COLOMBIA YOUTH VIOLENCE ASSESSMENT

Drivers and Opportunities for Change

Prepared by the Latin American and Caribbean Youth Violence Prevention Project (Task Order AID-OAA-TO-16-00041), under the YouthPower: Evidence and Evaluation IDIQ (AID-OAA-I-15-00007).

November 2020

Submitted to:
USAID/LAC/CARSI

Prepared by:
Patricia Campie, PhD
Yemile Mizrahi, PhD
Gina Romero, MA
Juan Bonilla, PhD
Marisa Garcia, MA
Nicholas Read, MA

Suggested citation:
Campie, P., Mizrahi, Y., Romero, G., Bonilla, J., Garcia, M. & Read, N. (2020). *Colombia Youth Violence Assessment: Drivers and Opportunities for Change.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Contractor:
American Institutes for Research
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW
Washington, DC, 20007
Tel: 202-403-5000
www.air.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the many individuals who contributed to this study, including the youth researchers in each community, community-based organizations who helped us identify youth for the study, the many stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed, and the Mission staff in Bogota, all who provided invaluable insights to the project.

CONTENTS

REPORT OVERVIEW 6
- STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT 7
- THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO PREVENTING CRIME AND VIOLENCE 7
- METHODOLOGY AND GUIDING QUESTIONS 9
  - SAMPLE 9
  - DESK ASSESSMENT 11
  - STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS 12
  - COMMUNITY DIALOGUES 12

STUDY RESULTS 14
- CONFLICT AND CRIME: HISTORY OF VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA 14
  - HISTORY OF ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE 17
- DRIVERS, SCOPE, AND MAGNITUDE OF VIOLENCE 18
  - NATIONAL SNAPSHOT 18
  - MUNICIPAL TRENDS IN VIOLENCE: BUENAVENTURA, CALI, CAUCASIA 21
  - RISK AND PROTECTION FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLENCE 29
- PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICES, PRACTICES, AND PROGRAMS 35
  - NATIONAL ASSETS 35
  - GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESOURCES 38
  - ACROSS CITIES 40
- EXISTING GAPS IN POLICY, PRACTICE, AND PROGRAMS 45
  - GAPS ACROSS CITIES 45
  - GAPS WITHIN CITIES 47

RECOMMENDATIONS 49
- RECOMMENDATION 1. INCREASE SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF YOUTH AT RISK FOR VIOLENCE IN THE HOME 49
- RECOMMENDATION 2. ENGAGE YOUTH AS PART OF THE VIOLENCE PREVENTION SOLUTION 50
- RECOMMENDATION 3. IMPROVE QUALITY-OF-LIFE CONDITIONS 51
- RECOMMENDATION 4. INCREASE SUPPORT FOR TERTIARY PREVENTION PROGRAMS 51
- RECOMMENDATION 5: IMPROVE COORDINATION AND TRANSPARENCY OF DATA, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS 52

APPENDICES 53
- APPENDIX A. RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND INDICATORS 54
- APPENDIX B. YOUTH RESOURCES IN BUENAVENTURA, CALI, AND CAUCASIA 56
- APPENDIX C. RECOMMENDATIONS OFFERED BY YOUTH 61
- APPENDIX D. PEER RESEARCHER METHODOLOGY 62
- APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS 64

REFERENCES 66

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1. Social-Ecological Model of Risk and Protective Factors 8

Exhibit 2. Study Locations 10

Exhibit 3. Interviews Conducted for CYVA 12

Exhibit 4. Community Dialogues Completed 13

Exhibit 5. National Homicide Rates per 100,000 Persons of All Ages 14

Exhibit 6. National Violence Rates per 100,000 Persons by Accidental or Intentional Means (2015–2018) 19

Exhibit 7. Overlapping Experiences: Different Types of Violence Before the Age of 18 20

Exhibit 8. Belief in Social Norms That Are Accepting of Violence 20

Exhibit 9. Homicide Rates per 100,000 Persons for Youth Ages 18 to 28 (2015–2018) 21

Exhibit 10. Buenaventura Violence Rates per 100,000 Persons by Accidental or Intentional Means for Youth Ages 0 to 28 (2015–2018) 23

Exhibit 11. Cali Violence Rates per 100,000 Persons by any Accidental or Intentional Means for Youth Ages 0 to 28 (2015–2018) 26

Exhibit 12. Caucasia Violence Rates per 100,000 Persons by Accidental or Intentional Means for Youth Ages 0 to 28 (2015–2018) 28

Exhibit 13. Factors Placing Youth at Greater Risk for Violence in Buenaventura, Cali, and Caucasia 29

Exhibit 14. Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Violence in Buenaventura 31

Exhibit 15. Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Violence in Cali 33

Exhibit 16. Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Violence in Caucasia 34

REPORT OVERVIEW

Of all countries in Latin America, Colombia has the longest legacy of violence. Over the past 50 years, Colombia has experienced persistent leftist guerrilla conflict, paramilitary violence, and violence-laden narcotics (narco) drug trafficking—the last of which has been driven by groups within and outside the country. During the 1980s and 1990s, Colombia was known as the "murder capital of the world," with homicide rates reaching 81.4 per 100,000 persons in 1990. In some cities, like Medellín, the homicide rate hovered between 245 and 400 per 100,000 persons in the early 1990s, while in Cali, the rate of homicides reached 100 per 100,000 persons in 2000.[a] Although homicide rates in Colombia began to decrease systematically in 2000, reaching a national average of 25.4 per 100,000 persons in 2018, and enormous progress has been made to reduce the level of violence, young people in Colombia continue to be exposed to multiple risk factors for violence, due to entrenched poverty, geosocial isolation, lack of educational and employment opportunities, and the normalization of violence within their families and communities. Moreover, despite overall improvements in citizen security, Colombia remains the biggest exporter of cocaine to the United States, a major factor driving much of the violence in the country today.[1]

Many say there are two Colombias: one clustered in thriving urban centers, such as Medellín and Bogotá, where violence is lower and opportunities are greater; the other, marginalized municipalities with large and impoverished rural areas, such as Caucasia, Quibdó, Tibú, and Tumaco, where an abundance of natural resources lies ready for exploitation by criminal actors at any cost, including violence. Yet even in big cities, poor and marginalized neighborhoods continue to experience high levels of violence.[2] In these places, motivated offenders may come from Mexican drug cartels undeterred from reaching Colombian shores to seek out coca to fuel their business in North America,[3] or where Colombian citizen security forces are intimidated or infiltrated by organized crime groups or rogue individuals from disbanded crime organizations, leaving the population unprotected from threats and acts of violence that further the criminal enterprise, making youth easy targets for criminal recruiters.

For more than 50 years, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been working as a partner to Colombia in its efforts to mitigate and reduce *youth violence*, defined as implied or expressed violence affecting individuals between the ages of 10 and 29. Substantial USAID investments have been made to improve the country's infrastructure and opportunities for Colombians to benefit from safe and equitable housing, employment, health, education, and justice systems. Despite these considerable efforts, challenges remain, and many Colombian youth are still routinely victimized by violence in their daily lives. Understanding this, USAID commissioned the American Institutes for Research (AIR), in partnership with Democracy International (DI), under the Latin America and the Caribbean Youth Violence Prevention Task Order, to take a fresh look at (a) the current state of violence affecting the most vulnerable youth in Colombia, and (b) current policies, programs, and practices in place to mitigate and prevent violence, as well as their impact on violence. In order to be relevant across Colombia, USAID instructed the AIR-DI team to examine the issue in three types of places: a large urban area, a peri-urban area, and a rural area. The results from this project, the Colombia Youth Violence Assessment (CYVA), will be used to inform USAID strategy by identifying successes that can be leveraged or taken to scale in other locations; gaps that might be addressed through USAID programs, policies, practices, and/or formal and informal social controls (i.e., rules and

[a] See World Bank and Ideas para la Paz: http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1498. For 2018 data, see Igarape Homicide Monitor: https://homicide.igarape.org.br/.

institutions) in the country; and lessons learned on how to effectively partner with national, departmental, and municipal sectors.

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

After a brief theoretical overview, and a discussion on the evolution of violence dynamics in Colombia, we present the methodology for the study, followed by results, beginning with national and municipal data on the prevalence of violence affecting youth. Second, we discuss existing youth programs and the risk factors they target, and analyze the remaining gaps for addressing risk for youth violence in the three cities. Finally, based on our findings, and drawing on evidence on effective youth-based violence prevention programs, we articulate actionable recommendations for future programming.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO PREVENTING CRIME AND VIOLENCE

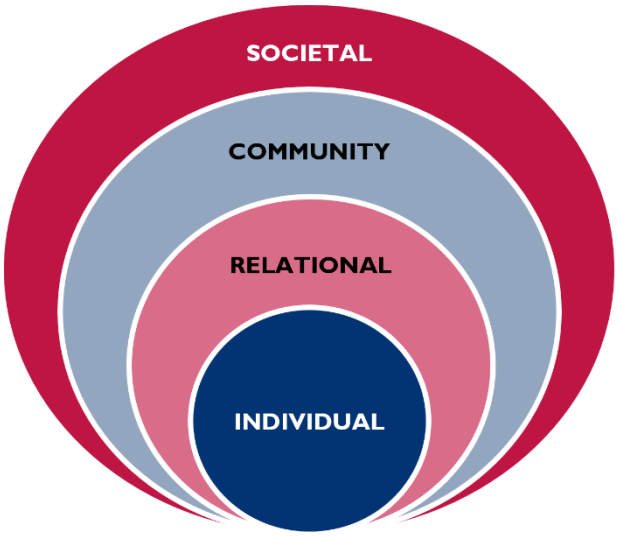
While the context of crime looks different from country to country and city to city, it is well established in the criminological research literature that three elements must be in place for any crime or deviant activity, including violence, to occur: a motivated offender, an opportunity, and lack of a capable guardian.[4]

1. **A motivated offender:** a person who has an intrinsic (i.e., within themselves) desire to break the law or norms of accepted behavior.
2. **An opportunity:** a person, place, or object that is of interest to, and accessible to, a motivated offender.
3. **Lack of a capable guardian:** the absence of a person or persons who can control a motivated offender from acting on their desires. This may be informal (e.g., a parent), or formal (e.g., police) control.

Further, individuals, opportunities, and deterrents against criminal or deviant behavior operate within and across a set of enabling conditions in the home, the neighborhood, and the broader social setting—within schools, the workplace, and even within prisons—from which violence and crime can be directed into the community. These enabling environments contain factors that either place young people at risk for, or help protect them from, crime and violence. These factors exist at the individual level, within the child's family and peer group, in the local neighborhood or community in which the youth lives and goes to school, and in the larger social setting (e.g., city, country). To prevent crime and violence over the long term, efforts must be taken to reduce risk and strengthen protective factors at each level of the social-ecological model (SEM, Exhibit 1). There are several validated risk and need assessment tools in use within the Latin America and Caribbean region and the United States that measure the indicators for risk in each of the SEM domains. (See Appendix A.)

In persistently violent places, where communities are not able to sustain reductions in violence over time, more risk factors are present, and potential mediators that could suppress crime are less present (e.g., collective efficacy, civic engagement). In these places, drug and firearm trafficking, gang proliferation, and higher rates of lethal and nonlethal violent crime—including threats, intimidation, mutilation, and sexual assault—are more likely.

Exhibit 1. Social-Ecological Model of Risk and Protective Factors[5]



A Closer Look at Each Level of the SEM

Individual
Identifies biological and personal history factors—such as age, education, income, substance use, or history of abuse—that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Relationship
Examines close relationships that may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator. A person's closest social circle—peers, partners, and family members—influences their behavior and contributes to their range of experience.

Community
Explores the settings—such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods—in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Societal
Looks at the broad societal factors—such as health, economic, educational, and social policies—that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited and that help maintain economic or social inequalities among groups in society.

Firearm homicides make up a small portion of the gun violence toll; nonfatal shootings are more common, and a decrease in a local homicide rate may be coupled with an increase in nonfatal shootings, threats, intimidation, mutilations, and implied violence meant to instill fear and create a power structure that can compel future compliance, either through silence or express involvement with criminal activity. Implied violence through threats and extortion can have long-lasting impacts on community levels of fear and can lead to businesses going bankrupt or avoiding investment in new places. In turn, this can then lead to fewer jobs and greater economic distress that drives people from their communities. Symbolic violence can also affect youth who belong to groups that are routinely victimized without consequence, such as females, who may experience sex trafficking and assault. When females live in this type of environment, research indicates that even if they have never been assaulted or seen another female assaulted, they may suffer from the persistent stress and anxiety typical of someone who has been the victim of a violent crime.

Similarly, gang behavior and structure are affected by characteristics of their environment; larger cities (which may have more densely concentrated poverty) are more likely to have organized crime gangs as well as street gangs that move from place to place (i.e., invisible borders). In more rural areas, street gang activity may be less organized but more violent due to fewer law enforcement deterrents, greater poverty driving more desperation, and fewer opportunities for criminals to carefully select their targets, as they might in a larger city in which many targets are available. In very remote places, organized crime activity may be highly territorial and tied to trafficking in people, weapons, and narcotics across great distances that transect municipalities and regions (e.g., departments), and even countries. Importantly, gang-related homicide is driven by the nature of the gang and its purpose. Criminal gangs are more likely to commit violence to further their business aims, whereas violence committed by youth street gangs is more often retaliatory, with less than one-quarter of gang-related homicides related to drug crimes or any other crime in progress.

Related to this issue is the resulting trauma that comes from a child living in a persistently dangerous place. We know from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey that children who experience

violence, death, and other traumatic events before the age of 18 are more likely to suffer from chronic physical and mental health diseases that result in higher rates of depression, addiction, disability, unemployment, and early mortality from cancer, heart disease, and other afflictions. Children who have no safe refuge from violence and who are exposed to it in the home, in school, and in the community (i.e., polyvictimization) are especially vulnerable to these negative consequences as they grow older. As a result, it is not enough simply to focus efforts on preventing crime and violence. Robust responses to violence are needed to heal individual victims, bystander witnesses to violence, and the community itself—which may become numb to the violence or believe it is normal, leading to more violence with a greater sense of impunity.

For evidence-based interventions to succeed in these communities, it is important to understand how the various risk factors (e.g., childhood trauma, weak family bonds, low education, violence norms) can inform the identification and fostering of readiness factors that will increase local capacity for implementing effective violence prevention programs and policies. It is equally important to understand how the prevalence of violence itself creates challenges beyond those arising from economic deprivation (e.g., fear for safety in the community), which may also reduce a high-risk community's readiness for a violence prevention intervention.

METHODOLOGY AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

A mixed-methods approach was used to conduct the assessment, through a combination of statistical data drawn from existing public sources; a review of policy, program, and practice documents and reports; interviews with key stakeholders; and community dialogues with youth in each of the three study cities.

The CYVA inquiry is organized according to six guiding questions:

1. What are the underlying drivers and trends of youth violence in Colombia in marginalized communities where youth are at greatest risk?
2. How is the youth violence characterized by demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and rural versus urban?
3. Who are the main actors, organizations, and institutions involved in stimulating youth violence in Colombia? What is their relative influence, and how do they relate to each other?
4. What indicators best measure the current risks to youth in Colombia and success or failure of USAID interventions regarding youth violence?
5. How are current policies and practices at the national, departmental, and municipal levels affecting youth violence prevention, and what is the intersectionality with rules and institutions?
6. What are the existing gaps in policy design and implementation related to youth violence? How do formal and informal rules and practices interact?

SAMPLE

The assessment was conducted over a 12-month period; it focused on three areas that met USAID criteria for persistent violence in a large urban area, a peri-urban area, and a rural area in Colombia.

After reviewing data and examining conditions across the country, the three locations chosen for the study were Cali (large urban area), Buenaventura (peri-urban area), and Caucasia (small city with large rural areas) (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2. Study Locations

Cali is the capital of the Valle del Cauca department and the most populous city in southwest Colombia, with more than 2.2 million residents, according to the 2018 census. The city spans more than 200 square miles, making it the second largest city in the country and the third most populous. Cali is the main economic center in the southern part of the country. The city has a high concentration of individuals displaced from the armed conflict, and many of these people live in impoverished comunas that are more vulnerable to crime and violence. From 1998 to 2011, Cali received more than 80,000 internally displaced people. Of the three cities analyzed in this assessment, Cali has the best overall performance in terms of rates of overall poverty (estimated at 15% in 2017), unemployment (estimated at 11.2% in 2018), and education (55% of residents have a high school degree), but there are still deep pockets of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate resources in the comunas in which levels of violence are the highest.

Buenaventura, on the southwest coast, is the most important port in Colombia, but it is also one of the poorest cities in the country, with high rates of unemployment, deficient public services, and high levels of violence. In 2017, the population was more than 415,000, according to the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE), República de Colombia.[b] Eighty-eight percent of people living in Buenaventura are Afro-Colombian, and according to the municipal government, in 2016, 88% of the city's population lived in poverty, while 44% suffered from extreme poverty.[6] Although Buenaventura has a modern port with enormous economic potential, the city suffers from very high levels of unemployment, estimated to be between 62% and 90%, and one of the highest levels of

[b] Census data available at https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/poblacion/proyepobla06_20/Municipal_area_1985-2020.xls.

unemployment in Colombia.[7,8] Local residents cite racial discrimination as a driving factor behind employment challenges. Big, private enterprises "refuse to hire local people; they prefer to employ people from other regions."[9] Similarly, access to higher education for Buenaventura's citizens is highly limited. Only 14% of young males and 25% of young females have a university or technical degree.[c]

Caucasia is in the Bajo Cauca region. As of 2017, it has a population of around 117,000 people, including many people displaced from other areas and others forced to leave their lands and move to other areas.[d] Like many other remote cities in Colombia, the state has been absent in Caucasia, resulting in poor service delivery and high levels of unemployment and poverty. According to Caucasia's Municipal Development Plan (2016–2019), more than half of Caucasia's population is poor, with 65% facing "Unmet Basic Social Needs," an index Colombia uses to measure poverty. Forty-five percent of the economically active population works in the informal economy, and 48% is unemployed. Seventy-eight percent of school-age youth (ages 11 to 17) attend school, but only 38% graduate from elementary school.[10] In the rural areas of the municipality, land ownership is highly concentrated, leaving the majority of people with few opportunities other than working for large landholders, migrating, or living from subsistence agriculture.

DESK ASSESSMENT

The first step in the research process involved a review of extant data and information sources to understand the prevalence, scope, and magnitude of youth violence in each of the three cities, and to identify the current policy, program, and practice landscape, along with the formal social controls in place through local rules and institutions (e.g., police, schools). AIR and DI staff conducted a detailed, extensive review of all available information on youth violence in the study locations through a combination of methods. These methods included the following: (a) extraction of crime data from online government and nongovernment databases, (b) review of academic research reports detailing crime in the region, and (c) analysis of policy and practice documents from USAID and its partners. It should be noted that the granularity of data was not sufficient to identify specific characteristics of youth that are more or less associated with violent offending or victimization. This lack of granularity is not unique to data from Colombia, and is a cross-cutting challenge faced by crime prevention stakeholders across the globe.[11]

To calculate fatal and nonfatal violence rates, we used data from the *Observatorio de Violencia* at the *Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal* for 2015 through 2018.[e] The data the Violence Observatory use for crime-related fatalities and injuries are provided through the National Police. The fatal indicators constructed include homicide, suicide, and accident rates. From those three indicators, we also constructed death rates. In turn, the nonfatal indicators include intrafamily violence (all, inflicted by partner, and inflicted by a family member different from the partner), interpersonal violence, and alleged sexual assault. All indicators were constructed for the three municipalities of interest (Buenaventura, Cali, and Caucasia). We constructed rates as the number of cases in a given year per 100,000 inhabitants for three age groups: 0 to 11, 12 to 17, and 18 to 28 years old.[12]

We also analyzed the data on the population who are incarcerated in institutions under the National Penitentiary and Prison Institute (INPEC).[f] The data include 183,509 people who were under INPEC

[c] Interview with Juan Manuel Torres, Fundación Paz y Reconciliación (PARES), Buenaventura, September 2019.
[d] Census data available at https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/poblacion/proyepobla06_20/Municipal_area_1985-2020.xls.
[e] See https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/indicadores-procuraduria.
[f] See https://www.datos.gov.co/Justicia-y-Derecho/Poblaci-n-Privada-de-la-Libertad-recluida-en-estab/n9zg-hnaj.

supervision as of June 30, 2020. The variables reported in the data are crimes committed (up to 15 different crimes), legal status (accused or convicted), date of arrest, date of entry, status (house arrest, electronic control, and regular facility), age, gender, name of facility, and department in which the person is located. The dataset reports information only on people older than 18 years old; INPEC is not responsible for minors who have been incarcerated. Data are not publicly available for juveniles under the supervision of the justice system or its agencies (e.g., Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, or Institute for Family Welfare [ICBF] in Colombia), although data are reportedly collected and shared among these agencies for internal management purposes.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Once the desk review was complete, the AIR-DI team identified key topics that required further examination through the perspectives of local experts in each community and at the departmental and national levels of action. In some cases, the team conducted interviews to confirm and contextualize the findings from the desk review. In other instances, we conducted interviews to explore gaps or incomplete information identified during the desk review. The team also conducted interviews to identify emerging or planned initiatives to reduce or prevent violence; solicit lessons learned and feedback on the impact of past and current violence prevention and intervention efforts; and gain a fuller understanding of the barriers, facilitators, and operating environment that affects entities in conducting their violence reduction work (Exhibit 3). A full list of interview sources and the interview protocol are presented Appendix E.

