

YCARE INTERNATIONAL- BARING FOUNDATION. YOUNG  
MANS' CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION ACJ- YMCA

Results of the final evaluation of the project “Capacity  
Building with Displaced Former Child Soldiers”<sup>1</sup>”

Evaluation performed by:

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Source: photographic archives Hogar Casa Shalom 2004. Young people not involved in the armed conflict in Colombia

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<sup>1</sup> It is understood that, throughout this document, the terms displaced young ex - combatants refers to boys, girls and young people no longer related to the armed conflict, taking into account that this is the phase utilized by the political parties in Columbia when making reference to this group, which represents the project's beneficiary population. For project purposes, the most appropriate group of the population consists of the young people, due to the fact that emotional and physiological factors are more relevant to the development of this group than with children. This does not exclude the recognition of the fact that the level of recruiting in Columbia has affected the rights of children as young as seven years of age.

# FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT "CAPACITY BUILDING WITH DISPLACED FORMER CHILD SOLDIERS "

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Problem to be treated
- 1.1.2 Scope and objectives

#### 1.2. Methodology of the evaluation

### 2. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

#### 2.1 Analysis of the impact

- 2.1.1. Over the young displaced ex - combatants
- 2.1.2. Over the social structure
- 2.1.3 Differential scopes

#### 2.2. Analysis of the institutional participation

- 2.2.1 Institutional management
- 2.2.2 Care
- 2.2.3 Technical capacity

#### 2.3. Analysis of the project's execution

- 2.3.1 Logical framework and planning
- 2.3.2 Unexpected changes

#### 2.4. Analysis of efficiency

### 3. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

### 5. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Life histories: the war and the reconciliation.

Attachment 2. Detail of informers - key to the evaluation

## 0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project "Capacity Building with Displaced Former Child Soldiers", approved by Y'care International and financed by the Baring Foundation, has completed its activities, therefore it is necessary to determine the hoped - for results, the lessons learned and the best practices to be utilized, formulate recommendations with regard to other projects and recognize the opinions of the protagonists. The evaluation consisted of a review of the products obtained throughout the development of the project and by means of holding interviews with the project's beneficiaries, who are boys, girls and young people no longer involved in the armed conflict, the officials of the institutions that work with this population in Colombia and, finally in all of the different factors involved in the process of the reinsertion of the young people into society, and their social and physiological recovery.

The general objective of the project was "Commence an innovative approach, and assistance, to support the rehabilitation, and reintegration social, of the displaced young people no longer related to the armed conflict in Colombia, developing the capacity of the YCI and 20 local CBOs and NGOs in Colombia". Due to the fact that this was a project of an exploratory nature, which was the first of its kind in the country, the methodologies applied and the activities performed placed emphasis on the on investigations, in other words, the recognition of different experiences in order to, in the course of the project's development, integrate newly obtained knowledge in the social practice, together with the formulation of innovative care models as a response to the needs of the young people no longer involved with the armed conflict. The executing entity complied, satisfactorily, with the established calendar, utilizing annual plans that permitted the project's operations and the necessary follow - up on the activities performed. In this sense, the executing team designed different strategies relating to each of the established specific objectives, in order to attend to the needs of the young people, notwithstanding the unexpected changes in the context of the project and the institutions.

The services offered to young people included an improvement in the execution period, reflected in 100% coverage in aspects relating to nutritional values, alimentation, initiating a process of educational stability, and priority health attention. With regard to training provided before commencing work this increased but, as this is one of fundamental aspects relating to the social reinsertion of the young people, the evaluation reflected concerns regarding the quality and practicality of the formation processes and the real possibilities that exist for the young people to become involved in the labor market in an urban context.

With regard to the social reinsertion the executing team faced challenges in face of the effective decrease in social prejudice towards this group. The project encountered difficulties with regard to the regulations of the ICBF in this respect, therefore it became necessary to design strategies based on the aspects intimately related to the young people; this strategy helped to avoid a significant number of changes in the project's locations in the City of Bogotá; the improvement in the level consciousness of the officials that worked directly with the population as educators and agents for health institutions; and the consolidation of the academic and public scenarios, covering this theme, contained in the agendas of the respective institutions.

The evaluation noted significant changes in the lives of the young people, specifically related to their concepts over the use of arms and armed conflicts, their ideas over legality and illegality, their conception of institutions and society, together with the strengthening of

their assertive relations with their families, which constituted an important step in their social reinsertion and the prevention of their involvement with illegal armed groups, this question was treated in the cities containing young people in risk of being involved with armed groups, and positively affected the perfection of the attention models from a preventive point of view.

The project reflects evidence of the inclusion of differential scopes, these are: a cope on age based on the formulation of attention models; a scope over sex based on the design of specific strategies, principally the introduction of pedagogical dispositions that consider their differences; and a scope in accordance with the armed groups with which the young people were involved, providing answers to the different profiles and the recognition of the subjectivity.

With relation to institutional management, the project consolidated the process of the network of institutions relating to the attention of the population no longer involved in the armed conflict in Bogotá as Cundinamarca, as a first experience in the coordination of the institutions regarding this theme. Even though the participation of the network in the formulation of public policies did not reach the hoped-for levels, as a result of the restrictions applied by the ICBF, this process strengthened the relations between institutions in providing services to young people in order for them to encounter their families, and interventions relating to emotional and physiological consequences, the interchange of experiences with other institutions and, most importantly, the formulation of health models that placed emphasis on the preparation of the young people to face life in society.

The attention models were realized by means of a participative process between the professionals and technical personnel that resulted in the systemization of the experience of two institutions and the final attention models both in the stage of the transitional home and the Center for Specialized Attention of the Young Mans' Christian Association ACJ-YMCA and the designing of tools that promoted the level of companionship between the young people. The participation of the professionals and the technical personnel permitted the different needs to be established, both in training and the socialization of experiences and also directed to the stress factors as a result of the attention to the young people no longer involved in the armed conflict.

This evaluation makes special recommendations so that the Columbian Government may place a higher level of relevance on the entities that execute public policies and, in this manner, recognize their experiences for the execution of proposals for the attention, and rehabilitation of the young people no longer involved in the armed conflict; specifically to overcome the critics of the process to improve the quality of the lifestyles of the young people no longer involved in the armed conflict, it is necessary to have an effective social inclusion that provides the young people with educational and employment opportunities, and a reduction of the social prejudice and the recognition, by the society, of the character of the young people as victims.

## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

### 1.1. Problem to be treated

The project placed a special emphasis on the armed conflict in Columbia characterized by the recruiting of boys, girls and young people into the files of the illegal armed groups. This problem, which was not new at the end of decade of the nineties was recognized, in Columbia, as a social problem when the number of children, and young people, directly participating in the acts of the armed groups, had reached almost 11, 000. The project, however, from the very beginning recognized that this problem is, actually, a consequence of a chain of violent events that Columbia has suffered throughout its history. The decades of the eighties and nineties were characterized by the massive deployment of more than two million Columbians who were forced to abandon their homes, and flee to other areas, as a result of the actions of the guerillas and paramilitary groups. The conflict, with a strong rural matrix, is now a problem in the cities and urban centers that received the displaced population. However, many of the displaced persons have been obliged to return to their original homes, and to face, again, the daily routine of the armed conflict. Boys, girls, and orphans as a result of the conflict had no other option but to join the armed groups, many others in the same population are running away from rural poverty and the family violence in their homes.

Notwithstanding that the experience, at a worldwide level, regarding the participation of young people in armed conflicts is more, or less, intense, the armed conflict in Columbia presents a matrix that has not been contemplated in other parts of the world. In countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador and Sri Lanka the reintegration social of the young people was achieved in the context of a post-conflict, the surrender of arms and reconciliation processes, where the victims, including young people who had been forced to collaborate with the rebel groups, were granted indemnity or included in education and integrated family reintegration processes, sponsored by the State. In the case of Columbia, this is different; the Columbian Government only implemented a Program for attention to young people no longer involved in the armed conflict, in a particular public context, in which the actions of the armed groups have become cruder as a result of territorial disputes and the cultivation and processing of illegal materials, specifically cocaine.

The project, from the initial planning, recognized the need to attack on various fronts. The first front was to the interior of the institutions, by means of impulse and coherent attention and rehabilitation models that went beyond attempts at assistance, together with the strengthening of the investigation process using the information from the interior to design the strategies to be treated. The second front was to the exterior seeking to treat social reintegration as an integrated process in which the communities, and society, recognized the problem and, thereby advancing in the consolidation of coherent policies to cover the needs of young people.

## 1.2 Scope and objectives

The general objective of the project is to “initiate a novel approach, and assistance, to support the rehabilitation and social reintegration of the displaced young people no longer involved in the armed conflict in Colombia, developing the capacities of the YCI and 20 local CBOs and NGOs in Colombia”

The general objectives of the project are:

Objective No. 1: Assist the OGs, NGOs and the Government of Colombia to understand the specific needs, and difficult situation, of this margined, discriminated and vulnerable group, and therefore, report over the appropriate answers for their rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Objective No. 2: Strengthen the capacity of the OGs, NGOs and the Government of Colombia to design, and implement, novel ideas to confront the needs for education and physiological, social, and health needs of the young people no longer involved in the armed conflict, with the objective of preventing recruitment by the armed groups the gangs and violent reprisals from the communities.

Objective No. 3: Form work networks to facilitate the collaboration between the local NGOs to increase the level of approval of projects' and the collection of funds to confront the basic needs of the displaced young people no longer involved in the armed conflict.

