment, he argued that it was crucial to engage them and obtain support in order to increase impact and guarantee the sustainability of the processes.

In Bogotá and Guamanga, children and youth claimed that parental participation contributed to their motivation. They explained that, “sometimes parents have to work and are not paying attention to children or to the workshops.” Children from Guamanga highlighted that they received great support from their parents mostly through their participation in events organized in the community. Conversely, in San Onofre, a group of adults stressed that parental involvement was too weak and often represented an obstacle to child and youth participation, as they sometimes prevented their children’s participation.

The support and commitment of community members and organizations was highlighted as being vital to enabling more integration within and between communities. Besides general logistical and financial support, programs can also benefit greatly from the support of their communities by allowing the use of community spaces for program activities and from the participation of community members in program events and campaigns.
Highlighting the importance of using community spaces, a 17 year old boy emphasized that “using [community] spaces that belong to all help eliminate invisible borders and empower participants.” Children and youth are aware of the gaps that can exist between initiatives, organizations, and community-members, and consider the promotion of their projects to be of the utmost importance. As stated by a 15 year old boy, “there are many people who talk or hear about our projects but they do not know us, or our proposals.”

Only 12 participants in the evaluation listed time constraints, the lack of meeting spaces, and limited financial and material resources as the main logistical challenges to program implementation and success. While it could easily be assumed that logistical constraints significantly affect peacebuilding organizations and initiatives, this small number of entries demonstrates the low level of importance that is attributed to such issues. However, participants from remote areas did emphasised the lack of meeting spaces and of funds to help offset the transportation costs of participants.

A transcending theme that was highlighted by all local evaluators was the benefits of organizing exchanges between different peacebuilding initiatives in order to create new alliances, learn from each other, and replicate activities and strategies relevant to their own contexts. LET members recommend and request peacebuilding organizations to support exchanges between child and youth peacebuilders across the country and the world. These types of exchanges were experienced during several peacebuilding initiatives taking part in the evaluation process. They were described as an extremely effective way to create networks and increase impact of participating in peacebuilding.

### Quality of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

Evaluating the quality of child and youth participation in peacebuilding was a key component of the evaluation. The Pots and Stones activity was used to discuss and score eight principles relating to the quality of child and youth participation in peacebuilding. Participants could also share their ideas to improve quality. The eight principles for quality of child and youth participation in peacebuilding were identified by the Global 3M Steering Team and Global Evaluators drawing upon two key international documents:

- **The Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.12, The Right of the Child to be Heard (CRC/C/GC/12, July 2009)** which outlines nine basic principles for effective and ethical participation of children and young people.
- **Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding (2014)** developed by members of the Sub Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding of the United Nations Interagency Network on Youth Development.

The eight key principles used were:

1. Participation is transparent and informative
2. Participation is relevant and respectful to children and youth
3. Participation encourages diversity and inclusion
4. Participation is sensitive to gender dynamics
5. Participation is safe and sensitive to risks
6. Investments are made in intergenerational partnerships in young people’s communities
7. Participation is accountable
8. Involvement of young people in all stages of peacebuilding and post-conflict programming

22 See appendix 3 for a detailed description of the eight principles and a complete Pots & Stones handout.
The Pots and Stones tool was facilitated with mixed groups of male and female participants in their respective age groups, 10-14 years, 15-17 years, 18-29 years, or with 18+ adult supporters. The results of different age groups were maintained for comparison of different perspectives. However, within any particular age group the Pots and Stones activity was conducted in small working groups, so that each group could explore two -three principles. Facilitators distributed a handout with a description of the 8 principles, questions, and the scoring scale on the top. Individuals had opportunities to record and share their individual score and reasons within their small group. The small group then collectively decided how many stones to place in the pot, and recorded their reasons for the group’s score. The group members also shared their ideas on how to improve implementation of the principle in their CYP. In a final plenary session each small group presented their score and reasons to the wider group, so that the score and reasons could be validated or adjusted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0 stones</th>
<th>1 stone</th>
<th>2 stones</th>
<th>3 stones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principle is not met at all</td>
<td>Some awareness, but the principle is not really reflected in practice</td>
<td>Some efforts made to address the principle, but not full efforts</td>
<td>The principle is fully understood, implemented and monitored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Part Two: Findings

Name of CYP initiative | 10-14 years old | 15-17 years old | 18-29 years old | 18+ Adult supporters
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Children and Youth Peacebuilders Program (Manizales) | 1 | 1 | | |
Youth Provoking Peace (Bajo Grande, Carmen de Bolivar, Guamanga, Macayepo) | | | 2 | |
National Movement of Children, Adolescents and Youth Peacebuilders Movement (Armenia-Bogotá-Soacha) | 3 | 1 | 1 | |
Promoting Child and Youth Rights in the Montes de María region (Carmen de Bolivar, Ovejas, San Onofre) | | | 1 | 1

LET members implemented the Pots and Stones tool in three regions to assess the quality of participation among the four CYP initiatives selected for case studies. The tool was used during thirteen FGDs and involved 136 participants. These FGD findings cannot be considered representative of the whole of CYP initiatives in Colombia due to the limited number of organizations involved in this part of the process. However, there were significant findings from the four initiatives that took part.

It is important to point out that only one FGD was conducted with supporting adults (San Onofre). Themes documented in the analysis are from the opinion of children and youth CYP initiative participants, unless otherwise noted. Comments from adult supporters cannot be considered representative.

**FIGURE 5:** Quality scores agreed during Pots and Stones FGDs.

This figure indicates interesting strengths and weakness in applying quality principles. Overall it indicates that CYP initiatives are fairly strong in ensuring that child and youth participation in peacebuilding:
- Is relevant and respectful to children and youth (principle 2);
- Encourages diversity and inclusion (principle 3);
- Is sensitive to gender dynamics (principle 4);
- Is accountable (principle 7).
Mixed scores are provided in relation to child and youth participation in peacebuilding being transparent and informative (principle 1), and in relation to opportunities for children and youth to be involved in all stages of peacebuilding and post conflict programming (principle 8). Furthermore, significant weaknesses in CYP initiatives are identified in relation to child and youth participation in peacebuilding that:

- Is safe and sensitive to risk (principle 5); and
- Investments are made in intergenerational partnerships in young people’s communities (principle 6)

Findings concerning each principle are further discussed below, and some key suggestions from children, youth, and adult supporters to improve the quality of their participation in peacebuilding are also shared.

**Principle 1: Participation is transparent and informative**

Principle 1 received the least comments. Nevertheless, children’s opinions were very positive and often expressed ideas, as expressed by a 15 year old girl from Manizales: “the process is transparent as we are always told about everything and they keep us informed.” Respondents generally expressed their satisfaction as to the level and quality of the information provided.

Conversely, two adults shared a different perspective: “children and youth almost never take autonomous decisions, they do it for adult leaders motivations,” stated a 59 year old woman from San Onofre. A 50 year old man from Carmen de Bolivar added that “information is provided to those who request it.”

While participants gave relatively high scores to this principle, several responses provided by children and youth revealed some challenges related to transparency and information. A 15 year old boy from Armenia explained that “there are situations in which we do not understand the purpose.” A group of youth from Guamanga added that they “are informed about some things, but not about other things.” A group of children from Manizales explained that they:

> consider that there is a need for improvement because even if it was informed that a group for children, adolescents and youth was established, it needs to be explained more deeply what is expected to be achieved and the advantages that children participants would have.

**Principle 2: Participation is relevant and respectful**

Half of the participants emphasized that they always felt free to participate in activities. A 15 year old girl from Manizales explained that “the activities are always fun and we are not pressured, the schedules are always in agreement with the participants. We are always respected and they treat us with love.” Several participants noted the freedom to choose to express themselves, or not to, as a relevant factor of respect.

Considering children and young people’s schedules was highlighted as a key strength. Along this theme, a 45 year old woman from El Carmen de Bolivar stated that “schedules of children and youth who study are taken into account.” During an FGD, supporting adults in San Onofre explained that organizations in the region had evolved and increasingly respected the schedules of children and youth.
**Principle 3: Participation encourages diversity and inclusion**

Similarly to principle 1, few reactions were recorded under the topic of diversity and inclusion. Scores oscillated between two and three. Positive feedback focused on the inclusion of all, without discrimination. However, only a few participants made mention of the inclusion of any specific group or type of participants. Only two women of 43 and 45 year old explained that the inclusion of different ethnic groups was a priority in their activities, mostly through artistic and cultural activities.

Motivation and systematic implementation of the activities were pointed out as vital strategies to attract more children and youth to peacebuilding initiatives. A 17 year old girl from Macayepo justified a low score of inclusion by pointing out that “only few meetings are being organized and the other children and youth are not motivated.”

The rest of respondents centered their comments on their own positive experience of inclusion, and that they felt that their peers were well included during the activities. While ethnic groups, gender, or other diversity factors were not often mentioned, participants highlighted that all children and youth were welcomed to the activities. However, a 15 year old boy from Manizales conveyed that there was a lack of inclusion of “children from other places, such as rural areas. Include disabled children because they are also people and deserve to be here.” As illustrated by a 16 year old girl from Bogotá: “it could be that we are always open to the participation of others without excluding anyone; but we have not developed the foundation to promote diversity during the activities.”

Another 15 year old girl from Manizales further explained that “everything is done equally because no one is racist, we are all already very united. Persons with disabilities cannot participate very well even though they would like to because of their disability.” This testimony sheds light on the different types of participation challenges faced by children and youth with disabilities. A meaningful and respectful inclusion requires “innovative approaches to fit the specific needs of children with disabilities” (Global Partnership for Education, 2015). It could be argued that the absence of feedback (only two comments) on the subject of inclusion of children and youth with disabilities indicates a lack of prioritization and/or capacity to address this issue effectively.

Additionally, participants recommended that the initiatives to be more inclusive and involve more participants in their peacebuilding initiatives, with a special emphasis on young children (<10 years old), and disabled children, youth, and adults, as well as those affected by drugs and involved in gangs. Respondents were clear in that those that benefited most from the peacebuilding initiatives were those involved in the implementation of such activities and that there is, therefore, a need to involve considerably more children and youth. To do so, they propose school-visits and increased community-based mobilization.

**Principle 4: Participation is sensitive to gender dynamics**

Participant responses suggested a general awareness of the importance of promoting gender equality. At the same time, challenges to overcome gender discrimination are considered difficult to tackle.

Children and youth asserted that the acceptance of those of different genders was often taken into account within their initiatives. Playing together, respecting each other, and avoiding discriminatory practices were considered to be the most important means to promote gender equality. “We women are respected and taken care of,” claimed a 13 year old girl from Macayepo. A 15 year old girl from Armenia added that “there is no discrimination based on gender, if there is an activity we all support each other and never judge the opinion of the boys or girls, we are all equal.”
While acknowledging the importance of respecting others, children and youth recognized the existing differences between boys and girls. For example, a 15 year old boy from Armenia explained that “men think differently, they have a more rustic thinking and women are more sensitive.” A 21 year old woman from Macayepo emphasized that “during the activities, we can appreciate similar opinions and there are also moments in which there are many differences of opinions.” A 15 year old girl from Manizales added that “in the program, we do not notice the differences based on gender or sexual inclination, all the opinions are valid and listened to although, for me it is obvious that even though everyone can participate freely, we women almost always take the lead in many aspects of the initiative.”

Participants identified several hindering factors. Adult supporters in San Onofre explained that cultural customs and norms were the main challenges to ensuring significant participation of children and youth of different genders and sexual orientations. A 20 year old male underlined that “when calls for participation start, everyone is welcomed but more women than men engage [in the programs].” A 43 year old woman added that “women and girls are more participative and responsible.” They further explained that there is a strong discrimination towards the LGBT community due to cultural stereotypes. For example, it is said that “men do not take part of the dancing activities by fear of being discriminated and judged.” It is interesting to note that during the entire evaluation, only one child (a 15 year old girl from Manizales) included genders other than male and female in her comments. When asked if the participation was sensitive to gender dynamics, she replied: “Very little because it is very infrequent [that] we talk about other genders that are not feminine or masculine.”

There was a strong debate within the group in San Onofre to rate this principal as a 1 or a 2. On the one hand, some participants justified scoring 1 because, “in the Caribbean [region], it will be a very long process to solve this [issue].” The rest of the group argued that although major challenges remained, successful strategies had already been implemented, mostly through cultural and sports activities.

To conclude, it is interesting to highlight that the inclusion of LGBT youth was only mentioned by one youth, a 17 year old boy from Cali. Coincidently, he participated in several FGDs and brought up this issue several times and from different angles. He stated that “showing and promoting ethnic and gender diversity in the school” had proven to be successful; adding that another major success was “providing a space to youth from the LGBT community, to prove that we are all alike.”

### Principle 5: Participation is safe and sensitive to risks

On average, principle 5 scored low and participants appeared aware they were not sufficiently prepared to confront risks. The safety issues reported were mostly related to a lack of capacity-building and information provided to children and youth. The low-score of this principle was also justified by a lack of preparation in emergency and high risk situations. A 15 year old girl from Manizales expressed that “security in terms of spaces is good but we are not trained to confront a situation of physical or psychological risk.”