Exhibit 3. Interviews Conducted for CYVA

BOGOTÁ	BUENAVENTURA	CALI	CAUCASIA
• USAID • Fundación Paz y Reconciliación • Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF) • Dirección de Democracia y Participación Ciudadana, Ministerio del Interior • Dirección de Seguridad Ciudadana, Ministerio del Interior • Organization of International Migration (OIM) • Chemonics, Human Resources for Health (HRH) project • Tierra de Hombres • Fundación para la Orientación Familiar (FUNOF), operator for Instituto de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF) • World Coach • Fintrac, Programa Alianzas Comerciales • ACDI/VOCA	• Plataforma de la Juventud • Fundación Paz y Reconciliación, Buenaventura • Fundación Rostros y Huellas • Observatorio de la Violencia, Buenaventura	• Centro de Investigación sobre Salud y Violencia (CISALVA), Universidad de los Andes • Alcaldía de Cali, Territorios Inclusivos de Oportunidades Sociales (TIOS) • Alcaldía de Cali, Secretaria de Seguridad • Director de la Policía Preventiva • Fundación Paz y Bien • Fundación Alvaralice • Fundación Carvajal	• Alcaldía de Caucasia, Oficina de la Juventud • Plataforma Juvenil

COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

The final element in the CYVA involved conversations in each community to hear directly from those most affected by violence and efforts to curb it. Because youth are disproportionately affected by the violence yet are rarely involved in the study of violence, we chose to use a novel approach to convening

community dialogues. The project team identified nine local youth (three per location) to act as peer researchers, working in partnership with the AIR-DI research team to plan, conduct, and analyze results from two community dialogues in each city. Peer researchers were trained and supported by a local consultant hired by the AIR-DI team; the consultant was trained in the peer-researcher methodology and supported throughout the process by the AIR-DI team. Two dialogues were organized in each location with young adult (ages 18–29) and minor youth (ages 10–17) participants to dig deeper into the results from the desk reviews and interviews, to identify gaps in information, and to elicit firsthand experience with the drivers of violence, effects of violence, and resources in place to respond to and prevent future violence. A total of six dialogues were completed across the three locations (Exhibit 4). A synopsis of the peer-researcher approach to working with youth from the community is provided in Appendix D.

Exhibit 4. Community Dialogues Completed

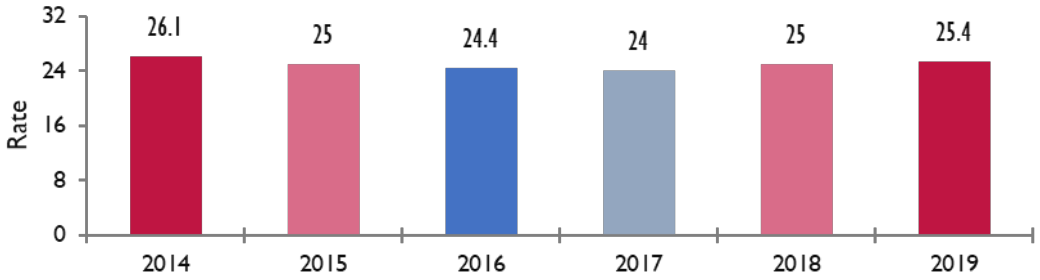
	BUENAVENTURA	CALI	CAUCASIA
Number of participants	17	22	16
Average age of participants	22	20	19.5

STUDY RESULTS

CONFLICT AND CRIME: HISTORY OF VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA

While homicide overall has been holding steady in Colombia (Exhibit 5), the number of young people afflicted by violence remains very high.

Exhibit 5. National Homicide Rates per 100,000 Persons of All Ages[13]



As in most countries, the majority of victims and perpetrators of violence in Colombia are young males between the ages of 14 and 29.[14] According to the World Health Organization, the homicide rate for young individuals (ages 15–29) in Colombia was 92.5 per 100,000 people in 2015.[g] When disaggregated by gender, the rate of homicides for men was 89.1 per 100,000 people.[15] Compared to the worldwide rate of homicides for young men of 16.7 per 100,000 people, Colombia's rate is extremely high.[16] Colombia invests little in its youth. In the Latin American region, Colombia's expenditure on youth is among the lowest, only after Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic.[17] Similarly, as in most countries in the Latin American region, structural factors related to exclusion, lack of opportunities, inadequate public services, poverty, and inequality are at the root of the problem of youth violence.[18] Yet, in contrast to other countries in the region, where the spread of violence is related to strictly criminal—not political—factors, in Colombia, the dynamics of violence are related to the history of conflict in the country and the displacement of millions of individuals who were forced to leave their lands and settle in poor, marginalized urban areas. Understanding the intersection between violence and conflict is essential for understanding the drivers of youth violence in Colombia.[19]

Over more than 50 years of armed conflict, Colombian criminal organizations evolved in their methods of recruitment, organizational structure, and territorial control. According to a citizen security expert interviewed for this study, Colombia is currently experiencing a "third generation of criminal organizations," different from the first generation of narcotraffickers and the second generation of guerrilla and paramilitary organizations, which were more hierarchical, more disciplined, and better organized.[h] These changes have important consequences not only for the evolution of the armed conflict in Colombia and the current peace-building process, but also for the changing patterns of recruitment and use of youth in criminal organizations.

From the 1970s until the mid-1990s, the Cali and Medellín cartels had control over Colombia's narcotrafficking routes and other illegal economies, and were responsible for most of the violence in the

[g] According to official data from the Government of Colombia, in 2017, individuals between the ages of 15 and 29 were victims of 84.8% of all homicides. See www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1498.
[h] Interview with Ariel Avila, Bogotá, March 2019.

country. While the Cali cartel was less brutal and allegedly more refined in its business model than the Medellín cartel,[i] both had pyramidal organizational structures and exerted strong controls over the recruitment processes and the activities of their members. Once these organizations were defeated by the Government of Colombia in the mid-1990s, left-wing guerilla organizations—mostly Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN)—and right-wing self-defense groups (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia [AUC]), better known as *paramilitaries*, gained control over the drug-trafficking business. Although the guerrillas and paramilitaries had political agendas, they resorted to drug trafficking, kidnapping, and extortion to maintain their territorial control. These armed groups also had vertical command structures and operated in a disciplined manner, although they had less stringent controls over their members and looser entry and exit barriers than the drug cartels. To conduct their operations, they routinely recruited boys, girls, and adolescents, who were more vulnerable; however, given their age, the youth could not be sent to prison.[j] In urban places, they tended to hire vulnerable youth for specific tasks, while in rural places they forcefully recruited them into their organizations.[20]

Eventually, once these armed organizations demobilized and/or were weakened by the Colombian army, multiple criminal organizations or bands—widely known as *bandas criminals*, or BACRIM—emerged, fighting for control of the still-profitable drug-trafficking business and other illegal economies, such as illicit mining. These criminal bands, according to a study on urban violence, are responsible for much of the violence that Colombians suffer today. They are less coherent criminal organizations, operating through decentralized networks with regional leaders, who in turn subcontract local groups or individuals for specific tasks. Unlike their predecessors, these criminal bands do not have political agendas; they are criminal in nature.[21] Yet, as spinoffs of former guerrilla and/or paramilitary organizations, they continue to use similar patterns of recruitment in targeting vulnerable youth, many of whom come from families who were forcefully displaced by the armed conflict, including children and adolescents. In contrast to Central American gangs, however, BACRIM exert much looser control over their members, who may join the organization for specific "tasks" but are not required to demonstrate loyalty to the organization and are not intimidated if they choose to leave it.[k]

One of the most important characteristics of the types of criminal organizations prevalent in Colombia is that they are regionally dispersed, but in many areas are not strong enough to exert hegemonic control over major drug-trafficking routes. They are extremely violent and cruel, and, according to many people interviewed for this study, some have ties to local government officials, the police, and even the military. In many cities in Colombia—for example, Caucasia and Buenaventura—multiple BACRIM are currently fighting for control of the territory. In Buenaventura, one organization allegedly controls 80% of the city, while two other organizations are disputing the remaining urban areas and most of the rural area.[l] In Caucasia, at least four different organizations are fighting for control over illegal mining and drug-trafficking routes. In other places, such as Cali, BACRIM have been reducing their presence and severing their ties to local criminal organizations, such as youth gangs. Although different studies on the patterns of youth violence in Cali still claim that criminal bands have some

[i] Interview with Rodrigo Guerrero, former mayor of Cali; Cali, March 2019.

[j] Children under the age of 12 cannot be sent to prison in Colombia. Between the ages of 12 and 18, juvenile offenders are sent to juvenile detention centers under the purview of the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, ICBF. See https://www.hrw.org/reports/1994/colombia/gener3.htm

[k] Interview with Ariel Avila; Bogotá, March 2019.

[l] For a study on criminal bands in Buenaventura, see Centro de Memoria Histórica, Buenaventura:

control over parts of the city, local government officials and experts interviewed for this study believe the main perpetrators of youth violence in the city are gangs, which have different types of relationships with the better armed and crueler criminal bands.[m]

Youth gangs are involved in micro-trafficking and exert territorial control over their neighborhoods through extortion and violence, but they are not engaged in the international drug-trafficking business and are not as disciplined or well organized as the BACRIM. According to a study on gangs in Colombia, there are more than 100 gangs in Cali, engaging approximately 1,500 youth.[22] Criminal bands hire or subcontract local gangs for specific and targeted killings, but they are not structurally linked to them. The autonomy of these gangs and their more anarchic pattern of operation is a key factor in explaining the high homicide rates in the city. In fact, most areas controlled by BACRIM have lower homicide rates than Cali, a factor that may relate to the temporary hegemony of one of the bands, or to what Avila calls *exemplary homicides*—killing only a few people, dismembering their bodies, and sending their body parts to their families as a way of communicating who is in charge. This method of killing is used to terrorize an entire community.[n]

The different configurations and number of areas in which criminal organizations operate is critical for understanding the range of choices and opportunities that youth confront in their daily life. In places dominated by BACRIM, youth may join criminal organizations because they either are coerced or regard participation in criminal and/or violent activities as essential to protect their families. In highly impoverished places, youth may join criminal organizations because they are seduced by the criminal organizations' lifestyle, the desire to make money quickly, and the opportunity to continue to live with their families. They start with small tasks until they eventually end up completely involved in the organization. In places characterized by lack of social cohesion and erosion of family ties (e.g., domestic violence) resulting from years of armed conflict, youth may join criminal organizations as a way of finding solidarity and emotional support, as well as a sense of honor, regardless of the material incentives the gang provides. Finally, youth may decide to join criminal organizations because they have nothing better to do with their free time. A combination of the last two factors motivating youth violent engagement may be more relevant in places dominated by high levels of interpersonal conflict and few mechanisms to resolve conflicts and/or in communities with a youth gang presence, rather than heavily armed regional BACRIM. Understanding the different drivers of and trends in violence is critical for designing relevant interventions to either reduce the risk of youth engaging in criminal and violent activities or encourage youth already engaged in criminal activity to stop and reintegrate into society.

The literature on Colombia's youth violence is rich, and identifies many of the general risk factors that motivate youth to engage in criminal or violent behavior. Although there is a dearth of rigorous, evidence-based assessments, scholars and practitioners agree that a combination of emotional immaturity and low levels of self-esteem, lack of parental and family support, school dropout, peer pressure (including forced recruitment or the search for protection), and the search for material rewards are the main drivers of youth violence.[23] One of the few available studies that uses survey data and statistical analysis to explain the vulnerability of children and adolescents to recruitment and use by armed groups concludes that lack of family unity and absence of a social support network are the highest risk factors for recruitment of youth (ages 9–16).[24] This study argues that the probability of recruitment into criminal bands increases to 96% for youth who have weak family ties, are not enrolled

[m] Interview with Secretary of Public Security, Cali, Cali, March 2019.
[n] Interview with Ariel Avila; Bogotá, March 2012.

in school, and have problems with other youth in the community. The study authors conclude that "the healthy development of a child requires few things, but those few things have to be good quality, starting with the family."[25]

Government leaders have also used local data to assess drivers of violence in Colombian cities. For example, in the city of Cali, the former mayor, who is also an epidemiologist, used evidence to analyze the major drivers of violence in the city during the 1990s, when homicide rates were higher than 100 per 100,000 persons. After collecting and analyzing data on specific homicide incidents, the mayor concluded that the major drivers of violence in the city were interpersonal conflicts, and that access to firearms and high alcohol consumption were the main risk factors. Using this evidence, the mayor designed a policy to restrict the sale of alcohol past 2 a.m. on weekdays and forbid carrying firearms in Cali unless manufactured, administered, and sold by the army. Evaluations showed a 35% reduction in homicides. In those areas in which only firearms were forbidden, there was a 14% reduction in homicides.[o]

HISTORY OF ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Colombia has introduced several legal and policy instruments to address the country's high prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), in particular violence against women and girls (VAWG). Early steps in this direction date back to the Government of Colombia's ratification of two international treaties, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),[p] through Law 51 (1981), and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women,[q] through Law 248 (1995). Colombia's Political Constitution of 1991 also includes clauses on equality between men and women and non-discrimination against women (Art. 43), as well as the need to sanction any form of violence taking place within families (Art. 42).[26] In the following years, Colombia approved a series of laws that helped institutionalize mechanisms to prevent and treat GBV, including protection measures for GBV survivors. Initial legislation included Law 294 (1996), which criminalized domestic (intra-family) violence and allowed civil protective orders to be issued; and Law 575 (2000), which partially amended the former by transferring the authority to issue same-day protection orders to victims of intra-family violence from judges to the Family Commissioner office (*Comisarías de Familia*).[r,27]

In 2008, Colombia adopted Law 1257, considered the first comprehensive law to address all forms of GBV.[28] The law guarantees women the right to live free of violence and ensures protective measures for victims.[s] It sets forth specific rights of victims of GBV—including free legal counseling and technical assistance—and recognizes that violence can be physical, sexual, psychological, or economic.[29] It lays

[o] Interview with Rodrigo Guerrero, former mayor of Cali, March 2019.

[p] The Convention, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, defines discrimination against women as "…any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil and any other field" (https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/).

[q] Also known as the Convention of Belém do Pará, the instrument defines violence against women as "any act of conduct, based on gender, which causes death, or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or private sphere" (https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html).

[r] According to the Ministry of Justice of Colombia, a *Comisaría de Familia* is a district or municipal agency focused on guaranteeing and reestablishing the rights of family members that have experienced domestic violence (https://www.minjusticia.gov.co/Conexi%C3%B3n-Justicia/Comisarios-de-Familia).

[s] See "Ley 1257 de 2008" (http://www.secretariasenado.gov.co/senado/basedoc/ley_1257_2008.html).

out the duties of the national, department, and municipal-level governments, family, and society to contribute to the elimination of violence against women.[30] This same year, Colombia's Constitutional Court issued the Judicial Decision 092 (Auto 092), which recognized that sexual violence against women was a widespread, recurrent, and systematic practice in the context of the Colombian armed conflict.[31] At the same time it acknowledged that forcibly displaced women, particularly indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, are highly vulnerable to sexual violence by both armed and non-armed men.[32] The ruling ordered the Attorney General's Office to initiate criminal investigations into 183 conflict-related sexual violence cases. However, a subsequent Constitutional Court ruling (Auto 009 of 2015) demonstrated that 97 percent of the 183 cases had not been prosecuted (Ibid). A 9-year survey (2011-2009) across 407 municipalities with an active presence of various armed actors found that 487,687 women had been victims of conflict-related sexual violence.[33] A major recent development was Colombia's adoption of Law 1761 (2015), which recognizes feminicide as a crime of its own that is purposely committed against women based on their sex or gender identity. This allows carrying out a distinct investigation and prosecution of the crime.[34] Despite robust legislation, Colombia lags behind in effective implementation of its laws at the central, departmental, and municipal levels. The gap between law and practice is recognized by the national government. Colombia's Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women made the following statement:

> *"Colombia has comprehensive legislation that recognizes women's rights, especially the right to a life free of violence. However, it is still necessary to advance the implementation of mechanisms and tools that allow for the full enjoyment of this right, while at the same time Colombia society advances in incorporating a culture that rejects the diverse forms of violence that affect women."*[35]

DRIVERS, SCOPE, AND MAGNITUDE OF VIOLENCE

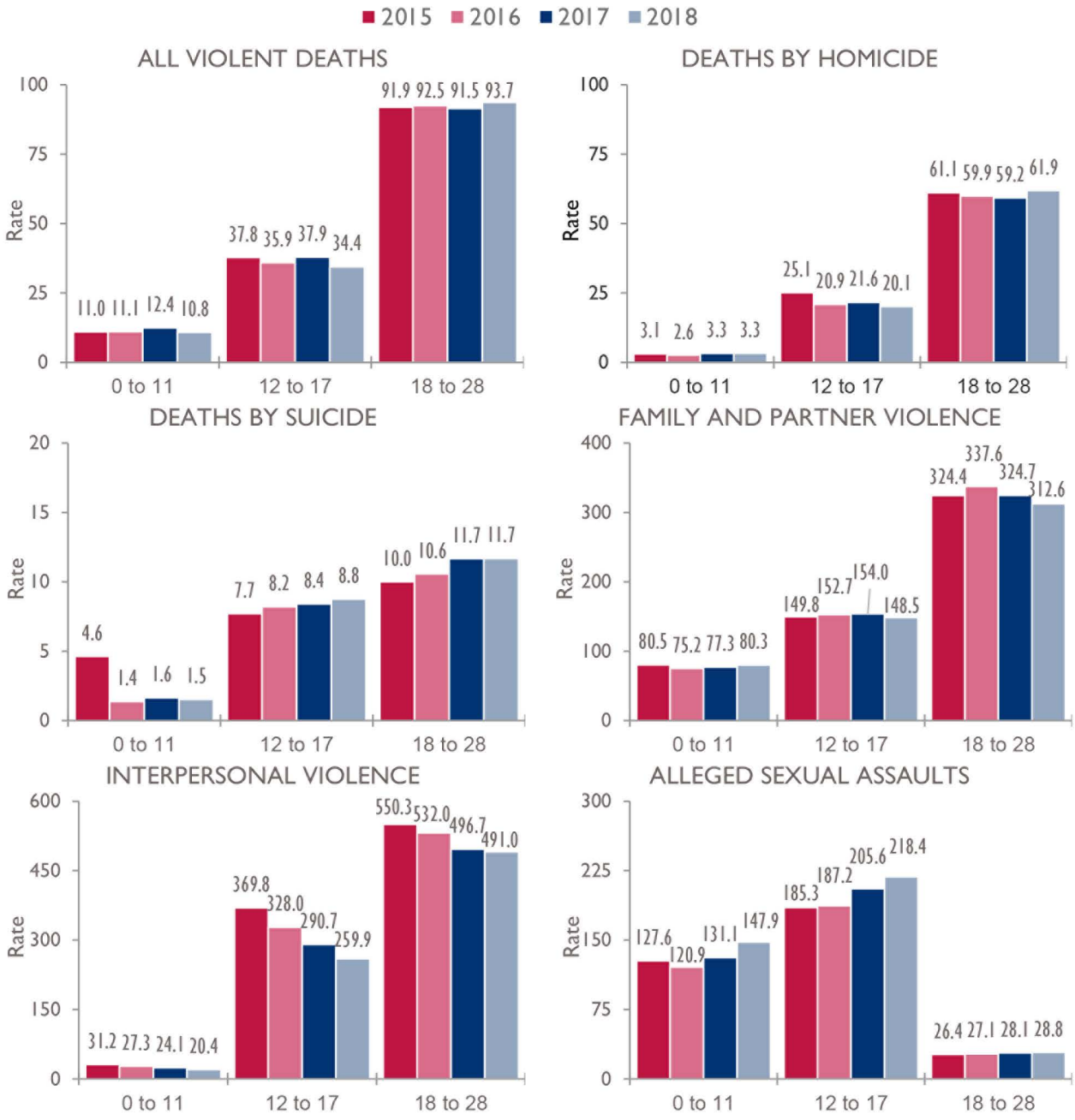
NATIONAL SNAPSHOT

As noted earlier in this report (Exhibit 5), the homicide rate in Colombia has been holding steady between 25 and 26 deaths per 100,000 persons over the past 5 years, and youth are disproportionately impacted at much higher rates. In terms of types of violence, rates of victimization among young people in the country are driven largely by family and partner violence and interpersonal violence among youth between the ages of 18 and 28. As with other age groups, homicides are the rarest type of violence among youth (though more common among youth than older adults), representing less than 20% of violence among those ages 0 to 28 in the country (Exhibit 6).

The Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) is the first nationally representative survey of violence against children in Colombia. The inaugural survey was launched in 2016 by the Proyectamos SAS under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the International Office for Migration, in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which provided technical assistance. Approximately 2,700 youth and young adults between the ages of 13 and 24 were surveyed in the nationwide sample, with an additional 2,500 young people in the same age categories responding in targeted municipalities that historically have experienced the highest homicide rates in the country.[36] The survey results indicate that a large number of young Colombians have experienced substantial physical, sexual, and psychological violence in their communities and in their homes before the age of 18 (Exhibit 7). Furthermore, almost 40% of male youth and 19% of female youth endorsed

one or more beliefs about gender, sexual practices, and intimate partner violence that may be perpetuating norms that violence is acceptable (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 6. National Violence Rates per 100,000 Persons by Accidental or Intentional Means (2015–2018)[t,37]



[t] *Note.* Scales for each rate of violence differ, and data exclude auto accidents.