Objective No. 4: Assist the OGs, NGOs and the Government of Colombia in the development of strategies to overcome the extreme, and violent, discrimination against this group of young people and to protect the individuals and groups that are compromised to assist this group.

Objective No. 5: Strengthen the capacity of YCI, creating an awareness of specific needs and promoting appropriate rehabilitation models for this vulnerable group of persons.

### 1.1.3 Execution of the strategies

In accordance with the planning matrix for this project, the executing entity designed different strategies, which although not considered when the project commenced, were aimed at providing an answer to the changes that arose in the project; these strategies are included in the follow-up, and annual, reports over project activities. The strategies developed, maintained relations. With the objectives originally established:

- **Investigation prior to the intervention.** The execution of the first objective, aimed at understanding the needs of the young people no longer involved in the armed conflict, was the first step in the design of the attention models and the formulation of recommendations to the entities responsible for public policies. In this phase three investigative processes were realized, which were recognized as part of the products of the project: one was performed directly with boys, girls and young people who no longer maintained contacts with the armed groups in the city of Bogotá, with the aim of understanding their form of thinking, both real and imaginary, about the experiences obtained during their participation in the armed conflict, and two making reference to the prevention of the participation of young people at risk, which may, also indirectly affect the young ex-combatants.

- **Institutionalization as a special area of interest.** One of the strategies developed for the project referred to the diversity of the types of institutions that formed the network of institutions or other specific mediums consisting of state organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities, other types of institutions that directly attend the population in question and international organizations that have, in some manner, maintained relations with the program, specifically of a local or national nature in certain scenarios in particular. Institutionalization in this sense was the means by which the project's objectives were extended to other institutions.
- **Systemization model as a process.** This strategy assumed that systemization was the process by means of which the different professionals and their functions came together, with relation to the recognizing of the initiatives of the institutions and the pedagogical practices resulting from the contacts with the population. Therefore, the formulation of the attention models is not considered as a product, but, rather, as coming into existence when it was formulated, and was utilized in the strategies for the recompiling of information and the interchange of knowledge between the different participants.

- **Professionals and technicians as part of the project's population.** It was established that one of the relevant aspects of successful care models was that the staff of the executing institutions should be recognized as parties that are also affected by the project, individuals who have a personal life, families and who were considered to be highly important in achieving the project's aims.

- **Reduce the level of discrimination on a small scale.** Due to the risks arising from promoting a massive campaign, the project team, designed to design a strategy to attack the prejudice against this group in a relatively small manner, in terms of the barrios, schools and the entities that work directly with this population; together with the creation of discussion scenarios, with the support of universities and experts in the respective themes.

## 1.2. Methodology of the evaluation

The following objectives were established for the purposes of this final evaluation:

- Evaluate the impact, the beneficiaries and the changes that have occurred as a result of the project compared against the anticipated results, (YCI 2008:4)
- Inform over the learning process and the lessons learned as a feedback, and as materials for, YCI, Baring Foundation and YMCA Bogotá.

The evaluation of social projects is not very far removed from the need to adopt methodologies that permit the participation of key parties and which recognizes that the measuring of the impact generated by the social processes, in certain cases is not possible but, are susceptible to analysis and interpretation. The qualitative paradigm consists of a wide conceptual concept orientated to the process, and is of subjective nature in conformity with social disciplines. "The social program to be evaluated should be understood to be the social universe consisting of the different points of view of the parties directly involved in the social process (...) the social practices to be studied are understood to be the situations in which the participants are involved. These recognize, and interpret the reality in a different

form and, at the same time, are related to the social and cultural world to which they pertain." (Puerta, 1996:141).

For this reason, and in accordance with the arguments registered in the guide of Y'Care International, the application of this evaluation was developed on the basis of the paradigm of an investigative evaluation. Therefore, the evaluation was conceived as an investigation process that permits the measurement of the results of a program or project, and the results obtained, or not obtained, from the actions contemplated under the project.

This final evaluation, utilized, in each phase, social investigation methods, conserving its character of an evaluation, but by means of a "systematic application of the procedures (...) to evaluate the conceptualization, design, implementation and benefits of the social intervention projects" (Puerta, 1996: 17).

In the phase for the compilation of the information, primary investigation sources were utilized; key informers and the principal participants throughout the life of the project. To this end, semi-structured, individual, interviewing techniques were utilized, that permitted the compilation of the different experiences and points of view, regarding the results and the impact of the project. Furthermore, secondary sources were employed, such as a detailed study of the documents prepared during the life of the project; amongst others the initial project approved by the Baring Foundation, work plans, half-yearly and annual activity reports, institutional reports, follow-up and monitoring reports, agendas and minutes of meetings of the executing unit, relating to the processes developed in the inter-institutional meetings, documents relating to investigations, and documents regarding systemization and the statistical records of the project.

In the analysis phase, this evaluation used tools such as an analysis of discourses, the interpretation of interviews and the recognition of the possible changes arising from the commencement of the project, together with a consideration of the unexpected changes that occurred during the project. The evaluation had the aim of "making a detailed analysis, and interpretation, of the information compiled." (Muñiz, 1997: 176). The evaluation of the results "must make it clear how the acts performed contributed to changing negative situations, and the attitudes and capacities of the project's beneficiaries and other groups in the population, that were, indirectly, affected". (Niremberg, 2003: 195); the activities performed, for this purpose, are detailed in this evaluation.

## 2. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

### 2.1 Analysis of the impact

#### 2.1.1. Displaced young people no longer related to the armed conflict

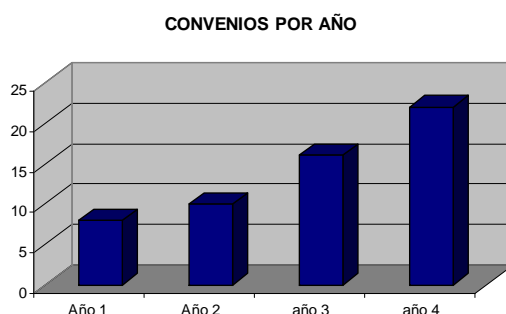
The project, "strengthening of the capacities of young displaced ex-combatants", in its objectives makes specific reference to the particular needs of the young people, and the circumstances generated as a result of the involvement of this group with the irregular armed groups, in such a way that government, and non-governmental, organizations, realized the need to provide novel answers to the deficiencies that exist in this area.

In this sense, it is important to identify the different elements by means of which it is possible to measure the project's real impact directly over the young people in question, when they are in a social re-insertion process, which does not only depend on the acts of the operating institutions, but also on a infrastructure of entities with different functions that form part of the policies for the attention of this group in Colombia.

As the project has placed emphasis on attention and improving the lifestyle of the young people, by means of the formulation of care modules, it is very important to consider the impact; for example as the result of the application of an institutional care program, there is an increased effect impact over the medium and long-term effects of the social re-insertion and physiological-social recovery processes for the young people. Therefore, it is possible, to establish the number of young people who are impacted by the attention models and establish the perceptions of the young people in this respect, calling attention to the fact that there are multiple factors that may result in the fact that the application of the same model may have varying results. Furthermore, the follow-up process on the young people who have now left the project, is the State's responsibility, and is very weak, and causes difficulty in measuring the real achievements of the project, which, of course, affects the results of this evaluation.

In this sense, the direct impact of the project over the young people was considered from three different points of view:

**1. ACCESS TO SERVICES** - Refers to reestablishing, directly, fundamental rights, which is the responsibility of the operating entities of the program for the attention of this group of young people, in coordination with other institutions; these form part of the program's planned objectives coordinated by the Columbian Institute for Family Welfare (food, temporary housing, health, educational and training services and recreation).



Graph 1. Agreements between institutions, by year of execution  
Source: administrative reports year 1 year 4. Files of the YMCA

The services offered to the young people, increased, steadily throughout the project's life, as can be seen in el Graph 1. When the project commenced, the executing entity reported achievement of 7 agreements with other institutions to facilitate the attention of the young people that would participate in the program. The number of agreements increased by 68% with relation to the first report. 100% of the young people commenced their educational grades in the transitional home, through the use of the CAFAM methodology, with the aim of helping the young people to acquire the tools necessary for them to participate, in the future, in a permanent educational process. *"I have obtained many benefits such as learning how to read; before I couldn't read properly, but was fairly quick at spelling out the words (...) my writing was horrible, here I have learned to improve it (...) I have learned to adapt to the city, here in Bogotá, this is like a gift that you have received, and will serve me when I leave here"* (Young displaced.

*Hernán. FARC 16 years of age*). In accordance with the reports over the project's execution and as part of an initiative realized in coordination with the State, significant advances have been achieved with the Secretary of Education, to permit the young people to commence their educational activities as soon as this is feasible, in the Special attention center phase, which can commence its activities at any time of the year.

100% of the young people attended by the program received nutrition and alimentation in accordance with the standards established for their respective ages; in this respect the young people have a positive perception: *"it makes me think very hard to think that, they, (the young people that were involved with the armed groups) suffering the cold, going hungry, it made me think, for example, here if you don't like the food you don't eat it, on the other hand, there, (in the armed group) you had to eat what was put in front of you or leave it; and, clearly ...you realize that you are very demanding, and while I was there I had to eat what they gave me, while here, the food is very good"* (young person no longer involved with the FARC, 17 years of age).

