



**Asking about “hopes” and “dreams” as a method of needs
assessment in humanitarian assistance. Case study:
Afro-Colombian IDPs in Cali**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BACRIM	Criminal gangs
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ELN	National Liberation Army
FARC	Colombian Revolutionary Armed Force
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally displaced people
JRC	Jesuit refugee centre
MIRA	Multi-sector/cluster Initial Rapid Assessment
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid Operations
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders
UNDG	United Nations Development Group

Abstract

This thesis aims at contributing to the current knowledge about needs assessment methods in humanitarian assistance by proposing an innovative protocol of interview which is focused on the hopes and dreams of the people in need.

The thesis is based on three months of field work in Cali (Colombia) between June and September 2017, in which social workers belonging to different organizations were interviewed and the proposed method was tested on Afro-Colombian IDPs.

The research found that the protocol was effective in gathering useful information from hopes and dreams of the people underlining at the same time its limits and problems. The protocol proved to be valid for humanitarian needs assessments, furthermore the thesis suggests that it could be used for longer-term planning of humanitarian aid that takes into account the future of the people in need.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

Humanitarian assistance historically distinguished itself for the timeliness of its response and shortness of its programs. Its areas of intervention are generally: food, health, protection and shelter. However, nowadays the international community faces crisis that increasingly more often last longer than twenty years and their consequences such as internal displacement and migration. Therefore, the traditional approach of humanitarian actors to complex crisis such as internal displacement requires a change, taking into consideration the length and complexity of the crisis, as recently underlined by OCHA (OCHA, 2017, p. 83). The first radical change concerns the assessment of needs of the affected population. This thesis proposes and studies a method that could be used as an assessment tool for humanitarian aid programmes which include wider elements than the standard ones.

The method consists in asking the people in need what their hopes and dreams are, considering that the “ideal” assistance should not only keep them alive but also support them in fighting for their perceived and deep objectives. The researcher also paid the due attention regarding how to conduct an interview in such difficult environments. The suggested protocol is based on specific and somehow innovative tools establishing an immediate communication channel between the interviewer and the respondents.

1.2 Background

The proposed method falls in the area of participatory needs assessment methods. Needs assessment methods in humanitarian assistance are a series of tools used to understand what are the main priorities in emergencies and constitute the basis to design and implement projects and programmes. The term “humanitarian need” is used to describe: 1) basic human needs; 2) a lack of basic human needs; 3) the need for a particular kind of humanitarian assistance.

The assessment should answer four main questions:

- whether to intervene or not;
- the nature and scale of the programme required;
- what are the priorities;
- programme design and planning (Darcy & Hofmann, 2003, pp. 5-6).

The standard areas of intervention in humanitarian assistance are: health, nutrition, protection of life and physical security. Therefore, the standard methods of needs assessment focus on gathering information to design programmes in these areas. However, due to the number and complexities of protracted crisis and lessons learnt during the years, there is nowadays a widespread agreement about the importance of sustaining humanitarian aid with a more comprehensive view. An example of this trend is the 2013 call from IASC to integrate early recovery into all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle (GCER, 2016). Early recovery is a term used to indicate all programmes deployed in the aftermath of an emergency that aim to strengthen resilience, rebuild capacity, solve root causes of problems and help the people in need to move from dependence on humanitarian aid to development. For this reason, the kind of information required by programmes such as early recovery or assistance to protracted displacement is different from the one used in the standard humanitarian assistance and it includes wider elements.

The fact that the method is participatory regards the way with which the information is extracted. Participatory approaches aim at involving the community in the whole process by putting them in the position of understanding and revealing their perceived needs and problems.

1.3 Problem statement

This research wants to test a way of getting information in difficult contexts and from fragile people such as IDPs. The method consists in asking them how they imagine their ideal life: where, how and with whom would they like to spend it and what are their “dreams”. This research is innovative because the needs assessment methods

generally used in humanitarian assistance focus on the problems of the moment while longer term objectives are relegated to other kind of programmes such as development. However, it is undisputable that some of the activities provided by humanitarian actors, such as the assistance to internally displaced people, last for so many years that a longer-term view is required in the designing and planning phases of the projects.

Moreover, one of the main hypothesis of the research is that an interview focused on “dreams” and about what the respondents really hope for their lives, can create a “bubble” away from the present, where the respondent recalls his “imaginary life” with pleasure and gives some useful information on his genuine hopes for the future. By doing this he reveals his true preferences on important aspects of his life which are crucial for implementing the best assistance programs for him also in the immediate present, therefore providing a prioritization of its needs.

The objective of this method of interview, in relation to humanitarian assistance and early recovery is to understand the needs and priorities of the respondents and possible resilience strategies that can be sustained by the assistance.

The necessity of this research emerges from:

- A call of developing new methods of needs assessment as underlined by the gaps identified in UNDG review of early recovery assessment methods. The main gaps regard the coordination between different actors, the identification and prioritization of cross-cutting and early recovery needs (Bollin & Khanna, 2007, p. 81).
- OCHA’s 2017 document on protracted displacement which asks that humanitarian actors should have an idea of the IDPs plans for the future and that quantitative assessments should be complemented by qualitative methods to assess these plans from the perspective of the IDPs (OCHA, 2017, p. 67).
- The underlined gap in the IDP literature on discussions about longer-term aspirations and future of IDPs (Sørensen, 2003).

The research is grounded on the theory of positive psychology and on its main idea that the best way to prevent suffering is to work on strengths and resilience rather

than on weaknesses (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 8). The thesis will introduce the main concepts on hopes and “dreams”, how these are related to reality and to resilience and how they are influenced by negative emotions such as fear, in times of war and violence.

The choice of the Afro-Colombian IDPs as a case study is due to multiple factors. First, Colombia is one of the countries with the highest number of IDPs worldwide and is on the top of the forgotten crisis list established by ECHO (ECHO, 2015). Second, the Afro-Colombian population is a “twice displaced” community, first from Africa at the time of slavery and then recently from the Pacific rural area to Cali. This, plus a widespread racism and a lack of integration, makes them one of the most complicated cases of displaced people in Colombia.

1.4 Research question

How and to what extent can interviews concerning hopes and dreams be used as a tool of needs assessment in humanitarian assistance?

1.5 Overall objective, specific objectives

The overall objective of the research is to assess whether interviews mainly focused on the dreams and hopes of the people can be used as a need assessment method in humanitarian emergencies, especially in protracted crisis such as internally displaced people.

The specific objectives of the research are:

- Design an interview protocol and method usable for the thesis purposes and future research in humanitarian assistance;
- Understand what are the dreams and hopes of the Afro-Colombian IDPs in Cali;
- Understand what are the most important present needs of the Afro-Colombian IDPs in Cali;
- Comprehend the validity of this method, by comparison with other sources of information (literature review and NGOs involved in the field).

1.6 Research design

The methodological approach is essentially qualitative. The research is composed of three parts. The first part aims to construct a protocol of interview, specifically tailored for dreams and hope. A possible script of interview consists in asking them what their ideal life would be, where, how and with whom would they want to live, what kind of job they would like to do and what would be the things that they most wish for themselves. In case they want to go back to a rural life, do they want to go back to their places of origin or to other places? If they imagine an urban life, would they like to stay In Cali, or move to other cities?

The second part consists in the application of this method and investigates the “dreams” and hopes of the people composing the Afro-Colombian community in Cali. This is done through interviews in Aguablanca, the district of the city where they are mainly present.

The third part compares the findings of the interviews with: 1) the current literature on Afro-Colombian IDPs; 2) knowledge about IDPs from interviews to social workers in the field of displacement. The purpose of the comparison is different for the two cases.