Exhibit 7. Overlapping Experiences: Different Types of Violence Before the Age of 18[38]

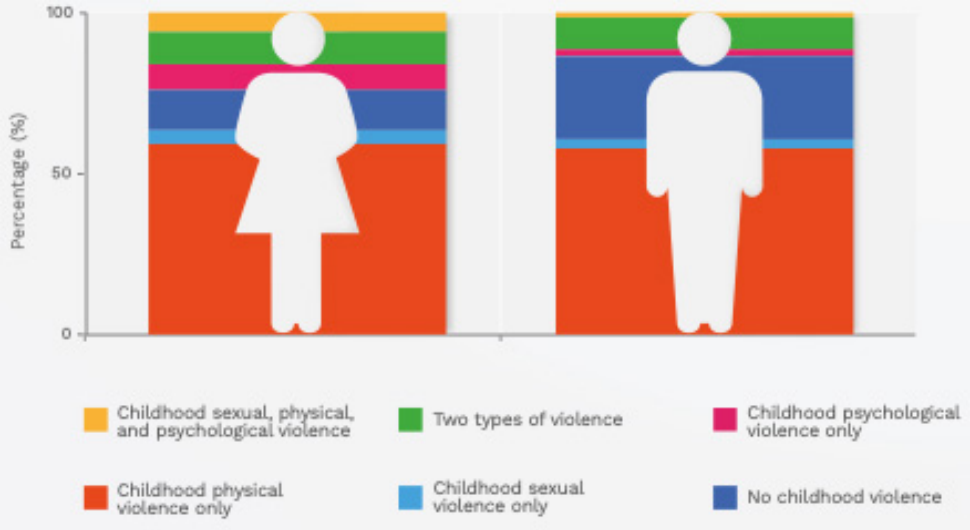
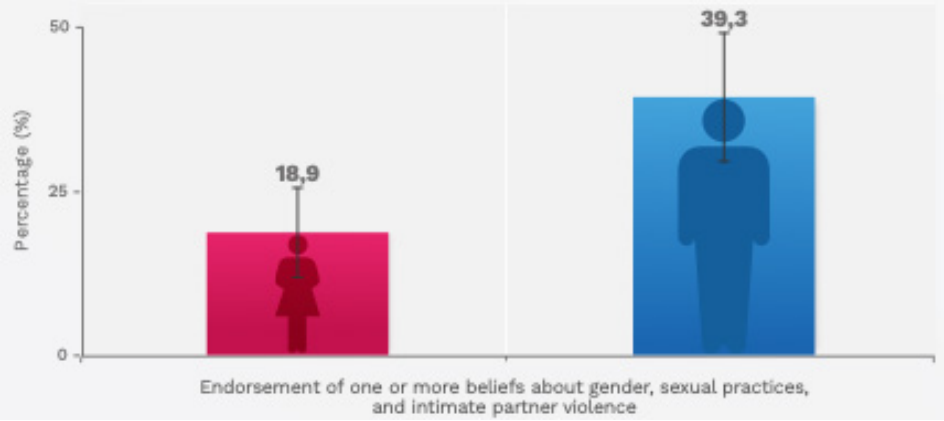


Exhibit 8. Belief in Social Norms That Are Accepting of Violence[39]



The Instituto Nacional Penitenciario y Carcelario (INPEC) is responsible for supervising adults 18 and older accused or found guilty of committing criminal offenses. Based on an analysis of INPEC data, as of June 2020, there were 66,503 youth aged 18 to 29 under criminal justice supervision in the country,[u] spread across 132 facilities in the country, with the largest youth populations found in the Valle de Cauca department. Thirty-nine percent of youth in these facilities are still awaiting a final court determination in their case, while 61% are serving a sentence because of a court finding of guilt. The average age of youth in this age group is 25 years, and most are males (91%). A higher proportion of youth have been incarcerated in the last 3.5 years relative to those who are above 30 years of age; a higher proportion of women have been detained in the last 3.5 years relative to men, but women are substantially more likely to be under house arrest than men. In terms of violence, 32% of youth under INPEC supervision committed a violent crime (homicide, sexual assault, intrafamily violence, other violent/nonlethal crime), and 95% of the violent crimes committed by youth aged 18 to 29 were committed by young males. While only 5% of female youth were arrested for homicides, this still

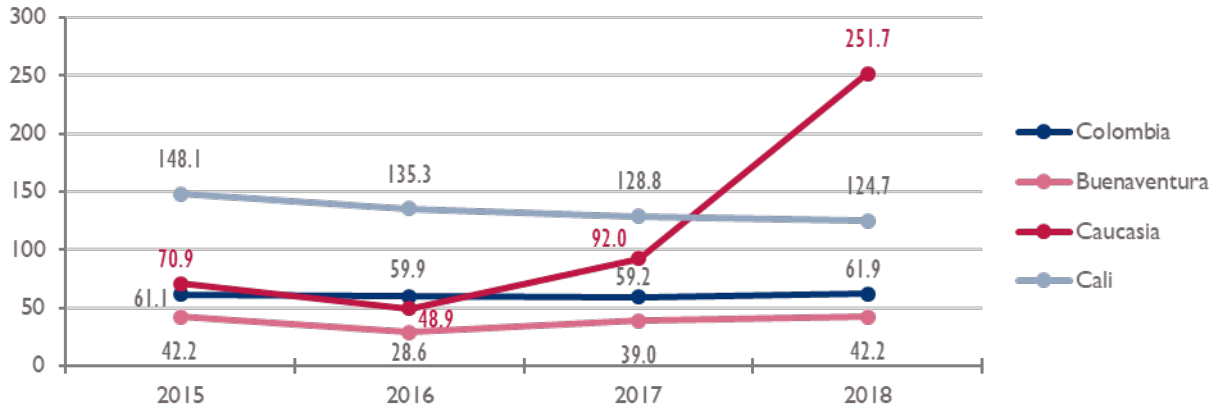
[u] Sixty percent of the population under INPEC supervision is in prison, 35% is under house arrest, and 3% is under electronic monitoring.

represents 614 young women under supervision for the most violent of offenses. Youth detained in the Valle de Cauca department had the highest proportion of violent offenses (37%) compared to youth detained in other parts of the country (e.g., 29% in Bogotá and Antioquia). Only 14% of youth in the 18-to-29 age group are under supervision for sexually violent offenses; this type of offense is more common for individuals over 30 years of age, and it is more commonly found among those detained in the Antioquia department. Almost all of those accused of family or partner violence are males (97%). Almost half (49%) of young women in the 19-to-29 age group are being detained for nonlethal forms of violence (i.e., violence that does not involve homicides, sexual assaults, or family violence).

MUNICIPAL TRENDS IN VIOLENCE: BUENAVENTURA, CALI, CAUCASIA

The desk review found that violent crime has been fluctuating in each of the three municipalities over the past 10 years, with all cities experiencing large decreases from historic levels of violence. More recently, homicide rates for youth ages 18 to 28 in Cali have consistently declined since 2015, while Caucasia experienced steady increases from 2016 to 2018, and Buenaventura had a dramatic increase from 2017 to 2018. In comparison, the nation as a whole has reported consistent and relatively low homicide rates among this population of young people since 2015 (Exhibit 9). However, homicide rates were much higher among this population of youth than for the country at large, which reached a high of 25.4 per 100,000 persons of all ages in 2018 after ranging between 24 and 25 per between 2015 and 2018.

Exhibit 9. Homicide Rates per 100,000 Persons for Youth Ages 18 to 28 (2015–2018)[40]



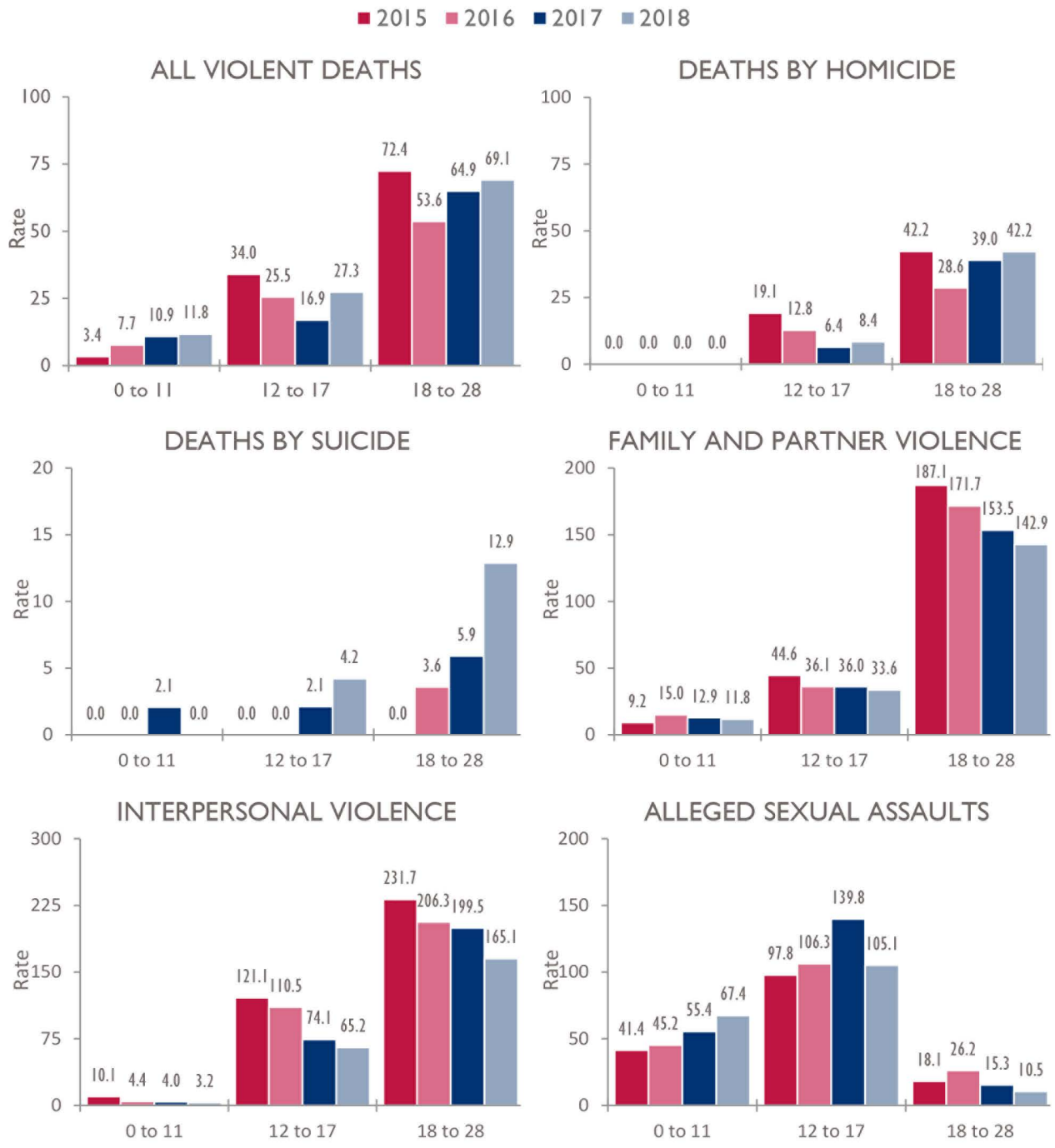
Buenaventura

A study on the impact of the armed conflict in Buenaventura labeled the city "a port without a community" to describe the consequences of an extractive economy based on an international port with little state presence, a situation in which the weakness of national and subnational state institutions fails to regulate the public arena, allowing different illegal criminal organizations to take control over an area and its people. In Buenaventura, the port is not only a major source of income for Colombia but also is a central location for the operation of illegal activities, including trafficking of arms, drugs, supplies for drug production, and illegal oil extraction, among others. To confront the escalation of violence, the Government of Colombia created special units of police and military forces in Buenaventura. The homicide rates began to decline in 2012, but rose again in 2013, and did not decline again until after 2016. Some experts believe that the decrease in homicide rates is not necessarily indicative of lower rates of violence or decreases in the levels of fear. Homicide rates decrease when one criminal

organization manages to win control over an area. More importantly, even if homicides have decreased, sexual violence, theft, kidnappings, suicides, and the disappearance of people have increased. According to one local expert interviewed, 60% of reported cases of sexual violence involve youth younger than 14. The level of cruelty has also intensified, leading some to conclude that one "exemplary homicide" has the same effect as killing several individuals. Buenaventura is notorious for having so-called "casas de pique," places in which individuals are tortured and killed and their bodies dismembered. Body parts are then placed in public places or sent to family members to terrorize citizens and send intimidating messages. As an almost paradigmatic case of "state absence," Buenaventura has been characterized by systemic problems of corruption, further contributing to the impoverishment of most of its population, despite the richness of the port and the revenues it generates.

As Exhibit 10 shows, those most likely to die of a violent death are older youth (between the ages of 18 and 28). This is also the group most likely to commit violence. This is a common aspect of violence victimization all over the world, with those committing violent acts most likely to offend against people in their age, peer, and family groups because there is greater opportunity to be in high-conflict situations with these people. Consequently, the most common type of violence leading to death in Buenaventura is violence experienced by individuals in the context of their interpersonal, family, or partner relationships, wherein the intent to kill is not determined to be intentional or premeditated. Overall, violent deaths remained roughly the same from 2015 to 2018, but deaths by suicide (which are often under-reported) showed a threefold increase in 2018 for youth in the oldest age group. This increase may be masking actual homicides or may point to the trauma faced by youth as they witness the aftermath of gruesome acts of violence. Lastly, there is an alarming number of deaths related to sexual assault among youth aged 12 to 17, and the rate for children less than 12 is also higher than that for youth over age 18.

Exhibit 10. Buenaventura Violence Rates per 100,000 Persons by Accidental or Intentional Means for Youth Ages 0 to 28 (2015–2018)[v,41]



Although participants in the youth dialogues identified certain areas in the city as most dangerous, particularly areas close to the water or places in which there are abandoned houses, they believed that most of the city is unsafe because the violence "travels" from one area to another. Invisible borders characterize much of the city, each controlled by a different armed group or subgroups (though youth

[v] *Note.* Scales for each rate of violence differ, and data exclude auto accidents.

never identified these organizations by their name, referring to them instead as "the bad guys," "guerrillas," "delinquents," etc.)—heavily restricting the mobility of citizens. Youth acknowledged they "lack freedom of movement," feel constantly vulnerable to forced recruitment, and suffer from stigmatization related to living in a violent city.

Cali

As in many Colombian cities, crime and violence in Cali has evolved over time. Once the home of one of the biggest drug cartels in the country, Cali became the hub of several illegal armed organizations fighting for control of the drug-trafficking business left behind after the downfall of the Cali cartel in the mid-1990s. The war between two criminal organizations in particular, the Rastrojos and the Urabeños —both spinoffs of paramilitary groups—was responsible for much of the violence during the 2000s, leaving a legacy of extremely violent youth gangs in the city's poorest neighborhoods. Scholars, experts, and public officials continue to debate the extent of the linkages between youth gangs and regional BACRIM in Cali. Some experts argue that BACRIM have abandoned the city and that youth gangs are now more autonomous, but also less disciplined and much more difficult to control. A study on youth violence in Cali, on the other hand, contends that BACRIM are still present in the city. A more recent study on youth gangs in Cali claims that only a few youth gangs have linkages to BACRIM, and that most do not. Most youth gangs are much smaller organizations than BACRIM, but they may also be more deadly. Although BACRIM are better armed and better organized, they are more strategic in their operations. This is one of the main reasons that homicide rates in Cali are much higher, where a plethora of semi-autonomous youth gangs, estimated at more than 100 and engaging more than 1,500 youth, commit most of the murders in the city. Moreover, in contrast to BACRIM, youth gangs, for the most part, do not forcefully recruit youth. Youth join gangs for a variety of reasons, including a desire to improve their income, a search for social recognition and a sense of belonging, the absence of parental controls, and a lack of recreational activities. In contrast to BACRIM in Caucasia and Buenaventura, youth gangs "live in the neighborhoods and they live with their families. They protect their territories and their families." For this reason, gang members, and particularly the most violent ones, are not always easily identified. Moreover, in addition to youth gangs, Cali has a variety of youth linked to highly violent "soccer bands" (*barras bravas*), which, although not related to the gangs, still commit homicides when they confront one another.

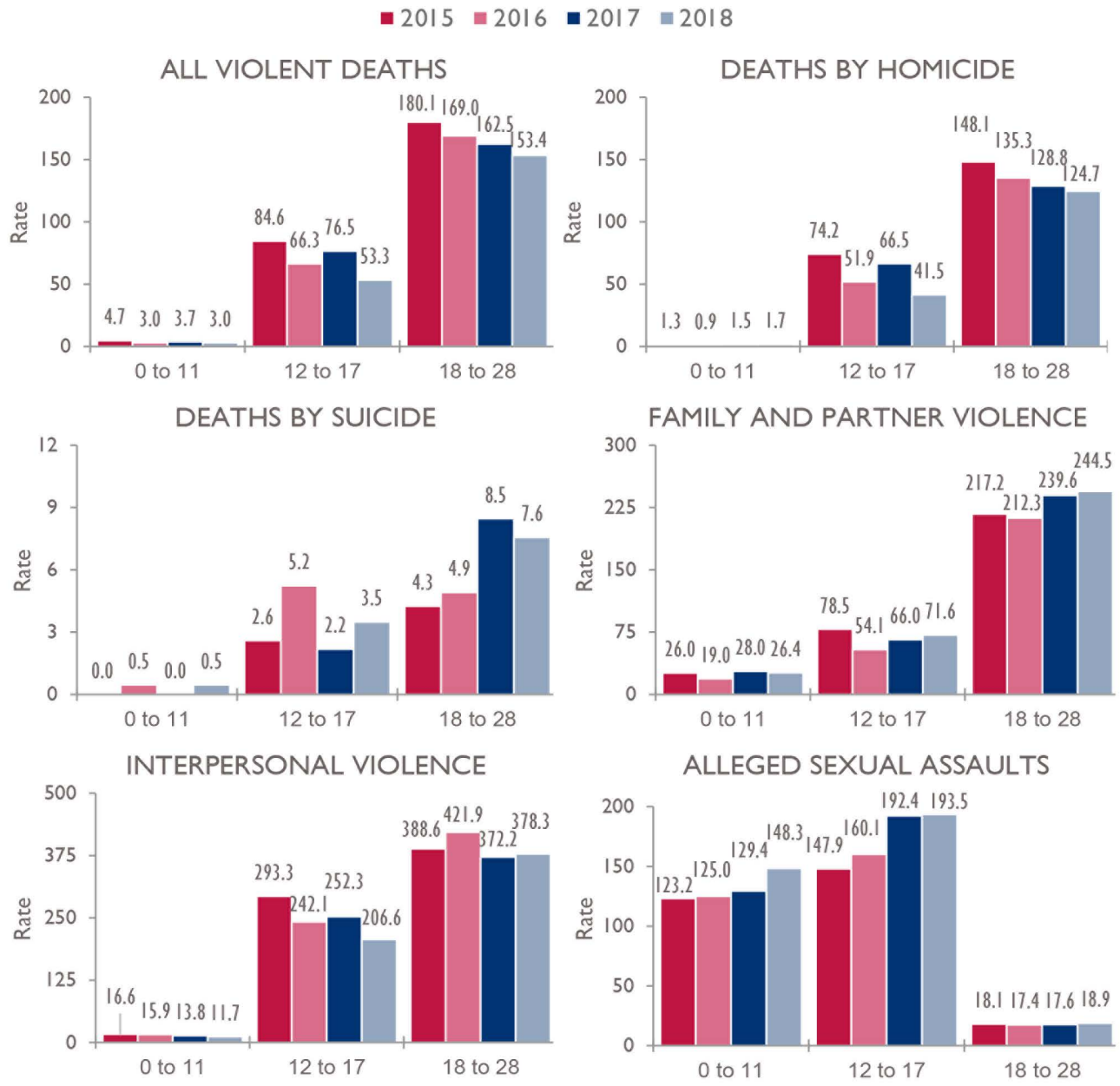
The 2019 citizen perception survey conducted by Cali Cómo Vamos,[42] a citizen watchdog group, revealed that only a minority of citizens (14%) believe the police are doing something to improve their quality of life. Moreover, 56% of citizens said they do not report crimes because they believe there is an extremely low probability that crimes will be penalized. A more nuanced analysis from earlier Cali Cómo Vamos survey results from 2013 revealed that most citizens are not satisfied with the police and have low levels of trust in them because they do not see sufficient police presence, believe police take too long to arrive after being called, and do not like the way police officers talk to people once they are stopped. Although the police in Cali have made great efforts to increase their effectiveness in reducing crime and to improve their public image, they remain highly distrusted by the majority of the population.

Similar to Buenaventura, the Cali youth most likely to die from violence are in the 18-to-28 age group (Exhibit 11). Unlike in Buenaventura, the overall violence death rate for Cali youth declined from 2015 to 2018. Deaths by homicide and interpersonal violence and involving sexual assault appear to be driving these decreases overall, with reductions each year in each category of violence. The one exception to this trend is death related to family or partner violence, for which victimization rates have

either stayed the same or increased for youth between the ages of 12 and 28 over the same time. As in Buenaventura, deaths involving sexual assault are very high for youth between the ages of 0 and 17, and while gender is not shown, it is highly likely that these assaults leading to death are of females targeted by male perpetrators. In fact, Cali has been known for having the highest feminicide rate in the country.[43]

Youth identified specific comunas—such as Llano Verde, Potrero Grande, Charco Azul, and Tercer Milenio—as being the most dangerous places, not the entire city. In these comunas, some parks and public places, like swimming pools and soccer fields, are considered most dangerous. Youth also identified public transport as being unsafe, because people often are assaulted and robbed on public transport.

Exhibit 11. Cali Violence Rates per 100,000 Persons by any Accidental or Intentional Means for Youth Ages 0 to 28 (2015–2018) [w] [44]



Caucasia

Caucasia has traditionally attracted a host of illegal armed groups because of its proximity to coca cultivation areas, extensive mining resources, and strategic position. Located in the upper northwest part of the department of Antioquia, Caucasia has access to important drug cultivation, processing, and trafficking routes. Homicide rates in Caucasia have always been higher than the national average. Along with a long history of violence and conflict, Caucasia has been characterized by systemic corruption, which includes the police. According to people interviewed for the assessment, the head of the police in

[w] *Note.* Scales for each rate of violence differ, and data exclude auto accidents.

Caucasia was removed because of allegations of corruption and engagement with criminal organizations. The widespread perception of insecurity, fear, and weakness of the rule of law has weakened the city's social fabric, including low levels of political participation. Numerous businesses are allegedly leaving the city because of high levels of insecurity and extortion, making the prospects for youth to improve their lifestyles even harder. According to the director of the municipal office of youth, the most organized sector of the population in Caucasia is the youth, but this office receives a meager budget from the municipal government, and its activities depend entirely on the international donor community.