The young people create comparisons with the situation in which they are actually living and their lives with the illegal armed groups, where the conditions are extremely harsh and, very

*which I, more or less, understood, the course finished and I couldn't continue because not many people were inscribed" (young ex-combatant, FARC 16 years of age).*

The State's efforts continue to place emphasis of offering courses, but this is not in conformity with the aims of a project that is designed, specifically, to provide attention to this specific group of ex-combatants. A high level of standards has been established to gain entrance to the courses, which place emphasis on training, in which the young people do not obtain sufficient abilities to obtain employment: *"these young people participate in accelerated academic processes, and when they are confronted with other training courses of a higher level or advanced training courses, they cannot adapt to the requirements. One sees that these courses develop a level of writing, and reading ability, that this group has not yet reached, this is a problem for many young people in this country, not only for this group, and denies them many possibilities to achieve the desired social reinsertion". "A group was sent to a course for the reparation of computers, were you see young people of seventh grade mixing with others from the eighth and tenth grades, which makes you ask how the facilitator of the course achieves a satisfactory balance to develop the course, (...) the young people cannot achieve the desired level of writing ability, therefore they become bored, this is incomprehensible and also very sad" (Benjamín Paba, FEAP).*

Furthermore, the training courses offered are very short, and not provide adequate tools to participate in the labor market. *"I commenced a course in assembling and maintenance of computers, but was unable to finish as the college no longer accepted me, and I didn't want the people in my town to know that I was an ex-combatant. I enrolled in another college as an ex-combatant and now I am studying at night; imagine the reactions of the people who once rejected me!". (César. 20 years of age, ex-combatant of the AUC).*

Other aspect that was treated by the project,

as a result of the more advanced age of the young people, in other words the average age of this group was higher than the normal age in the different educational grades, and also as a result of the methodology to be applied. Before the young people enter the educational process, they require an anticipated preparation so that they can acquire, again, the habit of studying and the ability to concentrate, which, on many occasions they did not attain before they became in the armed groups.

The majority of young people that have left the project, have experiences difficulty in obtaining employment in the areas in which they have been trained; either due to the lack of real tools to perform the required activities, or as a result of the lack of social habits that are necessary when they present themselves and compete for a vacant work position.

For this reason, many of the young people that have left the process, have become dedicated to activities for which they have not been trained. Even though the young people have had access to educational processes, these are not designed for the particular circumstances that result from little application of their knowledge of the real life in society. *"They are working, but in an informal sense, (...) in positions that don't even allow them to have access to social security (...), they don't even know hoe to make a curriculum vitae, or present themselves for a job opportunity, this was one of the objectives that we supported, and it was very sad to send a young person for a job opportunity for which he was not accepted, or because of a lack of previous labor experience ", (Norma Barrios ACJ-YMCA).*

By means of the project for the formulation of the lifestyle project, designed during the execution of the current project, *"the young people can, in the transitory phase, formulate the expectations, and dreams, that they have, its in the CAE that they have to confront these dreams with the opportunities offered by the project. (Carlos Rojas ACJ - YMCA) "What I want to do is finish studying, (...) then start working, to be able to buy the things that I need, and then afterwards see if I'm doing well or not". (Ex-combatant FARC, Pedro 18 years old).* The interest to continue studying occurs, specifically, in the young people that had some previous educational background, to consolidate their plans for the future *"I thought that, once I finished my Bachelors degree that I would go to university, but this is like a dream (...) due to the background that you have had with the group, you have to think of the things you have here it causes a big impact over you". (Hernán ex-combatant, FARC 16 years old).*

**3. SUBJECTIVE COMPONENT:** refers to the changes that have occurred in the lives of the young people, specifically related to their form of thinking, and acting, as they passed through the program. These contents were incorporated in the care models and are referred to by the young people as, amongst other names, the union of the young people with their families, and the consolidation of family relationships, the conceptions of the institutions and society, together with the changes and reforming of sentiments - thoughts with regard to the armed conflict or internal standards.

When leaving the armed groups the children and young people, are confronted by the fears that result from a new concept of life, and by the expectations created by the mediums of communication and the armed forces, with regard to the economical benefits that they will receive. *"On the one hand I was happy because I never had the opportunity to visit the city before, but on the other hand, I thought I would stay here in the program until it finished but, in my case this was not to be, I didn't have the capacity to confront my situation"* (Eduardo. Ex-combatant FARC 18 years of age). The expectations generated by the project and the obligatory changes, have been attended by professional teams that attend the young people and orientate them in accordance with their emotional level and other aspects related to the process.

The young people referred to the positive impact that this had on their perspectives of war and society. One of the factors that caused most impact, was the fact that the paramilitary and guerilla groups shared the same living space, thereby destroying the concept that the other group were "the enemies", and their daily contacts helped to relegate the armed conflict to another level in their lives: *"When they told me that I would be going to a home for demobilized people, the first thing I wanted to know was if the home was only for paramilitary guys like myself, and they told me that the home consisted of people from all of the different groups! - This scared me, and I thought well its as difficult here as in the mountains, - when I arrived the other guys treated me well, and I was the only paramilitary guy there at that time"*. (César. 20 years of age, ex-combatant AUC)

With the majority of young people the measurement of the real impact over their lives that resulted from their relationship with the Project was the conviction that their futures no longer depended on arms. The reports placed emphasis on the development of the methodologies to strengthen the processes for living together in society, together with establishing the plans for the future lives of the young people, generated new perspectives for the young people, which was expressed by them: *"when I left the program, I went to Guaviare(...) when I arrived the woman worked for the paramilitary group, she called one of the guys,*

*like alimentation for the body, (...) I have changes my form of thinking a little, and day after day I am changing a lot of things (...), but I don't believe that I will ever be able to blot my past experiences out of my mind because, in any given moment, it is called to my attention and I like it very much, but here I'm changing the way I think". (Hernán, ex-combatant with the FARC, 16 years old). On the other hand, the young people recognize the situation in which they lived with the illegal armed groups, as part of a difficult experience, and this made them conscious of the reasons why they became involved with the group, and reconciling this difficult past that they had to live during their participation with the armed groups. "When you become involved with a group of delinquents you have one foot in jail and one foot in the graveyard; and I decided that, if I had to kill someone, I would do it, I joined because I was persecuted, I was very bad, your own family makes you want to join the armed groups."*

methodologies for the analysis and interpretation of the armed conflict from the point of view of the young people, the protection from violence by means of cultural manifestations, and the forming of plans for lifestyles without weapons, amongst other themes.

### 2.1.2. In the social order

The project's execution encountered difficulties relating, specifically, to the directives from the ICBF, as the coordinator of public policy with respect to this theme, due to the fact that, initially, it was suggested that the project should be performed out of the public's view, due to the status of the young people and the risks that they may be exposed to; actually, at present, social reinsertion represents an important challenge, which were assumed by the project. *"That nobody must find out that there is an institution of ex-combatants, that nobody knows that there are ex-combatants in the college, that the community doesn't find out, that the neighbors don't find out, they have established different limitations and, furthermore, prohibitions" (Heidy Arévalo, network of institutions). There are always fears, because of the discrimination, or paradigm, that arises as a result of the concept that this group participated in the armed conflict (...) but in the manner in which the young people are recognized, as individuals, the doors of opportunity open for them" (official ICBF).*

The project had to design strategies to reduce the level of discrimination in the areas nearest to the young people. *"Well yes, because people think badly about you, they are always watching you (...) (ex-combatant, FARC 17 years old).* As a result the Social Service Program was created so that the young people could develop social abilities in the institutions in a manner that they could relate to the highly vulnerable populations such as children and old people. This permitted the community to change their image of the young people in their daily lives. In this manner, there was a significant reduction in the need to change from the home to the institution in Bogota and increased the agreements and activities developed with the communities in a direct manner. The young people could now visit churches, the national police and cultural centers without fearing for their personal safety.

However, at a macro level, the State's policy is still weak in the areas relating to social reinsertion, this should be seen from an integrated point of view that goes further than the responsibilities of the institutions that execute the public policies; this should be established as part of the policies of the Colombian government. In this sense, this not only refers to the discrimination of society as a result of history and the social representations of the Columbians with regard to the armed groups and the ex-combatants, but also the their vision of the reinsertion process, which continues to be very limited. *"Certain areas have not been included, (...) that have to do with social reinsertion, the discrimination against the young people and the part relating to the forming of competences and social lifestyles." (Benjamín Paba FEAP).*

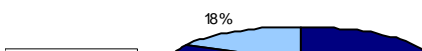
A decrease in social discrimination must become a general compromise for the Colombian society, and in a country which is polarized, it is necessary to commence with contexts relating businessmen and the entities that offer real opportunities to the young ex-combatants that want to build their futures without arms. *"With regard to work the only opportunities available a rein construction (...) for the ex-combatants other types of work cannot be obtained, the majority are uneducated, the young people that have studied made it, to eighth or ninth grade, the majority only made it through primary education, this make it very difficult for them" (César. 20 years of age, ex-combatant).*

In this sense the project advanced in the consolidation of academic, and public, scenarios that were collocated in the agendas of the institutions, and dealt with themes relating to the

discrimination of this population. Events realized during the life of the project, included a forum "from fright to tenderness" with the participation of 80 representatives from different institutions and 2 cine forums with the participation of 120 representatives from the academic world in coordination with the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, which resulted in the preparation of the document - a manual for Community relations "which established directives to generate processes for the coordination of social responsibilities, reparation and extra-institutional projection"(annual report for year 3), relating to this type of population.