The current literature on IDPs and afro-Colombian constitute a source of information about the general trend and the academic knowledge regarding the case study. In the second case, workers of organizations involved in social programmes in Aguablanca are valuable informants about all aspects of the local population, from problems and practical needs to hopes and future perspectives. Interviews to those workers were conducted and the comparison between the findings of the study and these interviews constitutes a quality test of the investigation.

A possible limit of the research arises from the problems related to the essence of the method: asking about dreams. In fact, as the thesis will show, it is possible that the respondents do not have (or have limited) “dreams” and hopes (Ratcliffe, et al., 2014) (MacLeod & Salaminiou, 2001) or are not able to express them, or else they feel too shy or embarrassed to express them (ALNAP, 2009, p. 152), or maybe these dreams and hopes belong to a context which does not exist anymore.

The methodology used in this research is not the only possible one. Another strategy is to carry out interviews with two different methods: the “new” one and a standard method used in humanitarian assistance, so as to compare the findings. This method presents a substantial problem: it is not possible to interview the same respondents with two different methods of interview without compromising the quality of the second interview. Then, the fact that the needs, hopes and “dreams” of the people can be radically different from one another, makes the comparison between two different respondents difficult. However, this comparison goes beyond the scope of the study but can represent an object of further research.

1.7 Utility

Asking about hopes and dreams of life can be not only a method to assess what the respondents’ vision of their future is, but also a method to understand their present needs. In fact, the vision, hopes and dreams are an imaginary built on the base of present life, experiences and problems. By asking the respondents to isolate themselves from the present and to talk only about their dreams, the interviewer is actually recalling this imaginary and therefore all the aspects that the respondent thinks are important for his present.

There can be many advantages in this needs assessment method instead of one more focused of problems and solutions. The first is that the population recipient of humanitarian aid has often had a very violent and traumatic past. By asking directly about their problems, the interviewer risks to inadvertently awaken fears and traumas and cause a block in the communication. On the contrary, by asking about the most beautiful things that they can imagine for their future, the respondents are led in a less painful area and they might feel more relaxed and open to talk. Also, this method tries to reduce the perceived social distance between the interviewer and the interviewee as everybody can have dreams and hopes but generally only the interviewee has the problems under study. Therefore, asking about “dreams” can help the participant feel being at the same level than the interviewer, a level where a human being is worthy not only of surviving, but also of dreaming of the best possible life.

CHAPTER 2: Literature review

2.1 Methods of need assessment

In general, the assessment methods can be categorized by nature, timeliness of performance and the data used.

The type of assessment can be qualitative or quantitative and both methods are needed to have a clear overview of the needs of the population. The timeliness of the assessment can regard different phases: from the immediate aftermath of the emergency, to the following weeks and months. The data used can be primary or secondary data, which means that they can be gathered directly by the research (primary data) or extrapolated by already existing materials such as published research, reports and governmental data. The secondary data is generally used in the first days following an emergency, as there are still few primary data, and constitute the base for the collection of primary data.

Quantitative research methods distinguish themselves from qualitative research for the use of a large number of participants and for methods, such as survey, that gather data scientifically and present them with graphs, tables and statistics. The aim of quantitative research is to test a theory or a hypothesis about reality and to produce a clear answer to a predetermined question. On the contrary, the nature of qualitative research is explorative, and tries to understand the reality by answering the questions: why and how? The qualitative methods mainly used are: direct observation; key informant interviews; focus groups; community group discussions (ACAPS, 2012).

2.1.1 Early Recovery assessments

Even if early recovery assessments are not so consolidated as the ones used in humanitarian assistance and development (Bollin & Khanna, 2007), there are a number of already existing tools and methods that can be used or adapted for the scope, such as:

- The Needs Analysis Framework (NAF) (IASC, 2007);
- The Post-conflict Need Assessments (PCNAs) (UNDG, 2004);
- Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (UNDG, 2013)
- Environmental Needs Assessment in Post-Disaster Situations (UNEP, 2008)

The Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) sets the specific objectives of an early recovery assessment as the identification of:

- The situation of the crisis setting before the beginning of the emergency;
 - The impact of the crisis on the local population and the most relevant needs;
 - Existing strategies of resilience of the affected population;
 - The ongoing assistance and development programmes in the area;
 - Principal factors that generated or worsened the crisis;
 - Negative coping mechanism that result from the crisis and can worsen the situation or create new risks;
 - Gender specific vulnerabilities and resilience strategies of women and girls;
 - Potential future threats;
 - An initial idea of what principal early recovery programmes are needed.
- (CWGER, 2008, p. 20)

The specific assessment method changes depending on the situation. For example, after the 2007 Cyclone in Bangladesh, the early recovery needs assessment conducted by the Early Recovery Cluster Coordination Group included focused group interviews, meetings with the local government, meetings with the community, household survey interviews, guided observations based on a pre-arranged checklist (CWGER, 2008, p. 23).

2.1.2 Participatory assessments

Participatory approaches aim at involving the affected population in the different phases of the project such as in assessment and in decision making can enhance the quality of the assistance for example identifying priority needs and local capacities. These approaches are highly used in development contexts, where the long-term duration and objectives make participation an essential feature of the projects. There are a number of manuals which explain the different kinds of tools to be used depending on the objective of the assessment and the purpose of the project. One of these is the F.Geilfus “80 tools for participatory development : appraisal, planning, follow-up and evaluation” which explain general techniques and specific methods depending on the focus of assessment. The kinds of assessment which are closer to the method proposed by the thesis are the ones focused on general and social aspects of the community (Geilfus, 2002, pp. 37-59).

As regards humanitarian assistance, even if there are some cases of sudden emergencies that require an immediate assessment precluding local participation, in most of the crisis it is possible to adopt participatory methods (ALNAP, 2009, pp. 49-51). The review of existing participatory practices commissioned by ECHO explains that the actual perception on the ground is that participatory approaches help to make the response faster (Aguaconsult Ltd., 2012, p. 35). The importance of participation is also underlined by all quality initiatives for humanitarian aid from the SPHERE Project to the Code of Conduct of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, NGOs in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP-I).

The main references for participatory approaches in humanitarian contexts are:

- “The Good Enough Guide – Impact measurement and accountability in emergencies” (OXFAM, 2007).
- “The Good Enough Guide – Humanitarian needs assessment” (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014).
- Chapter 7 of “Guidelines for assessment in emergencies” (ICRC, 2008)
- “Developing a participatory approach to involve crisis-affected people in a humanitarian response” (ALNAP, 2009).

- “Engagement of crisis-affected people in humanitarian action” (ALNAP, 2014)

The principal objectives of a participatory approach in humanitarian aid are:

- To prolong the impact of humanitarian assistance;
- To make the project more relevant;
- To avoid or reduce negative impacts of humanitarian responses;
- To enhance project effectiveness;
- To help establish a relationship based on respect and mutual understanding;
- To make the project more responsive to changing needs;
- To increase the resources available for the project;
- To improve project efficiency;
- To help everyone learn new skills;
- To respect your organisation’s mandate and principles (ALNAP, 2009, pp. 27-32).

As underlined by the ALNAP manual, one of the risk of participatory approaches is to create false expectations. Therefore, it is suggested to explain carefully the purpose of the assessment and to give the people the chance to ask questions and receive clear and complete answers (ALNAP, 2009, p. 141).