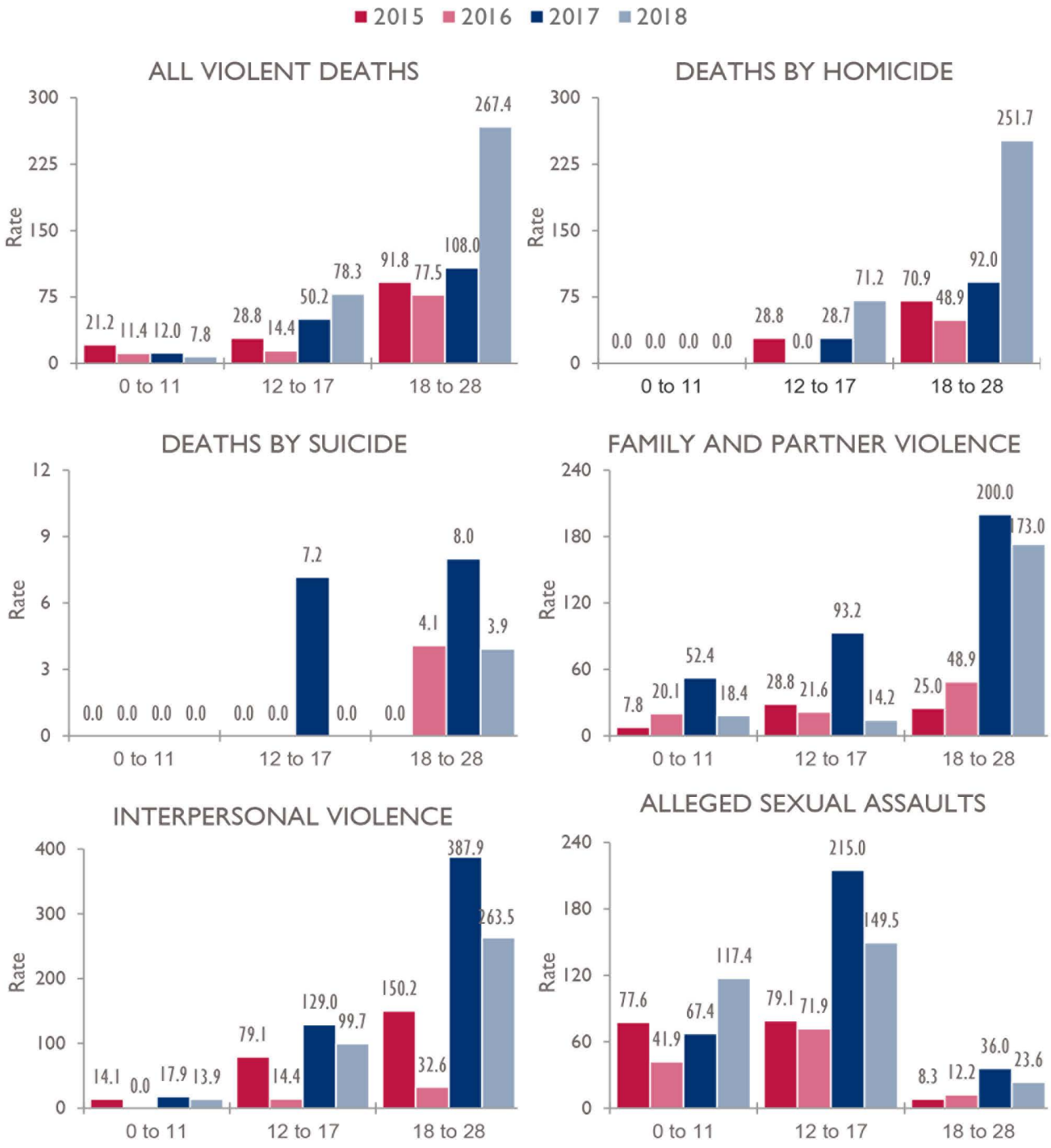
During 2009 and 2010, the Caucasia homicide rate reached 128 per 100,000 inhabitants. According to a study on criminal bands in the Bajo Cauca region,[45] the extreme violence during those 2 years resulted mostly from a confrontation between two criminal bands (the Urabeños and the Rastrojos, both spinoffs of former paramilitary units) fighting for control of important illegal mining and drug-trafficking routes. Faced with an escalating wave of violence, in 2010, the Government of Colombia sent military and police units, which were temporarily able to contain the situation and drive down homicide rates. According to Ariel Ávila, fighting between Urabeños and their former partners, the Caparrapos, as well as two other criminal bands—some of them linked to former guerrilla organizations—is responsible for most of the violence today. Criminal bands exert territorial control through a combination of extortion and violence. A study conducted by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs found that citizens in Caucasia perceive insecurity as the most important problem, as armed groups continue to restrict citizens' mobility, recruit children and adolescents, and stigmatize social leaders.[x]

The overall rate of violence victimization consistently increased from 2015 through 2018, driven solely by the steep increase in deaths by homicide from 2017 to 2018 (Exhibit 12). In fact, other types of violence leading to death decreased over the same time. As seen in the data from Buenaventura and Cali, those most affected by violence are older youth, between the ages of 18 and 28, with deaths related to sexual assault more likely among youth aged 17 and younger. Suicides typically are under-reported in most places around the world, and in Caucasia, there are years for which no suicides were reported across multiple age groups. This could be an under-reporting issue due to social norms that stigmatize the act of suicide, or a problem more generally with assessing cause of death in an extremely violent region in which firearm homicides and suicides may at times be difficult to distinguish.

When asked to identify the most dangerous places in Caucasia, youth dialogue participants all agreed that Caucasia is dangerous in general, but that the rural areas are more violent, as illegal armed groups have their operating centers in these areas. In the city, the most violent places were deemed to be the poorest areas of the city, as well as parks and other areas in which drugs are sold.

[x] See: https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Colombia%20HF%20Closure%20report%202018.pdf

Exhibit 12. Caucasia Violence Rates per 100,000 Persons by Accidental or Intentional Means for Youth Ages 0 to 28 (2015–2018) [y] [46]



[y] *Note*. Scales for violence may differ, and data exclude auto accidents.

RISK AND PROTECTION FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLENCE

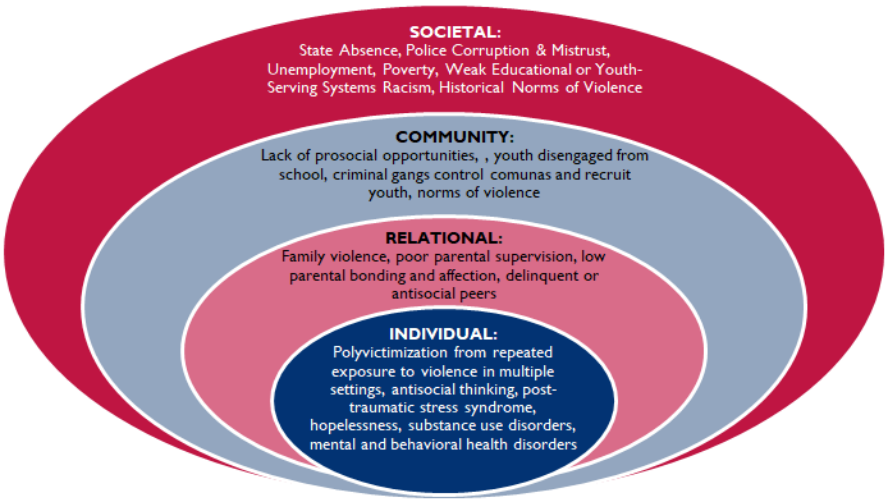
Across Cities

Although the dynamics of violence are different in each city, depending on the type of criminal organization, territorial coverage, linkages to illicit economies, and recruitment patterns, the most direct consequences of violence for youth are similar:

1. **Psychological impacts:** trauma, fear, rage, frustration, and feelings of revenge
2. **Erosion of the social fabric:** broken families, lack of trust, breakdown of friendships
3. **Restrictions on free movement:** fear of crossing invisible borders, permanent presence of armed groups and violent incidents, stigmatization of youth

The factors that place youth at risk for violence are similar across cities in that these factors exist at different levels of action in the SEM, pointing to different types of interventions and strategies that are needed—working in concert—in order to reduce the risk for violence (Exhibit 13).

Exhibit 13. Factors Placing Youth at Greater Risk for Violence in Buenaventura, Cali, and Caucasia



During the youth dialogues in each city, the AIR-DI study team found that youth are aware of the criminal organizations operating in their communities and understand the dangers they face, including dealing with the police, which many youth perceive with distrust, particularly in marginalized communities. Although public trust in the police has improved in Colombia in recent years, the police continue to face problems of public confidence. According to the most recent (2018) Latinobarómetro poll in Colombia, the majority of citizens interviewed (51.5%) said they do not trust or have low trust in the police.[z] In all six youth dialogues, the issue of domestic violence or gender violence was not brought up without it being prompted by the facilitators. As in many Latin American countries, domestic violence continues to be a prevalent problem that is either normalized in public discourse or silenced by fear of reprisal of those who have the courage to report it. One possible explanation for youth not identifying the problem of domestic violence during the dialogues may be that it is considered a private matter, not a public policy issue. Further, as the study shows, more than half of those surveyed viewed domestic violence as a private matter, and victims do not think they should seek help from the state.[aa] Likewise, some of the youth in the dialogues mentioned very cruel

[z] See http://www.latinobarometro.org/latCodebooks.jsp.

[aa] According to the study, more people believe that men are justified in physically assaulting women who have been unfaithful, and that most women exaggerate acts of violence against them and believe women should endure violence to maintain family unity (p. 5).

"disciplinary measures" taken by their parents. They did not see this as violence but the correct way of disciplining children. Most cases of domestic violence in Colombia go unreported, and the relationship between domestic violence and the perpetuation of violence in the community at large is often neglected. As we discuss later, addressing domestic violence and linking it to the wider problem of community violence is a substantial gap in Colombia's violence prevention programming. There was consensus among youth and experts interviewed for this assessment that violence stems from individual, peer, family, and social causes, including the breakdown of formal institutions of social control (e.g., education, police) as well as dysfunction among informal sources of social control (e.g., families), which serve to counter deviant or illegal behavior. Most interviewed youth and stakeholders agreed that the most decisive risk factors driving violence in their cities are lack of parental support, lack of employment, and lack of educational opportunities for youth, as well as bad friendships or associations with criminal groups. Access to firearms, alcohol, and drugs were also cited as factors affecting youth engaging in crime and violence, although there was no consensus on the role of drugs in motivating or enabling crime and violence. Most youth believed that drugs "accompany" violence but that they do not generate it. In some cases, youth who are going to commit a violent act take hard drugs as a tool to "erase their memory." The more risk factors a young person encounters at different levels of the SEM, the more vulnerable he or she is to engaging in violent behavior (voluntarily or not).

Buenaventura

Experts, practitioners, and youth who participated in the dialogues all agree that the main risk factors of violence in Buenaventura are related to the lack of opportunities in the formal or legal economy, combined with attractive opportunities in the illegal economy. In many cases, youth are actively recruited by illegal armed groups, sometimes as young as 15 years of age. As one expert stakeholder interviewed for this assessment said, "Illegal armed groups first hire youth to work in illegal mines, and then they get trapped inside the criminal organization."[bb] When the risk factors at the family level were discussed, youth identified lack of parental supervision and absence of positive role models as important drivers of violence, which—in combination with the lack of employment opportunities, the normalization of violence in the community, and the presence of illegal armed groups—contribute to the engagement of youth in violent activities. Yet there was no consensus on the weight of family support as a driver of violence. Some argued that if youth have strong, individual protection factors, such as self-esteem and established goals, the lack of family support may not be a strong determinant. Others disagreed, stating that youth who grow up alone in such a violent environment are more vulnerable to engaging in violence precisely because it is harder for them to develop self-esteem and other strong protection factors at the individual level.

"Homicides are not incidental events of 'robberies gone wrong'; it is a systemic problem related to the dynamics of territorial control due to the proximity to the water and the strategic importance of the port for the entry and exit of merchandise."

"Lots of youth say 'if I don't join [the armed group], I will get killed. But if I join, I will also get killed."

— Stakeholder Interviews, Buenaventura

"It was extremely traumatic for me seeing my grandfather die."

"Pablo Escobar exerted an enormous influence on people's way of thinking; I still know people who say his type of life was the best and they would like to be like him."

"Having a family member killed generates a lot of rage. … I know someone whose brother was killed … he got a gun, he killed the person who killed his brother, and afterwards, he remained in that world."

"When one joins the illegal organization, one receives a motorcycle and money."

— Youth Dialogues, Buenaventura

[bb] Interview with Juan Manuel Torres, Fundación Paz y Reconciliación (PARES), Buenaventura, August 2019.

In terms of the different individual-level risk factors driving violence, youth identified low self-esteem, inability to control emotions, and drug use. Yet they mentioned these factors alongside, or related to, the desire to obtain material goods quickly, stressing the importance of perceived lack of opportunities and/or lack of hope in the future as a driver of violence. In addition, the trauma that youth and their families have experienced over the decades has led to complex feelings of rage and sadness, mixed with a glamorization of the criminal lifestyle epitomized through notorious criminals from Colombia's past.

Over the years, Buenaventura has also experienced severe problems of government corruption. For example, the past six mayors had problems with corruption-related scandals, and the last two mayors did not complete their terms.[47] In addition to a more vigilant civil society, youth and stakeholders identified income generation as the most important protection factor, given the high levels of unemployment among youth and their vulnerability to being recruited by armed groups. Youth and stakeholders also identified safe places to hang out and caring and loving families as protection factors. A summary of risk and protective factors for Buenaventura is presented in Exhibit 14.

Exhibit 14. Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Violence in Buenaventura

BUENAVENTURA		
	RISK FACTORS	**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**
INDIVIDUAL	• Lack of a life plan • Feelings of envy, rage • Low self-esteem • Emotional immaturity • Drug consumption	• Abstinence from drug consumption
RELATIONAL	• Weak parental support • Absent parents • Violence in the home • Young parents • Absence of adult role models	• Engaged parents
COMMUNITY	• Peer pressure • Attraction to "facilismo" culture, wealth & power • Youth isolation • Lack of authority figures	• Cultural activities (e.g., art) • Safe public recreational spaces • Sports • Civic engagement (i.e., politics)
SOCIETAL	• Poverty • Discrimination toward Afro-Colombians • High unemployment • Lack of job opportunities for youth • Lack of access to higher education • Presence of illegal armed groups • Presence of narcotrafficking • State abandonment • Government and police corruption • Large infrastructure projects that displace locals	• Employment in legal economy • Quality education
CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE		
• Violence is an everyday occurrence; permanent sense of insecurity and fear • Psychological effects: trauma, fear, feelings of vengeance • Erosion of social skills, erosion of families and social networks • Inability to advance or improve one's life	• Barriers limiting free movement of people (*barreras invisibles*) • Stigmatization; constant vulnerability to recruitment • Loss of social fabric • Entrenched violence in family and schools; not enough prosocial activities for youth	

Cali

There was consensus that violence springs from individual, peer, family, and social causes, including the breakdown of formal institutions of social control (e.g., education, police) that should serve to counter deviant or illegal behavior. Lack of trust in police, and high impunity or low clearance rates for crimes (i.e., rimes for which someone is held accountable), lead to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, while those trying to desist from crime and violence are often met with anger and resistance to their attempts to leave the criminal lifestyle. Permanently stigmatized for their past behaviors, these youth face greater risk for continued criminal involvement.

> *"If gang members had jobs, they would leave gangs."*
>
> *"Youth gangs perpetrate most of the homicides, but they are not totally premeditated; in many cases, they are driven by silly fights, such as stealing one's girlfriend or restoring the honor of someone who has been aggrieved."*
>
> *"Uneducated people are more easily manipulated and controlled."*
>
> — Stakeholder Interviews in Cali

> *"Youth need more emotional support than money."*
>
> *"I tried drugs and I wanted to leave the gang because I did not like that life, and one day ... they beat me with a metal rod and shot me. I ran and they stabbed me in the back six times. I stood up, went home, and they took me to the hospital. We moved to another neighborhood, and thank God I am telling this story. In 2018 I graduated, and I try to prevent anything like this [from happening] again to any of my friends."*
>
> *"In my neighborhood, they kill for the color of their T-shirts."*
>
> *"They kill even for looking at someone badly ... they say, 'I killed him for a stupid reason.'"*
>
> — Youth Dialogues, Cali

Being a big city, Cali has more employment, educational, and assistance opportunities than many poorer and smaller cities in Colombia. While youth living in marginalized communities believe they lack opportunities because of discrimination, they acknowledged that the city has more opportunities in other neighborhoods where they can resettle, without necessarily having to move to a different city. This may partially explain why youth could not reach consensus on whether Cali, on the whole, offers sufficient opportunities for youth and whether youth are actually taking advantage of the programs that are being offered. Youth also said that many youth seek gangs to find a sense of belonging and identity—particularly when they lack emotional support from their families. In some cases, youth acknowledged that drug consumption can play an important role in the decision to join a gang and that peer pressure is often strong, including "punishing" those who decide to stop consuming drugs and/or leave youth gangs. Youth who participated in the youth dialogues identified gangs as the main perpetrators of violence in the city, but they also complained about the police. Youth agreed that most of the violence in Cali is related to territorial disputes between rival gangs and said the neighborhoods in which youth gangs operate have invisible borders: Crossing an invisible border can lead to an execution, just like wearing the wrong color of clothing. They did not discuss linkages between gangs and the international drug business.

When discussing the drivers of violence, youth identified envy as one of the major drivers in Cali. Joining a gang is a way to make money (mostly through micro-trafficking and/or extortion) and to be able to acquire material things that others possess. Youth also want to go out and entertain themselves, and they need money to do that. Without having faith in the future or having a life plan, youth are seduced by the opportunity to make money easily. In addition, they expressed that when youth are exposed to persistent violence from an early age, they may have more anger and resentment, which can lead to violence and aggression. Having safe places to meet and engage in recreational and/or positive activities was perceived as important for protecting youth against violence. Additionally, having stronger

families who love and care for their children, not consuming drugs, having access to employment and education opportunities, and particularly, having hope for the future and a life plan were all identified by interviewed youth and stakeholders as the most critical protection factors against violence. Exhibit 15 summarizes Cali's risk and protective factors for youth violence.

Exhibit 15. Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Violence in Cali

CALI		
	RISK FACTORS	**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**
INDIVIDUAL	• Impulsivity and immaturity • Feelings of envy, rage • Absence of a life plan • Low self-esteem • Drug consumption	• Abstinence from drugs • Hopefulness
RELATIONAL	• Weak parental support • Lack of sense of belonging and identity • Bad friendships	• Stronger families • Caring parents
COMMUNITY	• Peer pressure • Gang presence in the community • Lack of opportunities for youth • Stigmatization of youth • Distrust of the police • Inefficient transportation infrastructure	• Employment • Access to higher education • Safe spaces for youth • Better transportation systems
SOCIETAL	• Poverty • Inequality • Racism • Police abuse • Corruption	• Greater equality • Less abuse by police • Less tolerance for racism • Civic engagement (e.g., political accountability)
CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE		
• Erosion of the social fabric perpetuates the cycle of violence. • Stigmatization prevents youth from finding better opportunities. • Lack of identity makes youth vulnerable to gangs. • Youth grow up with a lot of anger and resentment, which leads to violence and aggression. • There can be some relationship between gangs and organized crime, but not necessarily. They kill for different reasons. The consequences, however, are similar. People end up limiting their mobility and creating invisible borders. • Youth violence affects prospects in life. Youth become involved with drugs, leave school, and affect the entire community because the neighborhood ends up being recruited by the gangs or criminal organizations.		

Caucasia

The youth who participated in the dialogues in Caucasia, as well as the people interviewed for the assessment, mentioned lack of opportunities for youth as one of the most important risk factors, explaining that criminal bands actively recruit vulnerable youth who have no opportunities to make a living in the legal market. In fact, some youth said that keeping a large portion of the population poor is instrumental for criminal bands, because vulnerable youth can be used as "cannon fodder" for their illegal activities. Youth said that engaging with criminal bands allows youth to "make money easily" and "gain power" in their communities, because they lack opportunities to make money or improve their

condition legally. Youth identified lack of parental support as a risk factor, but stressed that many parents are so poor that they simply do not question how their children make money. Violence inside the family, however, was identified as a major source of youth violence. During the dialogues, youth described harsh discipline methods used by families, including "tying children up, threatening them with machetes, and withholding food."

> *"We hear gunshots all the time."*
>
> *"Death has been overpowering youth."*
>
> *"Many are born, but few survive. In my neighborhood, of 24 friends, only four remain."*
>
> *"Children grow up with the stigma attached to the city."*
>
> — Youth Dialogues, Caucasia

Youth identified individual risk factors such as low self-esteem, inability to control emotions, and feelings of revenge as violence risk factors, but they related these to the desire to make "money fast." The persistent exposure to violence, including homicides occurring during the week of the dialogues and affecting at least one of the peer researcher's families, also takes a heavy toll on the youth psyche, fueling their sense of hopelessness for the future. With so few resources dedicated by the city to youth and their healthy development, they often feel that they have no other option than to participate in criminal activities that offer a semblance of safety and money for their families.

During the youth dialogues, youth identified safe public spaces that are properly maintained as an important protection factor. They specifically referred to a park, the Centenario Park, which in their view is a good example. They also identified churches as an important protection factor and said that spirituality was important in building resilience. Stakeholders and youth agreed that youth are able to resist violence, even if they live in a violent environment, when they have an inner spiritual life and when they have caring and loving families.

A summary of the risk and protective factors for youth violence in Caucasia is shown in Exhibit 16.