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based on the differences due to the generics of the young people. Both as a baseline and in the final report, it is obvious that there is a higher level of attention to men , between 71% and 80% between the both cut-offs. However, the attention to the female population increased by 9%, which may be due to an increase in the participation of girls and young females in the armed groups or an increase in desertion from the groups.

Grafico 3. Comparación de atención por género  
Fuente: Informes de Gestión Año1- Año 4. Archivo YMCA

However, the attention models in the transitory phases and the CAE make a difference, which is evident in the vision of the institutionalization of the State in this sense *“working from the point of view of generics, another very important aspect was related to the habits that the young people obtained to express their feelings and relate their life histories, this ability to express their sentiments will assist them overcoming the traumatic experiences they have suffered in their lives”*(Carlos Rojas, ACJ- YMCA).

The attention contemplated aspects such as attention in sexual and reproductive health, and the establishing of pedagogic measures that contemplated these differences. *“working from the point of view of generics, the experiences of both the boys and the girls, are very different and during the course of our work this must be taken into consideration (...) the work is articulated to the formation of young people, where they have to accept their experiences and that it is all in the past, you can't pretend that in a month they will be thinking differently, it is a very gradual process.”* (official ICBF).

*The scope of the attention in conformity with the armed groups to which the young people pertained.*



Grafico 4. Comparación de atención por grupo armado  
Fuente: Informes de Gestión Año1- Año 4. Archivo YMCA

The six-monthly and annual reports presented to YCI and the Baring Foundation reflected that, at the commencement of the project, there was a level of attention, almost at the same level, for the ex-combatants of the paramilitary and guerilla groups, due to the massive demobilization promoted by the national government. During the last year this proportion has changed, dramatically, as 83% of the attention is now aimed at the members of the guerilla groups. The changes in the profile, are treated in the attention models, due to the fact that the parameters for living together, and the expectations, of each group are very different.

## 2.2. Analysis of the institutional participation

### 2.2.1 Institutional management

The public policies formulated for the attention of this population, resulted in the participation of several institutions, with a high level dispersion of abilities, which were responsible for the attention to this group; as a result of this situation the project attempted to participate from the micro levels with the institutions by means of achieving the consciousness of the professors and personnel related, directly, with the attention of this group. However, this action was limited when forming new types of attention that resulted in proposals that were more specific for this population, due to the lack of interest by the Colombian government. A clear example is to be found in the education and training process for a working life, *"the same requirements are established in the state of Sena, where the training is being provided to the young people, one example is the O Module lo 0 relating to business activities, which only consists of 30 to 40 hours of verbal instruction, to speak about business activities for 40 hours to a young person who has difficulties in reading and writing, and therefore problems in concentrating; due to the fact that the children have problems in concentrating and the professor has 40 hours in which to teach them, and that the classes start and finish on specific dates, but the professor has to spend all day fighting with the young people due to the problems they have in accepting the established standards "* (Benjamín Paba FEAP).

Some of the factors that have influenced the poor acceptance of the attention process designed by the national government, are as follows:

- The interest of the government in diffusing the results, regarding the numbers of ex-combatants in a policy that is centered on disarming the armed groups, without developing strategies that permit a real social reinsertion. *"one can see, that the State is preoccupied for disarming the groups, but not for the social reinsertion, when we talk about demobilization, disarming and reintegration these are three aspects that cannot be separated."* Benjamín Paba (FEAP). The institutionalization of the State caused difficulties that could generate a low coverage for the program, as *"this is a fluctuating program that depends on policies at a presidential level (...) this affects us because sometimes the population is lower and the institutions, in some cases, cannot continue as they don't always have the same population, and this situation is very dependent on public policies and is not under the controls of the institutions ICBF"* (official ICBF).
- The centralization of the execution of the policies relating to infants and adolescents in the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare. Even though channels had been established for the participation of different institutions in the forming of public policies relating to infants, for example the Code for Infants and Adolescents, the theme of the ex-combatants was always handled, discreetly, by this entity.
- The lack of recognition by the state entities with regard to the knowledge and experience accumulated by the operating entities in providing an effective answer to the needs of the ex-combatants.

From the State's point of view, the assistance mentality regarding the needs of the young people are their basic needs, from the point of view of their basic rights regarding in the human rights theme. *"The young people arrive with needs that one feels are not very important, but for them, they are important, this consists of their alimentation, their clothing and their need for adequate space (...) but, also, for them the legal part is very important, they are always investigating the process, as they feel it is very important"*(official, ICBF).

The instruments reviewed provided evidence that the project has transcended this vision to identify the needs in excess of the basic needs covered by the state. Attention is called to the those referring to the processes for encountering the families of the young people, and the emotional and physiological needs of the young people, together with an intervention in the areas regarding the effects in the lives of the young people as a result of their participation with the armed groups. Situations that are made obvious by the young people in the form in which they relate to other people, the generation of psychoactive substances or alcohol, their thoughts over their sexual development, the forming of their plans for their future lives within the realities encountered in the program, amongst other things. All of the different aspects of the projects are made visible in public scenarios, the academic area and inter-institutional coordination.

As a result of the proposal established by the project for the creation of networks, which at a local and national level increased the coordination of the activities to provide an answer to the needs of this population, it is important to note that, although the incidence of the network in the forming of public policies was not achieved at the desired level, established in the initial plan, this did result in the fact that themes such as the participation in society and the insertion process were brought more into the public eye. The institutions that participated in events, conversations and encounters recognized the importance of these scenarios, and from this position the relationships between the different institutions were strengthened, in the handling of the processes and seeking solutions to specific problems or in the contexts that arose during the experiences. *"the impact (of the network) transcended the invitation to the executing institutions of public policies, and the operating institutions outside of Bogotá y other networks, as we spoke the same language, this was a positive scenario, the ICBF met with international and national organizations"* (Benjamin Paba FEAP). There were advances in the coordination of institutions both at national and local level, negotiating with other entities for example: *the Red Cross, and the Defense of the pueblo (Defensoria del Pueblo), a search for the families of this group was coordinated, requesting the assistance of training institutions such as Sena and the colleges."* (Official ICBF).

The strengthening of effective communication channels with the ICBF, together with the coordination of specific actions regarding the welfare of the ex-combatants was generated as a result of the incidence of the work of the local network, expressed in the formulation of a unified criteria related to the process for each young person, and to achieve agreements to facilitate their social reinsertion. *"The communication was very good, we established mechanisms (...) at a social worker and physiological level in order to discuss the behavior, and progress, of the young people in the institution. On a legal level, when necessary, we provided the respective assessments, whether obtaining a document or speeding up a civil registration process, an I.D. card, or a tutoring process, (...) an improved level of communication, that assisted in an efficient development of the work between the ICBF and the institutions"* (official ICBF).

At a local level, the ICBF was conscious of the importance for the coordination of the activities to improve the attention to the ex-combatants. *"We have achieved the necessary coordination between the different institutions, we have articulated with the networks to improve the attention, and the offers, to the young people."* (Official ICBF), which expressed the recognition of the State entities and the efforts of the project's executing entity.

A network of institutions for the attention of ex-combatants was constituted in Bogotá and Cundinamarca was the first experience of this nature in the country, as a network of operating institutions working in this theme, *"a positive scenario where there were clear opportunities for working under the required conditions, was achieved and enabled us to be seen, at least in Bogotá, although we were identifies at a national level, when we were able to participate,*

*and have influence, in presenting the project's objectives (Benjamín Paba. FEAP). There was no immediate answer from the Columbian Institute for Family Welfare, but the network sought to participate, from the beginning, in the programmed scenarios; and then open new spaces for dialog that would permit the interchange of experiences with other institutions and the generation of confidence in the relationships between the different institutions. In the beginning everything was virtually impossible, but little by little the necessary channel were opened that permitted fluidity. (Heidy Arévalo).*

The network of institutions was considered to be important as they *"generated a collective front before a complex theme, that also needed to become part of the national policies. This was a reality, we commenced working on themes, in coordination with our incidence in the opportunity to communicate with different institutions and have the opportunity to obtain other visions."* (Heidy Arévalo, network of institutions). *"It was important that we could create, and demonstrate, a positive scenario where there was a clear objective for our work and the intentions that we wanted to make our work visible in order to invite the other networks to visualize, so that we all worked together in the same direction". (Benjamín Paba. FEAP).*

### 2.2.2 Care

Due to the fact that the attention provided to the ex-combatants is a policy of the Columbian government, parameters were gradually established for the attention to be provided to this group of the population. Initially this was an institutional model in which the ex-combatants below the age of 18 was attended, in the sense that these would not be prosecuted as they were considered to be victims of the armed conflict; this group received, from the State, assistance in the form of access to, and reestablishing, basic services, including health, education, registration, culture and recreation amongst other things. The process, designed by the government, established the parameters that were necessary to design the attention models, this proposal for the different phases has been subject to changes, and new establishments have been created such as tutorial camps that no longer correspond to an institutional point of view, but rather to the safeguarding of the homes of the families prepared to receive the young people. However, the majority of the young people continue to be attended by the institutions, and it is possible to perceive a rupturing of the social insertion process in the different phases of the project. *"The social insertion process is not as fractured as the program indicates"* (Heidy Arévalo, installation network).

However, the internal dynamics were not established by the State. The institutions commenced the development of pedagogic attention strategies that demonstrated that the attention went further than just treating the basic needs of the young people and transcended the emotional needs and the social life of the young people. Initially, the State contracted a variety of institutions and non-government organizations with a wide range of experiences with the groups of ex-combatants, consequently the surrender or capture of the young people required the opening of new institutions.