Most participants highlighted the lack of information and practice around safety measures and mechanisms. “The information provided is not complete,” stated a 19 year old woman from el Carmen de Bolivar. An 11 year old boy from Bogotá added that “in previous years we were informed about these issues but nothing was concluded.” Another 14 year old girl from Bogotá further explained that “risks related to the reactions we should have in situations of emergency are not taken into account.” Most children and youth from Guamanga underlined that they had either “never heard about [safety issues]” or that
“in some occasions we have talked about these issues, but it is not so much about the talking”-- meaning that action was required.

Three participants from a FGD in Armenia stated that in “many occasions, our peers do not obey to what was agreed.” The lack of compliance among some CYP participants is a risk factor, noted a 14 year old girl from Armenia.

During the Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop, LET members described some of the risks they were facing as peacebuilders within their communities. While they recognized that some of these are difficult to avoid, they emphasized that informing communities about the activities, as well as involving community leaders in the processes, were very useful strategies to minimize risks.

**Principle 6: Investment in intergenerational partnerships in young people’s communities**

Principle six recorded the lowest score of all the quality principles. Getting more support from municipal units and involving parents were singled out as essential approaches to increase intergenerational partnerships within their peacebuilding initiatives.

Overall, children, youth, and adults considered that there was a lack of involvement and interaction with community-members and entities. A group of adolescents from Manizales claimed that they “have the tools and skills to participate and interact with adults, but we are not provided with spaces and [opportunities] to do so.” In Bogotá, a 17 year old boy explained that they “tried building alliances, but they did not consolidate as they should with a proper structure.”

The lack of interest and involvement of municipal units is noted as a major challenge. Participants from Armenia, el Carmen de Bolivar, and San Onofre pointed out that alliances existed but needed to improve. Along the theme, several youth from el Carmen de Bolivar stressed that the municipality “does not support youth processes” and added that “the municipality and other organizations do not often support the initiatives.”

In Bogotá and Guamanga, children and youth expressed that parent participation was very motivating. A group of children from Bogotá justified a medium score of principle six because of the lack of parental involvement. They explained that “sometimes parents have to work and are not paying attention to children to the workshops.” Children from Guamanga highlighted that they received great support from their parents mostly by way of participation in events organized in the community.

At the school level, a group of adolescents from Manizales claimed that there was no dialogue or interaction with adults. A 15 year old girl explained that, “we are provided with the tools, we are motivated to participate politically and talk with adults, but we are not provided with the spaces to interact with them.” It is interesting to note that these participants take part in a peacebuilding initiative at the school level and therefore might have less opportunities to interact with adults. Nevertheless, these adolescents affirmed their desire and intention to further expand their knowledge and skills in communities.

**Principle 7: Participation is accountable**

Under this principle, participants were invited to reflect about the support children and youth received to take part in follow-up and evaluation processes. Additionally, they had the opportunity to assess the extent to which their views and suggestions were taken into account. Participants established whether children and youth were given feedback by their peers, who represent them in child/youth organizations or peacebuilding events.
As shown in the case-study Appendix, participants from each initiative tackled this principle very differently.

No respondents discussed the involvement of children and youth in evaluation processes. It could be argued that the absence of responses under this theme reveals a lack of understanding of the question, or a need to increase child and youth involvement in evaluation processes.

In Macayepo and Guamanga, emphasis was placed on the support received from parents and leaders of the initiative. Children and adolescents from Manizales expressed that their opinions were always taken into account. They added that space was always provided to share their experiences and hear about the peer’s activities, mostly related to multiplication strategies being implemented in their schools. In Armenia, children and youth highlighted that participants were always free to join activities and that their opinions were always taken into account. They further explained that activities were led by mentors who were also active children and youth.

In San Onofre, two adults affirmed that peacebuilding initiatives were quite recent and that adults in the community did not take these type of initiatives seriously. In Bogotá, two child respondents underlined that there was a lack of responsibility on behalf of children and youth who did not participate regularly in the activities of the initiative.

**Principle 8: Young people are involved in all stages of peacebuilding and post-conflict programming**

Children and youth consider that they are meaningfully involved in peacebuilding processes, as well as in creating significant impact. Children and youth from Armenia, Guamanga, Macayepo, and Manizales expressed that they are listened to and supported when proposing and implementing peacebuilding activities in their schools and communities. A 16 year old girl from Armenia explained that “as mentors, we help children in a way that they can [themselves] seek solutions.” A 17 year old girl from Manizales justified a high score on this principle by explaining that they “share the knowledge that we have learnt in the project.”

Several respondents underlined that the lack of reliability of their peers affects their degree of involvement in all stages: “we are taken into account in all stages; but sometimes children themselves are not taken into account because of their disobedience and lack of discipline,” stated a 14 year old girl from Armenia.

Three children and youth from Bogotá stated that “the topic of peacebuilding and post-conflict was only mentioned during a National Meeting, but it was not very well focused.” Two teenagers from Bogotá added that “while the [peace talks between the government and the FARC] are taking place, they are not aware that there is more conflict in the neighborhoods.”

**Key recommendations to improve quality**

During Pots and Stones FGDs, participants suggested recommendations to improve the quality of their participation in peacebuilding. Highlights from their recommendations are listed below:

- Create and implement new strategies to better include rural populations, people with disabilities, discriminated children and youth based on their gender, and excluded children and youth.
- Prioritize and promote cultural, artistic, and sports activities to more effectively involve
children and youth of different genders.

- Organize workshops on “new masculinities” to cope with gender discrimination and gender-based stereotypes.
- Strengthen transparency and communication channels by returning and presenting to children and youth results of peacebuilding processes.
- Create new safety protocols that help identify risks and responses to dangerous situations.
- Encourage and promote intergenerational dialogues on themes affecting children and youth at local and national governmental institutions.
- Articulate peacebuilding processes with families to strengthen affective bonds.
- Systematically involve children and youth in planning, monitoring and evaluation processes of the initiatives in which they participate.
Overarching Findings

Peacebuilding Is Not Only Relevant in Contexts Affected by Armed Conflict

Children and youth constantly underlined that peacebuilding needs to permeate all levels of societies. Their perspectives helped elucidate that peacebuilding goes beyond contexts of armed conflict. They stressed the important efforts undertaken to counter different forms of disrespect, discrimination, conflict, and violence occurring in their schools, families, and communities. Moreover, they insisted that peacebuilding is a daily individual and collective transformation and action. One of the Colombia steering team members highlighted during an interview that peacebuilding in Colombia goes beyond countering the different types of violence overwhelmingly exposed in mass media. Violence has become normalized and its rhetoric continuously influences and nurtures a culture of violence. The initiatives involved in the evaluation, and many more, focus their work on peace rather than violence. Children and youth consider that the changes experienced as a result of their involvement in peacebuilding helped them become more responsible citizens. Peace values and peacebuilding skills are applied in their daily lives and help create more peaceful communities.

Since October of 2012, Colombia’s peace negotiations between the government and the largest guerrilla group in the country (FARC) have been taking place in Havana, Cuba. However, the peace talks were only mentioned three times during the entire evaluation. The small feedback on this theme could indicate that children and young people have a sound understanding that peacebuilding goes beyond political agreements and/or the absence of war. A statement made by a civil society leader about the peace talks clearly illustrates this: “[…] peace is not a ceasefire, peace is not a negotiation between the government and the insurgents, peace is the welfare and improvement of decent living conditions for society.” (Herrera 2014 in ABColombia 2015:7)

Several assumptions could be made to explain the absence of responses related to this critical issue. Firstly, as argued by two of the Colombia steering team members, many of the initiatives involved in the evaluation are operating in urban settings where direct consequences of the armed conflict are less observable than in other areas of the country. However, two peacebuilding initiatives were located in Montes de María—a region that was directly affected by the armed conflict. Yet, no responses from these initiatives were recorded under this theme. This steering team member further added that populations prioritize daily life issues such as economic survival, community-based violence, intrafamily violence, etc. While the current peace talks are mostly focused on the rural sector, Colombia has shifted from a rural to an urban society where nearly 80% of the population lives in cities and urban peripheries. It is therefore crucial to understand that most of the issues affecting the Colombian majority are not directly linked to the armed conflict (Patiño 2013).

It could also be argued that the lack of civil society’s involvement in the peace talks created a gap and distanced society from the negotiations. The government has created several mechanisms of participation including national and regional forums, participation of delegations of victims, and few organizations; as well as online mechanisms to submit proposals (Paz, 2014). However, significant segments of civil society and crucial issues are still excluded from the peace talks. (Bouvier 2013; Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género 2015)
Personal Capacities and Responsibility Make a Basis for CYP Action

Acquired skills and changes experienced in children and young people’s mindset, attitudes, values, and perceptions resulted in a significant peacebuilding impact. Throughout the evaluation, participants emphasized that their own capacities and leadership skills enabled them to become more efficient peacebuilders. Individual and collective peacebuilding actions at the community, family, and school levels were identified as a direct result of the skills acquired by children and young people. It is therefore important to prioritize children and youth personal development to ensure efficient and sustainable peacebuilding actions.

Evaluation results demonstrated that empowered children lead to more active youth. Attained leadership skills enabled children and youth to multiply their impact and motivate others to join them in their work. Moreover, leadership actually increases the resilience of young people (Ragan and Karkara, 2015). Resilience emphasizes the importance of prioritizing qualities and capabilities of local communities; it guides us to value advanced planning and prevention at the time of designing and implementing peacebuilding programs, and reminds us of the importance of capacity-building (Milliken, 2013:6).

Individual commitment was also identified as a contributor to the personal capacity of participants to influence CYP action. Peacebuilding organizations play a key role in motivating and committing children and youth to promote and build peace in their daily lives. Child and youth-led peacebuilding initiatives are driven by such motivation and commitment.

Finally, child and youth responsibility and continuity was distinguished as a key factor that increases impact and quality of CYP. Evaluation participants repeatedly recognized their responsibility to promote peace and reduce violence and conflicts within their schools, families, and communities. From individual peacemaking efforts to legal counseling, children and youth considered themselves as primary stakeholders. Responsibility is often the result of empowering practices implemented by peacebuilding organizations and initiatives. Children and young people are entitled to leadership roles, ownership of, and responsibility for their initiatives.

This sense of responsibility was also reflected in the professional work undertaken by the LET members during the evaluation.

The Right Combination of Inputs Multiplies Impact

Peacebuilding is a complex web of interacting factors. Preventing and stopping violence and healing from its aftereffects requires changes in attitudes and mindset, skilled, trained, and empowered children and youth, socio-political changes and key stakeholders’ involvement, motivation, and support. Children and youth have demonstrated that they can significantly reduce violence and conflict within their communities, families, and schools. To do so, they consider vital the support from policy-makers, agencies promoting peacebuilding initiatives, donors, the media, their communities, and other children and youth (see Part Three Recommendations). Combining their personal development with the meaningful support from all stakeholders significantly enhance peacebuilding efforts.

Children and youth have continuously expressed their conviction that peace was a bottom-up process in which they can play a practical and meaningful role. They contended that promoting a culture of peace and educating for peace, at the individual and collective levels, significantly helped change individuals and communities; thus, generating impact at the societal level. However, children and youth acknowledged that
their efforts could be more impactful by way of involving excluded children and youth, promoting intergenerational dialogue, fostering gender equality, expanding their work to new areas, and networking with other initiatives—as well as with private and public institutions. These factors were deemed to be impact magnifiers.

During the Data Analysis and Reflection Workshop, participants used the Reflect on Peace Practice Matrix. Hereby they recognized the importance of implementing strategies that also have a socio-political impact and that involve key players that weigh heavily on the perpetuation or resolution of conflict. Participants acknowledged that their peacebuilding initiatives should be enhanced if they are to be expected to generate impact at these levels.

Support to CYP Must Go Beyond Financial and Material Support

The need for increasing financial and material support was rarely mentioned during the 3M evaluation in Colombia. While participants affirmed that long-term and meaningful financial and logistical support was needed, they emphasised more the importance of the support from stakeholders.

It was argued that conflict sensitive approaches needed to be taken into account when supporting peacebuilding initiatives financially. Donors, political authorities, and agencies supporting CYP were singled out here. It was recognized that each context had its own particularities and interventions should therefore adapt to these traits; rather than the other way around.

Participants argued that several stakeholders such as the media, parents, and political authorities sometimes become roadblocks. Promoting violence, preventing children and youth from participating and manipulating CYP initiatives for political purposes were all considered major obstructing factors. Beyond asking for their support, children and youth urged that they stop being obstacles to peacebuilding and CYPP.

Children and youth want to play an active role and promote peace at all levels from the design, monitoring, and evaluation of peacebuilding processes, to local and national political advocacy and policy-making. Young people request backing to engage more meaningfully in peacebuilding. Agencies supporting peacebuilding, political authorities, community-members, and donors must afford latitude for children and youth to lead processes and transform their societies. Financial support is not sufficient.

Intergenerational Dialogue as an Approach to Prevent Violence

Intergenerational dialogue can prevent violence (Silva, 2011). In a paper presented for an Expert Group Meeting on “Dialogue and Mutual Understanding across Generations”, Silva (2011) argued that the levels of violence in Colombia could be reduced through intergenerational dialogue. Policies based on all generations’ perspectives must be created. These policies should create opportunities for young people and should be combined with a cultural shift within the society in which the value of intergenerational dialogue is acknowledged and accepted. Silva’s findings are based on a pilot project implemented in Bogotá to prevent recruitment of children and youth by illegal armed groups.