Exhibit 16. Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Violence in Caucasia

CAUCASIA		
	RISK FACTORS	**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**
INDIVIDUAL	• Low self-esteem • Drug consumption • Early pregnancy	• High spirituality
RELATIONAL	• Families who do not have a steady source of income • Weak parental support • Absent parents • Violence in the family	• Caring families
COMMUNITY	• Peer pressure, bad friendships • Attraction to "facilismo" culture, obtaining wealth and accumulating power quickly and easily • Lack of support for families • Lack of job opportunities for youth • Lack of opportunities for higher education • High barriers to entry for technical and higher level courses (i.e., demanding entrance exams, limited spots) • Lack of adult role models	• Centenario Park—considered a protective space • Churches and some sports fields/arenas • Youth organizations • Engagement in sports activities—Caucasia has a lot of talent for boxing

CAUCASIA		
	RISK FACTORS	**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**
SOCIETAL	• Culture of glorifying narcotraffickers • Corrupt police and military • High unemployment • Lack of opportunities for entrepreneurship • Strong presence of organized groups (BACRIM, dissidents of FARC, ELN, AUC, Sinaloa Cartel)	
CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE		
• Sense of "collective panic" in the city, a generalized perception of constant violence and fear • Generalized fear among youth leading to emotional trauma, even to some suicides • Youth feel hopeless given daily episodes of violence in the city • Normalization of violence in the community, fear, rage, and feelings of revenge • Erosion of social fabric and sense of trust; difficult to trust anyone • Violence leads to poverty, lack of opportunities; businesses refrain from investing; many commercial businesses have left the city because of insecurity • Lack of participation and apathy • Curfew for youth, leads to more stigmatization		

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICES, PRACTICES, AND PROGRAMS

NATIONAL ASSETS

From the national perspective, there are mechanisms that can be used to establish consistent and strategic actions to reduce risk factors and strengthen protections that prevent youth from violence. Colombia has introduced a series of youth policies and guidelines, beginning with the Constitution of 1991, which mentioned the establishment of a legal framework for youth participation. In 1997, the National Act of Youth provided the opportunity to create youth councils in every subnational level of government. In 2005, President Álvaro Uribe formulated the National Youth Policy, a 10-year plan that included a set of principles identifying youth rights. In 2013, the government enacted the National Statute of Youth Citizenship, identifying youth as people between 14 and 28 years old and transferring Colombia Joven, an institution responsible for the implementation of the youth policy, to the office of the presidency.[48] In 2018, the Statute of Youth Citizenship was amended to allow the election of youth councils at departmental and municipal levels. To date, these elections have not taken place; therefore, youth councils have not been established. The most common form of organization available to youth at the territorial level is the formation of the so-called Youth Platforms, or *Plataformas Juveniles*, which the Youth Statute recognized as organizational entities responsible for providing advice to the youth councils. According to a study completed in 2015, by 2014, there were 371 youth platforms in Colombia, but these organizations have no resources and no legal mandate other than being consultation bodies, and have little influence.[49]

At the national level, aside from Colombia Joven—which, according to several people interviewed, has remained inactive during the administration of President Duque—and the Office of the First Lady, which runs a skills-building program and employment program for youth, the most important institution responsible for assisting children, youth, and their families, particularly the most vulnerable ones, is the ICBF, or the Colombian Family Welfare Institute. The institute protects children, youth, and families whose rights have been violated. It is one of the largest public entities in Colombia, with representation across all Colombian departments and municipalities. ICBF has school feeding programs for poor children; homes for sheltering children who are taken away from abusive parents or guardians; and juvenile

detention centers, in which juveniles and disengaged child soldiers older than 14 years old serve time. These centers are under the direction of the department of criminal responsibilities (Sub-Dirección de Responsabilidad Penal). According to staff interviewed for this assessment, the department currently works with 13,000 adolescents across Colombia, some of them serving time in juvenile detention facilities. Most of these adolescents were accused of robbery and drug sales; some are also disengaged child soldiers who were recruited by armed groups. The vast majority of these adolescents come from poor families and were also victims of physical and emotional abuse by their own families.

ICBF has a restorative justice approach, focusing on reintegration and the reestablishment of juveniles' rights, and recently instituted a new division that includes youth.[50] Although ICBF has the largest budget among Colombia's government institutions, 60% of its budget is devoted to early childhood. According to staff interviewed for this assessment, ICBF did not have enough resources to work with youth and adolescents and their families, particularly those who serve time in juvenile detention centers and need follow-up support after they leave.[cc] To address this gap, ICBF, with support from USAID, designed a new family-based program called *Mi Familia*. The program, launched in 2019, serves families of youth who are under Sistema Responsabilidad Penal de Adolescentes (SRPA), or the juvenile justice system.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: MI FAMILIA

Mi Familia is a program implemented by the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, or Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF), to strengthen family communication, bonding, and parenting skills. ICBF expects to serve 65,000 families by the end of 2020 and a total of 280,000 families by the end of the administration in 2024. The program was designed in 2018 under former President Juan Manuel Santos, and it was supported by the International Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM) and Chemonics' HRH program with USAID funding. They assisted ICBF in the development of the program's protocols, including how to identify and target beneficiaries for this program. According to the director of HRH interviewed for this project, both HRH and OIM assisted ICBF at the inception of the program. The main theory behind the program is that strengthening families and reducing the levels of domestic violence and abuse will have a major impact in reducing the perpetration of violence in children and adolescents. One of the most serious problems that ICBF confronts is that many of the children and adolescents who leave SRPA reoffend when they return to their families. *Mi Familia* was designed to stop the cycle of violence by strengthening families.

> *"The ICBF is a complex and large organization, but they did not have any methodologies to assess and identify needs and risks of children and youth under the SRPA. This was our first task, helping them to design a methodology to provide differentiated services depending on the children and youth's level of risk and specific needs and to monitor results of implementation."*

Yet, while these protocols and methodologies exist at the national level, once the program goes through the ICBF bureaucracy and is implemented at the local level, mostly by organizations subcontracted by ICBF, the use of the tool to target beneficiaries and assess results over the course of implementation has not been consistently implemented.[dd]

The program is targeted for children and adolescents whose rights have been abused and/or are under Colombia's Criminal Juvenile Justice System, the Sistema de Responsabilidad Penal para Adolescentes (SRPA). The overall objective of this program, regarded as a violence prevention program, is to strengthen families as important protection factors for children and youth who are at high risk of victimization, violent behavior, or reoffending. Research in Colombia found that many children and adolescents who enter SRPA come from abusive homes, where violence is first experienced and internalized. Because beneficiaries of this program are

[cc] Interviews with ICBF staff, Bogotá, March 2019.
[dd] Interview with Juan Barco, Chemonics Human Resources for Health Program, Bogotá, April 2020.

either victims of abuse or youth under the custody of the SRPA, *Mi Familia* is considered a tertiary prevention program. The program offers parenting programs through home visitation and family encounters, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most assistance has been provided virtually. The program also refers family members to other service providers, depending on their needs.

According to ICBF staff interviewed for this project, the families are responding successfully to the program, even though home visits are not conducted at this time. They claimed that 96% of the families who are contacted by ICBF for this program are responding. The program is ostensibly also helping to improve the perception of ICBF among targeted families as an institution that promotes support to families and not only as an institution "that takes children away from their families."[ee] One of the challenges of ICBF is that despite the efforts of its previous director to improve the quality of service delivery and increase its staff, it still suffers from insufficient financial and human resources and weak information systems, particularly at the local level. According to interviews, many of the operators of the *Mi Familia* program do not completely follow the ICBF guidelines. Families also complain they receive too many phone calls from different professionals working in the program.

ICBF follows a restorative justice approach; however, interviewed ICBF staff admitted that a punitive approach still pervades the justice system in Colombia. While there are alternative justice options for juveniles, prosecutors rarely use them, preferring incarceration instead.[51] Moreover, several individuals interviewed for this assessment maintained that while ICBF understands the need for a comprehensive approach to rehabilitation, the health and education sectors do not coordinate well with ICBF, and the complementary services afforded to youth under the care of ICBF are insufficient or unavailable.

ICBF is still trying to develop a robust data collection system to analyze the results of their programs and assess their impact, but the staff interviewed said they believe most juvenile delinquents recidivate after they serve their time. In their opinion, "the information system is the Achilles hill of ICBF. We have no way of tracking children's and adolescents' performance."[52] Moreover, the staff expressed frustration that they lack sufficient resources to provide health services to juveniles, including mental health services and drug rehabilitation services.

> *"The Juvenile Justice System (Sistema Responsabilidad Penal de Adolescentes [SRPA]) does not often work well. There are no expedient responses from the health sector or the education sector. Often, they have to wait almost a month for a health official to come and evaluate a youth who has problems with substance abuse. By the time the health official shows up, the youth is no longer willing to cooperate. Similarly, in the education sector, often schools claim they no longer have any space for youth who are referred by a judge. This is a problem because many youth who end up in the SRPA come because of mental problems, suicidal tendencies that require a more immediate response from the health system. The problem is that we, the operators of ICBF programs, are caught in between. The judge should consider mandating a more immediate response when he refers youth to our centers."*
>
> — Interview with FUNOF, an organization that operates ICBF programs

Under national law, juvenile offenders under the age of 18 cannot, under any circumstances, be sent to an adult prison, but outside ICBF facilities, youth prisons as such do not exist. Consequences of this situation are as follows: (a) tension and lack of trust between the justice administration and the police, because sentenced juvenile criminals are often quickly back in their neighborhoods; (b) lack of public trust in the justice administration; and (c) tacit popular support for popular justice and social cleansing. While the municipal administration and others have recognized this situation, no structural solutions have been proposed, which would depend mainly

[ee] Interview with Katya de Oro, Subdirectora técnica de Gestión Técnica para la Atención a la Familia y Comunidades ICBF, Programa Mi Familia, Bogotá, April 2020.

on new national legislation. However, more than 60,000 older youth detained by the adult criminal justice system are either in a secure facility (i.e., prison) or under community supervision and on probation, confined to their homes or monitored through electronic bracelets.

Lastly, in 1995, the Government of Colombia, with financial support from USAID, established two *Casas de Justicia*, or Houses of Justice, in poor communities whose residents were otherwise denied meaningful access to justice. The purpose of the Casas de Justicia was to bring together in one place a number of municipal services involved in responding to criminal and family violence, and to help clients resolve problems together whenever possible. There is a network of over 32 Casas de Justicia, including locations in or near each of the three cities in this assessment. Their cases include domestic violence, community conflicts, and minor crimes. Over 60% of the users are women. In 2002, 300,000 cases were brought to the Casas de Justicia. Of these, only 25% were sent on to the court system. The rest were resolved through face-to-face meetings between the parties in conflict. We were unable to interview staff, but the Houses of Justice websites indicate the offices are open and still serving the community.

The use of alternatives to court proceedings has several benefits. The needs of victims are met quickly. Offenders are able to repair the damage they have caused while avoiding a prison sentence and its many negative impacts. The use of dialogue to resolve problems empowers people to take responsibility for their own actions, enables them to listen to and recognize the value of others, and provides hope for the future. Decreasing justice involvement for youth through these alternative mechanisms means fewer youth dropping out of school and being branded as delinquents, both of which make them more vulnerable to gang recruitment and involvement in serious crime and violence.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Colombia has developed *rutas de atención* (referral pathways) that lay out a comprehensive and inter-sectoral guide to inform victims of GBV (as well as other types of violence) of services available to them, including protection measures, access to justice systems, and health and psychosocial support, among others. The tool spells out the responsibilities of different government agencies and institutions in providing assistance to GBV victims according to their jurisdiction and mandates.[53] Several municipalities and departments have developed their own referral pathways, some with support from USAID.[54] However, implementation and use of these tools are limited due to a combination of factors, including "unclear or duplicative pathways, limited dissemination (especially in rural areas), weak municipal judicial systems, lack of inter-institutional coordination, and limited capacity of will."[55]

The main government agencies with mandates to address GBV cases and provide services to victims include: Family Commissioners (*Comisarías de Familia*), Office of the Attorney General (*Fiscalía General de la Nación*), Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (*Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar*), healthcare institutes, Colombian National Police, National Ombudsman (*Defensoría del Pueblo*), municipal and regional ombudsman offices (*Personerías Municipales*), and the public prosecutor's office. From the agencies mentioned above, Family Commissaries (FCs)[ff] normally serve as the first point of contact for GBV victims; according to Colombia's Ministry of Justice, 70 percent of cases of violence against women are initially handled by the Family Commissaries.[56] However, a stakeholder report for the United

[ff] Family Commissaries are district, municipal, or inter-municipal agencies responsible for ensuring and redressing the rights of family members who have experienced intra-family violence (https://www.minjusticia.gov.co/Conexi%C3%B3n-Justicia/Comisarios-de-Familia).

Nations Periodic Review in Colombia notes that Colombia is highly dependent on FCs to address violence against women.[57] Specifically, it notes that FCs are underfunded, understaffed, and overburdened by too many and highly diverse responsibilities, making them unable to provide adequate services to women experiencing domestic violence. GBV-related responsibilities, including issuing temporary and permanent civil protective orders, providing psychosocial and legal assistance, and referring complaints to prosecutors for formal investigation, are just a portion of their overall responsibilities regarding family matters.

Cases of GBV occurring outside a family unit are addressed by the Office of the Attorney General, which is responsible for initiating legal proceedings and referring cases to the Ombudsman Office to provide guidance to victims on matters related to legal advice and technical assistance. In 2013 the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women, with support from the National Police, introduced a free, 24-hour anonymous national helpline (*Línea 155*) to provide information on GBV issues, including guidance on filing a complaint and seeking legal and health assistance. Non-governmental and civil society organizations led by women, as well as women community leaders, also play a vital role in providing services to GBV victims, particularly women and girls, both within and outside the context of Colombia's armed conflict.

USAID has recently funded programming in Colombia aimed at overcoming GBV and improving the government's capacity, particularly of the justice system, to respond effectively to the needs of GBV victims. Between January 2015 and January 2020, USAID and UN Women implemented the Overcoming Gender-Based Violence to Ensure Women's Full Enjoyment of Rights Activity (OGBV) in the departments of Cauca and Meta in Colombia. The program's objective is to "contribute to the structural changes necessary to overcome violence against women while strengthening national and local institutions, as well as civil society organizations."[58] One of OGBV's activities includes monitoring the percentage of women reporting a "good" level of satisfaction with the delivery of services for women having suffered violence.[59] The ongoing USAID/Colombia Justice for Sustainable Peace (JSP) Activity (April 2017 – February 2021), implemented by Chemonics International, focuses on increasing the capacity of the country's justice-sector institutions to deliver effective justice at the local level, particularly for victims of the armed conflict.[60] With regard to GBV-specific activities, the program focuses on training key actors on GBV referral pathways and strengthening the judicial systems at the municipal level.

Prior programs addressing GBV in Colombia include the Integral Programme Against Gender-Based Violence (*Programa Integral Contra Violencias de Género MDG-F*), implemented by UN Women, United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA), and International Organization for Migration (IOM) from 2008 to 2012. The program's objective was to contribute to the eradication of all forms of GBV in Colombia, particularly "partner violence, sexual violence, trafficking of persons, conflict-related violence and harmful traditional practices which violate the rights of indigenous women."[61] The program focused on three components, including: (1) prevention, through changes in individual, social, and institutional behaviors and attitudes that legitimized GBV; (2) strengthening of quality services for GBV victims; and (3) development of a legal and policy framework for GBV.[62]

As part of its activities, the Integral Programme developed an educational communication strategy that aimed to inform and mobilize Colombians on three main fronts, including preventing and responding to GBV, challenging stereotypes associated with masculinity and femininity, and adopting new behaviors

around masculinity and femininity.[63] The strategy engaged various actors at the local and national levels, including government agencies, the private sector, civil society, and other partners. As part of the strategy, the "Nothing Justifies Violence Against Women" national campaign was launched in TV, radio, and print media in an effort to raise awareness of and condemn violence against women. In Buenaventura, one of the four pilot territories of the Integral Programme, the strategy was carried out under the motto "Not One More" (*Ni una más*) (Ibid). More recently, Netherlands-based NGO ICCO, together with the Alliance of Women Weavers of Life, launched the campaign "You're Not Alone" in Colombia in response to a significant increase of calls to the 155 helpline during mandatory isolation due to COVID-19.[gg] The campaign activated another phone line to offer legal and psychosocial support to women and to raise awareness about the prevention of violence at home. [64]

ACROSS CITIES

Although the three cities included in this assessment are different in terms of their size, economic potential, and social development, they do present similar problems with youth violence. In all cases, the large majority of both victims and perpetrators of violence are young, come from poor families, and have few economic opportunities or little faith in their ability to improve their livelihoods. In all cases, youth who participated in the youth dialogues came from extremely violent communities and had experienced violence in their daily life. In some cities, like Buenaventura, people perceive only some neighborhoods as being safe; in places like Caucasia, the entire city is perceived to be dangerous; and in Cali, only some neighborhoods are considered "hot." Yet, for people who live in violent neighborhoods, violence is part of life, and they have to live near criminal and violent people. In fact, although still regarded as tragic and traumatic, violence has been normalized in these communities.

As discussed in this report, at the local level, several youth programs are offered by the municipality, NGOs, the church, and/or the donor community. The range, coverage, and quality of these programs varies greatly among the cities. Of the three cities covered in this assessment, Cali has the largest number of youth programs and the largest investments in youth. The municipal government has historically partnered with a wide variety of national civil society organizations, universities, private foundations, and international donors. Caucasia has the fewest youth programs and, at least according to our desk review and interviews, the lowest level of funding for youth. Buenaventura, with a large population of victims of the armed conflict, has attracted a host of different organizations working on peace-building and reconciliation issues. Some of them work with Afro-Colombian youth in programs such as victims' rights, reintegration and reinsertion of former combatants, and prevention of recruitment into illegal armed groups. USAID has supported many of these activities, particularly in regions heavily affected by the armed conflict, such as Antioquia and Valle del Cauca, the two regions in which the three cities are located.[hh]

Although USAID does not have a specifically youth-led program, many of its activities include youth. Some examples include working with victims of violence and internally displaced populations; promoting peace and reconciliation through job promotion, truth telling, and awareness; protecting human rights;

[gg] The Vice-Presidency of Colombia reported an increase of 142 percent of calls made to the national 155 helpline between March 25 and April 11, 2020 (https://mlr.vicepresidencia.gov.co/Paginas/prensa/2020/Aumentan-en-142-llamadas-a-Linea-155-por-violencia-intrafamiliar-durante-Aislamiento.aspx).

[hh] USAID fact sheets shared with the AIR-DI team.

promoting increased public services and legal economic activities in rural areas; promoting legal crops and access to markets; and strengthening local governments and promoting greater accountability.

Buenaventura

The Buenaventura District's Development Plan (2016–2019)[ii] cites the main problems affecting youth as follows:

- The 48% of school-age children who are out of the school system
- Sexually transmitted diseases in rural and urban areas
- Drug consumption
- Violation of human rights after the armed conflict
- Premature pregnancies (in girls between the ages of 11 and 15)
- Lack of appropriate recreational and cultural spaces

The municipal government acknowledges the challenges that youth face in the district and, at least formally through its District Development Plan (2016–2019), commits to addressing them.[ij] As part of its response to these challenges, the municipal government established a Youth Attention Center (Centro Integral de la Juventud): CAIJU. However, according to the Asociación Paz y Reconciliación, the center has been attending to indigenous people forcefully displaced from their lands by illegal armed groups; it is not attending to youth.

Since 2010, other local organizations have been established that offer programs to youth, such as Jóvenes Metodistas de Paz, Colectivo de Vida, Pro Paz, and Fundación Tura. Buenaventura has also attracted a number of large civil society organizations and international donors that promote victims' rights and implement a variety of victims' assistance projects. Among the most important organizations are Fundación Paz y Reconciliación, a branch of Bogotá's office that is involved mostly in research and advocacy; Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados; and Fundación Espacios de Convivencia y Desarrollo Social (FUNDESCODES), a community-based organization promoting a culture of peace.[65] USAID has assisted several organizations in Buenaventura that support youth victims.

Despite the rich organizational network, most of the work of civil society organizations in Buenaventura focuses on victims' assistance and protection of their rights, peace building writ large, promotion of greater accountability, and condemnation of corruption and impunity. Although many organizations work with youth, their focus is not violence prevention. Moreover, some organizations offer cultural and recreational services to children and youth, and others provide youth leadership training and skills building and support entrepreneurial activities. But most of these organizations are small and not well funded.[kk]

During the youth dialogues, youth acknowledged that Buenaventura citizens have demonstrated the capacity to organize, fight corruption, and demand improved security, as evidenced by a civil strike that

[ii] See http://www.buenaventura.gov.co/images/multimedia/acuerdo_no_05_plan_de_desarrollo_del_distrito_29_de_mayo_de_2016.pdf.

[ij] The District Development Plan cites among the most important challenges the high number of victims of violence in the district, the high school dropout rates, problems of drug consumption, sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy, and absence of recreational and cultural activities for youth. An updated plan was recently released. See https://www.buenaventura.gov.co/

[kk] See https://pares.com.co/2018/07/09/historias-de-resistencia-juvenil-en-buenaventura/.

virtually paralyzed the city and the creation of a "humanitarian zone," a safe street block on which no homicide has been committed since 2016. Youth identified many organizations, including church-based initiatives, that offer mainly cultural activities, such as hip-hop or music, not necessarily activities focused on building greater resiliency among youth. Furthermore, they said that many sports activities are promoted by different political organizations during electoral campaigns as a way to attract votes.

Stakeholders and youth interviewed for this assessment agreed that although a wide variety of organizations offer programs for youth, many of the programs are limited, focusing mostly on cultural activities rather than centering on the most important protective factors, such as promoting greater access to higher education, income generation initiatives, and providing parenting support. Furthermore, they all expressed disappointment in the municipality's weak commitment to youth, despite its having formulated a youth policy in line with the national youth policy. Finally, they all said that many of the programs working with youth are temporary, sporadic, and not conducive to promoting a comprehensive safety net for youth in the city.

In 2011, Buenaventura adopted a policy on gender equality that incorporated specific GBV-related guidelines, such as prevention and treatment of women victims, humanitarian assistance to women who experienced forced displacement, and punishment of cases of sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and children.[66] At the same time, women organizations and women community leaders have taken on an active role in protecting women against GBV. For example, the Red Solidaria Contra las Violencias de Género: Mariposas de Alas Nuevas Construyendo Futuro, a Buenaventura-based network of Afro-Colombian, indigenous and *mestizo* women, assists victims of conflict-related forced displacement and GBV.[67] Given weak state presence and the existence of several illegal armed groups competing for territorial control in Buenaventura, the network relies on "self-protection" community processes. The group reaches out directly to victims to offer them guidance and support, including accompanying them to file a complaint. They aim to create a solidarity network of *comadres* to address GBV cases and create awareness among women of their rights and self-worth. [68]

A complete list of youth programs in Buenaventura is provided in Appendix B.