In this sense, the attention models designed for use in the project, seek to reconcile the economic needs of the young people with the importance of developing a process that prepares them to confront life outside of the institution, and to reduce the initial demands on the young people in a short-term process that provides rapid economic solutions and which, on the contrary should be self-sustaining. *"The principal aspects of the program have been the social reinsertion, where emphasis was placed on family relations, the emotional relationships of the young people, the aspects related to health, and aspects regarding training and education, which have been the most important elements"*(Benjamín Paba FEAP), however, as a result of the theorization

of the project's complexities, the work teams reviewed their experiences and social paradigms, amongst others, physiological-social attention. *"One important element is the fact that you have to treat their resistance from a physiological and social point of view. You cannot analyze all of the different forms of conduct of the young people; you start by reminding them how they felt when they were younger and start to remove the feeling of being discriminated against, the fear of being a young person, because when working with them you see that they are full of fear"* (Heidy Arévalo).

The recognition by the ICBF, of the work performed under the project, reflects their interest to transcend the attention *"the ACJ placed close attention on the opportune compliance of all of the different lineaments established by the ICBF; in the provision of materials and in the training health and education areas, this has not been mentioned previously but is very important for them, because when the young people enter the program it is essential that they receive adequate medical treatment and, when necessary, receive special attention; therefore, we believe that the ACJ has complied with the respective lineaments established by the (...)"* (official ICBF), but, in addition it is noted that *the recognition of the young people as subjects, with the right to work and participate on a daily basis, thereby achieving an active role in their own futures. I think that they made important contributions, so that the young people that entered the program started to construct their lives"*, (official ICBF).

It should be mentioned that, that the processes developed for the systemization in the institutions reflected a high level of participation by the professors and technical staff together the utilization of methodologies, which recognized the different experiences in the forming of the components for each of the models. The above was achieved by means of the application of interviews with the principal participants, reunions and dialogs of reencounters and the construction of the models, documented proposals, which were presented for discussion in order to advance the consolidation of the models and the socialization of the advances within the framework of the network of institutions. As a result, the institutions now count on new proposals and scopes of attention.

The project reported advances in an agreement with the Universidad Nacional for the integration of the personnel in the physiological area, in order to place emphasis on the mental health of the ex-combatants; by means of the identification of a component that works with the fears regarding the consumption of psychoactive substances and alcohol, and other concerns regarding their experiences with the armed groups and the unhealthy practices relating to sexuality and reproductive health. As a result the reflections have widened in this theme, and several institutions have become involved in the development of investigation and attention processes, aimed at this group. However, there is still a lack of interest on the State's part, as they continue to place this group of young people in attention programs, together with other groups of young people, without recognizing the special problems of the ex-combatants as a result of their participation with the armed groups, and the special consequences, such as the consumption of psychoactive substances in this group *"the consumption of psychoactive substances continues to increase, and there has also been an increase in the number of young people that are affected by paranoiac and physiological disorders, these disorders require a high level of specialized attention. The State's network doe not provide an answer to this problem, therefore I can place emphasis of physiological aspect of the attention provided to the young people."* (Benjamin Paba. FEAP).

The executing institutions that were interviewed conceived the creation of the care models as a permanent process, subject to modification due to the different profiles of the young people, together with the changes arising from the different experiences obtained in the development of the program. One of the factors necessary for the development of the

program is its flexibility the possibility of change, responding to new needs and social contexts. The process for the construction of the models, through a participative process, permitted the coordinators and professionals to obtain consciousness of their work in this respect, *“from the beginning of the program we have been seeking an attention model, a strategy to rescue the young people from the armed conflict, in order to show them other aspects of life that have nothing to do with war, art for example. The young people come from a training process instilled during their time with the armed groups, which many of them considered as a game that only caused pain. (...) Now, the arts permit them to demonstrate that it is not a war scene; it is a different scenario, a public scenario a social scenario (Benjamin Paba. FEAP).*

In a specific manner the attention models aimed to consider *“three fundamental section in each of the two models. The first section was related to the identification and signification of the experiences obtained during the armed conflict. The second section dealt was concerned with the network of family assistance and the third portion referred to the projection of the aims. The difference with this program was the manner in which each stage of the process was achieved.”(Heidy Arévalo).* In the contexts in Columbia, where the separation of families is the result of an enforced displacement as a result of the armed conflict, it is necessary to locate the families and extend the social reinsertion to the family group. Many of the young people had not seen their families since they became involved in the armed conflict; this fact was converted into an important factor in the planning of their life styles. *“When they arrive, the majority of the young people are anxious to reencounter their families; they need formation in order to define their life styles; the definition of their legal situation, in the penal processes the modifications to the existing laws should be accelerated in the educational areas, etc. The young people require a real social reinsertion” (official ICBF).*

The attentions models are novel, not only as they are the result of a unique experience in social reinsertion in the middle of an internal conflict, through the use of institutional attention but also for treating the theme by means of inter-disciplined manner. As a result of the review of the models that were formed on a parallel basis with other proposals realized by other institutions, it is important to mention:

- **Development of pedagogic strategies in a transversal manner;** in the daily life of program, actions were systemized, and integrated, in the attention models. *“Well I thought this home was very good to me, as I felt like a free person, and that I was no longer with the other people but with civilians, (...) the daily life there was very good, I placed attention on everything, and saw that the people who taught us only wanted the best for us, they treated us with care and love, even though they had never seen us before, as a result I felt very comfortable with them. One lives very well here although, occasionally, you get depressed as a result of your personal problems, but life is really good there.” (Ex-combatant FARC, 18 years of age)*
- **The division of the phases within the programs and the use of rituals.** *“The first phase, considers the experiences of the young people as they begin to understand their lives in another context, beginning to overcome the fears; the fights, the loss of the group the loss of friends in the group, (...). The second phase consists of a training process (...) in order to participate in civil life, commence reading again, and discover all of the abilities and skills that the young people inherently possess. (...) New alternative for employment and studies. (...). A young person can now say: “o.k. I’m going to start studying, I need to train myself, I’m to enroll in (...) grade, I’ve found my family, or I’ve encountered an emotional relationship that makes me want to better myself and achieve the strategic plans I’ve established for my future and I’ve also been able to overcome my emotional problems.”(Norma Barrios ACJ- YMCA).* These phases, in the interior of the program, permitted the conception that the process was being complied with and reflected the advances together with the generation of incentives by means of the abandoning of the guerilla image and the diligence of the young people in their efforts to form their life styles.

- **Procedures and proposals were centered on the subjects.** The lifestyles, experiences and the consequences of the participation of the young people with the armed groups, were not only determined by the length of time they were with the groups or the functions they performed within the groups; the attention model proposed different types of attention, which were the responsibility of professionals in the different phases and processes in the groups, in order to achieve individual treatments. *"The young people (...) were seen as holistic (...) as human beings with virtues, with abilities and defects (...) as is the case with everyone else"* (Carlos Rojas ACJ- YMCA.).
- **The positive relationships between the educators, the technical teams and the young people that facilitated the models.** *"We worked with a model, that permitted that the young people achieved affective relations, not necessarily in their family group, as many of their families lived a long way away, and in other cases the family has been lost forever; therefore, in the program, it was possible to establish emotional roots for the young people (...) an affective dynamic is created and fills the human sense, this results in the fact that the young people can live their daily lives without problems. I believe that this is the key to success, it is free learning as the people there see the young people as individual persons and not as members of an armed group."* (Norma Barrios). *"Values for them, is that they were once guerillas, and no longer want to be. Its not easy, but I believe that this was one of the lessons learned in practice."* (Heidy Arévalo).
- **The models gave added value to the autonomy** of the subjects, from the moment that they recognized the decision taking necessary in the social reinsertion process, and as a product for training the young people in the observance of standards as, due to their participation in the armed groups it is possible to note low levels of autonomy or a resistance to comply with the rules and standards required in any institutional process.
- **Emphasis on "education for peace" and ability of the institutions interact, and live, with society,** as a means of the strategies, such as the provision of services in the communities, where the program is located and the interior of the programs, with regards to the daily relationships, where the agreements achieve success, the concentration of standards and the recognition of the difference between legal and illegal, and legitimate and not legitimate. *"Very often you think they will not let you out, because you have been bad, but the truth is that is better for us, because in the street anything can happen to you and in the house you are safe; (...) and learn live with so many people because I'm not accustomed to living that way".* (ex-combatant FARC Iván, 17 years of age). *"I became a friend of the members of the guerilla, from ELN, of the Buitrago<sup>2</sup>, from everywhere, we were only four or five paramilitary guys, the rest were from the ELN; life is very strange, in the mountains we cannot stand these guys but, here, in the city we have learned to live together in peace. (César. 20 years of age, ex-combatant of the AUC).*

### 2.2.3 Technical capacity

During the project, the strengthening of the technical capacities in the operating institutions was understood to be a process that required, in addition to a systemization of experiences and the improving of the coordination between the different institutions, the strengthening of the teams that worked with the young people in the programs.