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24 “The Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP) is an experience-based learning process that involves agencies whose programs attempt to prevent or mitigate violent conflict. Its purpose is to analyze experience at the individual program level across a broad range of agencies and contexts. Its goal is to improve the effectiveness of international peacebuilding efforts.” (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects 2009, p. 1).
Evaluation participants emphasized the importance of building bridges of trust and dialogue between parents, community leaders, policy makers, and other adults involved in peacebuilding. Young people should be provided with the opportunity to work with adults “so that they see the empowerment of young people as a positive change, and not as a threat to their own power and position.” (Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding 2014, Principle 8.2).

Children and youth advocate for more support from local and national authorities, and to be involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Inter-institutional partnerships were noted as fundamental strategies. However, generational barriers were recognized as hindering factors to the establishment of such crucial partnerships.

The support of parents increased children and young people's motivation and commitment to peacebuilding. Similarly, community leaders have the potential to give a positive image of CYP within their communities and therefore increase its impact. Providing spaces to conduct activities, and partaking in community mobilization efforts were deemed indispensable supports from community leaders.

Children and youth need to be included in national and international efforts to build peace. Providing young people with meaningful ways to positively contribute and engage in peacebuilding is the most effective way to counteract different types of violence (UNOY Peacebuilders, 2012).
PART THREE:
Recommendations and conclusions

Key Messages and Recommendations

This report concludes with recommendations for key stakeholders which have been developed from inputs from children and youth peacebuilders and their adult supporters. Evaluation participants expect these powerful messages to reach stakeholders. Some recommendations clarify CYP roadblocks to remove, while others clarify paths to increasing CYP impact. Actions should be taken by influential actors and stakeholders, including children and youth themselves, to further strengthen CYP and the quality and impact of their efforts.

FIGURE 6: Key stakeholders blocking and promoting peacebuilding as identified by evaluation participants
**Agencies Supporting CYP**

Recommendations directed to agencies supporting CYP included local, national, and international civil society organizations, public institutions, UN agencies, and other national and international agencies supporting CYP. Recommendations to these agencies are to:

1. Give children and youth a real, not “symbolic,” vote and voice within the institutions and working teams.
2. Reduce, adapt, and review bureaucratic CYP implementing requirements depending on the context.
3. Ensure child and youth participation in all processes.
4. Do not only prioritize urban areas and marginalized groups.
5. Ensure clear dialogues garnering commitment from cooperating stakeholders.
6. Promote micro-projects developed by beneficiaries.
7. Encourage peacebuilding organizations to be more efficient at justifying expenses and present timely reports to donors in order to sustain their credibility and funding.
8. Attain a better understanding of the contexts, issues, and population before writing and submitting CYP proposals to donors.
10. Avoid prioritizing short-term support to young peacebuilders and promote capacity building to secure sustainability.
11. Prioritize recreational, cultural, and artistic CYP initiatives which effectively convey peaceful messages, while attracting younger children and promoting community bonds.
12. Support CYP initiatives while allowing more implementation autonomy.
13. Stop the welfare-oriented focus (paternalism or asistencialismo) and focus on CYP processes.
14. Increase and strengthen partnerships with public and private institutions and organizations to facilitate links with state institutions, promote the work of children and youth, and capture more funds.
15. Build the capacity of young peacebuilders, promote self-learning, and equip them to pass on their knowledge and skills to other young people.
16. Involve young peacebuilders in CYP design, monitoring and evaluation processes.

**Public and Private Donors**

Support from donors is crucial to promote and strengthen peacebuilding and CYP initiatives. Feedback from participants indicated a clear consensus that donors can impact peacebuilding initiatives in more significant ways. Donors should:

1. Promote and support self-sustainable CYP processes.
2. Ensure CYP initiatives are not used for lucrative purposes.
3. Safeguard honesty and integrity when financing CYP projects.
4. Provide alternative ways of justifying expenses depending on the contexts.
5. Ensure transparency when presenting CYP figures and results in reports.
6. Prioritize long-term CYP support.
7. Promote safety and provide safe spaces for CYP initiatives.
8. Ensure site visits and follow-up.
9. Guarantee an appropriate level of funding to match community needs.
10. Channel Corporate Social Responsibility funds to support peacebuilding initiatives.
11. Avoid using donations for political purposes.
Community Members

Evaluation participants formulated recommendations to schools, teachers, and educational authorities, parents and caregivers, and religious leaders.

**Schools, teachers, and educational authorities should:**
1. Increase the promotion of peacebuilding and peaceful coexistence practices in schools.
2. Invest in quality teachers and teaching for coming generations.
3. Include peacebuilding initiatives in the school curriculums and link these initiatives to the Social Service Law.
4. Ensure student representative bodies lead peacebuilding processes and integrate these in both schools and communities.

**Parents and caregivers should:**
1. Increase their support to children involved in peacebuilding processes, offering encouragement and motivation, and taking part in their activities.
2. Stop being and creating barriers to children’s participation in peacebuilding.

**Religious leaders and communities should:**
1. Increase their financial and moral support to peacebuilding initiatives.
2. Promote religious neutrality when supporting peacebuilding projects.

The Media

In Colombia, the media is quite powerful. Above all, it is used as an important psychological tool for armed actors (state and illegal) to disperse ideas that legitimize violence (Barreto et.al, 2009). Throughout the evaluation, participants highlighted the positive role that the media could play. Therefore, it is recommended that media actors:
1. Promote news on peacebuilding and CYP.
2. Ensure real and transparent information sharing.
3. Avoid showing violence.
4. Avoid morbidity and focus on background and analysis.
5. Provide different angles of stories.
6. Similarly to the space provided to sports, fashion, economy, and international news; create a space called ‘Children and Youth in Context’ to highlight CYP stories from the field.
7. Provide spaces for children and youth to be the main protagonists such as presenters and journalists.

Child and Youth Peacebuilders

Evaluation findings helped identify children and youth’s deep sense of responsibility and ownership within their peacebuilding initiatives. In many cases, their feedback emphasized the importance of their attitudes, skills, and actions to efficiently and meaningfully build peace. Accordingly, children and youth addressed powerful messages to themselves and their peers—recommendng to:
1. Maintain perseverance and commitment.
2. Involve their parents in peacebuilding processes.
4. Improve their peacebuilding methods.
5. Take the lead in seeking local strategic alliances.
6 Involve themselves in fundraising processes.
7 Maintain communication between peacebuilders at local, national, and international levels.
8 Be more inclusive by involving frequently excluded children and youth, such as those who are disabled, drug addicted, or gang involved.

Political Authorities

Governments, political leaders, and policy-makers should:
1 Create spaces for children and youth to actively participate in peacebuilding.
2 Prioritize children and youth peacebuilding in their political agendas.
3 Provide financial support to CYP initiatives.
4 Transform Colombia into a country suitable for children and youth.
5 Stop using children and youth initiatives for political purposes—such as election campaigns.
6 Fulfill their commitments in an honest and continuous way.
7 Prioritize children and youth peacebuilding when approving government expenditures.

Recommendations for Future Research

Through this 3M Evaluation, new insights have been gained into CYP in Colombia. This research provided evidences that children and youth can and do significantly contribute to peacebuilding impact. The report’s authors recommend future research to focus on different CYP perspectives and involve different stakeholders to further contribute to this body of knowledge and gain a better understanding of children and youth’s current and potential peacebuilding impact.

**Comparative analysis between CYP impact in conflict-affected and non-affected contexts.** Child and youth peacebuilding is and can be applied in both conflict-affected and non-affected contexts. One of the main results of this evaluation is that peacebuilding needs to permeate all levels of societies. Issues such as bullying, intrafamily violence, discrimination, sexual, and gender based violence; affect all societies regardless of the presence of armed conflicts. While conflicts can increase or worsen the occurrence of such violence, it is imperative to engage children and youth from all contexts to structurally and significantly transform societies. A comparative analysis could provide insight into how different contexts influence CYP impact.

**Involve children under 10 years old.** Numerous peacebuilding initiatives, including several involved in the evaluation, engage young children in peacebuilding. The evaluation protocol and methodology did not allow these age groups to be included in the evaluation. Yet, in the Colombian context, their perspectives could provide crucial elements to study how children significantly contribute to and promote peace in their communities, families, and schools.

**Assess CYP impact from adults’ perspectives.** While several adults were involved in the 3M evaluation, the focus of this participatory research was to build on children and young people’s perspectives. Comparing their views with adults’ views, such as those of caregivers, school staff, and community members, could provide distinct assessments of how conflicts decreased in schools; how and why peaceful coexistence increased in communities; how family relationships improved; etc. The adults involved in the 3M
evaluation were all already supporters of peacebuilding and CYP. It would be crucial to hear other adults’ perspectives.

Conclusions

The 3M evaluation in Colombia took an important step by actively involving children, youth and adults as evaluators, advisers, respondents, documenters, and analysts. This report helps fill an important gap of CYP research, and participatory evaluations, in and beyond Colombia. Findings significantly increase the evidence-based suggesting that child and youth participation contributes significantly to peacebuilding.

Children and youth work as active citizens for peace and primarily contribute to peacebuilding in their communities, families, and schools. CYP initiatives have significantly contributed to positive changes in the way children and youth think about themselves and others. Children and youth have made considerable contributions to prevent and address different forms of conflicts and violence, and to promote peaceful coexistence. There is good evidence that CYP efforts are powerful catalysts to transform societies in more peaceful and sustainable environments.

To enable more effective child and youth participation in peacebuilding, it is imperative to increase moral, family, organizational, institutional, and governmental support to CYP. Collaboration and commitment of key stakeholders including community members, local government officials, and political leaders, as well as ongoing sensitization among families and civil society organizations, are essential to CYP success.

Some persistent factors and actors continue to obstruct CYP impact and success. Children and youth advocate for increased and meaningful support to their participation. They demand their right to participation be integrally fulfilled in all levels of society and urge Colombian authorities, the media, civil society organizations, and donors to prioritize peacebuilding in their agendas.
Case Study One: Children and Youth Peacebuilders – Building Peace in Schools and Communities (Manizales)

For 15 years, the Centre of Advanced Studies in Childhood and Youth, a cooperation between the International Center for Education and Human Development (CINDE) and the University of Manizales, has been implementing the Children and Youth Peacebuilders program in 15 departments of Colombia and in several other Latin American countries, including Nicaragua, Honduras, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic. The program has benefitted many communities and over 35,000 children and youth, along with their families.

The main objective of the program, which combines educational development and academic research, is to contribute to peaceful coexistence processes through the building of citizenship, democracy, and peace. The program draws from the voices and viewpoints of children and youth around the experiences affecting peaceful coexistence in their communities and ways in which they believe peace can be achieved. The program is based on a process of transforming attitudes, perceptions, and practices related to developing children and youth’s human potential. The idea is to enable children and youth to participate in building political practices oriented to transforming daily life and basic patterns of interaction within their communities.

In Manizales (Department of Caldas), one of the cities where the evaluation was conducted, the program is currently implemented in 10 schools, (seven public and three private) and one project is implemented at the community-level. Currently, children
between 11 and 18 are involved in both the school and community settings. During the evaluation, children between 14 and 17 were involved.

The implementation had three main components: 1) capacity building and mentoring workshops; 2) multiplication and replication of the peacebuilding activities; and 3) school-wide peacebuilding impact. The first two components aimed at strengthening the capacities of the ‘multipliers’ teams. These teams were responsible for replicating activities and leading processes with other students. The third component aimed to expand the project in schools.

**Primary peacebuilding activities**

In Manizales, child participation in the program took a collaborative approach. Children took leadership roles to increase their learning and carry out peacebuilding activities within their schools and communities. They were actively involved in implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. They were also continuously engaged in feedback mechanisms to further improve the quality and impact of the program.

The evaluation involved children (ages 14 to 17 year olds) from four different schools. They identified a number of key strategies and activities that they considered imperative to helping build peace within their schools and communities. The importance of mobilizing schools and communities was highlighted as essential.

Children organized and participated in a set of activities, such as ‘marathon hugs’ and ‘wall of affections.’ By way of words and hugs, these activities provided participants with the opportunity to share their feelings while having a positive effect on others, and generating peace in their schools and communities. One of the program coordinators explained how the ‘wall of affections’ enabled children to mediate and transform conflicts using spoken and written words. Evaluation participants also pointed out another activity called ‘magic swamp’ which encouraged children to collaborate and make ethical decisions. These activities, along with several mobilization activities, were considered to be the most successful and impactful.

An essential part of the program was that several ‘multipliers’ continued to meet on a regular basis to share their experiences, draw inspiration, and acquire new skills. The ‘multipliers’ identified this strategy as a significant way to reach out to more children in their schools and communities. As will be further explained, feedback from participants revealed the extent to which children enjoyed this leadership role.

**CYP impact**

Children and adolescent peacebuilders from Manizales became more aware and active citizens for peace. They experienced significant impact at the personal level, which resulted in changes in their mindsets, attitudes, and points of view. Their participation in the program helped them recognize their emotional potential and practice daily peacebuilding actions. They emphasized that their personal development, commitment, and collaboration with their peers resulted in increased peaceful coexistence at school and in their families and communities.

“I used to hear about peace and thought it was a lie.” - 15 year old boy.