The participatory assessments can help to understand the history of the community and the main changes that led to the disruption. One tool used to do this is called the Historical timeline (ICRC, 2008, p. 53). Another information that such assessment should gather is the geographical, social and economic environment of the community prior the disaster. This is needed in order to identify possible objectives and limits of a future project. The main purpose of a participatory approach is to understand the present situation and perceived needs as well as how the crisis is perceived by the local community. Many of the methods make use of objects to better involve people who might be illiterate or have problems with numbers. One of these methods is the so-called Proportional Piling which aims at estimating numbers and proportions with the use of beans or pebbles (ICRC, 2008, pp. 53-54).

The issue of perceived needs is particularly relevant because the needs perceived by the community might be different from the needs perceived by an external

organization supposed to design and implement a project (ALNAP, 2009, p. 150). An initiative called HESPER aims to solve this dilemma by introducing a perceived need scale for humanitarian emergency settings (WHO, 2011).

Another problem is that some needs might not be expressed due to the fact that the people do not consider them as important or they feel embarrassed to mention them, such as sexual related problems (ALNAP, 2009, p. 152).

As regards the literature on needs assessment methods tailored for the specific case of refugees and IDPs, a draft document published by the Centre for Refugee and Disaster Studies of the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health introduces specific methods and problematics (Weiss, 2000). This draft was written mainly for the case of settlement camps and not for assessments performed in urban settings, which was the case of the present research.

2.2 Hopes and dreams

Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines "hope" as "1) trust or reliance; 2) desire accompanied with expectation of obtaining what is desired or belief that it is obtainable" (Merriam, 1971, p. 1089). The analysis of researches on hopes showed that they are included in two possible life domains: universal and culture-specific. The universal domains regard work, education, family and concerns about the self, such as "to be happy" (for people living in western countries) or transition to modernity settings (for developing countries). Culture-specific domains regard different area depending on the culture. For example, In the case of Finnish and German adolescents, the culture-specific domains are about leisure, while for Israeli Arabs and Druze collective domains are about themes such as village, nation and world (Seginer, 2008, p. 273).

The connection between hopes and human actions is channelled through the concept of goals. Goals can be short or long term, they must be feasible but they always have some elements of uncertainty. A goal 100 % certain does not necessitate hope while in case of a goal with 0% of possibility of achievement the person might redirect himself to another goal (Snyder, 2000, p. 13). Snyder's further research discovered that many people with low hope set absurdly high goals (Snyder, 2002, p. 265).

2.2.1 Impact of threat and challenge on hope

Generally, people who suffer traumas report changes in three main areas: philosophy of life, interpersonal relationship and self-perception (Páez, et al., 2008, p. 17). As regards hope, threat and challenges strongly impact on future orientation of the people. The analysis of current literature on the issue underlines how there are mainly two extreme outcomes: a drastic reduction of hope and a sense of “foreshortened future” or a stronger hope on future life.

“Foreshortened future”

In the opinion of Snyder, traumatic events can extinguish hopeful thought with no difference if the trauma was related to war, rape or plane crash (Snyder, 2000, p. 19). Even if experiences of trauma and reactions to it can be very different, the current research emphasizes that especially traumatic events inflicted by other people lead to a loss of trust in the future, the so-called “foreshortened future”. The loss of trust has a deep impact on what and how a person believes. There is a general feeling that one’s life has been irreparably damaged and this brings to a loss of trust in one’s own abilities and in the future. This is not only an internal process but it depends on interpersonal relations and is shaped by social and cultural aspects (Ratcliffe, et al., 2014). Depression plays an important role on future-thinking as depressed people showed to have a reduced capacity to anticipate future and positive events (Macleod & Salaminiou, 2001).

Positive following trauma

Not all people who experience violence and trauma develop post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). In fact, an extreme negative event creates a large quantity of energy that can be canalized positively or negatively depending on the cognitive processes. A positive canalization leads to resilience, resistance and heroism (Páez, et al., 2008, p. 15). Related studies attribute the positive canalization to three main aspects: positive psychology, the role of spirituality and religion and the stress-related growth.

As regards positive psychology, a positive attitude seems to protect from PTSD (Ai & Park, 2005, p. 245). Spirituality and religion also have a strong role as coping strategies in traumatic events. In fact, during difficulties people might challenge their core values and meaning of life (Janoff-Bulman & Frantz, 1997) and spirituality and religion can constitute an important mental resource. This emerged from a research on Muslim refugees from Bosnia and Kosovo, resettled in the United States. The study explains that religious belief impacted in a lower level of hopelessness and represents a “protection” against PTSD (Ai, et al., 2003, pp. 32,42). Another study which involved women survival of sexual assault noticed that a high percentage of them became more spiritual and that this spirituality increased their well-being over time (Kennedy, et al., 1998). The connection with religion works also in the opposite way as a study reported that Vietnam veterans who developed PTSDs lost their faith and became less religious (Drescher & Foy, 1995).

Finally, the stress related growth or post-traumatic growth represents the positive outcomes of a negative event in terms of personal growth. The reported changes can be radical such a reorientation of life and priorities or it can regard the intimate sphere such as deciding to spend more time with the loved ones and taking more care of oneself or appreciate more every moment of life (Ai & Park, 2005, p. 248). Regarding future orientation, the studies on post-traumatic growth show that the most productive attitude is to have realist expectations and to choose minor and immediate objectives (Páez, et al., 2008, p. 22).

2.3 Background of the case study

2.3.1 Displacement in Colombia

Worldwide, in 2016 31.1 million of new displacements were recorded by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. 24.4 million of cases were triggered by natural disasters and 6.9 million by conflicts. The total number of IDPs in the case of conflicts is 40.3 million, while in the case of natural disaster it is unknown (IDMC, 2017, p. 10).

Colombia is globally the country with the highest number of people internally displaced by violence and conflict, with a total number of 7,246,000 IDPs as of the end of 2016, followed by Syria, with 6,326,000 IDPs (IDMC, 2017, p. 27).

The main causes of displacement are: armed conflict, land disputes associated to drug commerce and illegal mining, common criminality and violence.

The Colombian internal armed conflict is one of the world's longest conflict, lasting more than fifty years and involving a wide range of actors: guerrilla (such as the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Force (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN)), paramilitary, drug dealers, the Colombian national army and criminal groups (BACRIM). The historical peace deal signed in 2016 between the FARC and the Government was of great value for a possibility of reconciliation, but did not stop the wave of violence and displacement in the country (IDMC, 2017, p. 29). Areas that were under the control (and protection) of the FARC are now exposed to new armed groups such as paramilitary groups, and a new wave of displacement brings inhabitants from rural areas to urban centres, among all Medellín, Bogotá, Cali, Pasto, Buenaventura and Suarez. Colombian ethnic minorities were the most exposed to recent displacement, in fact between January 2014 and August 2016, 74 per cent of the total number of mass displacement (event in which at least 10 families or 50 people are simultaneously displaced) involved indigenous and Afro-Colombians. Moreover, they constitute respectively 3,4 per cent and 10,6 per cent of the total population but they accounted for 6,7 per cent and 14,5 per cent of all registered displacement (IDMC, 2017, p. 29). A geographical overview shows that 58 per cent of the displacement took place in the departments of Valle del Cauca,

Antioquia, Nariño, Cauca and Choco, which is the area of Colombia most populated by Afro-Colombians (OCHA, 2017, pp. 9-10).

The demographic data indicate that the average age of IDPs is 23, 49% of them are women, half of them in childbearing age. 61% of families have both parents while 39% of them are single-headed (91% of cases by women). Displacement strongly impacts on the emotional sphere of the people. The main symptoms are sadness, depression, fear, nervous tension, nostalgia, regression to childhood and aggressive behaviour. A study conducted by ICRC-WFP shows that about 67% of displaced households report psychosocial problems (Carrillo, 2009, pp. 540-541).