This was created as the answer to the high rotation of personnel, which was not convenient for the institutions, and on the contrary establishes challenges relating to the stress factors

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<sup>2</sup> Buitrago: paramilitary group

that may arise as a result of the dynamics of the project, the flexible hours and, in general, the personal needs and training of the professionals and other people that work in the institutions. The effectiveness and efficiency of an attention program, depends, principally, on the executors and the human element, on which the project was based throughout the term of its execution; factors that were recognized by the persons that were interviewed; in this sense, the reports over the project highlighted the following conclusions:

- The needs of the professional and technical staff vary from training to the treatment of stress, resulting from the dynamics of the project. The requirements of the person that attend the ex-combatants, has a high personal component, in the areas relating to the elaboration of the situations that have to be confronted on a daily basis.
- The demands for training courses for the professionals that work with this population are centered, principally, in the handling of the crisis situations that may be presented, and in the strengthening of the tools for the handling of conflicts, from the perspective of reconciliation.
- It is ineludible that the scenarios generated by the sharing of experiences between the different disciplinary points of view, socialize the lesson learned and the sentiments resulting from the life histories regarding the experiences suffered during the armed conflict. *“Working with ex-combatants shows you how to be a person, to be sensitive I believe that every population has something, to learn to live one with the other; we can become bigger and stronger, but they need affection, and this shows you how to demonstrate this sentiment to others.”* (Bernardo, educator).
- It is necessary to generate synergies between the teams so that the execution of the care models will be efficient, in other words that there scenarios that can be easily handled by means of attention models but, finally, the direct attention, on a person to person basis cannot be implemented but must be provided on a spontaneous basis. *“Another lesson was how an adult is located in an institutional area, with relation to young people, (...) and based on the experiences accumulated with the young people of different ages, together with their life histories, different religions and different armed groups. These experiences, of a personal nature, are reflected in some manner in the attention models, which any professional entering the institutions considers to be their own, when they are consolidated into the institutional processes”.* (Heidy Arévalo, network of institutions).

The project executed labor turns for the socialization of the intervention strategies and for the strengthening of the work teams by means of methods for their formulation taken from the intervention proposal. The institutions placed emphasis on the importance of these meetings to clarify the profiles of the professional, and technical, staff that would work with this population *“we were all subject to the same language the same rules (...) there are clear intervention strategies so that the professional is clear that there is a model that must be applied therapeutically”, (...) that requires that the person has an assertive tone, because for them, this is very important as they have been subject language, which has caused a lot of damage to them, an aggressive tone, which was applied whenever they tried to express their sentiments; consequently, it is necessary to seek an assertive type of language”* (Benjamín Paba FEAP).

However, the rotation of professionals in the institutions, continues, whether due to the stress generated by the project or, mainly, due the opportunity to earn higher salaries in other entities. This causes difficulty in the training processes and in the continuity of the strengthening of the technical capacity of the institutions. *“The universities are not preparing professionals, especially in the social areas, in order to attend the post-war consequences and this is very worrying, because this is a country in the process of becoming demobilized, and who will be responsible for attending the victims; when the people graduate, and when they start to work in these programs, they become aware of the existence of an armed conflict as the result of an unrecognized*

*political conflict; therefore, this is very difficult and causes the processes to be even slower than usual" (Benjamín Paba FEAP).*

As the majority of the operating institutions in the program are civil society organizations, it is necessary to count on the full support of the State. The National Board for Demobilized Persons, was an entity created to coordinate the different State entities that would attend this population, in this sense it is necessary to provide sufficient training to government officials, as they are the people who, on a daily basis, with this group of young ex-combatants. *"We, the civil organization, need your assistance, and not the contrary, because it appears that this is our problem, (the institutions providing the services) and in reality the problem of the State organizations" (Benjamin Paba, FEAP) .*

## 2.3. Analysis of the execution

### 2.3.1 Planning and follow-up the results

The project plan was prepared on the format utilized by the Baring Foundation for the presentation of projects and fund requests from this organization. The initial project presented a description of the problem in a synthetic manner, based on an analysis of the reality in Columbia and the experience of the institution in similar problem areas.

With regard to the general objective of the project this is considered to be clear, concrete and realizable, in other words it is aimed at a real problem that affects a delimited group. The general objective is segregated in specific objectives, which permits the project's operational activities. The planning matrix descjrs ian arj8(r)n

### 2.3.2 Unexpected changes that affected the development of the project

The program for assistance to the ex-combatants is subject, at all times, to changes that may arise from a political and legislative context in Colombia, which resulted in several modifications during the course of the program. In the reports that were reviewed during this evaluation, these changes can be noted together with the actions taken to minimize their effect over the project's execution. When reviewing the impact generated by these changes, adaptations that generated unexpected changes can be seen. In accordance with the action plan for each of the years of the project's life, the execution of the objectives and indicators do not reflect substantial modifications. The principal changes are reflected in the strategies for the themes to be treated, or in the institutions that were considered to more appropriate in accordance with the contexts contained in the report.

As the attention provided to the young people was a State policy, this was susceptible to changes due to political influences, *"We are working under uncertain conditions, today there is an institution tomorrow no, today there are young people tomorrow there are none, (...) there always exists a latent problem of things, or people, disappearing"*(Heidy Arévalo. Network of institutions). Amongst the unexpected changes that occurred in the institutional, or internal, contexts of the project's execution, we would highlight the following:

- Changing, and variable, legislation with regard to the ex-combatants in Colombia, include the formulation of Law 975 during 2005, that provides benefits to the demobilized elements of the self- defense units, the new Code for Infants and Adolescents which was implemented at the end of 2006, created new juridical channels in the case of the below age ex-combatants and the legal projects for administrative compensation that contemplates the children no longer related to the armed conflict and considered to be victims, and subject to compensation from the recruiters in the form of subsidies from the State.
- The closure of the programs of the organizations on a national level during the life of the project, which changed, permanently, the institutional map that was to have been strengthened, and an evident loss of accumulated knowledge and experience of the these institutions with regard to the attention provided to the ex-combatants. 60% of the programs at a national level have closed for a variety of reasons, during the project's life, *"This is a fluctuating program that depends on the policies at a presidential level, therefore we cannot define the number of young people that will participate in the programs, which affects us as, occasionally, the population is lower, this, I believe, has been one of the factors that has affected the project and the institutions that, sometimes, can no longer continue as they don't always have the same population to attend, this depends, very much, on the policies of the State, and is a factor outside the control of the institutions or the ICBF"*.(official ICBF). For the project, this resulted in important changes with regard to the consolidation of the local experience in attention in the city of Bogotá through the network of institutions, this was due, initially, to the closure of the Center for Specialized Attention, located in Bucaramanga, which caused great difficulties in calling meetings with the institutions at a national level, and it became necessary to seek other channels in the cities.
- Unexpected changes in the instructions from the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, that affected the functioning of the program. In some cases it was attempted apply the models created by the State, from an external viewpoint, which did not consider the daily

reality in the different stage so of the project, or the specific factors regarding the context of local attention, and based on the different experiences of the institutions.

- State policies that favored the self-defense units in Columbia, units that had a high percentage of young people less than 18 years old. This established challenges for the design of adequate models, as the profile of this group of young people had a high level of necessity for which the programs were not adequately prepared.
- The rearming of the self-defense groups, whose leaders are adults, in specific areas dedicated to delinquency, who call themselves "the black eagles", also represent a latent risk that the young people again become involved in this problem, even in the cities.

## 2.4. Analysis of efficiency

The project, initially, prepared a proposal for a budget, which was developed in accordance with the initial planning, with certain small differences that were caused by the increase in transport, materials and the costs of personnel, that corresponded to the increase of the cost of living in the country and had nothing to do with substantial changes in the project.

Each of the available resources was assigned to specific areas, and was applied in a parallel manner with the activities that were carried out. The executing entity maintained an accounting system that permitted the control of the expenses incurred in each of the assigned areas. This approach permitted the use of the resources in a manner to obtain the required results and that the population (young people, officials, community) participated in the process.

In general, it should be mentioned that the designation of the available labor sources in this manner contributed, significantly, to obtaining knowledge over, and handling this situation; as the conditions in which the young ex-combatants are encountered, are relatively unknown, and the handling of their situation was on an informal basis with no technical, or conceptual, support to ensure a higher level of response to their problems.

In another sense, the work areas designated to be performed between institutions, permitted encounters and mutual experiences, which, previously, had never been achieved, opening communication channels that became sources that favored the strengthening, and widening of the qualification of the services provided to the young people.

The project strengthened an alternative source of action for the young people, favoring their inclusion in urban society, and although the results of this objective have not been expressed in the form of achievements against aims, the fact that several entities became committed to assisting in this area, which permitted the costs to be distributed between various entities, and in this manner the young people were able to take advantage of the different opportunities presented as a result of source of action.

In achieving that the young people left the vicious circle of the armed conflict and the generation of other projects for their future lives created a new culture that is infiltrated by other forms of relationships that are not related to the violence, thereby permitting that the resources of the State, can, to a greater extent, be aimed at the construction of scenarios regarding living conditions and not to confront an armed conflict.