**Understanding peace as a daily process.** Children gained understanding of peace as a way of building everyday life. Their perspectives on peace changed significantly. Participation in peacebuilding enabled children to recognize their human potential and how it relates to peacebuilding. One of the program’s chief objectives was to contribute to children’s development of five types of potentials: 1) emotional potential;
2) communicative potential; 3) creative potential to solve conflicts; 4) ethical and moral potential; and 5) political potential (CINDE 2014, p. 6). A 15 year old boy affirmed that he “gained a more human way of thinking and managed to understand the meaning of peace and peacebuilding. It changed my life emotionally.” Evaluation participants described the major impact of activities such as the ‘hugs marathon’ and the ‘wall of affections,’ in which students and community-members felt free to express their feelings, recognize their emotional potential, and understand the central role of such potential in peacebuilding. Overall, participant responses revealed that children understood that peace is a daily responsibility that starts at the individual level and permeates all aspects of their daily lives.

Respecting others. Children valued the opinions of others and increasingly learned to respect them. Listening to their peers and respecting their views were identified as crucial outcomes. A 14 year old girl stated that, before, she “did not listen [to others] because what they said did not seem important to me.” As will be further illustrated, respectful communication was pinpointed as an essential factor in the promotion of peace and increase of peaceful coexistence.

Increased self-confidence and self-esteem. Participants professed that they managed to reduce shyness and learned to relate better to others. While shyness is neither a positive or negative personal trait, children recognized that they overcame significant communication barriers. Opening themselves up to others and participating in different activities increased their self-confidence and self-esteem. Children were encouraged to reproduce their experiences with other children and groups in their schools and in their communities. This often entailed talking in public. Children considered these leadership roles as a major added-value of the program. They appeared in front of their peers as leaders of processes that generate positive transformation in schools and in communities.

Developing greater responsibility and commitment in children. Responsibility at school was also identified as a significant output. Children expressed that they attached more importance to their school duties and performances. “I started doing my homework and become more responsible every day,” illustrated a 14 year old girl. Participating actively and continuously was noted as a key impact. Responses revealed children’s commitment to engaging and reaching out to more people; as well as to improving their own skills so they could more efficiently promote peace in their schools and communities. For example, a 15 year old boy described his commitment to “introduce and inform about the program; as many people have heard or talk about it but do not know the program and its proposals.”

Spreading peaceful coexistence. Children’s attitudes, knowledge, and actions contributed to increased peaceful coexistence, primarily at school, in the community and in their families. Children specifically emphasized that respectful communication was a key factor in increasing peaceful coexistence. As an example, a 14 year old boy stated that he “used to communicate with my friends or enemies by shouting or fighting.” Using proper vocabulary and dialogue significantly decreased conflicts in schools and communities. At the family level, respectful attitudes improved relationships between children and their relatives.

Expressing their feelings contributed to peaceful coexistence between children. Two 14 year old girls illustrated how their participation in the program helped them to recognize their own feelings and how this positively affected their relationships with others. When asked about how these changes contributed to peacebuilding, they stated that “now I do not feel so much resentment towards them [friends and classmates], now I increasingly show my affection and express my feelings,” and “I used to have a lot of
resentment against others, I did not show them affection as I did not feel anything for them, not even friendship.”

Overall, participants in the program stressed that all of the outcomes described above significantly increased peaceful coexistence in their schools, families and communities. While the program was primarily implemented in school settings, meaningful impact was also seen at the community and family levels. Expanding and implementing strategies in the streets of Manizales considerably helped children to promote a culture of peace. Putting their skills and experiences into action contributed to improved relationships at the family level. In essence, children became more active, more aware and more committed to peace.

Factors influencing CYP impact
Based on the outcome of the FGDs and interviews that took place in Manizales, four factors that influenced CYP impact were identified. Participants’ views elucidated how these factors could have both positive and negative influences.

Children and youths’ attitudes, motivation, and commitment. Several factors were distinguished as key to determining success, including teamwork, effective communication, having children as good role models, and the responsibility and commitment of individuals. The involvement of other children from the schools and communities increased the impact of program activities.

Dedicating their efforts to building peace and fully engaging themselves in the organization and the implementation of activities were described as key success factors. For example, a 15 year old girl described how the success of activities was “mainly due to the willingness of the people we work with and the efficient planning on our behalf.” Cooperation among children was highlighted as a major success. Several participants emphasized the positive results of effective planning and coordination, as well as the positive attitude of peacebuilders. For example, two 15 year old girls talked about the effectiveness of the activities, stressing the “commitment and trust between the multipliers [organizers] and the students,” and “commitment and coordination in order to avoid disarray among us, the peacebuilders.”
The lack of commitment and involvement of other children, youth, and community members significantly hindered impact. Children pointed out that the lack of participation and interaction during the activities was a major challenge. “The challenge was that they did not participate or did not interact with one another,” explained a 16 year old girl. “They would not pay attention,” added a 15 year old girl, when describing how the lack of commitment from participants considerably hindered the impact of peacebuilding activities.

Self-confidence, respect, and trust between the multipliers and program participants contributed to success. Children conveyed that confidence to talk in public, as well as safe spaces for participants to express their feelings, resulted in an increased positive impact. Conversely, children’s shyness, unwillingness to express feelings, fear to interact with others and lack of self-confidence deterred impact. As an example, a 15 year old girl explained that “the challenges and difficulties to carry out the activity were shyness and fear to fail and express feelings that others were maybe not interested in hearing.” A 15 year old boy noted the “fear to become acquainted and cohabit with new people,” as a major challenge.

**Children and youths’ capacity, knowledge, skills and experiences.** Acquiring facilitation and life skills affected the success or limitations of the program. Children considered their ability to lead activities and solve problems as a success of the program. Their facilitation skills enabled them to effectively conduct and multiply peacebuilding activities in their schools and communities, involving both peers and strangers.

Several participants recognized that having to communicate their knowledge and convince others of the positive impact of their work was a major challenge they faced. A 15 year old girl explained what a challenge it was to “communicate our knowledge to others in an appropriate way so that they obtain a clear idea of the objective of the activity.” Interaction with other children and community members can be hindered by participants’ lack of interaction and of a clear understanding of the activities’ purposes. Given these points, children emphasized the difficulty of convincing their peers of the importance and benefits of building peace and participating in their activities.

**Awareness raising and sensitization among children and community members.** Bringing together students from different courses and schools increased peaceful coexistence and raised awareness on key topics such as citizenship and nonviolent alternatives to conflict. Children stressed that involving a wider variety of individuals and groups made activities more successful. Interaction between children, youth, and community members also had a positive influence. “We interacted with the other
peacebuilders and with other schools that we do not get along with,” explained a 16 year old girl.

Children recognized that the implementation of activities in public spaces was an effective and creative way to increase community impact. Altogether, recreational and didactical strategies were identified as successful approaches to effectively conveying their messages and engaging students and community members in peacebuilding.

Stakeholder motivation and support. During an interview with the program’s coordination team, it was acknowledged that increasing support from the educational community was critical. Involving them more significantly in the peacebuilding process was a challenge. Developing partnerships and networking was recognized as an enabling factor to increase impact. Efforts to secure continuity, sustainability and funding can be enhanced through increased engagement from critical stakeholders.

**FIGURE:** Quality scores agreed during Pots and Stones FGDs.

As shown in the above figure, most principles25 scored highly. However, principles 5 and 6 received low scores. The following section will provide a brief overview of the main opinions shared by children, justifying the high scores of principles 1-4 and 7-8. Similarly, an analysis of the low scores of principles 5 and 6 will be discussed.

The high scores of principles 1-4 and 7-8 were justified as follows. Transparent and clear information was provided to children. Respect was reflected in the way children were treated. Additionally, participants acknowledged never being forced to participate during the activities. The program was considered to be inclusive, primarily because children learned to respect diversity during different workshops and activities. Children

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25 See appendix 3 for a detailed description of the quality principles identified by the GPCYP.
added that everyone was welcome to participate in peacebuilding activities. Gender equality was promoted in all activities and workshops. There was never any type of discrimination, including gender-based discrimination. Children’s opinions were always acknowledged and respected, regardless of their gender identity. Children expressed that their suggestions and views to improve the program and activities were always taken into account. Similarly, they highlighted that the program coordinators were always sharing key information about the program and listening to their feedback. Lastly, evaluation participants expressed their satisfaction regarding their level of involvement and leadership within the program. They explained that their role as multipliers evidenced their high level of commitment.

To substantiate the low score (1) assigned to principle 5, all participants explained that they were not prepared and trained to react in an emergency situation, be it a natural disaster or any other dangerous situation. Interestingly enough, program coordinators also assigned a low score to this principle and acknowledged that improvements needed to be made in this area. The section on recommendations will provide some of the participants’ views on how to improve this indicator.

Principle 6 also received a low score (1), as children stressed that no opportunities were available to interact with adults. While they agreed that they were provided with useful tools and skills to increase peaceful coexistence and reduce conflicts with both young people and adults, they insisted that they never had the opportunity to put these learnings into practice with adults. The next section will present some key recommendations formulated to increase intergenerational dialogue and interaction.

**Recommendations and conclusions**

The Child and Youth Peacebuilders program demonstrated the significant impacts of school-based peacebuilding initiatives. Mentoring, training, and engaging students resulted in great impact in both schools and communities. The program participants were considerably empowered and became increasingly committed to promote a culture of peace in their daily lives. To wage peace more effectively, children and youth made the following recommendations:

- Conduct activities more frequently, particularly the most successful ones
- Integrate more participants during the activities
- Expand the program to new communities and schools, including those more affected by violence
- Receive more support from teachers and involve them in the activities
- Maintain CY perseverance and commitment
- Increase intergenerational partnerships by involving teachers, parents, and other community members
Case Study Two: Youth Provoking Peace (JOPPAZ) – A youth-led movement reconciling communities

Youth Provoking Peace (Jóvenes Provocadores de Paz – JOPPAZ) is a youth-led movement aiming to organize, integrate and reconcile the youth of the High Mountain (Alta Montaña), a predominantly peasant region that has been highly affected in the past by armed conflict and the presence of different armed actors. Guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, criminal organizations, and the absence of State assistance contributed to dramatic impoverishment, as well as the economic and social exclusion of the region (JOPPAZ, 2013).

In April 2013, rural communities from the High Mountain conducted a peaceful three-day march, gathering more than 1,000 participants that walked towards the city of Cartagena. They demanded the fulfilment of their social and economic rights, integral reparation, subsidies to avocado growers and technical assistance in agricultural practices. The march was organized by the Movimiento Pacifico de la Alta Montaña (Pacific Movement of the High Mountain), a movement of peasants and victims established in 2012, and supported by Sembrando Paz, a steering team member of the Colombia Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding and supporter of the Youth Provoking Peace movement (Movimiento Pacifico de la Alta Montaña, 2013, p. 1-6).

JOPPAZ started in 2013 as a result of the massive youth participation during the march. The coordinators of the Movement identified a strong need to listen to the voices of the region’s youth. The movement is now composed of more than 600 youths from 52 different villages. They develop processes of reconciliation and sensitization within the different communities. Environmental protection is a central pillar of the movement, in a region that is greatly impacted by environmental hazards and degradation, including drought and land burning practices.

Description of main peacebuilding activities

Awareness, sensitization, and campaigns. Events and activities were organized by youth at the community level to sensitize the population about the importance of respecting women and to stop the pollution of water sources and the cutting down of trees, etc.

Capacity building and trainings were conducted in the areas of leadership, environmental protection, non-violence and general professional development. The youth promoted the participation of young people in public and political spaces. Several training components focused on teaching youth to use their voice and to advocate for their rights.

Reconciliation and integration. Efforts for reconciliation and integration between communities were pursued, including cultural and recreational activities that were organized to facilitate bonding between different communities. Reconciliation was a primary objective and was achieved by bringing together communities that, in the past, have been separated by violence and armed conflict.
Mentoring. Each district or village had a youth representative in the coordinating committee of JOPPAZ. He or she assumed a mentoring role among youth in their communities, to train them and disseminate network information.

CYP Impact

Change in mindset and increased self-confidence. Youth emphasized changes experienced at the individual level. Increased self-confidence, respect and care for others were major outcomes.

Increased self-confidence enabled young people to improve relationships at the community and family levels. “Now I speak without fear with my friends and parents, and I speak with more confidence,” illustrated a 15 year old girl from Guamanga. They validated that they understood that respectful communication and consideration for others reduces conflicts. A 19 year old girl from Guamanga explained that “[Now] I am sweet, kind and I love people. I do not hate anyone.”

Youth also became more comfortable in expressing their feelings. Less distress in expressing their ideas and feelings allowed them to interact with and learn from others, as well as raise their voices in their communities. Acknowledging their feelings resulted in increased consideration and respect for others. “Before, I was not cautious when talking to others; everything was negative,” stated a 20 year old male from Bajo Grande.

Individual commitment and personal development. Young people’s understanding of peace changed. They valued the work and the potential of youth to bring about positive changes in their communities. Their participation in peacebuilding raised awareness of their important role as agents of change. Young leaders of JOPPAZ stressed that youth became more responsible towards their communities. They gained understanding that change was possible and that they could play a crucial role in promoting it. As a result, several of the youth involved themselves in local political spaces to advocate for the rights of young people.

Commitment was reflected in their participation in all activities. They organized and participated in activities in their own villages, as well as in other communities. The topography of the region, characterized by extended rural and mountainous areas, often meant long walks or ‘chalupa’ (longboat) journeys. “Now, we do not care where the meetings take place. We reach the venues even if we have to walk, because we are interested in receiving the information they give us,” explained an 18 year old female from Bajo Grande.