The governmental assistance to IDPs is ensured by the law 387 of 1997 and implemented by various institutions who offer comprehensive assistance made of three levels. Firstly, IDPs receive humanitarian assistance which lasts for three months and consists of an economic support that should enable the IDPs to survive and adapt in the immediate period after displacement. The second level tries to tackle the socioeconomic vulnerabilities and focuses on the following sectors: food; education; identification documents; family reunion; health; health (including psychosocial attention); housing and livelihoods which includes occupational orientation. The third level is composed of reparation, rehabilitation, restitution of land and guarantees of non-repetition (IDMC, 2017, p. 30).

Due to a limited capacity, in less than four years the victims' unit was able to compensate only less than 10 per cent of people entitled to compensation. There is also an issue regarding the official registration as victims. In fact, due to many frauds, there are higher controls and some IDP are not granted the status even if they would deserve it. For all those people, the only remaining available assistance on which those people can rely is the one offered by NGOs, such as ICRC and Colombian Red Cross (Carrillo, 2009, pp. 534-537).

2.3.2 Future orientation of Colombian IDPs

Even if there is not a wide literature on future orientation of specifically Colombian IDPs, some studies researched the attitude of IDPs toward returning to the countryside. All those sources indicate that IDPs in Colombia want to stay living in urban areas and not return to their land of origin. In fact, a survey conducted

between 1997 and 2004 shows that only 11% of the 43.587 participating IDP household wanted to return to their place of origin (Arias, et al., 2014). Another survey, conducted in 2008 by the Commission for the Monitoring of the Public Policy on Forced Displacement revealed that out of 8100 participants only 2,9 per cent wanted to return to their place of origin, 12 per cent preferred to move somewhere else and 78,7 per cent wanted to stay in the receiving city (CSPPDF, 2008). Similar conclusions emerged from a survey conducted in Bogotá and Barranquilla with 499 IDP households, where only 28,1 per cent expressed a real interest in returning. In-depth interviews with IDPs who received a free house in the urban area, confirmed their willingness of settling there permanently, even if they all missed some elements of the rural life such as being able to cultivate their own food. These results are summarized by the numbers of people who applied for the two programmes. In fact, 900.000 IDP households are on the waiting list for Free Housing around the country, while only 73.000 claimed Land Restitution. The main factors involved in this trend are the better employment and education opportunity for them and for their children in the cities, perceived insecurity in the place of origin and memories of violence and displacement (Sliwa & Wiig, 2016, pp. 15-16).

2.3.3 Afro-Colombians

The term “Afro-Colombians” indicates Colombian citizens of African descent and originated in the time of slavery. When the Spanish Conquistadores entered in the area in 1499 they quickly realized that indigenous people could not be used as a work-force. Therefore, they started to import slaves form the coasts of Western Africa, from the actual Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Congo Deltas and the islands of Santo Tomé and Capo Verde (Orobio, et al., 2003). The number of slaves imported rose from 1000 to 3000 in the period between 1590 and 1640 (Vila Vilar E., 1977, p. 226). They were forced to work in mines, farms or housekeeping. In the 17th century some slaves started to flee to remote areas, hardly reachable by the Spanish and started to fund independent and free villages such as San Basilio de Palenque. The zone of Colombia which is mainly populated by Afro-Colombians is the Pacific coast, a rainforest region which covers an area of about 900 km from Panama to Ecuador, between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes. This zone is

inhabited by almost 1 million people, 90 per cent Afro-Colombians and 50,000 indigenous and was considered until recently a laboratory for peaceful co-existence (Escobar, 2003, p. 159).

The Afro-Colombian culture is firmly rooted in the territory, in the community life, in the music, in the religious celebrations and in the oral traditions (Figueroa, 2016, p. 112). For the Afro-Colombians living in the Pacific area, the territory constitutes the basis of social, cultural, economic and political relations. The rivers are not only a source of food, but also connecting ways to other communities and the place where the people spend their free time. Religious and spiritual rituals accompany the most important moments of their life, such as the “velorios” which are songs for funerals. The music is always present in the Afro-Colombians’ life: performed with typical instruments such as the “marimba”, which is the adapted version of the African balafon, the “cununo”, “bombo” and “guasá”. Finally, the culinary traditions comprehend a large variety of typical dishes prepared with local fish and seafood from the rivers, lagoons and sea, little mammals and they are accompanied by plantain, coconut and aromatic plants and herbs (Figueroa & Chica, 2016, pp. 165-176).

2.3.4 Afro-Colombian IDPs in Cali

Cali, the third most populated city of Colombia and biggest urban centre of the Valle del Cauca department, is one of the principal destination of the Afro-Colombian displacement from the Pacific area. In the whole Valle del Cauca there are almost 90 thousand IDPs, 53 per cent of them are women and 45 per cent are children (OCHA, 2017, p. 16). The only city of Cali hosts about 78 thousand IDPs (Toro, 2013, p. 38).

76% of the IDPs settled in the “comuna” 14 and 15, the so-called district of Aguablanca, or “The District” (Corral, 2003, p. 199). This zone covers the eastern side of the city and is characterized by high levels of poverty, violence and criminality. When the new IDPs arrive in Cali they often go to live in the worst areas of the District and in unhealthy living conditions, such as illegal “invaded areas”

where they build shacks with waste materials or in proximity of drainage channels (Corral, 2003, p. 200).

One of the features of Afro-Colombian displacement in Cali is that it happens “drop by drop” which means that it is constituted by individuals or single families who move into the city, mixing with the local population. This enhances the challenge of having a clear and concrete vision over the situation (Corral, 2003, p. 199).

As regards the employment of IDPs, men often do non-qualified jobs such as construction of houses or street vendors while women are often employed as maids or work as street vendors (Corral, 2003, p. 200).

Different studies emphasise how displacement in Cali affects all areas of Afro-Colombian culture, changing its representations and practices. The city prevents their contact with the nature and they can no longer rely on fishing and other practice of self-sufficiency. The community life breaks down and the fight for life imposes an individualistic behaviour. The previous knowledge about the river and the forest is not useful anymore and the same IDPs who were used once to move freely on boats or through the forest, now depend on public transport and are subject to movement constraints such as the “invisible borders”¹ which cross Aguablanca. Afro-Colombian IDPs tend to abandon their spiritual, religious and musical traditions. Also food is subject to a drastic change, as many ingredients are not available in Cali or they are too expensive (Figuroa & Chica, 2016, pp. 160-178). As C.Rosero wrote, the current wave of displacement recalls the times of slavery: the pain of family and community fragmentation, the impossibility of holding goods and delimiting territory and the involvement of men in an alien war (Rosero, 2001). On the contrary, there is a recent trend of cultural self-identification of the Afro-Colombian community (Jordan, 2008) , which is also shown by the increased popularity of the “Petronio” in Cali, the principal festival and celebration the Afro-Colombian music and culture in the whole country.

¹ “Invisible borders” separate the zones of the city controlled by different gangs. If a member of a gang crosses one of these borders, entering a zone controlled by another gang, he risks being assaulted. The same is valid for the girlfriends and relatives of every gang member.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Interviews to organizations

The researcher interviewed workers of different organizations that deal with IDPs, victims of the conflict and people in risk. The main purpose was to understand the opinions of social workers regarding the topic of the research. In order to include all possible answers, different kinds of organizations were contacted: international and national NGOs, local grassroots organizations and public institutions.

The specific questions depended on the kind of organization. For example, interviewees from international, national and governmental organizations were asked about what methods of need assessment do they use, while this question was not asked to local organizations made by people of Aguablanca who do not need any assessment method to know what are the needs and challenges in their zone.