### 3. LESSON LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

With regard to the project's experience, the lessons learned were:

- **Dealing with children with the mentality of men and women.** The institutions that provide attention to the ex-combatants must consider the fact that the biological and emotional development of the young children that participated in the armed groups, takes place at an accelerated rate. Their transformation into adults was extremely rapid, and has a fundamental affect on their life styles. 70% of the combatants are young people with ages in a range from 14 to 26 years of age.
- **Valuing the young ex-combatants as people.** Although the option selected for the attention to be provided to the young ex-combatants, was through the application of institutional processes, the design of the care models must place emphasis on the individual subjects. In other words, the different types of experience obtained as a result of the ex-combatants participation in the armed conflict must be contemplated in the care models and the attention processes, from each of the different disciplines; considered whether the young people are men or women, the period for they participated in the armed groups and their experiences.
- **The armed conflict considered as an experience.** The design of the attention models had to recognize the fact that, although the children and young people were guerillas affected their fact lives, this was not the only factor that is relevant to their present condition. The fact that the young people participated in the armed conflict, cannot be converted into the only factor to be considered, as the young people also have to confront the experiences they have had with their families, their schools, their personal relationships, and their self esteem; all of which have a great influence over their efforts to reestablish their lives, and futures.
- **Reencountering the family as an identification factor:** as a result of their participation in the armed groups many of the young people lose contact with their families, and the relationships have been permanently broken. Locating the families of the young people is one of the factors that contribute to the reconstruction of the real identities of the young people, which was changed completely as a result of their participation in the armed groups. It is one manner in which to forget the past and provided motivation for the future.
- **From the country to the city: an urban plan for rural children.** This proposal was formed so that the adoption programs for the ex-combatants considered the origin of the young people, as a fundamental option, with the aim of preserving their identity and their origin. The program aims to locate the young people, as close as possible, to their hometowns; however for security reasons a large percentage of the young people remain in the larger cities. By means of an institutional urban process, it is necessary to adopt appropriate met, and to create strategies for their reinsertion in society.
- **Urban networks for social reinsertion.** The network of institutions that provide attention to young people in the cities is very limited; therefore the institution is converted into the principal reference point. It is important that the attention process for the young ex-combatants recognizes the fact that the process do not conclude when the young people leave the institution, and it is important to design the dispositions to provide a permanent follow-up on this group, as part of the State's responsibilities.
- **The need for specific attention.** The attention provided to the young ex-combatants requires knowledge of the specific problems that arise with other young people, but which are not present in this group; therefore it is not sufficient to just develop agreements

with institutions that attend other types of profiles. This case requires physiological attention, and the design of proposals to prevent, and eradicate, the consumption of psychoactive substances, together with the implementation of sexual health and sexual reproduction programs.

- **Sexuality instead of love.** The armed establish their own standards and requirements with regard to sexuality that cannot be overcome by means of pre-designed models. The form of the relationship with their bodies, the significance of sexual relationships as a form of power, and the practices of couples in the armed groups, establish images that are very important to identify at a personal level with each person.
- **Decrease the level of from the inside to the outside.** A society that is immersed in an armed conflict, complicated by the drug lords, the assassination of its leaders, the breaking of community and family relationships, is a society that is very reluctant to accept the reconciliation and social reinsertion, of the young people who are blamed for this situation. Consciousness of the fact that the young people are in fact victims, is progressing slowly, and requires a this consciousness to be extended by the professors and the professionals by overcoming this discrimination against the ex-combatants, the fear and the hate; commencing with their near neighbors, this is the only manner in which to commence large-scale processes.
- **The reinsertion social is, above all, reinsertion in the labor market.** One of the biggest problems in the reinsertion process is the lack of real labor opportunities, for the young people when they leave the program. The businessmen and private companies have not designed effective strategies as a guarantee that the young people can achieve their hoped-for life styles. The educational standards to obtain employment are very high and training processes do not respond to their motivation or needs.

The best practices resulting from the project's execution

- **The participation of the academy and investigation centers in this type of project.** The participation of investigation centers such as the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, and the Universidad de la Salle, was a fundamental aspect in the development of the strategies for the visibility of this theme, and the progressive incidence in public policies, by means of the investigation processes developed in a parallel manner with the execution of the activities in these academic centers.
- **Development of participative systemization processes and the recognition of the histories of the institutions.** The design of the attention models is a participative construction process, where the experience of the professional and technical staff is relevant in the development of novel processes.
- **Formulation of new methodologies to treat the problems related to the participation of the young people with the illegal armed groups.** The attention methodology utilized in the project was based on the results of the investigations regarding the themes for the formulation of the projects relating to the future plans for the future lives of the young people, their living conditions and their sexual education; proposals based on the experience of the young people, which were applied, and monitored, in the different phases of the program.
- **The conformation of the institutional network required the participation of government entities and governmental agencies.**

government entities, and for this purpose the voluntary participation, in this case of the Columbian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF), is very important.

- **The needs of the young people go beyond basic needs, as they have emotional problems that require special attention.** The vulnerability of the human rights of this group of young ex-combatants is not limited to reestablishing their fundamental rights. An attention program of this nature cannot be limited purely to attention. In a complementary manner, the young people have special emotional needs; many of them are afraid of the armed groups, and want to contact their families, they have obvious physiological problems as a result of the marks that the war has left on their bodies and minds.
- **Institutions open to the reconciliation processes and to permitting the paramilitary and guerilla groups to live together in harmony.** The project developed strategies to permit the young people from the different armed groups to come together in the institutions; this strategy assisting in changing the mentality between the groups that the other group was their enemy, which had been ingrained in them as a result of the conflict.
- **Social insertion from different scenarios.** The project decided, from the planning stage, to decrease the level of the initial level of discrimination in the different scenarios, including the same institutions and the persons attending the children and young people. The schools, the health care entities and the academy, were the appropriate scenarios that permitted society to learn about the histories of this group of young people and their needs and, for society to recognize their need, in the future, to be reinserted in the society.
- **Training of the staff as a tool for sustaining the proposals for attention and the methodologies designed by the project.** To sustain the project's activities and the proposals contained in the attention models it is necessary that these are supported by training processes by professionals and technical staff, specifically in the mental health and emotional areas, to guarantee an adequate attention to the needs of the young ex-combatants.
- **Living in harmony as a strategy for the reconciliation.** The project's executing entity created alternatives in order to permit the groups to live in harmony in the institutions by means of the design of a tool that permitted the realization of agreements and the acceptance of standards and rules. The "pedagogy for peace" that was utilized in other experiences is adequate, as it can be adapted to the special needs of the young people when they wish to reestablish their relations in the society and with other people.
- **From attention to prevention** - In countries such as Colombia, where ex-combatants, surrender, or are captured, it is necessary to create dispositions to prevent the children, and young people, becoming involved in the armed conflict, or that the young ex-combatants return to the armed groups. The project assumed this task with an investigative scope that would orientate future projects in this theme; which would play an important role in the reparation and reconciliation areas.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions reached in this final evaluation report are presented in two specific groups: results and recommendations; furthermore in each group, we considered aspects relating to the planning, effectiveness and efficiency of each of the objectives.

### 1. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED

#### 1.1. The planning phase

A planning process established in a progressive manner by means of operating plans was one of the project's successes, as this permitted the effective operating of the project and an annual follow-up process of the executing entity's activities. The establishing of specific broad objectives, provided the opportunity to create novel strategies to achieve the established objectives, without limiting the team's ability to execute the planned activities in a tangential manner from the project's commencement. The follow up and feedback of the YCI was relevant to the material reviewed for this evaluation as they ensured that the unexpected change that occurred did not materially affect the essential essence of the project.

#### 1.2 Effectiveness

The executing entity complied, in a satisfactory manner, with the chronogram established in the initial phase. It is clear that the design of the strategies was developed in a political and social context, with a low profile, as a result of which the investigative processes and internal reflections made it possible to design the care models. The participation of the universities and investigation centers facilitated the project's execution, and the project's objectives, such as the reduction of the level of rejection of the young ex-combatants, were channeled through these institutions. A project that is executed from the interior and directed to the exterior reflects excellent results, in other words, prior to the diffusion of novel ideas it is necessary to achieve strength at an institutional level, in this case the local network, which sought external sources of participation. The recognition of the project's objectives by the ICBF was achieved on a progressive basis, and they became one of the project's principal elements, specifically in areas relating to the improvement of services.

#### 1.3 Effectiveness

First objective: (Assist the OGs, NGOs and the government of Columbia to understand the specific needs and difficult circumstances, and social stigmas, that confront this vulnerable group, in order to report the development of appropriate answers to permit their rehabilitation and social re-insertion).

The project developed investigative and reflection processes through the systemization and investigation of different experiences. This resulted in the recognition of the basic needs of this group of the population, which is aimed at establishing their fundamental rights. The executing entities, through the network of institutions promoted this vision relating to the needs of this population in events held for this purpose, directed specifically at the institutions directly involved in this theme.

Second objective: Develop the capacities of the Ogs, the NGOs and the Colombian government to design, and implement, novel approaches that confront the needs for education, physiological, social and health services for the young people no longer involved with the armed groups, with the objective of preventing recruitment by the armed groups, gangs and violent reactions by the communities.

The project consolidated the experiences of systemization to create care models and novel forms of approximation in four executing institutions. The project developed, through the systemization with the institutions the model "Constructing scenes of peace", which was

successfully applied. Additionally, novel forms of methodology were applied to treat highly important themes regarding the social re-insertion of the ex-combatants in themes relating to living conditions, and sexual and reproductive health. The methodologies applied reflected knowledge of the reality of the groups in this population and the experience of working with young people, which were taken advantage of to include a sense of participation and living together with the young people.

With regard to the prevention of recruiting, as this is a very sensitive area for the re-insertion of the young people, the ACJ-YMCA formulated, and executed, two investigations over the population subject to the risks of recruitment; "Prevention of the participation in the armed conflict; the point of view of the young people not involved in the conflict" an approach adopted in three cities in Colombia; together with the investigation "the young people have the word", developed as the result of an alliance with the ICBF. As a result, the National University continues to have a presence in the areas where the investigations were developed in the city of Bogotá, and they have applied the methodology created to counter recruiting and they have had an important impact regarding the voluntary involvement of young people with the armed groups.