Their personal changes resulted in stronger commitment to help others and to transform their communities. Several participants expressed that their participation motivated them to further contribute to peacebuilding by recruiting more youth into the initiative and to participate in political spaces. Young people's motivation was also reflected in their increased efforts in their search for academic and professional opportunities. A 20 year old female from Bajo Grande described the impact that her involvement in peacebuilding had on her: “Now I am a responsible girl with the desire to help and support my community and family.”

Acquired knowledge and skills. Significant knowledge and skills in the areas of human rights, environmental protection, women’s rights and leadership were offered to young people across the High Mountain region. These skills enabled them to more effectively advocate and protect the environment and human rights. Leadership was mentioned as the most important skill acquired. It resulted in concrete actions undertaken in their communities, and in the entire region, to unite neighborhoods and increase peaceful coexistence.
Increased peaceful cohabitation and reduced conflicts. Commitment and leadership “enabled young people to organize themselves and promote values to reduce violence,” affirmed a 32 year old female from Macayepo. Peaceful coexistence was not only reflected within communities, but also between communities. As will be shown in the next section, the reduction of armed conflict violence opened a space for interaction between communities. JOPPAZ implemented cultural events and campaigns to bring together community members and enhance reconciliation. Youth concluded that peaceful coexistence continued to increase as a result of their ongoing visits and activities in the different neighborhoods. Walking without fear to other areas was considered to be a significantly positive outcome and proof that peace was possible.

Conflict between young people decreased. Participants pointed out that respectful communication and dialogue were key strategies to solve conflicts in a peaceful way. Violence was considered useless and interacting with others became increasingly valued.

Factors hindering or enabling impact of CYP initiatives

Based on FGD results and interviews conducted with Youth Provoking Peace, five factors influencing CYP impact were identified. The views of participants revealed that these factors can have both a positive or negative impact on outcomes.

Young people’s attitudes, motivation, and commitment. Young people’s commitment and responsibility was essential to the success of JOPPAZ. Teamwork and discipline resulted in more effective implementation of peacebuilding activities at the community level. Many participants pointed out that their respectful attitudes and willingness to tolerate others were also important factors that contributed to success. “Respect, tolerating cultural exchanges and love,” were illustrated as enabling factors by an 18 year old female from Bajo Grande. Many of the activities undertaken by Youth Provoking Peace incorporated different communities that used to suffer from intolerance, fear and violence. Participants determined that unwelcoming attitudes were hindering factors at the time of organizing such events.

The lack of motivation and commitment of young people resulted in decreased impact. One of the initiative’s coordinators explained that, at times, it was a challenge to motivate youth. Convincing them that their involvement in peacebuilding would be meaningful was pointed out as a challenge. Several participants stressed that uniting youth from different communities was crucial in successfully increasing peaceful coexistence. But, as illustrated by a 19 year old female from Macayepo, “Convincing youth to participate and support us” was not easy.

Mobilizing communities through culture and sports. The High Mountain region used to be characterized by high levels of violence and stigmatization between communities. The lack of trust between the different communities, due to the presence of armed actors and violent groups, had generated both direct and stigma-based violence in the region. The reduction of violence in the region, to some extent, helped reduce stigma and allowed people to be mobile within the region. Youth from the region emphasized how cultural integration activities helped community members regain trust and increased visits between communities without experiencing fear. “I am not afraid anymore to walk to other areas, I go to meetings in other communities and villages,” explained a 17 year old girl from Guamanga.
“We think differently. At the time of violence, we used to run when helicopters were flying over our heads, we could not walk by night, now all is different.” – Youth Peace Provoker from Guamanga

A chief objective of JOPPAZ was to recover the regional traditional and cultural heritage which was lost due to the armed conflict. Violence and displacement prevented communities from celebrating and honoring their traditions. Sports and dance were recognized as important enabling factors to help reunite and reconcile communities. “Some youth are uniting with other communities to rebuild trust through sport,” illustrated a 22 year old female from Macayepo. The integration of different communities was a key factor in increasing peaceful coexistence.

Skills and experiences strengthened CYP. Leadership, project management and environmental protection skills significantly increased CYP impact. Similarly, participants emphasized that visiting and collaborating with other peacebuilding initiatives inspired them and equipped them with new skills and ideas to implement in their contexts. Leadership skills offered young people the abilities to train other youth, advocate at the local municipal level and act as role models. During some special activities, youth were asked to come up with proposals for projects that could be recognized and supported by their communities. Training was provided to help design such projects. Participants distinguished this as a prominent success factor that enabled them to put in practice what they learned.

Several of the youth had the opportunity to travel to Soacha, near Bogota, to learn from another peacebuilding initiative. This was part of an organized exchange between the two initiatives, in which participants would visit and learn from each other. This exchange was determined to be essential in enabling young people to increase their motivation and commitment to further peacebuilding in their communities. Youth expressed that they were inspired to replicate activities and strategies they had observed during this exchange experience.

Insufficient logistical support to CYP initiatives. “Sustaining a youth-led movement that receives little support from organizations and authorities is a challenge,” underlined one of the
movement’s coordinators. The lack of support resulted in decreased motivation, as youth sometimes doubted the long-term sustainability of their projects.

A 20 year old male from Macayepo argued that, “Securing funds for logistics and transport for the different communities” was limited and prevented many people from participating, which deterred effective community integration.

CYP Quality

FIGURE: Quality scores\textsuperscript{26} agreed during Pots and Stones FGDs.

Principle 1 received positive feedback. Youth reported that they were provided with transparent and timely information. However, several participants underlined that they lacked information, likely due to their lack of regular participation in program activities.

Regarding principle 2, two main elements were identified as decisive to ensuring quality. Firstly, participants affirmed that their participation was always voluntary and they were never pressured to take part in activities, campaigns, or events. Secondly, it was acknowledged that the schedule of young people was taken into account when organizing activities.

Similar to the previous case study, participants agreed that everyone was welcome to engage in the movement and participate during activities. They affirmed that there was no discrimination whatsoever. Participants noted that diversity was appreciated, valued and promoted in JOPPAZ.

\textsuperscript{26} See appendix 3 for a detailed description of the quality principles identified by the GPCYP.
Youth Provoking Peace considered themselves, and their initiative, to be gender inclusive. In the same way as the score of principle 3 was justified, participants affirmed that everyone was welcome regardless of their gender. A 16 year old boy explained that, “Everybody has the right to participate in the activities, no matter if they are boys, youth, adults, transsexuals, etc. We all have rights!”

Principle 5 received the lowest score of all eight principles. Most participants affirmed that they had never been informed or prepared to confront insecure situations. Without being precise as to the types of risks they could be exposed to, youth recognized that necessary measures to avoid risks were not taken.

Intergenerational dialogue increased due to JOPPAZ’s cooperation with the Municipal Action Councils, which are independent local associations formed by communities to promote citizens participation and promote awareness of local needs. Additionally, several participants from Guamanga argued that support from parents had been significant and very helpful in motivating children and youth to take part in activities and promote peace in their communities. Conversely, the lack of community involvement was identified as a weakness and hurdle to intergenerational dialogue.

Principle 7 scored high because of the significant support received from parents and young leaders. In both Macayepo and Guamanga, participants underlined the crucial support of their parents who motivated them to take part in the activities. At the community level, effective communication channels were considered essential to the success of events.

Ownership and leadership enabled young people to take the lead in their communities and to organize activities. Most participants expressed their satisfaction as to the level of support they received to help ensure that they could carry out activities. However, one participant from Guamanga explained that activities organized at the school level were challenged by the fact that young people’s opinions and views were not always taken into account. Community support was identified as crucial and participants recognized that most activities were supported by community members. Very little interaction or support from local authorities was received since the creation of JOPPAZ in 2013.

Recommendations and conclusions
Youth Provoking Peace illustrates the power of young people to reconcile communities, protect the environment, contribute to the development of their communities, and advocate for their rights. It demonstrates how youth can join efforts to increase peaceful coexistence and transform regions that have been historically affected by war and violence. Throughout the evaluation, youth recognized that efforts were needed to improve this “new” movement (2013) and engage young people more effectively in peacebuilding. They considered it crucial to:

- Involve additional youth in the movement
- Maintain their commitment and participate more frequently in the activities
- Involve local authorities in their peacebuilding processes
- Get more support from local authorities
- Improve communication channels within the movement
- Better engage communities and integrate them in the activities
Case Study Three: National Movement of Children, Adolescents, and Youth Peacebuilders

The National Movement of Children, Adolescents, and Youth Peacebuilders emerged in 1996 as a result of a national initiative created by several national and international organizations and agencies. When the initiative ended in 2000, World Vision International Colombia Office, a country steering team member of the Colombia partnership, decided to continue supporting the movement which is now active in 15 cities across the country, involving more than 10,500 children, adolescents, and youth. It is a sociopolitical movement aiming at contributing to building a culture of peace and non-violence, mobilizing populations in their fight for peace, acknowledging children, adolescents, and youth as legitimate social actors, and guaranteeing the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other national and international treaties promoting the rights of children, adolescents, and youth. To do so, they advocate at community, family, school, political, local, national, and international levels. They promote child and youth participation as indispensable elements in human transformative processes and sustainable development of their communities. With the support of World Vision International Colombia Office, the different local branches of the Movement coordinate their work at the national level and unite their efforts to more effectively advocate for their rights and strengthen the Movement’s impact and quality. During the 3M evaluation, children, adolescents, youth, and adults from Armenia, Bogotá/Soacha, and Cali actively participated in the process. While they belong to the same Movement and implement similar activities and campaigns, each local branch of the Movement experiences different processes and results.

Description of main peacebuilding activities

Children and youth collaborate significantly in program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. While the project as a whole was designed at the organizational level, feedbacks from children, young people, local partners, and communities is always taken into consideration to improve project implementation.

Evaluation participants identified different categories of activities they considered essential to promote and protect child and youth rights, and to build peace in their communities, families, schools, and in the Colombian society as whole.

Mobilizations and campaigns—such as Peace marches, awareness campaigns on violence against children, solidarity actions against hunger and child malnutrition, school and community-based awareness campaigns on environmental protection, and child and youth rights, among others.

Capacity building and trainings—on child rights and other child and youth related legal frameworks, trainings on mentoring and leadership, and capacity building on advocacy strategies.
Local, departmental and national political advocacy--including their participation in Municipal Youth Councils and Student Councils; their partnerships with local, regional, national and international institutions and organizations to help promote child and youth rights; their participation in governmental events; and their advocacy strategies targeting local and national policy makers; among others.

Community integration-- gathering communities and promoting peaceful coexistence by organizing cultural and recreational activities, environmental campaigns, and marches against violence, among others.

CYP Impact

Children, adolescents, and youth from both Armenia and Bogotá-Soacha experienced similar changes and impacts at the individual, community, family, and school levels. Individual changes were very similar between both districts. Concrete individual and collective actions to build peace varied as the issues addressed by the movement in each district were different. Significant skills and knowledge were acquired in both districts which results in a substantial impact.

Some of the main changes that they have experienced include heightened self-confidence and self-esteem, improved relationships, reduced shyness, greater respect towards others, and increased commitment and responsibility. Improved peaceful coexistence was identified as a key impact resulting from young people's respectful attitudes and stronger community bonds.

Change in mindset and increased self-confidence. The majority of participants mentioned increased self-confidence as a key impact. In both districts, it was acknowledged that workshops and public events enabled children, adolescents, and youth to overcome communication barriers and be better at expressing themselves in front of others. A 16 year old girl from Armenia explained that, “my self-esteem was based on shyness and I changed it to courage.” A 37 year old woman from Bogotá added that, “shyness disappeared from [children], now they increasingly interact with each other.” Children and adolescents pointed out that shyness prevented them from relating to others and from enhancing their peacebuilding skills.

“We generate changes in attitudes and behaviors,” affirmed a 23 year old female from Armenia. These pivotal changes resulted in improved social relationships. Young people valued interaction with others. “I am more sociable with the people surrounding me,” stated an 18 year old male from Armenia. Interpersonal relationships increased peaceful coexistence in schools and communities. “During meetings, we managed to mix with others and learn from children coming from different neighborhoods,” illustrated a 12 year old girl from Soacha.

Mutual respect improved relationships at the community, school, and family levels. Respecting their peers by using proper words and dialogue instead of fighting was a key impact. “I used to fight for everything, I was rude and a liar, and unpleasant,” illustrated a 10 year old girl from Bogotá. Evaluation results revealed how participating in peacebuilding activities transformed young people. Their views indicate how individual transformations translated into daily peacebuilding actions such as respectful communication, reconciliation, and care about others.

Individual commitment. Young people’s increased commitment was a direct result of their involvement in peacebuilding. In their daily lives, they became more committed peacebuilders as well as more responsible with their schools duties and their use of free time.
As peacebuilders, they underlined that they became more motivated and passionate about helping others and contributing positively to their communities. For example, two adolescents from Bogotá and Armenia illustrated key changes they experienced, stating “love for what I do, motivation to help others” and “I have now the leadership capacity and I can become a mentor and guide children in the community.” The Movement enabled participants to become leaders within their communities and groups, and to conduct activities and workshops with their peers. They expressed that they gained a sense of commitment and motivation to increasingly participate in peacebuilding activities and disseminate their knowledge and passion within their circle of influence. “Helping others to change,” described a 10 year old girl as her commitment to build peace.