The interviewees signed a consensus document in which they agreed that the information revealed during the interviews could be associated with their name and with the name of the organization for which they work. It is important to underline that these interviews reflect personal opinions and experiences of those social workers and they are not meant to represent the point of view of the organizations. The data related to those interviews is presented in ANNEX II.

3.2 Interviews to IDPs

3.2.1 Sample

Seventeen interviews to Afro-Colombian displaced people were performed in the district of Aguablanca (Cali) in the period between 29th of July 2017 to 29th of August 2017.

Due to the violence of the district and the fact that the interviewer could not walk alone without the risk of inadvertently crossing invisible borders, being assaulted and robbed, the interviewees were chosen on the basis of the intermediary contacts. Therefore, the sample method was availability.

The three intermediary contacts used to perform such interviews were the following:

1. The community organization “Se Quien Soy”;
2. The foundation “Paz y Bien”;
3. A key informant who lives in the district of Aguablanca.

The different nature of the intermediary contacts and their location in the district implies a difference in the nature of the interviewees which must be taken into consideration.

For example, the people interviewed through the “Se Quien Soy” are probably more aware than the average regarding issues of cultural identity, due to the emphasis on the issue, stressed by the organization. Moreover, as Rio Cauca is the place where the government built the new houses for displaced people, all the people interviewed in this area were officially recognized as displaced and victims of the conflict.



Picture 1 - Apartments for IDPs in Rio Cauca (Cali)

The third intermediary contact was a key informant who lives in a critical area of the district of Aguablanca. This person put the interviewer in touch with known displaced people of the neighbourhood. For an issue of confidentiality, the name of this area

and the demographic differences of the people constituting the three different groups are not revealed.

All the interviewees accepted to take part in the research by signing an informed consent to the interview. The interviews were recorded with an audio recorder and the records were kept for the only scope of the research.

These precautions are particularly important considering the fragile context where the research took place. All the displaced people interviewed fled from violence and death due to armed groups operating in the Pacific area of Colombia and there seemed to be cases of displaced people followed and persecuted by such groups right up to the city. All these issues were considered when preparing the scripts of the interviews and the researcher avoided asking questions that could risk putting the interviewees at higher risk.

The demographic information about the respondents are the following. Out of 17 participants, there were 14 women and 3 men, the average age was 44. the average time since they displaced to Cali was 11 years and the region of origin was in 12 cases Nariño, in 4 cases Cauca and the youngest participant (19 years) was born in Cali from a family displaced from Chocó.

The fact that the interviewees were mainly women can be explained in two ways. Firstly, within the displaced people there is a higher percentage of women, because many of the men were killed by armed groups (personal interview n.33, min 19:55) which is not supported by the demographic data on IDPs in Valle del Cauca. In fact, only 53 per cent of IDPs in Valle del Cauca are women (OCHA, 2017, p. 16). Secondly women appeared to be more active as reported by Ms. Escobar (Plan Colombia), and therefore it is possible that they are more open to outsiders and researchers.

Regarding the age there was a limit in the interaction with young males because many of them were already involved in criminal bands, carrying weapons and using drugs. Only one of them was interviewed, thanks to the intermediary contact.

As regards interviews with young women, there was a different kind of limitation. As the interviewer was a young male, he thought that it would not have been

appropriate to approach women of the same age in a cultural situation often characterized by machismo and possessiveness.

The fact, then that most of the participants were displaced from the same region, Nariño, is explained by the high percentage of people from Nariño within the population of Aguablanca. As the officer of the Colombian Red Cross said, most of displaced people from Chocó, flee to other cities and not Cali, such as Medellín, capital of Antioquia department. This is because:

“Chocó, economically and politically speaking, is much more connected with Antioquia. Some zones of Chocó have easier access to Antioquia than to Quibdó (capital of Chocó department).” (personal interview n.34, min 40).

As to the fact that the average years of displacement are 11, there are some considerations to make. New arrivals in Cali are difficult to detect because they arrive “drop by drop” and they mix with the old community, often in the worst and most dangerous areas of the city such as “the invasions”, which are zones where people illegally build poor shacks. Those people are generally fleeing violence in the Pacific area and they try to disappear in the city as they know that the persecutors could follow them and search for them also in Cali. Therefore, the most recent IDPs are often invisible also to the authorities and they wait a long time before going to declare their status and receive assistance.

Another characteristic is that most of IDPs from the Pacific area have been subject to multiple displacements. The step before Cali is generally Buenaventura, the principal port of the country and one of the two places on the Pacific coast of Colombia reachable by road. This city faces a continuous emergency as regards IDPs and their basic needs. The security situation seems to constitute a serious problem even for a possible researcher:

“If you think of working in Buenaventura, I really suggest to you to be accompanied by some organizations, because there it’s much more dangerous. No zone of Cali is comparable with a zone of Buenaventura, no one. You can be in every dangerous zone of Cali, we could say that it’s a kinder garden in comparison with zones of Buenaventura such as Bajamar or Comuna 12.. it’s totally different. If you enter a house in Bajamar there is always the risk that you will never come out.” (personal interview n.35, min 46)

The interviews were planned to be individual but often happened to take place in a room with many other people. This was due to the fact that most of interviewees are used to sharing their space and their house with the family, neighbours and friends. The researcher was confronted by the choice of requiring a strictly individual conversation with the benefit of anonymous answers or participated interviews. When the researcher proposed to the interviewee to go in a more isolated space the interviewee always replied that they preferred to answer the questions in front of everybody. For this reason, the final choice was to perform individual interviews but in a participated environment.

This fact impacted on the results especially in the case where a person who heard an interview was then interviewed later on. The problem was that he/she was already influenced by the previous answers. On the other hand, he/she had already had time to think about his own answers in a position less demanding than the one of being the interviewee.

3.2.2 The method: interviews on dreams

The research used and tested a particular protocol of interview which was specifically created for the case (see the script in ANNEX III).

The first questions of the interview were standard questions and regarded demographic information of the participant: where and in what year were they born, when did they flee and with whom are they living at present.

These were followed by a couple of questions meant to welcome and stimulate the participant on the topic: What do you think is to be happy? What do you think is to be rich?

Then, the researcher asked the participant to tell him what were her/his dreams and hopes for her/his life. The interviewee was explained that he/she could tell anything, from little to big things, hopes and dreams regarding the near future or things that he/she would dream of obtaining in many years, from material to immaterial things. The participant was told that he/she could take the required time to think and that the interviewer would wait for the answer in silence.

While explaining this, the interviewer was also showing a set of necklace and bracelet beads of different materials, shapes, dimensions and colours.



Picture 2 - The beads used for the interview, over the map of Colombia

The interviewee was asked to select for every dream and hope which he was talking about, one of these beads that could represent that hope or dream.

In this phase what was of extreme value was the reaction of the interviewer and his capacity of deepening interview by exploring every hope or dream. For example, if the participant said that he wanted a car, the possible following questions could have been: Can you describe the car of your dream? How would you use it? Where would you go?

These questions were really important because they pushed the participant to imagine and project himself into his dreams. The depth and quality of these probes determined the level of abstraction of the answer and the possibility of creating a “bubble” away from the present where the participant could reveal with pleasure interesting details on his hopes and dreams.

During the interview the researcher was taking note of the list of revealed hopes and dreams and was positioning every bead in correspondence with the hope/dream that it was representing.

In case the interviewee did not know what to say, the interviewer had a list of questions to use:

- Where would you like to live?
- What kind of job would you like to do?
- If you had a lot of money, what would you buy?

At the end of the interview, the researcher strung every bead on a transparent and elastic thread and created a bracelet for the participant. Only in that moment the interviewer explained that this bracelet represented his dreams/hopes and that it was a present in exchange for the time that he gave for answering the questions.