Third objective. Establish working networks to facilitate the collaboration of the local NGOs to increase the level of approval for the projects and for the collection of funds to confront the basic needs of the displaced young ex-combatants.

The conformation of a network of institutions, suffered substantial modifications as the result of the closure of several institutions, which had been included when the project commenced, to form part of the coordination efforts. However, the constitution of a strong local network in the city of Bogotá, was reflected in the participation of more than 15 entities in the network. The fact that the operational coordination of the network was centered on the project's executing unit permitted an improved flexibility for the institutions and an increased level of continuity in the meetings. The establishing of a network platform that contained the action lines and administrative actions of the institutions had a positive effect over the training plans, the systemization and incidence in the public policies.

The project made advances in recognizing the needs of the population no longer involved with the armed groups, specifically in relation to the needs of the young people. The coordination with the educational institutions and the development of workshops with professors and teachers permitted the basis for the re-insertion offered to the young people. Also the generation of the synergies with the universities and other interested institutions permitted the visualization of the problems in Columbia, and permitted an increase in the interest to increase the level of investigations with the intention of consolidating experiences as an observatory of the population no longer involved with the armed groups.

Fourth objective: Assist the OGS' the NGOs and the Columbian government in the development of strategies to overcome the extreme, and violent, stigmas that the young people and to protect the individuals, and organizations, that are collaborating with this group.

The project consolidated more than 25 different alliances with national and local institutions to provide services to the young people. Entities such as Sena, Profamilia, Hospitales (Engativa, Chapinero), libraries, museums, and recreational parks amongst others, facilitated the access of the young people to health and educational services and recreational facilities in the city of Bogotá. It was very important that the project promoted specific attention to this population, which is to be recommended in other experiences of a similar nature at an international level.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 2.1 In the planning

The project, in the planning stage, established activity indicators in accordance with each of the planned results, and activities to be performed. It is recommendable that, for this type project, there are indicators established to assess the project's impact, that facilitate the measuring of the final results and take into consideration the qualitative nature of the project. On the other hand, it is recommended that, for these types of projects, which are essentially qualitative, in the first year a base plan should be executed, with regard to the functioning of the planned objectives, in other words, a cut-off of the initial activities, that will facilitate not only the final evaluation, but also provide an intermediary evaluation, and also assist with the follow-up of the entities.

### 2.2. Effectiveness.

It is necessary that the government of Columbia place emphasis on the initiatives of the executing entities in public policies, in order that these achieve a higher degree of effectiveness. The State cannot become an obstacle when the entities seek to consolidate the processes of the network and the improvement of social services. The government's low perception of the real needs of the young ex-combatants has only been overcome partially. This is reflected in the very poor follow-up over the young people who have now left the program. The measurement standards applied by the government still utilize the total population attended by the health and educational services, instead of the number of young people who are actually beneficiaries of these services.

### 2.3 Effectiveness

First objective. The incidence of the public policies of the operating institutions is still very low; the Colombian government should take advantage of its experience to design proposals for the attention, and rehabilitation that take into consideration the opinions of the young people and the technical and professional personnel. The advances in the Colombian legislation must not be reversed by the application of public policies; a democratic society must provide access to human rights. The social re-integration of this group of young people requires modifications in the legislation that result in an improvement in the living standards of this group.

Second objective. The combination of two objectives, the prevention of recruiting and the attention provided to young ex-combatants, into one objective was one of the principal achievements of this project, when compared with other similar projects developed in the country. A country that does not recognize the persistence of an armed conflict and the risks that this represents for social re-insertion, together with an increase in the young people joining the armed groups. The rearming of the paramilitary-armed groups was a reality, which preoccupies the young people and the respective institutions; consequently, it is necessary to refute all of the cases of forced recruitment of children and young people.

Third objective. The consolidation of the processes in an institutional network requires the full cooperation of the respective institutions, which in the case of the young ex-combatants are the institutions that are dedicated to providing social services. A critical part of the processes relating this group of young people, is aimed at the coordination of efforts and the design of educational and employment alternatives for the juveniles and their social re-

insertion, in an effective manner; which are the principal problems relating to the policies for the attention of this group in Colombia

Although the project consolidated important experiences in the coordination between the different institutions in order to provide attention to the young people, it is important that the State takes the necessary action, in the educational and employment areas, to enable this group of young people to encounter viable alternatives to their participation in the armed groups; agreements with private enterprise that permit the young people to maintain a reasonable life style, would be an ideal starting point.

Fourth objective. The social stigma maintained by the population against the ex-combatants in Colombia, may represent the greatest threat against the welfare of the young people. When leaving the program, the young people faced difficulties in obtaining decent employment to permit them maintain their families and plan their futures in an appropriate manner. Society, represented by the private companies, have not made sufficient efforts, to lower the level of stigma against this population, or recognized their condition as victims, due to the fact that they are underage. The Columbian government, in their policies relating to attention, decided to conceal the efforts of the executing entities, fearing reprisals by the armed groups and, also for the security of the children and young people; however, this attitude has also resulted in a lack of understanding, by the population, of the enormity of the problem.

## 5. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Life histories: from the war through reconciliation.  
(Attached in file)

Attachment 2. List of informers - key to the evaluation.

### LIST OF PRIMARY CONTACTS UTILIZED AS INFORMATION SOURCES

Name of source	Institution/group
Mauricio Zuluaga	Ex - member of ELN
Edwin Quilindo	Ex - member of FARC
Germán Andrés Rojas	Ex - member of FARC
Carlos Rodríguez	Ex - member of AUC
Diyer Bedoya	Ex - member of FARC
Ferley Vargas	Ex - member of FARC
Carlos José Rojas	Psychologist Shadai
Bernardo	Educator
Norma Barrios	Director Shalom
Heidy Arévalo	Coordinator of the network of institutions
Benjamín Paba	Foundation teach me how to fish
Consuelo Rangel and ICBF team	ICBF Regional Office

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND SECONDARY SOURCES REVIEWED

No.	NAME OF DOCUMENT	CONTENTS
1	Project COLOMBIA CAPACITY BUILDING- THE BARING FOUNDATION.	Final project approved by the financing entity.
2	Annual planning documents.	Annual operating plans established by the executing entity, which contains the planning matrix.
3	Annual report No. 1 of the administration	Description of the activities and results of the first period of the project.
4	Annual report No. 2 of the administration	Description of the activities and results of the second year of the project.
5	Annual report No. 3 of the administration	Description of the activities and results of the third year of the project.
6	Annual report No. 4 of the administration	Description of the activities and results of the fourth year of the project.
7	Half yearly and quarterly reports required by the executing entity.	Description of the activities and results for the periods required by the financing entity.
8	Document "platform of the network of institutions that attend the population no longer involved in the armed conflict in Bogotá and Cundinamarca.	Document that contains a description of the objectives and scope established by the network of institutions.
9	Minutes of the meetings in the network of institutions .	Document that describes the agreements reached by the network.

10	Report of the final systemization of the hogar Casa de Colores	The systemization process and the results of the best practices included in the CAE phase.
11	Report of the final systemization of the Foundation Teach Me How to Fish".	The systemization process and the results of the best practices included in the CAE phase.
12	Module: Recognizing history	Document that recompiles the attention provided to the population no longer involved in the armed conflict, in the transitional phase of the executing entity.
13	Attention model; construction of peace scenarios z	Attention model, for attention in a transitional phase.
14	Education regarding love: the right to be a subject	Attention model treating sexual and reproductive education for the young people no longer involved in the armed conflict in Colombia.
15	Employment methodology "the crossing"; a logbook of the guide.	Methodology for the attention aimed at ensuring that young people no longer involved in the armed conflict can live in harmony within the different institutions.
16	Investigation of the codes of war relating to the prevention of participation in the armed conflict: the point of view of young people that were not involved in the conflict, from three cities in Colombia.	Final document over an investigation performed over the young people no longer involved in the armed conflict.
17	"The prevention of participation in the armed conflict: the point of view of young people that were not involved in the conflict", from three cities in Colombia	Final document relating to an investigation performed over the young people in risk of being involved in the armed conflict in the cities of Bucaramanga, Bogotá and Armero - Guayabal
18	Young people have the word	Final report over the prevention of the participation of boys, girls and young people in the armed conflict, from a subjective point of view.
19	Presentations throughout the project are in Power Point.	Contains advances of the project's results, unexpected changes and other aspects relevant to the theme in questions.
20	Financial Reports for years 1, 2, 3 and 4	Contain the disbursements by expense line, compared against budget.
21	Recovery of the lost young people: Lessons learned from the rehabilitation, and reinsertion, of young ex - combatants in Colombia	Investigation produced by YCI -

\* \* \* \* \*

## Glossary of abbreviations

AUC: United self - defense of Colombia

CODA: Certification of having deposited arms

CAFAM: Family compensation fund - CAFAM. Educational methodology in the program.

ELN: National Liberation Army

FARC- EP: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

FEAP: "Foundation teach me how to fish"

ICBF: Columbian Institute for family Welfare

OG: Governmental Organizations

NGO: Non - Governmental Organizations

OIM: International Immigration Organization

SENA: National Training Service

YCI: Ycare International

YMCA: Young Mans' Christian Association