Responsibility was identified as a key impact. Their participation in peacebuilding encouraged them to better use their free time and, most importantly, distance themselves from harmful activities. “Since I started being part of the Movement, I learnt to use my free time in thing that are truly important to me and not in harmful activities,” illustrated a 17 year old adolescent from Armenia. At the school level, participants emphasized that they became more responsible with their homework.

Environmental protection was constantly mentioned by children from Soacha. As will be explained in the next section, they acquired key learnings and skills to effectively protect the environment and mobilize community members. Their formation in this area resulted in greater commitment to undertake daily actions to protect the environment and convince others to do so.

Acquired knowledge and skills. Trainings on child and youth-related laws, facilitation skills, and technical abilities in environmental protection significantly improved the impact of peacebuilders.

In Armenia, several participants explained that they had gained legal knowledge on child rights which enabled them to more effectively advocate at the community and political level. They stressed that these trainings were conducted by their peers and that they were now also equipped to disseminate information to others.

In Soacha, participants highlighted skills acquired to take action and promote environmental protection. They added that such trainings enabled them to effectively “raise awareness on the use of our natural resources,” stressed a 12 year old girl.
In Armenia, facilitation skills were crucial to enable young peacebuilders to lead activities, disseminate learnings, entertain children, and motivate others to join the movement. They emphasized that using recreational activities was the most effective strategy to promote peacebuilding and convey powerful messages. A 15 year old boy explained that recreational activities “accelerated learning and its impact.”

**Increased peaceful coexistence and reduced conflicts.** Conflict reduction was experienced at the family and community level. Respectful communication, dialogue, and decreased aggressiveness enabled young people to better relate with others and find peaceful strategies to reduce conflict. Family relationships improved as a result of the “strengthening of emotional bonds between family members,” explained a 19 year old male from Armenia. “I used to fight a lot with my sister and but not anymore,” added an 11 year old boy from Soacha. Nurturing the value of respect during the Movement’s activities raised awareness among children and adolescents of the importance of respecting others.

At the community level, several participants from both districts expressed that they used to be violent and aggressive towards others. Changes in mindset and attitudes helped them improve their relationships with other children and youth.

In Armenia, the peacebuilders conveyed that community mobilization and campaigns brought together individuals and groups from different neighborhoods, contributing to peaceful coexistence. “The success was that we managed to connect children, youth, and adults because the activities enabled uniting people regardless of their age and gender, and it also enabled changing people’s perceptions about their neighborhoods” illustrated a 24 year old male from Armenia. The next section on key factors influencing impact will provide more notions on how community mobilizations and gatherings were crucial catalysts to increase peaceful coexistence.

**Factors influencing CYP impact**

Based on the FGD’s results and interviews, four factors influencing CYP impact were identified. Participants’ views elucidated how factors can sometimes influence impact in both positive and negative ways.

**Child and youths’ attitudes, motivation, and commitment.** Children and young people’s attitudes, commitment, and motivation considerably increased impact. Ongoing participation was considered a relevant factor. Participants identified that the success of their activities highly depended on the degree of their involvement, and that of their peers. In this respect, teamwork was crucial to effectively attract participants from different communities.

Motivating others to participate regularly was seen as a challenge in Bogotá. An 18 year old girl from Bogotá described how “managing to convince children to participate took constant efforts.” Child and youth peacebuilders described some of their efforts to organize more appealing activities and to use better communication strategies as a tactic to attract new participants and increase impact at the community level.

Dedicating their efforts to build peace and fully engage themselves in the organization, and the implementation of activities were described as key success factor by children and youth. For example a 17 year old girl from Armenia described that, “we dedicate a lot of time to plan and study the issues we discuss [with children and youth].”

Evaluation participants recounted how their own attitudes and those of their peers could also undermine peacebuilding activities. Shyness, rivalry, lack of information sharing, and disrespectful communication were found to be major impediments in Armenia and Bogotá. A significant number of responses from children and adolescents
underlined how shyness prevented children and youth from actively engaging in peacebuilding activities, as they hesitate to express themselves, share with, and learn from others. A 14 year old girl from Armenia noted that “The challenge I overcame was to reject shyness in order to relate with my peers.”

**Awareness raising, sensitization, and commitment of key stakeholders.** Raising awareness and engaging community members and other young people has been critical to the successful impact of peacebuilders in Armenia, Bogotá, and Soacha. Conversely, the lack of people’s interest to participate and support CYP reduced its impact.

In Armenia, they determined that their strategies to raise awareness and to organize campaigns on peace and related issues had dramatically helped make their movement more visible and convinced others to join them. Mobilizing public institutions also increased the movement’s appreciation as peacebuilders were able to demonstrate the impact of their work.

Children and adolescents participate and advocate during a national forum on Peace and Childhood in Bogotá.

Uniting and sensitizing community members and groups were also identified as key successes of peacebuilding initiatives. They insisted on the importance of gathering different community members to increase their awareness and engagement in peacebuilding processes at the community level. “We were successful because of the marches we organized to raise awareness that war is not the solution,” illustrated a 12 year old girl from Soacha.

In Bogotá, one community leader who leads a child group commented during an interview that the main challenge was the fight against children selling drugs in the community. She explained that these children are rejected in the community and have a negative influence on the peacebuilders because they poke fun at them and ridicule their activities. The peacebuilders reject these children as a way to protect themselves. She stressed that children involved in the drug trade also needed help, yet, integrating them in the group was challenging due to their lack of interest and the rejection from the peacebuilders themselves.

At the school level, participants explained that mobilizing students was a very efficient strategy to promote peace. A 17 year old girl from Armenia described how “in each school, we organised activities related to peace, such as wall paintings, drawings, talks, theatre, among others, so that children, adolescents, and youth can share and learn about peace related concepts and apply these in their daily lives.” In Armenia, the movement cooperates
with different schools to conduct activities in their premises, and to involve them in the movement through the Student Social Service Law.27

The lack of support from key stakeholders hindered impact. Evaluation participants from Armenia and Bogotá explained that the lack of funds, adequate materials, and physical space to carry out their activities was a challenge. During an interview with a mother leading a child group in Bogotá, the lack of material to conduct sports and music activities was noted as a critical discouraging factor. In Soacha, they insisted that environmental related advocacy was a difficult endeavor due to lack of commitment from community members to change their polluting habits.

Children and youths’ capacity, knowledge, and skills. The peacebuilders of Armenia play a leading roles as mentors, facilitators, organizers, etc. and are frequently supported by the movement to improve their skills. Accordingly, they acknowledged their professional and personal development as critical to improve the impact of their work. They spotlighted the importance of disseminating their learnings among their peers so that a wider numbers of children and youth could be mobilized and engaged.

Participants described a significant accountability activity in which they had to prepare and share the results of their peacebuilding work to different stakeholders such as municipal authorities, public and private institutions, civil society organizations, community members, school representatives, among others. This exercise was considered a top success factor, being that it enabled them to evaluate their own work and adapt their plans of action to more effectively promote and build peace in their communities.

Their facilitation and leadership skills resulted in increased impact at the community and school levels. For example, the peacebuilders in Armenia provided capacity building to student representatives in various schools on prominent topics such as human rights, culture of peace, and the 1620 Act regarding school life and coexistence, etc. Their empowerment enabled them to take leading roles and to implement this youth-to-youth teaching methodology.

Participants emphasized the challenge, and the importance of acquiring new knowledge and skills to spread them among other children and youth. A 17 year old girl from Armenia explained that she felt one major challenge was “to acquire new knowledge in order to disseminate it afterwards.”

Recreational and artistic activities. Dynamic and recreational strategies are effectively used by children, adolescents, and youth as creative methods to engage and sustain the motivation of children and youth in peacebuilding, and to promote awareness and messages of peacebuilding and related issues related to conflict or violence.

Participants from both districts emphasized that artistic and recreational activities greatly motivated them to continue their involvement in the movement. “We were successful with the activities, since most children participated in the games instead of staying in the streets,” illustrated a 15 year old girl from Bogotá. During several interviews, staff from the movement explained that keeping young people’s minds busy, and conveying peaceful messages and learnings through recreational activities significantly influenced impact. As a result, peaceful coexistence increased and conflict decreased at the school and community levels.

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27 Article 97 of the Law 115 of 1994 stipulates that all students from the last two grades of secondary school are obliged to provide a social service as part of the curriculum (National Education Ministry 1994).
In Armenia, some participants underlined that they were implementing artistic and recreational activities in their communities and schools with great success. They added that adults were successfully involved and lost their fear to “become children again,” illustrated a 17 year old boy. Conversely, another participant added that involving adults in these type of activities was sometimes challenging, as they would have difficulties immersing completely in the games. Across this theme, several participants pointed out that teaching through games was not always easy, and that improved facilitation skills were needed.

**CYP Quality**

**FIGURE:** Quality scores\(^\text{28}\) agreed during Pots and Stones FGDs

Principle 1 and 2 scored an average of 2.2. In both districts, participants expressed that information was always provided in a transparent way. In Armenia, it was highlighted that participants assuming the role of mentors provided clear information. But one 15 year old boy justified a medium score because “sometimes we do not understand the purpose of the activity.” In Bogotá, some participants underlined that the opinion of children and adolescents were not always taken into consideration by adults. They added that in some cases, parents were acting as roadblocks and prevented their children from participating in activities. In Armenia, the feedback was very positive and young people considered that they were never forced to take part in activities and their views were always taken into account.

\(^\text{28}\) See appendix 3 for a detailed description of the quality principles identified by the GPCYP.
Across the theme of diversity and inclusion, two adolescents from Armenia and Bogotá provided different views than their peers. All participants emphasized that everybody was welcome to participate in the activities without any sort of discrimination. Yet, these two adolescents (16 year old girl and 17 year old boy) explained that better efforts needed to be made, commenting respectively that: “it could be that we are always open to the participation of others without excluding anyone; but we have not developed the foundation to promote diversity during the activities.”

In both districts, gender equality was considered to be an important aspect in the movement. Children, adolescents, and youth stressed that participation was equal. Their responses indicated that the issue of gender equality had been discussed during their activities. In Armenia, a 21 year old male explained that this topic was covered during activities that addressed young people’s emotional development.

Principle 5 scored a medium score. Yet, several opinions suggested weaknesses in terms of safety and risks. Three participants from a FGD in Armenia stated that in “many occasions, our peers do not [follow through with] what was agreed.” The lack of compliance among some CYP participants is a risk factor, noted a 14 year old girl from Armenia. In this area, participants recognized that they were more exposed to risk when organizing outdoor activities. An 11 year old boy from Bogotá added that “in previous years we were informed about these issues but nothing was concluded.” Another 14 year old girl from Bogotá further explained that “risks related to the reactions we should have in situations of emergency are not [addressed].”

Intergenerational alliances took place in both districts. In Soacha, a 10 year old boy noted that parents were always supportive of the activities. In Bogotá, participants emphasized that better efforts were required to strengthen existing alliances. In Armenia, participants underlined that some of their activities significantly engaged families and community members. Yet, they considered that intergenerational interaction should happen more frequently. Participants from Bogotá and Armenia underlined that the Movement’s sustainability depended on the involvement and commitment of new generations. Therefore, they emphasized the importance of preparing the new generation of peacebuilders for the ‘generational relay’.

Principle 7 scored relatively high. In Armenia, participants emphasized that they always implement a youth-to-youth methodology in which they play leading roles as facilitators, mentors, organizers, and evaluators. They argued that opinions are always considered and respected. In Bogotá, the peacebuilders explained that the movement in their district was facing a major issue of decreased participation. They believe that it is a significant barrier to meaningful involvement of children and young people, as many are not involved on a regular basis.

Under principle 8, children and youth from Armenia expressed that they are listened to and supported when proposing and implementing peacebuilding activities in their schools and communities. A 16 year old girl explained that “as mentors, we help children in a way that they can [themselves] seek solutions.” Several respondents underlined that the lack of reliability of their peers affects their degree of involvement at all stages, “we are taken into account in all stages; but sometimes children themselves are not taken into account because of their disobedience and lack of discipline,” stated a 14 year old girl from Armenia. As pointed out earlier, decreased participation in the movement in Bogotá did not allow the significant involvement of children, adolescents, and youth in all program stages.

Recommendations and conclusions. This case study revealed the potential of large scale movements in empowering children, adolescents, and youth to become leaders and transform their realities at the local, regional, and national levels. A common vision and mission has united peacebuilders from different contexts and realities across the
country. Collective strategies and campaigns implemented by local branches resulted in successful advocacy processes. Their empowerment led to increased motivation, improved representation of the Movement by children and youth, and greater peacebuilding impact.

In Armenia, participants recommended to:

- Maintain perseverance and commitment
- Expand their work to more children, youth, and communities
- Acquire new skills to more effectively engage new members
- Seek new strategic partnerships to strengthen the movement
- Strengthen existing partnerships with schools
- Keep prioritizing recreational strategies
- Provide spaces for children and youth with disabilities to participate

In Bogotá and Soacha, participants recommended to:

- Engage additional children and youth
- Improve communication channels within the movement
- Organize more recreational and cultural activities
- Engage communities and young people more effectively in environmental protection activities and campaigns
- Maintain commitment and perseverance
- Equip children and youth with more peacebuilding skills and knowledge

Case study Four: Promoting Child and Youth Rights in the Montes de Maria Sub-region

“Promoting Child and Youth Rights in the Montes de Maria Sub-region” is a project striving to prevent the recruitment of children and young people into the armed conflict and other related types of violence. Together with several partners, the Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation has been implementing this project since 2004 and in seven different municipalities of the Montes de Maria subregion.