While doing this operation, it was important to remind the participant what dream/hope every bead represented.



Picture 3 - The interviewer while stringing a bracelet

3.2.3 Analysis of the interviews

The interviews were firstly transcribed, in Spanish and literally. In this phase special attention was given to the reactions of the participant not expressed by words, such as fun, laughs, shame, tiredness, blocks and they were noted in the transcription or in a separate sheet.

The difficulty of the transcription was mainly related to the fact the researcher was not Spanish mother-tongue and the whole process required a long time.

An additional challenge was that Afro-Colombians have a special dialect which contains typical and unique words of the Pacific area and it is generally characterized by a shortening of the words. For example, the word “cuidado” (attention) is pronounced “cuiao”, which makes them often difficult to understand.

Once the interviews were transcribed, they were uploaded on QCAmap², a software of qualitative software analysis. With this software the researcher labelled all the interviews following different levels of labels:

- The dreams
- The attitude of the participant toward the hope of staying, returning home or moving to a new place
- Reactions of the participants (shame, blocks, fun,..)
- Past or present problems (violence, money, health,..)
- Elements of resilience
- Expressed needs
- Situation of the participant regarding humanitarian aid.

The method used for the categorization was inductive. It means that the researcher created a new label every time that he encountered an element that could not be labelled with the previous labels. The alternative was a deductive method of categorization which means that the researcher starts from a known model and uses pre-established series of labels. No new label is then introduced during the categorization. The researcher chose an inductive method because he investigated all possible results of the interviews and he did not know a priori what was the list of labels to use. The choice of the categories and labels was arbitrary and depended on the intuition of the researcher.

² <https://www.qcamap.org/>

CHAPTER 4: Data presentation

4.1 Interview to organizations

During the period from 25/07/2017 and 13/09/2017, the researcher interviewed 19 social workers from 13 different organizations (see ANNEX II). The organizations were initially selected on the basis of availability. The first contacts were provided by the tutor, Sandra Londoño, professor at the Instituto de Estudios Interculturales of the Universidad Javeriana Cali, while the remaining organizations were contacted through the so-called “snowball sampling”. In fact, the interviewees themselves provided the contacts of other organizations. The final selection represents a large percentage of all organizations working with IPDs and vulnerable people in Cali. The following paragraph introduces the organizations contacted dividing them into four categories: international, governmental, national and local organizations.

kind of organization	name of organization
International	ICRC
	Jesuit Refugee Centre
Governmental	Papsivi
	Unidad para las victimas
	SENA
	Proyecto Video-reconciliación
National	Colombian Red Cross
	Afrodes
	Foro Nacional Colombia
Local	Lila Mujer
	Casa Cultural Chontaduro
	Se Quien Soy
	Paz y Bien

Table 1 - List of organizations

International organizations

The **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** office of Cali works in the area of Tolima, Quindío, Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño, which is the southern part of the Colombian Pacific area. The office deals with protection and assistance to the affected population, in strict cooperation with the government as to highlight the needs and to cover the gaps. The protection consists in a direct and confidential dialogue with the armed actors and with the affected communities and in the control of prison conditions. The assistance includes: economic security which helps the victims to regain self-sufficiency; the health department which helps them to access to the public health service; and the WASH department which mainly builds infrastructures such as community aqueducts in the case, for example, that the water is contaminated by explosives.

The **Jesuit Refugee Centre** is an international Catholic organization with the aim of supporting and defending immigrants and IDPs. Its branch in Buenaventura is particularly focused on humanitarian assistance to forced IDPs, prevention of violence and community strengthening in case of possible displacement.

Governmental organizations

The **PAPSIVI** (Programa de atención psicosocial y salud integral a víctimas) is the programme of the Minister of Health designed for the victims of the conflict with the aim of providing them psychosocial attention and integral health. The difference with the Victims' Unit is that they provide individual, familiar, communitarian and ethnical assistance, and that they go directly to the houses of the people in need. The PAPSIVI works with both victims and organizations on the field and leaders.

The **Unidad para la Atención y reparación Integral a las víctimas** (victims' unit for attention and reparation) was created by the Ley de las víctimas (law for the victims) in 2011. The law prescribes an integral reparation for the victims and the victim's unity deals with orientation and access to possible reparations and physical and psychosocial rehabilitation of the victims.

The **SENA** is a governmental organization which provides professional training courses and orientation to people who belong to the lowest social ranks and to protected people, such as IDPs and victims of conflicts. One interview was performed in the training centre of Pondaje (Aguablanca) while the other in the branch in charge of orientation in the labour market. It is interesting to note that the training centre of Pondaje is located in one of the zones with lower condition and higher insecurity of Aguablanca. In fact, the way that leads to their entrance passes through a so called “invasion”, an abusive area of shacks.

“**Proyecto Video-reconciliación**” (Video-reconciliación Project), financed by the South Korean Embassy, is a project coordinated by five organizations: MAPPOEA (Peace Deal Support Mission of the Organization of American States), Unidad Para las Víctimas, ARN (the governmental agency for the reintegration of former combatants), Alcaldía de Cali (town hall of Cali) and Ruta Pacífica de la Mujeres (a national movement of women). The project aimed at reconciling a group of 30 women which included different kind of victims of the conflict: displaced people, former combatants, and women who live in vulnerable zones of Valle del Cauca.

National organizations

The **Colombian Red Cross** has a section in Valle del Cauca, located in Cali, which provides assistance focused on five points: 1) Promotion of culture of nonviolence and peace; 2) Generation of opportunities; 3) Risk management; 4) Community resilience; Health and welfare. One of their main objectives is the mitigation of urban violence and they operate also in Cali, in the zone of Potrero Grande (Aguablanca).

Afrodes is the main organization of Afro-Colombian displaced people. Its main aim is to support them and protect their rights as victims of the conflict.

Foro Nacional Colombia is an NGO which mainly supports social organizations directly related with the government. Their branch in Cali also provides direct assistance to IDPs and to population in risk.

Local organizations

Lila Mujer is an association of women who live with HIV, in the zone of Calimio, district of Aguablanca. The objectives of the organization are to empower the women affected by HIV and their families, to inform them of their rights and to develop prevention strategies on sexual health.

The “**Casa Cultural Chontaduro**” is an association in the area of Marroquin III (Aguablanca) and takes the name from a traditional fruit of the Pacific area, the chontaduro, which is often sold by Afro-Colombian women in the streets of Cali. The association provides different activities: groups and training for women; a library and courses of dance, theatre, arts for children and teenagers; social research on the community done by the community itself.

The “**Se Quien Soy**” (which means “I know who I am”) is an organization composed of Afro-Colombian displaced people who live in Aguablanca, in the area of Rio Cauca, Llano Verde and Desepaz. The aim of the organization is to help the community with its basic needs, legal assistance and especially with the strengthening of cultural identity.

The foundation “**Paz y Bien**” is a grassroots social net with religious connotations born in 1987 in the zone of Marroquin II (Aguablanca), with the aim of helping children, teenagers and old people in situation of risk, such as IDPs. The emphasis of the foundation is on legal education of the people and on knowledge of their rights (Paz y Bien, 2017).

4.1.1 Assessment methods

The following section presents the results obtained by the interviews with social workers, as regards needs assessment methods.

The Colombian Red Cross – Section Valle uses a method of needs assessment called AVC, analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities. The method consists of focal groups and individual interviews aimed at understanding which are the capacities that a project could strengthen. In this phase the competence of the interviewer is

of paramount importance because he must succeed in generating confidence in the participant. This is the reason why Red Cross interviewers are specifically trained.