Cali

In Colombia, Cali is recognized for being a hub of innovation in evidence-based crime and violence prevention interventions. The Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo en Prevención de la Violencia y Promoción de la Convivencia Social (CISALVA), established at the Universidad del Valle in 1995, pioneered the utilization of evidence through rigorous data collection methodologies and launched the now famous Violence Observatory. Cali has built upon its strong history of violence prevention work that began during the Rodrigo Guerrero mayoral administrations in the 1990s and continued through the mid-2000s[69] to institutionalize violence prevention as a core strategy to advance the municipality's long-term prosperity and well-being. In December 2015, Cali was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation as one of its 100 resilient cities (100RC). In 2016, Cali's work began with a workshop to launch the 100RC program. More than 120 local stakeholders from the public and private sectors and from civil society took part in the workshop, which aimed to identify the main challenges faced by the city. The strategic plan that was developed as part of the initiative used a public health approach to urban violence by mapping crime and violence using data, and the identification of risk factors by engaging the community. Cali's resilience strategy consists of five overarching themes, 11 goals, and 45 initiatives. The five themes drive the strategies that will be developed and implemented by the city: (a) educational

quality and relevance; (b) coexistence, diversity, and trust; (c) sustainable and resilient public transportation, (d) preparedness and resilience in the face of climate change; and (e) robust processes and planning. The Resilient Cali Strategic Plan identified violence prevention as a key pillar for sustainable development, although it is not clear if the new administration in Cali will be supporting the plan from the previous administration(s).[70] The Ambassadors of Civic Culture for Peace is described in the strategic plan as a comprehensive social intervention program for former gang members, demobilized ex-combatants, victims of armed conflict, young people at high risk, and residents of communities affected by violence. The ambassadors are trained in promoting and implementing initiatives that support civic culture in the city.

Jóvenes Sin Fronteras (Comprehensive Gang Treatment Program), also established as part of the initiative, works with former gang members through the TIPS program, Trabajo Integral de Pandillas.[ll] The TIPS activity is part of a larger municipal government effort to reduce and prevent crime and violence in the city, particularly in the most marginalized communities. In these same communities and in conjunction with the academic community, the private sector, and the international donor community, the municipal government also introduced the Territorios de Inclusión y de Oportunidades (TIOS) program. The program's four components focus on interruption, intervention, prevention, and reintegration. Although this is not a specifically youth-focused program, most of its activities engage youth. These include cash transfers; temporary employment projects; revitalization of public spaces, including community centers, libraries, and parks; and food programs. In addition to the TIPs program, which focuses on secondary prevention and rehabilitation, and in conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Alvaralice Foundation, the municipality was implementing the Cure Violence program in two pilot communities—Comuneros and Charco Azul—but had not continued past the pilot phase.[mm] Fundación Alvaralice also supported the establishment of a technological center, or Tecnocentro in Potrero Grande, in a highly violent community. The center offers several programs for youth, including a skill-building program that has received support from USAID.[nn]

Cali also joined the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)/UN-Habitat project Evidence-Based Policies for Community Safety in Latin American and African Cities. Under this project, the city plans to conduct a safety audit involving a broad spectrum of community members in the collection of quantitative and qualitative crime-related data, following past exercises elsewhere in the country, such as Medellín and Barranquilla. This work with UNODC is expected to offer an in-depth picture of crime trends and risk factors affecting Cali, directly from those experiencing it. In turn, this will provide for the development of evidence-based strategies targeting distinct groups, including at-risk youth, gangs, and ex-combatants, and the strengthening of local, government-led crime prevention and urban safety policies.[71] The Hogar Claret transitory home is a government-run institution to support child soldiers with their reintegration process that is intended to socialize them, provide mental services, provide educational and financial support, and, ultimately, bring them back into the fold as peaceful,

[ll] The program works with the preventive police to identify youth involved in youth gangs (not criminal bands) and offers them employment and educational and recreational opportunities to rebuild their lives and commit to nonviolence. The program is implemented in a few targeted communities and will be evaluated for its results in reducing homicide levels.

[mm] Interview with Julieta Arboleda, Sub-Director of Alvaralice, Cali, July 2019. According to Sub-Director Arboleda, the program has been successful in Charco Azul but not in Comuneros, where criminal bands, not just gangs, are present.

[nn] Interview with Julieta Arboleda, Sub-Director of Alvaralice, Cali, July 2019. The program works with USAID's activity Alianzas para la Reconciliación.

productive citizens. Disengaged child soldiers, who have lived in the jungle for 10 or 15 years, are often unfamiliar with city life or amenities, never having negotiated rent or walked the aisles of a supermarket. They have never held down a job or, for that matter, prepared a résumé or sat for an interview. With support from the European Commission, Mercy Corps implemented reintegration programs for former child soldiers at Hogar Claret.[72] The Don Bosco Center is another transitory home, situated in the Aguablanca neighborhood in Cali, where many former child soldiers live and go to school. With support from USAID, ICBF operates treatment and reception centers in Cali that provide a range of supportive services for disengaged child soldiers. While protecting these high-risk youth from further engagement with crime and supporting their reintegration into society, the quality of programs available for them is limited and at risk of creating a permanent underclass of former insurgents.

Casas de Jóvenes are youth clubs at which young people are able to meet with a social worker, receive social services, receive parenting courses, and participate in programs to prevent bullying in schools. There are 17 youth houses, staffed with nutritionists, psychologists, and social workers, along with three *Casas de Paz* (Houses of Peace), where police, forensic experts, and the judiciary work in the middle of Cali's impoverished neighborhoods.[73] Two popular music orchestras, several theatre groups, and sports teams grew from one of the youth houses. After a year of preparation, a 6-month-long Olympics-style event took place in 2013, including many different sports and involving more than 100,000 participants of all sexes and ages. *Paz y Bien Foundation's Francisco Esperanza Youth Restoration Centers* in the Aguablanca district of Cali implement restorative justice practices that enable participation, reflection, self-awareness and inclusion, with co-responsibility of all parties, including children and adolescents, as citizens with full civic rights.[74]

UNODC's sport-based, youth crime prevention initiative, Line Up, Live Up, was recently presented to authorities in Cali, as well as in the cities of Bogotá and Medellín. Several grassroots projects were also visited within the context of this life skills training, highlighting the importance of crime prevention through social development as well as cooperation and coordination among different sectors and levels of government. In partnership with ICBF and the Ministry of Law and Justice, UNODC trained more than 30 sports coaches, physical education teachers, and other officials working with youth from Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Peru. The trained coaches will roll out the Line Up, Live Up 10-part course in their countries, including in Bogotá, Cali, and Medellín, where pre-pilots of the initiative are expected to start in the coming weeks.

Lastly, the municipality's Under-secretariat of Gender Equality (*Subsecretaría de Equidad de Género*), with funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and support from various women organizations, established Casa Matria in 2015, a dedicated space to promote women's rights and a GBV-free municipality. In 2020 alone, Casa Matria has responded to 647 cases of violence against women.[75] Given the high rates of GBV violence and feminicides, the Secretary of Security and Justice and Deputy Secretary of Gender Equality of Cali have recently requested support from the national government to increase the number of Family Commissaries and strengthen the municipality's forensic medicine institute (*Medicina Legal*).[76]

A complete list of youth resources in Cali is provided in Appendix B.

Caucasia

Caucasia's Municipal Development Plan (2016–2019) identifies four youth programs for its Youth Sector: Jóvenes Avanzando en la Transformación de la Sociedad (promotes access to higher education and labor inclusion), Juventud Saludable Avance Seguro (health education program), Empoderando a los Jóvenes (promotes political participation of youth), and Jóvenes Construyendo Paz (promotes dialogues and events to foster a culture of peace). The plan names the Youth Office as the entity responsible for the implementation of these programs.[77] The new mayor needs to review the data and the results for creating a new plan for 2020 and beyond. However, as mentioned earlier, this office has a meager budget.[oo] During the youth dialogues, none of the participants identified any of these programs by name, but they said most of the municipal youth programs were held at the cultural center, which they regarded as having an obsolete infrastructure and being inadequately equipped. They also stated that many of the programs offered by the municipal government are held at hours that are not convenient for youth. Participants identified a youth-based social auditing program funded by USAID, but they said this program has concluded, and they did not know if more programs would follow.

In Caucasia, the *Asociación Municipal de Mujeres de Caucasia* (ASOMUCA) is an active network of several organizations focused on the protection of women's rights and women's economic and social empowerment. One of the organization's main lines of work is helping women navigate the municipality's referral pathway and accompanying them during the process of seeking assistance. Thanks to the organization, a municipal office dedicated to women issues was created in Caucasia (*Oficina de la Mujer en Caucasia*).[78] The organization is part of the Inter-Institutional Roundtable for the Eradication of Violence Against Women (*Mesa Interinstitucional de Erradicación de la Violencia Contra la Mujer*), formed by other women organizations and various government agencies such as the Family Commissioner, Municipal Council, police, and others. Caucasia has a committee focused on monitoring GBV cases, and USAID has been heavily involved with efforts to reduce GBV in the city.

A complete list of youth programs in Caucasia is provided in Appendix B.

EXISTING GAPS IN POLICY, PRACTICE, AND PROGRAMS

GAPS ACROSS CITIES

A full review of program activities, results, and overall impact on the youth population is beyond the scope of this assessment. However, the assessment identified the following gaps:

Insufficient support for families of youth at risk for violence at home. Family violence in Colombia is pervasive and one of the most important risk factors for youth. Children and adolescents exposed to corporal punishment and domestic violence are more at risk of perpetuating and replicating violent behavior in their lives. This has been amply demonstrated in the world at large, not just in Colombia. Yet most of the programs offered for youth in Colombia, including government and donor-supported programs, focus on individual youth, without enough attention to their families. With few exceptions, the assessment team did not find programs that provide support for children and adolescents who are traumatized by family violence. Similarly, there is a lack of sufficient parenting programs or programs supporting families as a unit, particularly with respect to conflict resolution.

[oo] Personal interview with director of the Office of Youth, Caucasia, September 2019. He said the youth office receives an annual budget of only 50 million Colombian pesos (US$16,000) to attend to almost 43,000 youth.

Further, as one interviewee at ICBF said, there is a disconnect between children and youth in Colombia's public policy.[pp] A renewed focus on families could be a way to articulate more coherent programs for children and adolescents.

Youth not seen as part of the solution. Youth do not have sufficient opportunity to participate in their communities and share their experiences, including exposure to violence. As detailed later in this report, in all six dialogues, youth expressed frustration about lacking opportunities to share their views on the problems of violence and lacking a voice in public discussions about how to prevent and mitigate violence in their communities. In their view, programs offered to youth in their communities are designed without any input from the youth population and without consideration for their preferences and/or specific interests and needs. The recent delay in elections for youth municipal councils is a tangible example of the ongoing disconnect between youth and opportunities for community leadership.

Lack of opportunities for youth to improve their life conditions. The problem of lack of opportunities for youth was one of the strongest risk factors identified by experts and youth interviewed for this assessment. The literature on youth violence in Colombia highlights this problem as one of the most serious challenges for youth and one of the single most important elements explaining why youth decide to join illegal criminal groups. Importantly, improving life conditions entails more than simple job creation efforts, which have been introduced by different municipal administrations and international donors, including USAID, but have not yet been adequately evaluated for their impact as deterrents to violent behavior.[qq] By improvement of life conditions, we mean not just the ability to generate income but also to attain a sense of respect, honor, and hope for the future. As a Mercy Corps report acknowledged in a study on former insurgents in Colombia, job opportunities have to be meaningful if they are expected to have an effect in reducing youth risk for violence.[79]

Limited support for tertiary prevention programs. There are not enough interventions or resources focused on youth who are at the highest risk of violent behavior. ICBF is the only institution the assessment team identified that provides support to young offenders, who are the most vulnerable to reoffending. Indeed, although no data exist, the ICBF staff said they believe around 90% of the adolescents under their care in the juvenile detention center in Bogotá recidivate.[rr] While ICBF has a restorative justice approach and supports rehabilitation and reintegration programs, these programs do not have adequate levels of funding and may not be providing the types of rehabilitation and reintegration approaches that have proved to be most effective in other countries in which tertiary prevention programs have been subjected to more rigorous evaluations. One of the most effective programs, for example, is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a technique shown to control impulsive behavior and demonstrated to have a positive impact on reducing recidivism.[80]

Lack of coordinated and transparent data monitoring and evaluation systems. The desk assessment revealed a dearth of information on minor youth under age 18 regarding victimization as well as perpetration of violence and involvement in rehabilitative services. This finding was confirmed

[pp] Interview with ICBF staff, Bogotá, March 2019.

[qq] In fact, one of the few studies that used robust methodologies to assess the impact of youth employment on violence reduction in Latin America concluded that the evidence does not prove that "providing economic opportunities to the young translate into an immediate reduction of violence." See Gordillo, D. Z., Sánchez Torres, F., & Chegwin Dugand, V. (2018). *Employment, violence and youth opportunities: Evidence for Latin America and the Caribbean*. Universidad de los Andes, CEDE.

[rr] Interview with ICBF staff, Bogotá, March 2019.

during interviews in which stakeholders described fragmented data systems and practices that are different in each community and that cannot be used to produce accurate numbers of youth under the care of the juvenile justice systems (e.g., ICBF), the needs these youth present, and how and to what effect they are supported in programs (i.e., how the outcomes improve). Moreover, there is an absence of rigorous evaluations assessing the effectiveness of youth programs in Colombia. According to USAID staff, USAID supported a promising intervention to measure risk factors of juveniles leaving the juvenile detention facilities. While this was an evidence-based activity with support of the Universidad de los Andes, it is unclear whether the study was used by the Colombian authorities to keep track of these youth.[ss] This points to a broader problem with the way that prevention programs and youth-serving systems are currently siloed, or kept separate, from one another. This fragmentation makes it difficult for organizations to collaborate to serve families they may be working simultaneously to assist, and it places strain on families and youth struggling to navigate multiple systems and programs that are not working together.

GAPS WITHIN CITIES

Buenaventura

The assessment did not assess the variety of programs offered by civil society organizations or the municipal government and could not make informed judgements about the results or impact of these programs. However, during stakeholder interviews and the youth dialogues, the assessment team collected some anecdotal information about these programs and the gaps they believe exist in the city. While there are resources committed to youth in the hopes of preventing them from joining criminal groups, it appears that some of these programs are overwhelmed by the enormous need of displaced and struggling adults and families, and youth may not be the primary beneficiary of support, as initially intended. The high degree of perceived racism among the population also erodes the trust and relationships with formal institutions of government and the private business sector, where racism is felt most strongly. Furthermore, youth at the dialogues expressed disappointment in the municipality's weak commitment to youth, despite having formulated a youth policy. Finally, they all said that many of the programs working with youth are temporary, sporadic, and not conducive to promoting a comprehensive safety net for youth in the city. Many youth-based programs have left the municipality because of violence.

- Education opportunities in the city are sparse.
- Few programs are aimed at building parenting skills.
- Events seem sporadic. None seem to be offered on a long-term basis.
- There are limited arts programs.
- There is an absence of policy targeting youth.

Cali

While there are many programs available for youth, those who participated in the youth dialogues believed that most of these efforts are disconnected from one another, making it difficult to provide a consistent safety net for youth in the city. Moreover, they believed these programs do not address driving causes and more structural problems related to violence. In addition, they observed that programs exist where violence is already high, but they are not offered in other places where violence is

[ss] Interview with Camila Gomez, USAID, March 2019.

not yet high but may become a problem if action is not taken to prevent it. Local experts shared additional concerns over weak transportation infrastructure that limits the ability of people to get to work and engage in prosocial activities, a lack of school-based programs for youth at risk, poor supports for new parents who need parenting skills, an unwillingness among local businesses to employ youth from certain high-risk places or who have a record of criminal involvement, and a weak and sometimes corrupt public safety system that is not trusted to do its job of protecting the community. Youth also said that although programs are offered in one community, they are not necessarily available for youth in other parts of the city, given the existence of invisible borders and the cost of transportation to faraway places, such as Potrero Grande, where the Tecnocentro is located.

Local government officials interviewed also identified as an important gap the absence of education programs suitable for at-risk youth. In their view, technical and other skills-building programs offered by Colombian institutions, such as the Sistema Nacional de Aprendizaje, are not appropriate for youth who have learning disabilities, have dropped out of school, and/or have been traumatized by violence. Moreover, the local government officials said that many skill-building programs are not linked to employment opportunities and noted the dearth of parenting programs, especially for disadvantaged young parents. Although many stakeholders identified a variety of private foundations offering youth-based programs, local government officials said that in general, the private sector does not have sufficient corporate social responsibility and that many businesses refrain from hiring youth who live in dangerous places or who have a criminal record.

Caucasia

In addition to little investment in youth programs, youth and stakeholders identified as an important gap the sporadic and short-term duration of youth programs in the municipality. They also mentioned the limited opportunities for attending the university or obtaining a technical degree and the dearth of programs offering youth pathways to generate income in the legal economy. During the dialogues, youth recognized that many of the youth programs are not well attended. When asked why this was the case, youth said they were "apathetic," but acknowledged that the main reason for failing to attend these programs is that the programs do not focus on topics interesting or relevant to youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While youth violence is a national problem in Colombia, the solutions to the problem are local. As we have described in this report, the dynamics of violence in each city vary: In some places, like Cali, gangs are the main perpetrators of violence, while in others, such as Buenaventura and Caucasia, highly armed and organized regional criminal bands are responsible for most of the violence. While gangs may be most amenable to community-based interventions, criminal bands require the involvement of law enforcement agencies.

Furthermore, while risk factors are similar in different places—weak family bonds, lack of educational and employment opportunities for youth, the normalization of violence in the community, and more systemic factors such as poverty and inequality—the formulation of an effective violence prevention and reduction program requires paying close attention to specific information on the patterns of recruitment of youth to violent groups; location of violent incidents; type and organization of violent groups; types and sources of arms used; types of social networks among criminal and violent organizations; and, importantly, youth preferences and opinions about the factors that drive violence in their communities. This information can be derived only from a careful collection and analysis of data at the local level, which is central to the formulation of any evidence-based prevention program.

Although the assessment team did not analyze the formal justice systems in each city, to examine the way they function with respect to violence prevention and response, including interactions with victims of violent crime (which may progress to retaliation and future violence), no violence prevention approach will be complete unless formal justice systems are fully engaged in the process. This includes the engagement of police, prosecutors, and juvenile and adult correctional rehabilitation and re-entry systems. Thus, the recommendations offered herein target the specific gaps identified through this assessment, to inform specific, locally driven and evidence-informed prevention strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 1. INCREASE SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF YOUTH AT RISK FOR VIOLENCE IN THE HOME

To reduce the cycle of violence that begins with early exposure to violence as a child within the home (i.e., domestic violence), evidence-based family-strengthening programs can be an effective means of providing parents with the knowledge and skills they need to understand the developmental stages their children experience and effective use of positive discipline and support techniques that are appropriate, and not harmful, for each developmental stage of a child's life. Family-serving programs with a strong record of evidence for reducing violence in the home include the following:

- **Triple P (Positive Parenting Program):** Triple P has been tested with thousands of families over more than 35 years and has been shown to help families in many different situations and cultures. Triple P has been shown to help reduce children's and teens' problem behavior and to reduce their emotional problems. The evidence also indicates that the program helps parents feel more confident, less stressed, less angry, and less depressed. The program can be done in the privacy of the home, with supporting materials or online guidance from program developers, and has modules appropriate for younger (ages 0–12) and older (ages 10–16) youth. Triple P is currently implemented in three **Latin American countries: Mexico, Costa Rica, and Chile**.

- **Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP):** NFP is a home visitation program for low-income, first-time mothers designed to improve family functioning. Research over several decades has shown that NFP families experience statistically significant decreases in child abuse/neglect and domestic violence and improvements in home learning environments. The program has been adapted for use with Latino families in the United States, with no drop-off in reported program effectiveness.

The *Mi Familia* program that USAID is supporting through ICBF is a promising foundation on which to build greater evidence-based approaches to improving family supports to reduce violence in the home and stop the cycle of violence that can propel youth to engage in violent behavior themselves.

RECOMMENDATION 2. ENGAGE YOUTH AS PART OF THE VIOLENCE PREVENTION SOLUTION

In each of the three cities, youth are aware of the violence problems affecting their communities but are rarely asked to be part of the solution, even though it is youth who are committing and being victimized by the violence, as shown in the data produced through this assessment. There was a high level of enthusiasm among the 54 youth engaged in this assessment, across the three cities, about working with local policymakers to develop violence prevention plans and resources that would enable youth to lead programs, communicate violence prevention plans, and increase the buy-in and salience of prevention efforts among their peers. To that end, youth suggested the following strategies:

- Hold more youth dialogues, like those done in this assessment, to share experiences on violence in the community, heal collectively, establish support relationships, and articulate specific recommendations.
- Promote youth leadership opportunities for youth, develop peer-based mentoring programs, create peer-based restorative justice programs, launch communication campaigns designed by youth, and engage youth in knowledge building and dissemination.
- Develop peer-based mentoring programs in which older youth can work with younger individuals and help them build greater resiliency.
- Create peer-based restorative justice programs, a strength of the Colombian juvenile justice system, that allow peers of youth who have hurt the community work together to repair the harm and reintegrate into society to restore their lives, supported by a healthy peer network.
- Launch communication campaigns designed by youth to more effectively communicate prevention messages and reduce the stigmatization of youth who may be at greatest risk for violence due to underlying trauma and self-medication through substance use disorders, or who may live in dangerous neighborhoods but who are not themselves engaging in violence.

The TIPS program in Cali is a good example of an intervention in which youth are directly engaged in the violence prevention process, using a peer-based approach, to improve their comunas while changing their own behavior and providing the city with insights that are used to continually improve the program and inform local action.

A complete list of recommendations offered by youth during the dialogues in each city is presented in Appendix C.

RECOMMENDATION 3. IMPROVE QUALITY-OF-LIFE

Youth can reduce their risk for violence through attention to their interpersonal and relationship needs, but these gains will be lost if the comunas in which they live and the broader municipal context places them at risk. During the community dialogues, youth frequently cited a lack of meaningful employment that provides sufficient income but that also brings a sense of purpose and respect as a key driver in youth joining gangs. These gangs offer a decent living and give youth a sense of status in the community. More broadly, research has confirmed the observation that the quality of life in a neighborhood or larger community (e.g., unemployment, substandard housing, lack of transportation) affects risks for violence and jeopardizes future financial success as well as health outcomes.

The TIOS program in Cali attempts to address these structural issues by targeting specific comunas for improvements that are driven by residents in those comunas, including youth. These improvements include redesigning the area and bringing in green space for recreational opportunities, libraries, childcare facilities, and older adult education centers to improve quality of life and reduce crime and violence in the process. The ASOMUCA program in Caucasia is another example on which to build. In this program, women's economic and social empowerment is the foundation used to strengthen the capacity of women to generate household income without fear of staying in a violent relationship just to pay the bills. Furthermore, efforts to improve quality of life must be coordinated between sectors. Violence exists in, and moves between, homes, schools, businesses, the community, and the region, and must be addressed by sectors within and across these environments.