The project aims at strengthening protective environments for children and youth. To do so, Childhood and Youth Local Support Committees (Comités Locales de Apoyo a la Infancia y Juventud – CLAIJ) were created in each municipality. The CLAIJ aim to strengthen spaces for social interaction, in collaboration with organizations interested and experienced in promoting the rights of children and youth. Children, youth, community leaders, youth organizations, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), teachers, and schools are all part of the different CLAIJ in the region. The Foundation strengthens the capacities of these groups and individuals, and supports monitoring and evaluation processes. Interaction with local, departmental, and national authorities is prioritized to strengthen partnerships and improve relationships between communities and local authorities.

One of the main pillars of the project was the creation of a ‘multi-purpose fund’. The fund supports micro projects directed to protection factors, such as Cultural, Productivity, Educational, and Organizational Strengthening. After more than ten years
of implementation, the projects have demonstrated that culture-related protective
factors were the most effective to prevent child and youth recruitment. Cultural
components are included in all the aspects of their projects.

The projects financed by the Fund are child and youth-led. Some examples of
projects supported include: the creation of a playground for disabled children; support
to recycling and trash collection brigades; apiculture projects; establishment of
music schools; and backing of dance groups. All the project funding proposals must
demonstrate a sustainable component. Additionally, young people and groups are
continuously mentored and equipped with leadership and project management skills.

Description of main peacebuilding activities

Children and youth collaborate significantly in program implementation, monitoring,
and evaluation. While the project as a whole was designed at the organizational level,
feedbacks from children, young people, local partners, and communities is always taken
into consideration to improve project implementation.

Evaluation participants identified different categories of activities they considered
essential to promote child and youth rights, and to prevent recruitment from armed and
violent actors.

Mobilizations and campaigns—such as cultural presentations in the communities
and at schools, and campaigns to end violence against women, and teach sexual and
reproductive health, etc.

Capacity building and trainings—on child and youth-related legal frameworks,
workshops on public policy, and project formulation, design, monitoring, and evaluation.

Local political advocacy and public participation—including the participation of
children, youth, and organizations in local government meetings; in school councils; and
in partnerships with local, regional, and national institutions and organizations to help
promote child and youth rights in the Montes de Maria region.

Micro-projects—funded through the multi-purpose fund.

CYP Impact

Changes in mindset and personal development. Children and youth became more active
and aware citizens for peace. Their involvement in peacebuilding helped them adopt
peaceful and respectful attitudes, gain self-confidence, and become more responsible
towards themselves, their peers, and their families.

Respecting others was highlighted as a key impact. Children and youth explained
that they understood the value of respect and adopted respectful attitudes towards their
classmates, friends, and relatives. “I am part of a dance group. When practicing, I used
to laugh at my peers who could not dance. Now I changed and I do not laugh anymore.
Because this [attitude] did not have any positive impact,” illustrated a 13 year old girl
from San Onofre. Participants emphasized how they started using proper words and
treating others respectfully.

Children and young people became aware of the importance of not consuming drugs,
and being responsible students and citizens. A 15 year old boy from Ovejas explained
that “the ‘party therapy’ took youth away from drugs.” A 16 year old girl from Ovejas added
that the project “helped raising awareness and encouraging us to become better persons.”
Children highlighted that discipline was a key change they experienced as a result of
their involvement in cultural activities, such as music and dance groups, which required
a lot of commitment and responsibility. Additionally, academic performance increased

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as a result of children’s motivation and commitment. In many cases, activities were implemented within schools and in cooperation with teachers and school principals.

Increased self-confidence was another crucial impact. Performing traditional dances and concerts increased children and young people’s self-confidence. They stressed that they lost fear when advocating for their rights and talking to other stakeholders, including local institutions and other children and young people. “Thanks to the youth network, I lost fear to participate in events. Now I belong to a group where I can express myself and participate in school and in the society,” illustrated a 16 year old girl from San Onofre.

**Acquired knowledge and skills.** Knowledge of local, national, and international legal and institutional frameworks considerably helped children and young people protect themselves and promote the rights of other young people. Participants stressed that such knowledge enabled them to reduce child and human rights violations and impunity in their communities. As an example, a 26 year old female from el Carmen de Bolivar stated that, “in the CLAIJ, youth acquired broad knowledge of public policy, and therefore we organize some activities with the authorities when problems occur.” Workshops and trainings were developed to inform children and young people about their rights and mechanisms for their defense. “[The project] enabled us to have a clear understanding about our education and to learn about our rights in order for these not to be violated and [be able to] defend myself with [good] arguments,” noted an 18 year old female from San Onofre.

Children and young people acquired artistic, interpersonal, leadership, and organizational skills. Participants emphasized that they discovered new talents and learnt to play music instruments and dance. The support provided to the CLAIJ and other related-groups increased children and young people’s abilities to design projects, prepare budgets, and perform monitor and evaluation tasks.

**Increased peaceful coexistence.** Conflicts in families and schools decreased. Nurturing the value of respect resulted in increased peaceful coexistence. Children and young explained that their participation in peacebuilding enabled them to value peaceful coexistence, and put in practice what they learned. At the family level, two participants described how respectful communication and dialogue helped reduce conflicts with their parents. In schools, conflicts decreased as a result of children’s individual action and decisions. For example, a 12 year old girl from San Onofre illustrated that she did “not fight at school anymore because I do not like it, and to overcome this change I decided to enroll in dance classes.” A 14 year old boy from San Onofre added that before he “used to come to school to fight and disrespect my friends. Now I belong to the vallenato [traditional Colombian music] and folk music bands.”

At the community level, adults explained that keeping children and young people’s minds engaged helped keep them away from harmful activities and groups. Culture was highlighted as the most effective factor of protection for children and youth. They not only became passionate about music, dance, and theatre, they also found new paths for their futures. The multi-purpose fund provided them with income-generation and life-skills development opportunities to help promote peace and their cultural heritage, protect the environment, and increase peaceful coexistence in their communities.

“We managed to inform people and make them appreciate the rights of the Afro-descendant communities—a part of our country” 10 year old girl from San Onofre.

**Inter-institutional and organizational articulation.** A key priority and impact of the project was to strengthen partnerships at the local, regional, and national level to more effectively protect and promote child and youth rights. Youth and adult participants stressed that significant results were achieved in this area. CLAIJ and
Partner organizations successfully engaged municipal authorities and state institutions in a variety of events and meetings. Children and youth actively engaged themselves in dialogue with the authorities, and shared the results of their peacebuilding work.

As will be shown in the quality section, considerable efforts still need to be made by the authorities. Nevertheless, promoting peacebuilding in communities, and presenting social, economic, and cultural issues to political authorities was seen as a key impact. A 45-year-old woman from el Carmen de Bolivar affirmed that it was important to work with state authorities in order to address their concerns and care better for children and youth. She further added that they “managed to bring together organizations and public institutions around the issue of risks affecting youth.”

Youth were encouraged and supported to participate in Municipal Youth Councils. CLAIJ from Ovejas and San Onofre supported the creation of such councils in their municipalities. As explained above, the creation of these councils is included in legal frameworks, but this is not yet a reality in many parts of the country. CLAIJ created local civil society platforms to promote child and youth rights which enabled increased organizational cooperation, and effective actions and campaigns to protect children and youth from recruitment by armed actors and violent groups. During an interview, one of the project’s coordinator highlighted a relevant example of successful partnerships with local authorities. In Ovejas, the municipality institutionalized two activities at the community level. The success of these activities encouraged local authorities to undertake similar types of activities with community members.

Factors influencing CYP impact

Based on FGD’s results and interviews conducted with one of the project’s coordinator, five factors influencing CYP impact were identified. Participants’ views elucidated how factors can sometimes influence impact in both positive and negative ways.

**Children and youths’ attitudes, motivation, and commitment.**
Commitment, dedication, efforts, and teamwork increased the impact of child and youth peacebuilding activities. Participants recognized that in most cases, the success of activities, such as workshops, campaigns, and cultural performances, highly depended on their own attitudes. Conversely, the lack of participation and commitment limited outcomes. A 16-year-old girl from Ovejas described that it was challenge to “sensitize youth to participate in different talks, because they consider it boring.”

**Sensitization and key stakeholders motivation, commitment, and support.** Institutional, organizational, and community support was critical to CYP’s positive and sustained impact. As illustrated earlier, one of the project’s strategies was to strengthen and build partnerships in order to receive increasing support to promote and protect child and youth’s rights. Under this theme, a group of adults affirmed that “governmental institutions involved themselves because they are forced, not because they wish to so.” One of the project’s coordinators explained that local
authorities and state institutions were always invited to take part in events. While their support was not very significant at the moment, he argued that it was crucial to engage them and obtain support in order to increase impact, and guarantee the sustainability of the processes.

Adults’ support was a key influencing factor. Their support significantly motivated children and youth. Yet, several participants highlighted that adults faced difficulties in assuming a mentoring role, and that giving leadership to children and youth was difficult. The quality section will elucidate how adult support can hinder CYP. In San Onofre, a group of adult supporters stressed that parents’ involvement was too weak and often represented an obstacle to child and youth participation, since parents sometimes prevented their children from participating.

Community-based activities and campaigns peacefully gathered people and groups from different neighborhoods. Events such as cultural performances and campaigns increased peaceful coexistence. Bonding communities was a key factor to protect children and youth from violence. “The successes were that we gathered children from different neighborhoods and we freed youth from drug addictions, and we integrated all the neighborhoods,” stated a 15 year old boy from Ovejas. A 35 year old woman from el Carmen described how community-based activities managed to “sensitize the male population about the types of violence against women.”

When there is a general lack of community involvement and support for child and youth peacebuilding efforts within the community, there tends to be lower morale among children and youth and less active participation. Participants acknowledged that a success factor was the mobilization and gathering of different communities and neighborhoods during events and campaigns. Children and young people expressed their frustration concerning the negative impacts of community members’ disinterest and unwillingness to take part in such activities.

**Children and youth's knowledge and skills.** Children and Young people acquired knowledge and skills that influenced the success of their peacebuilding actions. They have gained increased opportunities to access training on sexual and reproductive health, legal frameworks, and to develop project management and artistic skills.

Trainings and campaigns on sexual and reproductive health contributed to the protection of children and youth, as they were equipped with knowledge applicable in their daily lives. Awareness of legal frameworks and mechanisms enabled children and youth to meaningfully protect and advocate for their rights and those of others.

The lack of knowledge also limited the impact of their initiatives. Participants illustrated that insufficient knowledge prevented them from creating new youth peacebuilding initiatives. Child participants focused their responses on their own challenges to increase their artistic skills. They considered it a factor that limited the quality of the activities.

**Culture, Theatre, and Arts.** More than fifty percent of FGDS’ participants underlined cultural and artistic activities as key strategies to convey powerful messages, attract more children, keep children and youth from drug addictions, and prevent children and young people’s involvement in armed and violent groups.

Child and youth participants emphasized that they enjoyed taking part in such activities which enabled them to display their talents, express their views and peace messages, and build social relations among groups.
Adults focused their responses on the potential of cultural events as powerful catalysts to bring communities closer, and prevent children and young people from engaging in harmful activities such as drugs, gangs, and violence. Keeping their mind engaged, and focusing their energies in music, dance, and micro-projects often resulted in new life projects for children and young people.

**Income generation support for marginalized groups.** The multi-purpose fund provides child and youth groups and organizations with crucial support to develop sustainable, income generating projects. These initiatives positively impact the communities by protecting the environment, supporting disabled children, etc. and offering economic opportunities for children and youth in a region with high levels of poverty and unemployment (Fundación Restrepo Barco, 2008). Evaluation participants underlined how these opportunities enabled them to develop new life projects. Youth from el Carmen de Bolívar, Ovejas, and San Onofre have very little employment opportunities. Developing skills that contribute to the society and income generation were recognized as the right combination of factors to meaningfully build peace.

Several parents participated in the evaluation, and emphasized their satisfaction with regards to the income generating opportunities that micro projects offered to their children. A 43 year old mother explained that her “daughter managed to feel satisfied saving money.” Another 56 year old mother added that “with the economic support, our children have the means for undertaking any type of activities.”
CYP Quality

**FIGURE:** Quality scores agreed in plenary during Pots and Stones FGDs.

As shown in the above figure, most principles\(^{29}\) oscillated between 2 and 2.5, except for principle six.

Under Principle 1, participants underlined that information was provided in a transparent way. Several adult participants recognized that children and young people lacked autonomy to make decisions. They illustrated that since 2014, young people were given full freedom to formulate their projects.

Principle 2 received positive feedbacks. Children stressed that their opinions and schedules were always respected and taken into account. Many of the activities are taking place in schools, and children felt satisfied that their school duties and schedule were respected when organizing activities. A group of adults explained that prioritizing children’s schedules over the adults’ had been an issue in the past that had recently improved significantly.

Inclusion (Principle 3) was highlighted as a key success. Adults explained that one of the project’s objectives was to strengthen the ethnic and cultural identity of the people and the regional. All children and youth, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background are welcome to the activities. Cultural activities focused on bonding students and communities around the rich diversity of the region.