The Jesuit Refugee Centre performs two kinds of assessments with IDPs. The first is the MIRA, a standard multisector initial rapid assessment³ whose objective is to understand the major problems of the days immediately following the outbreak of the emergency, such as a massive displacement. The second assessment is carried out in their branch in Buenaventura, when the IDPs come to receive assistance and they are registered in the virtual platform of the JRC. During this assessment they are asked information regarding the violence from which they fled and whether they have already received assistance from the state. The IDPs are also asked if they want to go back or move to another place.

The SENA performed interviews and assessment in different situations and for different purposes. The training centre of Pondaje conducted interviews with the community, by going directly to the houses and shacks of the neighbourhood so as to understand what kind of professional training should be organized. They also orient the newcomers to their centre where they are personally interviewed in order to understand what they want to do and what is the best training for them. The “Agencia publica de empleo” also performs interviews to find out what is the best work for the people, starting from what they can do and what they want.

Regarding ICRC, different kinds of assessment are conducted depending on the purpose. There are assessments focused on designing a specific project or else general assessments of the community.

Regarding the first case, the ICRC performs productive interventions in the area of economic security. As these interventions generally affect the whole community, the tool used to evaluate their need is the so called participatory diagnosis. This tool has been designed to understand how to recover and strengthen the economic and food security. One of the methods used is the *time-line*, which investigates the livelihood of the community in the time preceding the displacement or the disruption. The interviewees are asked what they were working at, and what kind of jobs they

³ Retrieved from <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space/document/mira-manual>

can do in order to understand what the affected population lost and what is the relation with the armed conflict.

After understanding what the affected people are capable of doing, and what their needs are, it is essential to establish priorities. This is done with a matrix. For example, if a community knows how to produce/breed pigs, chicken and bananas and if the ICRC can choose only one of those projects, the matrix would be the following:

	pigs	Chickens	bananas
Pigs	-	(e.g. pigs)	(e.g. bananas)
chickens	(e.g. pigs)	-	(e.g. bananas)
bananas	(e.g. bananas)	(e.g. bananas)	-

The participant has to choose the project he prefers after having compared each one of them. Then the interviewee fills out a matrix that shows if the project is for food security, for economic security or for both. For example, if the pigs are bred to be eaten, it is for food security or to be sold then it is for economic security.

	Food security	Economic security
pigs		*
Chickens	*	
bananas	*	*

The ICRC generally gives a high priority to the projects that are for food security or the ones that are both for economic and food security. This fact emerges from the study from the time-line. In fact, often the communities are in very hard places to reach and projects that involve the transport of goods to be sold in a bigger city (which is the last stage for economic security) are more prone to fail.

Another kind of assessment is the general evaluation of the community where the interviewer asks what are the needs of the people. The needs that generally emerge from this evaluation are the need of: a house; electricity, aqueduct, transport, education, health, which exceed the possibility of action of ICRC. This information

is gathered to report the situation to bigger governmental organizations. Such interviews also give information about economic activities that could be sustained by the ICRC but they are always secondary to the others.

Lastly there is the individual evaluation which is done for example when a displaced person arrives in Cali and needs an immediate response. This interview assesses the family situation, how many men and women, if somebody has some handicap, what is the education level, where he/she is living and if he/she thinks to stay in Cali or to move to some other place. This information is used to provide him/her with a basic assistance such as food and accommodation (personal interview, ICRC).

4.1.2 Interviews in practice

In the opinion of I. Sanchez (ICRC) the main problem to get information is to be trusted by the people and to do this it is essential to go directly to the houses or to the fields of the people. In their houses, the people feel more at ease to speak about security issues, while during a community meeting they might feel afraid to reveal certain information, in front of people who might be their persecutors. He also noticed that the interviewer should pay great attention to the dynamics: who is speaking more and who is more silent, because the people who speak less in a group discussion are often the ones who have the most to say. Mr Sanchez also said that, even if not explicitly asked, the participants often revealed information on the context and on violence that led to the displacement or disruption, such as murders and threats.

The influence that the interviewer has over the extracted information appeared clearly from a dynamic emerged from the interview with Ms. Valencia (Lila Mujer). In fact, when the researcher interviewed the latter, he was accompanied by two IDPs previously interviewed (who did not know her before). Ms. Valencia told everyone about her personal battles with a strong charisma, and the two IDPs, probably touched by the story, decided to share with her (but in front of the researcher) sensitive information of their life previously omitted. This fact shows that probably for the interviewees it is particularly important to feel that the interviewer is on their same level.

4.1.3 Experiences with dreams

The “Proyecto Video-reconciliación” included interviews on dreams in its diagnostic part. The purpose was to evaluate how the project affected the lives of the participants and what was the most important change in their lives. In the case of dreams, this was done by asking them, in different phases of the project, what was their short/long-term dream. For example, a child who, before the project, dreamed of becoming a policeman, four years later dreamed of becoming a doctor, showing a radical change in his life. The main body of the project was constituted by the so-called Video-transformation. A series of activities were carried out and recorded with a camera, with a view at enhancing the self-esteem of the participants by making them look at the recordings. In one activity every woman was individually told she was a princess, dressed with a crown and asked to explain how she would rule her kingdom. Some of them had never imagined before they could be in a position of power, some reacted with authority, others with shame.

Paz y Bien has a project of more than 400 notebooks where the people can write and draw their past, their history but also their dreams and hopes. For the young participants, the second part is predominant and the notebooks are called “notebook of dreams”. This would have been a precious source for the research in order to evaluate a particular method of “dream assessment” but the researcher could not accede to these notebooks for privacy reasons. As Alba Stella reported, even when she is reading, the authors of the notebooks cover some parts of the page which are personal, such as sentimental issues (personal interview, Alba Stella, Paz y Bien, 7 September 2017, min 5:27).

In relation to the idea of asking the affected people about their dreams and hopes, on the one hand I. Sanchez Vargas (ICRC) thought that this it would be particularly interesting to understand how their dreams and hopes change from before to after the displacement. On the other hand, he mentioned the risk of giving them false expectations about the help that they are going to receive. In his opinion the interviewer should only ask questions about what the community would like in the projects that the ICRC is able to implement.

The PAPSIVI includes dreams and projections in the future in different stages of the programme. The coping strategies of the people are taken into consideration because they are the first step for their recovery. As the interviewed officer said: “everybody has some strategies”, and part of the work of PAPSIVI is to identify them and specially to let the people concerned identify their own strategies, which are present but of which they might not be aware:

“In some cases, the dreams are coping strategies for the people. This dream, this desire that I have for some reason, is something that helps me keep safe, float, despite history of very violent situations.” (personal interview n. 25, min 03:34)

In the first phase of the psychosocial attention the operator always asks the people how they would like to see themselves in the future and how they think that the programme can contribute to the fulfilment of their dreams, so that the objectives of the programme can take them into account.

4.1.4 Dreams and future in traumatic context

Ms. Escobar (Foro Nacional Colombia) reports that the plan of life of IDPs is generally completely shattered and that they struggle to rebuild it. Mr. Valencia of the SENA thinks that around 70/75% of the IDPs want to go ahead (personal interview n.27, min.10). Her colleague, from the Agencia de Empleo said:

“I think that the people always want to keep going. You meet for example a mother whose sons and husbands had been killed, whose daughters raped, and there they are working and selling, going ahead, trying to send the remaining sons to work. We keep projecting ourselves, with all the difficulties, but we keep going.” (personal interview n. 32, min. 19:10).