RECOMMENDATION 4. INCREASE SUPPORT FOR TERTIARY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Most of the evidence on effective interventions come from the United States and other developed countries.[81] Recently, AIR, in collaboration with DI, completed a global review of the violence prevention evidence to identify successful interventions implemented in Latin America, the Caribbean, and around the world, identifying key gaps for which little or no evidence is available.[82] This recent review confirms previous research indicating that some of the most effective interventions, such as CBT or focus deterrence, have demonstrated positive results with youth already involved in violent behavior or who are at high risk of engaging in violence—in other words targeting the tertiary prevention of violence.[83] With respect to youth already engaged in violent behavior, ICBF has introduced several programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate youth offenders. However, youth older than 18 are not covered by ICBF. Some of these young offenders are serving time in regular prisons; others are free in their communities. Finding ways to identify these youth and then engaging them in therapeutic approaches may be a promising area for future programming. The following are evidence-based approaches to assisting older youth who are in the tertiary risk group.

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** CBT is a therapeutic approach that can be used to treat a range of harmful beliefs and behaviors, including depression, anger, and impulsivity.[84] In violence prevention efforts, CBT attempts to change the distorted thinking and behavior of criminal and juvenile offenders, including self-justificatory thinking, misinterpretation of social cues, displacement of blame, deficient moral reasoning, and schemas of dominance and entitlement, among others.[85] CBT can be used within any structured program setting by staff trained in specific therapeutic techniques. CBT has been implemented throughout the world with great success, in home, school, and community-based settings, including in the TIPS program in Cali and social integration programs in Medellín and Bogotá.[86]

- **Focused Deterrence:** Also known as *pulling levers policing*, focused deterrence is a multifaceted crime reduction strategy that aims to dissuade *specific* criminal behavior (e.g., gun violence) by implementing locally customized responses involving a mix of law enforcement, community engagement, and social services.[87] The interventions target a specific and usually small number of criminally active individuals whose behavior is normally driven by gang or group dynamics. The approach has a solid research track record and relies heavily on police data to identify youth, as well as on a credible police presence in the eyes of the youth it is targeting and the broader community. Focused deterrence strategies have been implemented in predominantly high-income countries and, to a limited degree, within Latin American contexts.
- **Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI):** SSYI is a multifaceted, community-based strategy that combines public health and public safety approaches to reduce gun and gang violence among urban youth between the ages of 17 and 24. The SSYI model focuses on improving individual economic, physical, social, and emotional well-being through an intensive outreach and one-on-one case management process, along with access to employment, education, and behavioral health services, such as CBT. The program is not time-bound but, rather, continues until clients become self-sufficient and able to lead healthy, independent lives.[88] The program is implemented in 14 Massachusetts cities and has demonstrated consistent reductions in violence each year since its 2011 inception. Participants are males, predominately Latino, and heavily involved in gang activity. The program has not been implemented in Latin America.

RECOMMENDATION 5: IMPROVE COORDINATION AND TRANSPARENCY OF DATA, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Having accurate data on the problem of violence and the needs of youth is an indispensable precursor to identifying the resources required (e.g., budget needs) and the specific outcomes any intervention or strategy seeks to achieve. Only then can a theory of change be formulated to explain why a specific intervention is expected to produce the desired outcomes, and how different levels of outcomes are connected to one another. Identifying valid indicators and accurate measures of youth violence are also key to this work.

For example, skills-based training programs can be expected to increase employment. Still, it is necessary to explain how employment creation will be expected to contribute to violence reduction, what would indicate change has occurred, and how these changes will be measured. It may be necessary to pay attention to the quality of employment being created, not only to the numbers, and to explain why youth employed in meaningful jobs will be less likely to engage in violent activities. Government systems must be willing and able to share relevant data from their sectors with youth-serving agencies to understand what resources can be utilized and how outcomes are changing over time once youth access these resources. Currently, there is no public access to data on minor youth (i.e., younger than 18) involved in the juvenile justice system. Without these data, municipalities have no data-driven way to understand the number of youths who need support, what those support needs are, and how those needs are being met (or not) over time. On this point, interventions must document implementation and collect data on outputs from the intervention (e.g., number of youth served) as well as outcomes (e.g., changes in behavior) measured before and after youth participate in the program. Further, these interventions must use that information to monitor progress, make improvements, and evaluate the extent to which the program is working, for which youth, and under what circumstances.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND INDICATORS[89]

VALIDATED RISK AND NEED INDICATORS FOR YOUTH VIOLENCE—THE SAVRY

LEVEL	DEFINITION	RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS
Individual	Biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.	• History of abuse and neglect/trauma • Low level of performance in school • Substance abuse • Low levels of self-esteem • Lack of a life plan or faith in the future • Inability to control emotions • Teenage pregnancy • Desire to make money fast	• Positive social attitudes • Faith in the future • No history of substance abuse • No history of physical or emotional abuse • Spirituality
Relationship/family	Close relationships, including the person's family and closest circle of peers that influence his or her behavior	• Low family support and parental involvement • Harsh disciplinary practices • Domestic violence • Close association with criminal peers • Access to arms	• Family emotional support and supervision • Commitment to school or employment • Association with positive friendships • Involvement in social activities
Community	Settings, such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur and may influence a person's behavior	• Unemployment • Lack of educational opportunities • Stigmatization • Low level of community participation • High levels of insecurity • Insufficient investment in positive youth development programs • Normalization of violence as a way of resolving conflicts • Presence of criminal organizations • Glorification of criminal organizations	• Involvement in social activities • Association with groups that do not endorse violence • Secure neighborhoods • Safe community spaces • Participation in religious activities
Societal	Broad societal factors, including structural problems that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited.	• Inequality • Poverty • Corruption • Deficient public services • Police abuse	• Social equality • Opportunities to improve one's lifestyle • Adequate public services • Low corruption of public sector

The **Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY)** has been shown through research to be the most reputable, validated tool that has been used with thousands of Latino/a/x youth in the United States and Europe to predict violent behavior based on actual incidents of violence.[90] The indicators used to measure risk for violence span ecological levels, from self to community).

Note: Validation of a tool means that the behavioral risk measured using the indicators in the tool has been confirmed over time against subsequent behavior of youth with whom the tool has been used. In other words, unlike many risk tools used in the LAC region, this is not a theoretical tool based on risk and protective factors but is built using indicators that have successfully predicted actual violent

behavior. Therefore, these indicators are the most reliable ones available to predict violent behavior in youth. Indicators are different from measures in that an indicator is "what" should be measured, and measures are "how" things are measured. For example, an indicator for a hot day is the temperature, while measuring the temperature might be done with a thermometer or how hot someone feels, etc.

HISTORICAL RISK INDICATORS

- History of Violence
- History of Nonviolent Offending
- Early Initiation of Violence
- Past Supervision/Intervention Failures
- History of Self-Harm or Suicide Attempts
- Exposure to Violence in the Home
- Childhood History of Maltreatment
- Parental/Guardian Criminality
- Early Caregiver Disruption
- Poor School Achievement

SOCIAL AND CONTEXTUAL RISK INDICATORS

- Peer Delinquency
- Peer Rejection Stress and Poor Coping
- Poor Parental Management
- Lack of Personal/Social Support
- Community Disorganization

INDIVIDUAL/CLINICAL RISK INDICATORS

- Negative Attitudes
- Risk Taking/Impulsivity
- Substance-Use Difficulties
- Anger Management Problems
- Low Empathy/Remorse
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Difficulties
- Poor Compliance Low Interest/Commitment to School

PROTECTIVE INDICATORS

- Prosocial Involvement
- Strong Social Support
- Strong Attachments and Bonds
- Positive Attitude Toward Intervention and Authority
- Strong Commitment to School
- Resilient Personality Traits

APPENDIX B. YOUTH RESOURCES IN BUENAVENTURA, CALI, AND CAUCASIA

BUENAVENTURA YOUTH RESOURCES

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Fundación Carvajal—local NGO	Activa Buenaventura	Community-based program *Promotes social leadership, advocacy for greater accountability and transparency in public affairs, and open government. Fosters cooperation among the private sector, government, and donor community to participate in public decision making.*
	Fortalecimiento Vínculos Familia y Sociedad	Family-based program *Implements a parenting coaching program to improve parents' socio-emotional skills and improve the quality of their relationships. Offers training on negotiation skills, management, and effective communication. Strengthens skills that promote the balance between affection and firmness in parenting practices with children and adolescents.*
	Golazo	Community-based program *Promotes civic values, coexistence, and conflict resolution skills through the game of soccer.*
Tierra de Hombres—international NGO	Entornos Protectores	Community-based program *Supports community centers offering psychological services, skill-building, and cultural activities for youth who live in marginalized communities in Cali. Promotes dialogue with families and members of their community as a violence prevention strategy.*
	Grupos Juveniles	Community-based program *Creates youth groups to promote cultural and sports activities and foster a culture of civic participation. Provides skills trainings in conflict management and resolution, communication, and leadership skills and generates awareness of the problems affecting the community. Groups of youth have individual and group tutors who coach them.*
World Coach—international NGO, supported by OIM and funded by USAID	Escuelas de Futbol	Community-based program *Trains youth on leadership and team-building skills through soccer. Prevents youth from joining illegal groups by offering after-school sports activities.*
Fundación Juan Pablo Gutiérrez Cáceres	Chocó to Dance	Peace-building program *Offers postgraduate scholarships (specializations) to young people to empower them as social leaders and community organizers through dance. The objective is to promote reconciliation and peaceful coexistence through artistic activities.*
Defensor del Pueblo—central government office, with support from OIM	Círculo de la Palabra	Peace-building and civic rights program *Promotes citizen participation for youth; fosters dialogue among children, youth, and the elderly to promote respect, acceptance of different opinions, inclusion, and recognition of "the other."*
Fundación Espacios de Convivencia y Desarrollo Social (FUDESCODES)—local NGO		Peace-building programs *Promotes a culture of peace at the community level.*

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Churches and church-based organizations: **Iglesia Alianza Cristiana Rey de Reyes** **Fundación Provipax** **Fundación Fe y Alegría** **Colectiva Vida**		Community-based programs *Provide recreational activities for youth, mostly related to music.* *Protecting human rights projects, particularly with women and children affected by the armed conflict.*
Fundación Tura—local NGO		Community-based program *Offers hip-hop dancing for youth.*
Pro-Pacífico—local NGO		Employment program *Job creation program for youth. Flagged for having problems with security.*
Fundación Rostros y Huellas—local NGO		Community-based programs *Offer cultural events for youth.*
Fundación Paz y Reconciliación—local NGO		Peace-building programs *Promote peace and reconciliation activities for victims of armed conflict.*
Red Solidaria Contra las Violencias de Género: Mariposas de Alas Nuevas Construyendo Futuro		A network of Afro-Colombia, indigenous, and mestizo women who assist victims of conflict-related forced displacement and GBV.

CALI YOUTH RESOURCES

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Municipal government	Sexual Education	School-based program
Municipal government in partnership with several foundations and international donors	Territorios de Inclusión y de Oportunidades (TIOS)	A comprehensive package of community and employment programs that includes the following:
	Cure Violence	*Violence interruption program, supported by InterAmerican Development Bank and implemented by Fundación Alvaralice*
	Tecnocentro	*Technical skill-building center, supported by USAID and implemented by Fundación Alvaralice*
	Recreational activities and feeding programs	*Sports centers and soup kitchens in different neighborhoods, implemented and funded by the municipal government*
	Jóvenes sin Fronteras	*Employment program for unemployed youth, funded and implemented by the municipal government*

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Municipal government, preventive police, and CISALVA—Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo en Prevención de la Violencia y Promoción de la Convivencia Social (at Universidad del Valle, Cali)	Trabajo Integral de Pandillas (TIPS)	*An evidence-based anti-gang program that works with youth at risk of engaging in gangs. Promotes positive youth development activities, including skills building, psychological support, and employment opportunities. Implemented by municipal government and the police.*
Vicaría Arquidiócesis de Cali—supported by ACDI/VOCA and funded by USAID	Programa Barrios en Paz	Community-based program *Promotion of activities to rebuild the social fabric and foster social coexistence and peace among citizens who either suffered from violence or were engaged in violent activities during the armed conflict. Invites gang members to its activities to promote peaceful coexistence and signing of nonaggression pacts. Promotes prosocial activities in the community.*
Fundación Saldariaga Concha—local NGO supported by ACDI/VOCA and partially funded by USAID	Lazos de Reconciliación (diálogo-Potrero Grande en Cali)	Community-based program *Promotes laboratories of written and oral narration. Strives to rescue the oral tradition and the historical memory of populations systematically excluded by violence. Offers spaces for dialogue between young and old people through the development of workshops on narration and other artistic expressions. The project is part of a comprehensive strategy of historical memory in different areas of Colombia. It has engaged 196 elderly and young people from the Olaya Herrera neighborhood of Cartagena, the Potrero Grande neighborhood of the District of Aguablanca in Cali, and the municipality of San Carlos in Antioquia.*
Fundación Corona, Fundación Alvarálice—local NGOs	Rumbo Joven	Employment program *The program seeks to reduce unemployment of vulnerable young people from marginalized communities in Cali. It offers skills-building training, helps youth improve their life plan, and provides job placement assistance.*
Fundación Paz y Bien—Local NGO—supported by local foundations and previously supported by USAID	Programa Casas de Restauración Juvenil "Francisco Esperanza"	Peace-building program and family support program *Program for girls, boys, and young adults who have been victimized and who have committed acts of violence in the community of Aguablanca, Cali. The program serves youth from ages 7 to 25. It offers alternative income-generation opportunities to youth engaged in violent and criminal activities, promotes reconciliation between victims and perpetrators, and offers psychological support for victims and their families. The program provides a safe place for youth to engage in positive activities and promotes prosocial engagement. It uses a restorative justice approach to promote reparation and social inclusion.*
ACDI/VOCA—funded by USAID	Empleo para la Reconciliación	Employment program *Provides soft and hard skills training for youth. 450 youth from Cali have been involved. Some of the training programs include marketing and sales, call center consultant, gastronomy, table and bar, kitchen assistant, bakery, hotel reception, port assistant, administrative assistant, accounting and financial assistant, business teller, tailor, telecommunications, systems technician, warehouse assistant, and distribution center staff.*

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Tierra de Hombres—international NGO	Entornos protectors	Community-based program *Supports community centers offering psychological services, skill-building, and cultural activities for youth who live in marginalized communities in Cali. The program promotes dialogue with families of youth and members of their community as a violence prevention strategy.*
	Programa de Justicia Restaurativa	*A restorative justice program that promotes alternative measures for youth who have engaged in delinquent behavior.*
Defensor del Pueblo—central government office, with support from OIM	Círculo de la Palabra	Peace-building and civic rights program *Promotes citizen participation for youth; fosters dialogue among children, youth, and the elderly to promote respect, acceptance of different opinions, inclusion, and recognition of "the other."*
Fundación Carvajal—local NGO	Fortalecimiento de Vínculos Familia y Sociedad	Family-based program *Implements a parenting coaching program to improve parents' socio-emotional skills and improve the quality of their relationships. Offers training on negotiation skills, management, and effective communication. Strengthens skills that promote the balance between affection and firmness in parenting practices with children and adolescents.*
	Golazo	Community-based program *Promotes civic values, coexistence, and conflict resolution skills through the game of soccer.*
Conectados—local NGO	Reporteros por la Paz Comunicación para el Cambio Social	Community-based program *Supports innovative and creative projects with youth, including training youth on ways to report on peaceful events, and organizes communication workshops to promote social change.*

CAUCASIA YOUTH RESOURCES

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
MSI-Programa de Gobernabilidad Regional—funded by USAID	Festivales de convivencia en el marco de Plan Antioquia	Community-based program *Promotes festivals to motivate young leaders to develop skills and participate in public life. Promotes social auditing activities.*
Cultural House—municipal government		Community-based activities *Promotes cultural activities in the community.*
Fundación Luker—local NGO	Efecto Cacao	Rural development project *An inclusive rural development project for the development of cocoa-growing communities in rural areas of the Caucasia region. Involves families formed by young parents and promotes the participation of young members of the families.*
Colanta—private sector	Yuca amarga para una dulce leche	Rural development project *Seeks to improve the competitiveness of the dairy sector, reducing the cost of production per liter and increasing the volume of milk of small and medium producers. It aims to strengthen legal economies by improving the competitiveness of small- and medium-sized farms in conflict-affected areas. Works with youth who have families.*
Proantioquia y Fundacion Kreanta—local NGO and private sector	Ser más maestros	Educational and community-based program *Creation of ties with educational actors increases educational opportunities in the region of Bajo Cauca, Antioquia. Involves teachers, students, and the community in building reconciliation and dialogue.*

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
FINTRAC—USAID-funded	Programa de Alianzas Comerciales	Productive program *This commercial alliances program in the rural area of the Caucasia municipality aims to increase the production and marketing capacities of families engaged in agricultural production. Although the program uses a generational connection approach—that is, it does not focus exclusively on young people—it does involve families who are young parents or who have youth engaged in agricultural activities.*
Municipal government	Jóvenes Avanzando en la Transformación de la Sociedad Juventud Saludable Avance Seguro Empoderando a los Jóvenes Jóvenes Construyendo Paz	Educational and community-based programs *Promote access to higher education and health education; promote political participation of youth and foster a culture of peace.*
Defensoría del Pueblo—central government office, with support of OIM	Círculo de la Palabra	Peace-building and civic rights program *Promotes citizen participation for youth; fosters dialogue among children, youth, and the elderly to promote respect, acceptance of different opinions, inclusion, and recognition of "the other."*
	Pre Olimpiadas de Derechos Humanos	School-based program *Promotes knowledge of human rights through a competition that takes place in schools. The competition is conducted once a year in the framework of the celebration of the International Day of Human Rights.*
Grupo de Danza Folclor Latino Grupo y Arte Maranta		Dance groups for youth

APPENDIX C. RECOMMENDATIONS OFFERED BY YOUTH

CALI	BUENAVENTURA	CAUCASIA
• Provide emotional support for youth—emotional support more needed than money • Offer skills and capacity building, more employment programs for youth • Support greater access to higher education • Endorse productive projects for youth • Support arts, sports, and tournaments for youth; activities to entertain youth during their free time • Refurbish public spaces and parks • Support mentoring programs • Introduce parenting programs • Launch communications programs against stigmatization of youth • Replicate Cure Violence programs • Introduce restorative justice programs	• Support parental coaching and emotional support for parents; promote positive discipline methods • Support arts and sports activities to entertain youth during their free time • Promote conflict mitigation workshops and other methodologies for peaceful resolution of conflicts • Support reconciliation initiatives • Generate employment opportunities • Improve education opportunities for youth, including Sistema Nacional de Aprendizaje and universities • Social auditing • Revamp crumbling houses and other abandoned spaces in which people engage in illicit activities • Improve facilities of the Juntas de Accion Comunal and replace leadership • Organize more dialogues to be able to hear ideas and heal collectively • Update youth policy and implement it	• Bring programs offered by the Culture House closer to the neighborhoods • Create more recreational spaces • Promote recreational activities such as clubs, theatre, soccer tournaments, and cultural events to entertain youth during their free time • Restore public spaces, such as parks • Support skill-building programs, including soft and hard skills • Promote youth-based entrepreneurial activities to support small business initiatives • Improve access to university and technical programs • Increase job creation for youth • Promote cultural campaigns to change negative role models; support new leaders • Support parents and provide guidance on positive discipline patterns • Support communications campaigns against negative youth stereotypes • Reduce income inequality

APPENDIX D. PEER RESEARCHER METHODOLOGY

In our Assessment of Youth Violence in Colombia, we engaged young people in participating and knowledge building through the use of the six youth dialogues, two each in Cali, Caucasia, and Buenaventura. Our purpose was twofold: (a) We wanted to involve young people as key stakeholders of information to better understand youth experiences with violence and how they are affected by it; and (b) we wanted to engage young people meaningfully as active leaders and decision makers in our study.

The youth dialogues gave us the opportunity to gather youth input on violence. Fifty-five young people in Cali, Caucasia, and Buenaventura provided rich descriptions of violence through their stories and experiences they shared with us. While involving young people for input through the youth dialogues was important, engaging nine young people (three from each city) as peer researchers enabled us to improve the quality of the design and findings and to examine the benefits the peer researchers gained from participating.

Because the research team was based in the United States, it was essential to identify a local consultant who would work closely with the young researchers in Cali, Caucasia, and Buenaventura. It was also important that this person understand the youth–adult partnership framework and allow youth leadership and initiative in the study. We contracted with a Colombian consultant residing in Bogotá who was experienced in social change and working with young people, and who was also committed to implementing the youth–adult partnership framework in this study. Our fieldwork lead (FL) recruited the youth peer researchers, trained them in the dialogue methodology, supervised their work, supported their development, and acted as a communication bridge with the full research team in the United States.

The FL reached out to local youth-serving organizations in Cali, Caucasia, and Buenaventura and helped us identify young people who potentially would be interested in participating as peer researchers. Some of these organizations also helped us recruit participants for the youth dialogues and provided space for the sessions. Through local community organizations and word of mouth, FL identified youth who were interested in working as peer researchers. These youth were interviewed to identify their interest, level of experience, and potential fit with our youth–adult partnership framework.

The FL recruited nine young people to serve as researchers within each community (three in each city) and aimed to balance each team with respect to gender, age, race/ethnicity, and some level of experience with public speaking and coordination within each of the three groups:

- The young researchers included five women and four men. Two of the three groups comprised two females and one male; the third group had the reverse order.
- The youngest in the group was 19 years of age, and the oldest was 29. The average age was 25.
- Two of the nine peer researchers had a college degree; three others (all in the same group) were college students.
- Two of researchers were parents, and one was getting ready to be a father.

- All of the peer researchers had experienced violence and trauma in their lives. Most of them were displaced due to internal conflict in Colombia; one participant's father was killed in an act of violence; and another's uncle had been shot fatally during the period of our study, and the participant had to move their family to another location. Two of the peer researchers were Cure Violence interrupters in their communities.