While Principle 4 scored relatively high [2.5], several responses indicated significant hurdles to guarantee gender inclusion and equality. Young people focused their responses on the positive inclusion of all genders without discrimination. But several

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\(^{29}\) See appendix 3 for a detailed description of the quality principles identified by the GPCYP.
adults pointed out several remaining issues in this respect. It was recognized that there was more participation from girls and young females, compared to boys and young males. To shed some light on this aspect, adults explained that there were cultural and social norms preventing boys from enrolling in cultural activities such as dance; i.e. fearing to be categorized as ‘gay’, thus facing discrimination. To cope with this issue, sports and artistic activities were implemented to promote gender equality. LGBT people suffer widespread discrimination, and several adults suggested organizing workshops on new masculinities to break young people’s stereotypes towards the LGBT community.

In relation to security and risks (Principle 5), participants underlined that more information should be provided to better prepare children and young people for situations of risk.

Intergenerational alliances (Principle 6) are too weak, and demand significant efforts. On the one hand, relationships between young peacebuilders and adults is jeopardized by a lack of trust. Children and youth were not given sufficient independence to lead their projects. Several participants recognized that a slow positive change was taking place, as adults assumed a mentoring role. On the other hand, political authorities render low importance to child and youth-led processes. As explained previously, several participants highlighted that municipal authorities were involved because they were required to do so. Young peacebuilders participate in local political spaces but the interaction with adults is considered limited. Additionally, several participants explained that the involvement of parents in activities was too weak. In many cases, parents act as roadblocks preventing their children from participating.

The scores of principle 7 and Principle 8 were justified by meaningful involvement of children and youth in all stages of the projects. However, two issues were pointed out. Firstly, many young people were not involved in any type of social processes, and participants pointed out that promoting peace in the communities implied involving larger numbers of the youth people. Secondly, the lack of trust that adults have towards the youth community sometimes resulted in little involvement of children and young people in all cycles of the projects.

**Recommendations and conclusions**

Protecting children and youth by engaging them in peacebuilding is a significant lesson of this project. Cultural strategies proved to be the most successful protective factor. Empowering and equipping children and youth with life and project management skills, providing them with income generating opportunities, promoting intergenerational partnerships, and engaging children and youth in cultural activities, empowered them to protect themselves from being recruited into violent groups. Children, youth, and adult supporters identified a number of strategies to further increase the impact of their work:

- Maintain commitment and perseverance
- Involve more children and youth, particularly those engaged in violence
- Get more support from local authorities and CSOs working in the region
- Receive more material support to conduct their activities
- Expand the project to other municipalities and villages
## Appendix 2: Overview of CYP Initiatives Evaluated

Total FGDs = 90. * Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peacebuilding Initiative (Locations)</th>
<th>FGD</th>
<th>Overview of CYP Initiative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Provoking Peace – JOPPAZ (Montes de Maria – High Mountain region)</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Youth Provoking Peace (Jóvenes Provocadores de Paz – JOPPAZ) is a youth-led movement aiming to organize, integrate, and reconcile the youth of the High Mountain (Alta Montaña)--a predominantly peasant region highly affected by the armed conflict and the presence of different armed actors. Guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, criminal organizations, and the absence of the State contributes to dramatic impoverishment and economic and social exclusion of the region (JOPPAZ 2014). Asociación Sembrando Semillas de Paz, a Colombia Partnership Steering Team member supports the movement. In April 2013, rural communities from the High Mountain conducted a peaceful three-day march towards the city of Cartagena, gathering more than 1,000 people demanding the fulfillment of their social and economic rights, integral reparation, subsidies for the land losses of avocado production, and technical agricultural assistance. JOPPAZ was born in 2013 as a result of massive youth participation during the march. The voices of young people were identified as a crucial need in the region. The movement is now composed of more than 600 youth from 52 different villages. They develop processes of reconciliation and sensitization within the different communities. They empower young people and their communities as well as advocate for their meaningful participation in public and political spaces to guarantee the fulfillment of their rights and the sustainable development of their communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aulas en Paz - Classrooms in Peace (Manizales)</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Classrooms in Peace is a project implemented in the Sinai School. It aims to promote classrooms as safe spaces in which students can fully develop their potential. The project is focused on a dynamic approach of mutual respect and care for others, resulting in a peaceful environments for student development. Students are equipped with personal and interpersonal skills enabling them to become active and responsible citizens. The project is focused in five areas: knowledge, basic skills (cognitive, emotional, and communicative), integrating skills, citizenship, and democracy. Classrooms in Peace is also contributing to the Children and Youth Peacebuilders Program (see case study 1) in which students from different schools develop and implement joint peacebuilding strategies.</td>
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<td>Multipropaz (Cali)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multipropaz is a youth-led peacebuilding initiative working with students from the Multiproposito School in the Comuna 20, in the city of Cali. They have been working for 10 years to promote children and young people's citizenship and as agents of development in their communities and schools. The project involves children and youth between 12 and 26 years old. Multipropaz focuses its efforts on the prevention of children and young people's engagement in violent actions and groups. They aim to empower children and youth, building their leadership skills to make them into active agents in the resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding. The initiative was born as a result of children and young people's involvement in the Children and Youth Peacebuilders Program (see case study 1). After several years they decided to create their own independent initiative in which they put in practice key theoretical and practical teachings from their past experience.</td>
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<tr>
<th>National Movement of Children, Adolescents and Youth Peacebuilders (Armenia-Bogotá/Soacha-Cali)*</th>
<th>11</th>
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<tr>
<td>Armenia* 13</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bogotá-Soacha* 17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cali 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>The National Movement of Children, Adolescents, and Youth Peacebuilders emerged in 1996 as a result of a national initiative created by several national and international organizations and agencies. When the initiative ended in 2000, World Vision International Colombia Office, a country steering team member of the Colombia partnership, decided to continue supporting the movement which is now active in 15 cities across the country, involving more than 10,500 children, adolescents, and youth. It is a sociopolitical movement aiming at: contributing to the building of a culture of peace and non-violence; mobilizing populations in their fight for peace; the acknowledgement of children, adolescents, and youth as legitimate social actors; and guaranteeing the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other national and international treaties promoting the rights of children, adolescents, and youth. To do so, they advocate at the community, family, school, political, local, national, and international levels. They promote child and youth participation as indispensable members in human transformative processes and sustainable development of their communities. With the support of World Vision International Colombia Office, the different local branches of the Movement coordinate their work at the national level and unite their efforts to more effectively advocate for their rights and strengthen the Movement's impact and quality. During the 3M evaluation, children, adolescents, youth, and adults from Armenia, Bogotá/Soacha and Cali actively participated as both evaluators and participants. While they belong to the same Movement and implement similar activities and campaigns, each local branch of the movement experiences different processes and results.</td>
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# Evaluation of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

For 15 years, the Centre of Advanced Studies in Childhood and Youth (cooperation between the International Center for Education and Human Development – CINDE, and the University of Manizales) has been implementing the Children and Youth Peacebuilders program in 15 departments of Colombia and in several other Latin American countries--including Nicaragua, Honduras, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic. More than 35,000 children, youth, families, and communities benefitted from the program coordinated by CINDE, a country steering team member of the Colombia Partnership.

The main objective of the Children and Youth Peacebuilders program, which combines education development and academic research, is to contribute to peaceful coexistence by building citizenship, democracy, and peace. The program draws from the voices and perspectives of children and youth around the experiences that affect peaceful coexistence in their communities and the ways in which they believe peace can be achieved. The program is based on a transformative process of attitudes, imaginaries, and practices related to the development of children and youth’s human potential. This works to enable children and youth to participate in the building of political practices oriented to the transformation of daily life and basic patterns of interaction within their communities. In Manizales (department of Caldas), one of the city where the evaluation was conducted, the program is currently implemented in ten schools (seven public and three private schools) and a community-based program. In both school and community settings, children from 11 to 18 year old are involved.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>“Processes of social construction with children in contexts of armed conflict in the Eje Cafetero, Antioquia and Bogota: Peace, reconciliation and democracy from the perspective of children's narratives”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This project is part of the Children and Youth Peacebuilders Program. It is supported by Colciencias and implemented by the International Center for Education and Human Development – CINDE, in collaboration with the University of Manizales and the National Pedagogic University. The project aims to understand the constitution of children’s political subjectivities as part of their contribution to peacebuilding, democratization, and reconciliation processes. It includes two main components--namely research and social development. It looks at the context of armed conflict in which children and their families identified themselves as victims or victimizers. It started in 2012 by developing a theoretical framework and a state of the art on children in contexts of armed conflict. Subsequently, direct work with children and their families has been undertaken. The methodological approach is based on collaborative and participatory processes. It provides children and their families with a place to be listened to.</td>
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<td><strong>Promoting Child and Youth Rights in the Montes de Maria Sub region (Montes de María)</strong>*</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Promoting Child and Youth Rights in the Montes de Maria Sub region” is a project preventing recruitment of children and young people to the armed conflict and other associated types of violence. Together with several partners, the Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation—a country steering team member of the Colombia Partnership, has been implementing this project since 2004 in 7 different municipalities of the Montes de Maria sub-region. The project aims at strengthening protective environments for children and youth as well as consolidate spaces of social interaction with organizations experienced and interested in promoting child and youth rights. To do so, Local Support Committees for Childhood and Youth (Comités Locales de Apoyo a la Infancia y Juventud – CLAIJ) were established in each municipality. One of the main pillar of the initiative is the creation of a ‘multi-purpose fund’ which supports micro projects focused on protection factors, such as culture, productivity, education, and organizational strengthening. After more than ten years of implementation, the projects demonstrated that culture-related protection factors were the most effective to prevent child and youth recruitment. Cultural components are included in all the aspects of the project.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Center for the Integral Development of Youth (Soacha)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>The Center for the Integral Development of Youth is a UNICEF strategy that was executed by Fundación Escuelas de Paz (Schools for Peace Foundation) between 2009 and 2012. It was based on the exercise and protection of the rights of adolescents and youngsters from Cazuca—a highly vulnerable area located in the municipality of Soacha, bordering Bogota. The objective was to contribute to the integral development of the adolescents and youngsters from this community. A fundamental aspect of the program was continuous cooperation and communication with the Municipality of Soacha. To guarantee the project’s sustainability, and the responsibility of the authorities, the Center was handed over to the Secretary of Social Development of the Municipality of Soacha in July 2012. The project is now executed by the local authorities as part of their Public Policy on Youth.</td>
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Appendix 3: Pots and Stones Handout.

Eight Principles for Evaluating the Quality of Child and Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Questions on key indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Participation is transparent and informative</td>
<td>Do children and youth have enough information about the programme to make an informed decision about whether and how they may participate in the peacebuilding initiatives? Is information shared with children in child friendly formats and languages that they understand? Are the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved clearly explained?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Participation is relevant and respectful to children and youth?</td>
<td>Are the issues being discussed and addressed of real relevance to children and youth’s own lives? Do children or youth feel any pressure from adults to participate in activities that are not relevant to them? Are the children and youth’s own time commitments (to study, work, play) respected and taken into consideration? Are adults respectful towards children and youth and their peacebuilding initiatives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Participation encourages diversity and inclusion</td>
<td>Are children and youth from different backgrounds included and involved taking into account differences in age, gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, disability, education, social status, sexual orientation etc. Are children and youth with disabilities actively involved in peacebuilding? Are rural and urban children and youth, out of school working children and youth given opportunities to participate? Are children / youth encouraged to address discrimination through their participation in peacebuilding?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Participation is sensitive to gender dynamics</td>
<td>Are stereotypical assumptions avoided concerning the roles and aspirations of girls, boys, young women, young men and young transgender people in conflict? Are strategies in place to reach out to and involve girls and young women? as well as boys and young men? Are safe spaces created for girls and female youth to discuss and address their specific concerns? Are different forms of gender discrimination and gender based violence explored and addressed through the child/ youth participation initiatives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle</td>
<td>Questions on key indicators</td>
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| 5. Safe and sensitive to risks | Have risks been identified and ways to keep children and youth safe been put into action?  
Have staff and volunteers received training to handle sensitive protection concerns and situations and do they know where to refer young people who might need specialized services?  
Have safe spaces been created for children and youth to share experiences?  
Do children and youth know who to report to if they have concerns about their safety? |
| 6. Invest in Intergenerational Partnerships in Young People’s Communities | Has there been dialogue and opportunities for cooperation among children, youth, parents and elders, in order to act jointly to prevent and resolve violence and transform conflicts?  
Is intergenerational dialogue on issues affecting children, youth, peace and conflict encouraged?  
Is there sufficient sensitisation with adults regarding the value of child/ youth participation, to see the empowerment of young people as a positive change, and not as a threat?  
Is child and youth participation encouraged in local and national governance and peacebuilding processes? |
| 7. Participation is accountable | Are children and youth supported to participate in follow up and evaluation processes of their children’s participation in peacebuilding initiatives?  
Do adults take children and youth views and suggestions on peacebuilding seriously and act upon their suggestions?  
Are children and youth given feedback by their peers who represent them in child/ youth organizations or peacebuilding forums? |
| 8. Involve Young People in all stages of Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Programming | Are children and youth involved in analysing the conflict and the roles of different actors?  
Do children and youth have opportunities to participate in all stages of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and following up on peacebuilding initiatives?  
Are children and youth encouraged to initiate and manage their own peacebuilding initiatives? And/or are adults ready to collaborate with children and youth?  
Are efforts made to support and to sustain child and youth participation and representation in local and national governance processes? |
REFERENCES


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