The peer researchers were responsible for the following activities, working under the supervision of the FL:

- Recruiting participants for each dialogue
- Coordinating logistics for each dialogue (invitations, space, refreshments, room preparation for data collection)
- Improving and finalizing the list of questions for the dialogues developed by the research team
- Facilitating each dialogue following the protocols drafted by the research team, taking notes during each dialogue, and monitoring time at the dialogue
- Summarizing each dialogue and aggregating findings from the two dialogues

APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS

COLOMBIA YOUTH VIOLENCE ASSESSMENT

Key Informant Interview Protocol

Purpose: These interviews will be used to collect information for an assessment of youth violence funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Colombia Mission in Bogota, Colombia. Study sites are Buenaventura, Colombia, Cali, Colombia, and Caucasia, Colombia. The questions will be used to understand youth violence in each of the three communities, available resources and programs, and the role of key stakeholders in each community's violence prevention and response efforts.

Protocol: Individuals will be interviewed separately by telephone or in person by AIR Staff and AIR partner, and subcontractor, Democracy International staff or consultants approved by AIR. Interviews will be based on the questions shown in this protocol. Interviews will be recorded, if respondents provide verbal permission to do so, and then transcribed, and edited into a report for review by individuals interviewed. Otherwise, interview notes will be collected at the time of the interview by a separate notetaker, assisting the interviewer. Interview data will be stored and analyzed on secure SharePoint systems at AIR.

Key Informant Categories May Include:

- Law Enforcement
- Policymakers (E.g., Mayor's Office)
- Child Welfare and Protection Agencies
- Non-governmental Human Service Organizations
- University Researchers
- Prevention and Intervention Program Practitioners
- USAID Staff
- Clergy

Process:

"Hello, my name is [insert name] from (AIR, DI) and I will be interviewing you today for the Colombia Youth Violence Assessment. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. The Colombia Youth Violence Assessment is examining youth violence in three cities in Colombia to learn what is happening now and what can be done in the future to prevent youth violence. Study results will be used to help USAID Colombia determine priorities for their youth violence programming. Your answers today will be anonymous and confidential, never associated with your name, and will be aggregated or combined with other key stakeholders we are interviewing in this city before sharing with the Mission. This interview is voluntary, and you can withdraw from the interview at any time. I would like to record our conversation today to ensure I accurately capture your valuable feedback. If you give permission to record, the file will be destroyed immediately after it is transcribed. Do I have your permission to record? The interview should take no more than 60 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

Questions:

1. Please describe how you or your organization are connected to the issue of youth and violence?
2. What are the available programs and resources dedicated to the issue of youth violence in this city?
3. In this city, how is youth violence characterized by demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and location?
4. From your perspective what are the underlying drivers and trends of youth violence in this city?
5. Who are the main actors, organizations, and institutions involved in stimulating youth violence in in this city? What is their relative influence and how do they relate to each other?
6. How are current policies and practices (national, departmental, and municipal) impacting youth violence prevention?
7. What are the existing gaps in policy design and implementation related to youth violence?
8. What lessons learned have there been from youth violence prevention efforts here?
9. Based on available evidence, which citizen security strategies and specific interventions would be most effective at engaging youth at-risk youth for violence in this city?
10. Based on your experience, what has not worked well to prevent youth violence, or had adverse or negative consequences?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience preventing or responding to youth violence in this city?

REFERENCES

[1] Doyle, C. (2016). *Explaining patterns of urban violence in Medellín, Colombia* (p. 17). School of Business, University of New South Wales.

[2] Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (CERAC) (2014). *Violencia Juvenil en Contextos Urbanos*. Bogotá: Opciones Gráficas Editores.

[3] Business Insider. (2015). *'El Chapo' Guzmán's key role in the global cocaine trade is becoming clearer*. Retrieved from https://www.businessinsider.com/the-sinaloa-cartel-and-colombian-cocaine-2015-8

[4] Gottfredson, M., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A general theory of crime*. Stanford University Press.

[5] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. *The social-ecological model: A framework for violence prevention*. Washington, DC: CDC. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/SEM_Framewrk-a.pdf

[6] Government of Buenaventura. (2016). *Plan de Desarrollo Distrital*. Retrieved from http://www.buenaventura.gov.co/images/multimedia/acuerdo_no_05_plan_de_desarrollo_del_distrito_29_de_mayo_de_2016.pdf

[7] Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE). (2016). *Mercado Laboral de la Cuidad de Buenaventura 2016*. Bogotá, DC, Colombia. Retrieved from https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/ech/ech_buenaventura/boletin_buenaventura_16.pdf

[8] Centro de Memoria Histórica, Buenaventura. (2015). *Un Puerto sin Comunidad* (p. 60).

[9] Cardenás Angel, N. (2017, June 29). *¿Y qué del empleo en Buenaventura?* Retrieved from https://lasillavacia.com/silla-llena/red-social/historia/y-que-del-empleo-en-buenaventura-61541

[10] Municipio de Caucasia. *Caucasia municipal development plan, 2016–2019*. Retrieved from http://caucasiaantioquia.micolombiadigital.gov.co/sites/caucasiaantioquia/content/files/000081/4034_plan-desarrollo-municipal-20162019.pdf

[11] Sanabria, M. A. O., Fernández, F. O. A., & Zabala, M. P. G. (2018). *Colombian case study for the analysis of open data government: A data quality approach*. ICEGOV '18: Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance. April 2018, pp. 389–394.

[12] Logan, W. A., & Guthrie Ferguson, A. (2016). Policing criminal justice data. *Minnesota Law Review, 145*.

Van Dijk JJM (2007) The world of crime; breaking the silence on problems of security, justice and development across the world. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA

[13] Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. (2020). *Observatorio de Violencia.* Retrieved from https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/indicadores-procuraduria.

[14] United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), World Drug Report 2017. Vol. 5: The Drug Problem and Organized Crime, Illicit Financial Flows, Corruption and Terrorism, New York, United Nations, May 2017, http://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/ en/drug-problem.html

[15] World Health Organization. (2017). Violence info: Colombia, region of the Americas. Retrieved from http://apps.who.int/violence-info/country/CO

[16] Llorente, M. V. (2017, April 10). *Se desactiva la guerra, pero la violencia sigue en Colombia*. Fundación Ideas para la Paz. Retrieved from http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1498

[17] Bosch, A., Vanegas Muñoz, G., González, J. D., & López, J. N. (2017). *Pandilla Juveniles en Colombia. Aproximaciones conceptuales, expresiones urbanas y posibilidades de intervención* (p. 46).

Ministerio de Justicia. (2017). See also Human Rights Watch report on Colombia's policy and public performance relative to minors: https://www.hrw.org/reports/1994/colombia/gener3.htm.

[18] Chioda, L. (2017). *Stop the violence in Latin America: A look at prevention from cradle to adulthood*. The World Bank.

[19] Sánchez, F., Solimano, A., & Formisano, M. (2002). *Conflict, violent crime and criminal activity in Colombia*. Research program of The Economics and Politics of Civil Wars, Yale University. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6999/b5f7b6749368279b96300651dacff3747bfd.pdf

[20] USAID, OIM, Cifras y Conceptos. *Segunda Fase estudio sobre la dinámica del reclutamiento y la utilización de niños, niñas y adolescentes y los factores de riesgo y protección en el conflicto armado: Un análisis integral y territorial* (p. 15). Bogotá: Author.

[21] Arévalo, L. A. (2014). *Violencia Urbana. Radiografía de una Región. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung en Colombia FESCOL*. Bogotá, Colombia: Aguilar.

[22] Ministerio de Justicia. (2017). *Pandillas Juveniles en Colombia. Aproximaciones conceptuales, expresiones urbanas y posibilidades de intervención* (p. 185). Retrieved from https://www.minjusticia.gov.co/Portals/0/pdfs/Diagno%CC%81stico%20del%20Feno%CC%81meno%20de%20Pandillas%20en%20Colombia%20MJD%202017%20(1).pdf

[23] Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (CERAC). (2014). *Violencia Juvenil en Contextos Urbanos*. Bogotá.

Bosch, A., Vanegas Muñoz, G., González, J. D., & López, J. N. (2017). *Pandilla Juveniles en Colombia. Aproximaciones conceptuales, expresiones urbanas y posibilidades de intervención*. Ministerio de Justicia.

[24] USAID, OIM, Cifras y Conceptos. (2017). *Segunda Fase estudio sobre la dinámica del reclutamiento y la utilización de niños, niñas y adolescentes y los factores de riesgo y protección en el conflicto armado: Un análisis integral y territorial* (p. 100). Bogotá: Author.

[25] USAID, OIM, Cifras y Conceptos. (2017). *Segunda Fase estudio sobre la dinámica del reclutamiento y la utilización de niños, niñas y adolescentes y los factores de riesgo y protección en el conflicto armado: Un análisis integral y territorial* (p. 19). Bogotá: Author.

[26] Colombia 2020. (2018, April 17). Las mujeres de Caucasia hacen valer su voz y sus derechos. Retrieved on July 13, 2020, from https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/territorio/las-mujeres-de-caucasia-hacen-valer-su-voz-y-sus-derechos-articulo-856545/

[27] Howell, B. and Sinthusek, N. (2020). "In the Crosshairs: Centering Local Responses to SGBV in Afro-Colombian Communities." Columbia Human Rights Law Review. HRLR Online. Retrieved from: http://hrlr.law.columbia.edu/hrlr-online/in-the-crosshairs-centering-local-responses-to-sgbv-in-afro-colombian-communities/

[28] Human Rights Watch. (2012). *Rights Out of Reach: Obstacles to Health, Justice, and Protection for Displaced Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Colombia*. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/11/14/rights-out-reach/obstacles-health-justice-and-protection-displaced-victims-gender

[29] Ibid

[30] Schreuel, I., Rodriguez, E.M., Gomez, E., and Kolundzija, A. (2019). USAID/Colombia Final Gender Analysis and Assessment Report. Prepared by Banyan Global.

[31] ICCO. (2020, May 13). COVID-19 Campaign to Prevent Gender-based Violence in Colombia. Retrieved on July 13, 2020 from https://www.icco-cooperation.org/en/news/covid-19-campaign-to-prevent-gender-based-violence-in-colombia/

[32] Marín Carvajal, I. and Álvarez-Vanegas, E. (2019). "Securing Participation and Protection in Peace Agreements: The Case of Colombia." In *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security* (Eds. Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True). New York: Oxford University Press.

[33] Oxfam and Casa de la Mujer. (2011). First Survey on the Prevalence pf Sexual Violence Against Women in the Context of the Colombian Armed Conflict 2001-2009. Retrieved on July 13, 2020 from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2011-03-23-Report-English.pdf

[34] Alta Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer. (2012). "Lineamientos de la Política Pública Nacional de Equidad de Género para las Mujeres." Updated on May 25, 2018. Retrieved from: https://www.siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_accion_files/siteal_colombia_0446.pdf

[35] Ibid.

[36] Government of Colombia, Ministry of Health and Social Protection. (2019). *Colombia, Violence Against Children and Youth Survey, 2018*. Bogotá, Colombia.

[37] Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. (2020). *Observatorio de Violencia.* Retrieved from https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/indicadores-procuraduria.

[38] Government of Colombia, Ministry of Health and Social Protection. (2019). *Colombia, Violence Against Children and Youth Survey, 2018*. Bogotá, Colombia.

[39] Government of Colombia, Ministry of Health and Social Protection. (2019). *Colombia, Violence Against Children and Youth Survey, 2018*. Bogotá, Colombia.

[40] *Source*. Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. 2020. *Observatorio de Violencia.* Retrieved from https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/indicadores-procuraduria.

[41] Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. (2020). *Observatorio de Violencia.* Retrieved from https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/indicadores-procuraduria.

[42] https://www.calicomovamos.org.co/encuesta-percepcion-ciudadana

[43] Schreuel, I., Rodriguez, E. M., Gomez, E., & Kolundzija, A. (2019). *USAID/Colombia final gender analysis and assessment report*. Banyan Global.

[44] Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. (2020). *Observatorio de Violencia.* Retrieved from https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/indicadores-procuraduria.

[45] Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Colombia: Paramilitary successor groups and criminal bands (bandas criminales, BACRIM), areas of operation and criminal activities, including the Clan del Golfo (also known as Urabeños or Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia); state response, including reintegration of, and assistance to, combatants (May 2016-March 2017), 24 April 2017, COL105773.E, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/591614014.html [accessed 14 August 2020]

[46] Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. (2020). *Observatorio de Violencia.* Retrieved from https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/indicadores-procuraduria.

[47] Gill, S. (2018). Colombia's government reaches agreement to end strike in largest port city. Colombia Reports. Accessed September 19, 2019 at: https://colombiareports.com/colombias-government-reach-agreement-end-strike-largest-port-city/

[48] Paola, G., Rodriguez, R., et al. (2015). *Youth and public policy in Colombia*. Youth Policy Process.

[49] Paola, G., Rodriguez, R., et al. (2015). *Youth and public policy in Colombia*. Youth Policy Process.

[50] https://www.icbf.gov.co/noticias/presidente-de-la-republica-anuncia-creacion-de-la-direccion-de-adolescencia-y-juventud-en

[51] Paola, G., Rodriguez, R., et al. (2015). *Youth and public policy in Colombia*. Youth Policy Process.

[52] Paola, G., Rodriguez, R., et al. (2015). *Youth and public policy in Colombia*. Youth Policy Process.

[53] Ministerio de Salud. (n.d.). Ruta de atención integral para víctimas de violencias de género. Retrieved July 13, 2020, from https://www.minsalud.gov.co/salud/publica/ssr/Paginas/Ruta-de-atencion-integral-para-victimas-de-violencias-de-genero.aspx

[54] Schreuel, I., Rodriguez, E.M., Gomez, E., and Kolundzija, A. (2019). USAID/Colombia Final Gender Analysis and Assessment Report. Prepared by Banyan Global.

[55] Ibid, Page 41.

[56] Ministerio de Justicia. (2015, March 9). "Comisarías de Familia atienden 7 de cada 10 casos de violencia contra la mujer." Retrieved on July 13, 2020 from http://201.217.213.220/Home/noticias/comisar237as-de-familia-atienden-7-de-cada-10-casos-de-violencia-contra-la-mujer-47

[57] Advocates for Human Rights and The Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. (2017, October 4). *Republic of Colombia Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review*, prepared for the 30th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. Retrieved on July 13, 2020, from https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/uploads/colombia_upr_final.pdf

[58] USAID. (2017b). "Fact Sheet: Overcoming Gender-Based Violence Activity." Retrieved on July 12, 2020 from https://2012-2017.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/OGBV_FactSheet_030717.pdf

[59] Schreuel, I., Rodriguez, E.M., Gomez, E., and Kolundzija, A. (2019). USAID/Colombia Final Gender Analysis and Assessment Report. Prepared by Banyan Global.

[60] USAID. (2017a). "Fact Sheet: Justice for a Sustainable Peace." Retrieved on July 12, 2020 from https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/drg-justice-sustainable-peace-jsp#:~:text=USAID's%20Justice%20for%20a%20Sustainable,victims%20of%20the%20armed%20conflict.

[61] MDG Achievement Fund Secretariat and UN Women. (2013). "Educational Communication Strategy within the Integral Programme Against Gender-based Violence." In *Advancing Gender Equality: Promising Practices. Cases from Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund*. Retrieved on July 12, 2020 from https://www.unwomen.org/mdgf/downloads/index.html

[62] Ibid

[63] Ibid

[64] ICCO. (2020, May 13). COVID-19 Campaign to Prevent Gender-based Violence in Colombia. Retrieved on July 13, 2020 from https://www.icco-cooperation.org/en/news/covid-19-campaign-to-prevent-gender-based-violence-in-colombia/

[65] Centro de Memoria Histórica. (2015). *Buenaventura un Puerto sin Comunidad*. Retrieved from http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/descargas/informes2015/buenaventuraPuebloSinComunidad/buenaventura-un-puerto-sin-comunidad.pdf

[66] Defensoría del Pueblo. (2011). *Violencia contra las mujeres en el distrito de Buenaventura. Informe Temático*. Prepared under the Integral Programme Against Gender-based Violence. Retrieved on

July 13, 2020, from https://www.sdgfund.org/sites/default/files/Colombia_VBG%20Buenaventura.pdf

[67] Howell, B. and Sinthusek, N. (2020). "In the Crosshairs: Centering Local Responses to SGBV in Afro-Colombian Communities." Columbia Human Rights Law Review. HRLR Online. Retrieved from: http://hrlr.law.columbia.edu/hrlr-online/in-the-crosshairs-centering-local-responses-to-sgbv-in-afro-colombian-communities/

[68] Peñaranda, B. and Sulewski, D.J. (2017). Las Mariposas de Buenaventura, Colombia: Sostienen la vide, construyen la paz. *Middle Atlantic Review of Latin American Studies*, 1(2): 36-42. DOI: http://doi.org/10.23870/151

[69] Villaveces, A., Cummings, P., Espitia, V. E., Koepsell, T. D., McKnight, B., & Kellermann A. L. Effect of a ban on carrying firearms on homicide rates in 2 Colombian cities. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 283*(9),1205–1209. doi:10.1001/jama.283.9.1205.

Guerrero, R. (2006). Violence prevention through multi-sectoral partnerships: The cases of Cali and Bogotá, Colombia. *African Safety Promotion, 4*(2), pp. 88–98.

[70] Bravo, N. (2020, August 13). La masacre de Cali destapa los problemas de seguridad que la cuarentena había ocultado. Retrieved November 4, 2020, from https://lasillavacia.com/masacre-cali-destapa-los-problemas-seguridad-cuarentena-habia-ocultado-77929

[71] United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), World Drug Report 2017. Vol. 5: The Drug Problem and Organized Crime, Illicit Financial Flows, Corruption and Terrorism, New York, United Nations, May 2017, http://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/

[72] Mercy Corps. (2015). *Youth and consequences: Unemployment, injustice and violence*," p. 36. Retrieved from https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/MercyCorps_YouthConsequencesReport_2015.pdf

[73] World Health Organization. (2019). *Gun violence in Colombia*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/97/11/19-021119.pdf

[74] Ochoa, L. (2018). Peacebuilding in Colombia: A Youth Perspective. Accessed September 19, 2019 at: https://static.globalinnovationexchange.org/s3fs-public/asset/document/Peacebuilding_in_Colombia-A_YOUTH_PERSPECTIVE-SfCG.pdf?cJdSQglY9z5EXkeNQvDeVcn5YnuL8ZRu

[75] Redacción el Tiempo. (2020, June 24). Conozca las Violencias contra la mujer y no son solo de golpes en Cali. *El Tiempo*. Retrieved on July 13, 2020 from https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/cali/alarma-por-violencia-de-genero-en-cali-se-suman-13-feminicidios-510288

[76] Redacción de El País. (2020, July 3). Las peticiones al Gobierno Nacional para luchar contra violencia de género en Cali. El País. Retrieved on July 13, 2020 from https://www.elpais.com.co/judicial/mas-comisarias-de-familia-opcion-contra-violencia-de-genero-en.html

[77] Plan de Desarrollo Caucasia-Antioquia. *Gestión para avanzar 2016–2019*, p. 141.

[78] Colombia 2020. (2018, April 17). Las mujeres de Caucasia hacen valer su voz y sus derechos. Retrieved on July 13, 2020, from https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/territorio/las-mujeres-de-caucasia-hacen-valer-su-voz-y-sus-derechos-articulo-856545/

[79] Mercy Corps. (2015). *Youth and consequences: Unemployment, injustice and violence*," p. 36. Retrieved from https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/MercyCorps_YouthConsequencesReport_2015.pdf

[80] Campie, P., Tanyu, M., & Udayakumar Holla, C. (2018). What works to prevent lethal youth violence in the LAC region: A global review of the research. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

[81] Abt, T. P., & Winship, C. (2016). "What works" in reducing community violence: A meta-review and field study for the northern triangle. Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

[82] Campie, P., Tanyu, M., & Udayakumar Holla, C. (2018). What works to prevent lethal youth violence in the LAC region: A global review of the research. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

[83] Abt, T. P., & Winship, C. (2016). "What works" in reducing community violence: A meta-review and field study for the northern triangle. Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

[84] Blattman, Christopher, Julian C. Jamison, and Margaret Sheridan. 2017. "Reducing Crime and Violence: Experimental Evidence from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Liberia." American Economic Review, 107 (4): 1165-1206.DOI: 10.1257/aer.20150503

[85] Abt, T. P., & Winship, C. (2016). "What works" in reducing community violence: A meta-review and field study for the northern triangle. Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development;

Lipsey, M. W., Howell, J. C., Kelly, M. R., Chapman, G., Carver, D. (2010). Improving the effectiveness of juvenile justice programs: A new perspective on evidence-based practice. Washington, DC: Georgetown University, Center for Juvenile Justice.

[86] For more information on social integration innovations in Medellin see: https://blog.iese.edu/cities-challenges-and-management/2018/10/26/medellin-a-story-of-transformation/

For more information on social integration innovations in Bogota see: https://www.intechopen.com/books/an-overview-of-urban-and-regional-planning/urban-development-in-bogot-the-metro-case-of-study

[87] Braga, AA, Weisburd, D, Turchan, B. (2019) Focused deterrence strategies effects on crime: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. e1051. https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1051

[88] Campie, P. E., Read, N. W., Fronius, T., Siwach, G., Kamto, K., Guckenburg, S., Briggs, O., Persson, H., & Petrosino, A. (2019). Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) Evaluation: 2018–19 Final Programmatic Report. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

[89] Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Violence https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html#Risk%20Factors

[90] Ortega, E., García, J., De la Fuente, L., & Zaldivar, F. (2020). Predicting risk of recidivism in Spanish young offenders: Comparative analysis of the SAVRY and YLS/CMI. Psicothema, 32(2), 221-228. http://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2019.275

Olver, M. E., Stockdale, K. C., & Wormith, J. S. (2009). Risk Assessment With Young Offenders: A Meta-Analysis of Three Assessment Measures. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *36*(4), 329–353. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854809331457

Meyers, J. R., & Schmidt, F. (2008). Predictive Validity of the Structured Assessment for Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) With Juvenile Offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *35*(3), 344–355. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854807311972

Lodewijks, H. P. B., de Ruiter, C., & Doreleijers, T. A. H. (2010). The Impact of Protective Factors in Desistance From Violent Reoffending: A Study in Three Samples of Adolescent Offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *25*(3), 568–587. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260509334403