Ms. Escobar of the Unidad para las Víctimas reported that:

“When a person suffers violence, he has such a strong pain in the heart and often in the physic that is like a vase that breaks. With this broken vase, you have the pieces and you have to rebuild it. This “reinvent yourself” means to take what you have of your life and build with this vase something else, more functional. To reinvent yourself is to give meaning to this experience of life, but in the here and now. Here often we speak of expectations, of dreams and means that are motivators to keep going”. (personal interview n.23, min 10:50)

The interviews with SENA also underlined the importance of the family as a support for people in planning their future. One of the identified problems is that many young IDPs are sent alone to the city by the family and without their support, they struggle to stick to their projects and risk entering in the local criminality (personal interview n. 33, min. 23).

The relation with the family was also stressed by the officer of PAPSIVI, who noticed that while the dreams of a family headed toward a shared ideal before the tragedy, after the tragedy the dreams of the family members split. The dreams of the parents and of the children differ because they have a different perception of the tragedy. This is related with the territory and the fact that when they live in the rural community the centre of the life is the community, while the life of the city is very individualistic.

The same interviewee also emphasized the importance of the group dimension. In his/her experience, generally half of the people are not able to project themselves in the future, but the other half give them ideas and motivation. Sometimes what happens is that in the same group there are two people who had a similar experience of violence, for example the murder of a son, and while a mother thinks that she cannot keep on living, the other can be more resilient and inspire the former. The officer of PAPSIVI is convinced that an encouragement that comes from a person who lived a similar violence is much more effective than the one that comes from an external officer.

As regards the case of people living with HIV, Ms Valencia (Lila Mujer) admitted that at times those people struggle to understand what they need and to project themselves in the future, but it depends from case to case:

“One says that she wants to die, another that it’s enough, ‘why keep going?’, others cry, and others hate their husbands... still they did not recover. They have dreams, yes... some finished their studies, some others want to start, others did not yet go out of the lagoon, they try to project themselves and PUFF! ...another time.” (Personal interview n.24, min 11:30)

The problem underlined by Ms. Valencia is the fact that with this illness the person is not sure of how long will he/she live.

4.1.5 Reported dreams and tools of resilience

In the experience of the social workers interviewed, the most common dreams revealed to them by Afro-Colombian IDPs were:

- To develop and be able to show their own capacities (such as art, music, dance...);
- To conquer higher social positions;
- To help the family;
- To study;
- To travel (for example, going to the Caribbean coast of Colombia);
- a house;
- health;
- to give a future to their sons/daughters;
- To help the community.

The dream of helping the community was reported by three different social workers in different interviews: Carlos of the Colombian Red Cross, Alba Stella of Paz y Bien and Ms. Escobar of Foro Nacional Colombia. They were all surprised by the importance of this dream within IDPs. In particular Hermana Alba Stella reported the case of a guy who wanted to study systems and innovation to go back to his original community in the Pacific area and share the knowledge (personal interview n. 26, min. 12). Ms. Escobar said that many women express their altruism by being community leaders and that this feature is probably the strongest tool of resilience that they have (personal interview n.30, min. 15)

The consultant of Proyecto Video-reconciliación noticed that the mothers often struggle to identify their own dreams as separate from the ones related to the future of their sons/daughters. This same feature seemed to Ms. Escobar (Plan Colombia) the reason why women are much more resilient than men. Men often don't know how to use their capacities related to their previous life such as for example being fishermen, while for the women the future of their sons is an engine that keeps them moving. This would explain why they are more active, enterprising and in average more present than men in activities for victims (personal interview n.30, min.13).

The consultant of the "Proyecto Video-reconciliación" also reported that often, in group meetings, the participants would not express their deepest dream due to the

common belief that if you tell your dream, it will not come true. The same person said that in individual interviews this mechanism seemed to disappear.

Always according to him/her not everybody has material dreams and he/she reported the case of a woman whose dream was to forgive the mother and that she (the mother) could explain why she did what she did (personal interview n.22).

With respect to the age groups, the interviews with SENA revealed a difference between the kind of training chosen. In fact, while young people wanted to study nursing, informatics, systems, accountability, mechanics, adults preferred courses of training that they could possibly use in some personal business, such as food preparation. The difference concerns also the attitude toward the place where they want to live. Young IDPs prefer staying in the city, while adult IDPs want to go back to their place of origin (personal interview n.33, min 21:20).

I. Sanchez Vargas (ICRC) reported that surprisingly, in some cases, in the aftermath of a disruption the community preferred long-term projects instead of a faster response. For example, an indigenous community who had lost everything, from a technical point of view needed as a priority the fish nets because with them they could start fishing and eating the day after they received them. But, from the meetings and the prioritization done with them emerged that the community wanted seeds of plantain, which need ten months to grow and produce fruits. The reason was that fish nets last for a couple of months while plantain trees last for at least two or three years. This is what they needed more to survive in the territory.

“We do the diagnosis to respect and understand their knowledge, their dynamics... so as not to impose anything... the participatory diagnosis tries to make it possible for the interventions to be concerted, to make people participate and to understand and value their knowledge. Now for example we are going to work with a cultivation project. They will produce the seeds themselves and we will pay them, because there is an issue of ancestral and cultural knowledge. Many institutions say: they are fishermen, let’s give them fishnets. But they don’t fish the whole time, they do also other activities.” (Personal interview n.21, min 40:00)

4.1.6 Resilience

Vicenta of the “Casa Cultural El Chontaduro” underlined the importance of maintaining the Afro-Colombian tradition, such as the Afro-Colombian religions, and arts, such as music, poetry and theatre (personal interview n.36, min 9:07).

The officer of PAPSIVI also emphasized the importance of those traditions as a tool of resilience.

“Most of the Afro-Colombian population preserves a cultural tradition, this tradition is the basis for their recovery, it is the basis for transforming the pain generated by the events... women who write poetry, who sing, who dance, and through these ancestral customs they are able to go through the events and to heal the damages created by the conflicts. At the emotional level it is a strong coping strategy and often a population which is not afro does not have it. For example, in the case of the indigenous people, yes, they do have healing strategies but to be found more in the field of organization, whereas the Afro-Colombians rely on their emotional side” (Personal interview n.25, min 16:08)

Therefore, it seems that different ethnic groups have different coping systems which are traditions for Afro-Colombians and organization of the community for indigenous people.

The same informant is convinced that one of the strongest tools of resilience of the Afro-Colombian community is music:

“Music has always been used as a method. We worked with a lady who came from a place called Guapi, displaced from Guapi, and she said that she managed to come out of her sadness and depression only after heard a marimba (typical percussion of the Afro-Colombian music) when she started to dance and sing. These people, as an afro culture, are very closely connected to their traditions and I am convinced that this is a method used to be resilient and happy, because in my opinion sadness and depression are an issue of energy. Persons may say that they are not able to do anything, that they have no energy, that they cannot move and have to lie down all the time! And yet they are healthy, suffer from no illness, but their minds, his hearts and their bodies feel a lack of energy. Music for the Afro-Colombians always makes people move, it gives them happiness.” (personal interview n.25, min 19:19)

Paz y Bien is now planning a project of return to the land, based on the dream of a group of farmers to go back to rural life. Alba Stella stresses the importance of

sustaining this choice and this dream by helping them find the appropriate economic activity which could facilitate the return:

“Their dream is to go back to the fields. Go back to do what? What we were doing before (they said). So, I said NO. Let’s go to search the SENA and let’s find out what is competitive today which could constitute a dignified project of life and help the national economy...” (personal interview n.26, min 17:30).

4.2 Interview to IDPs

4.2.1 Method in practice

17 interviews to Afro-Colombian displaced people were performed in the district of Aguablanca (Cali) in the period between 29th of July 2017 to 29th of August 2017 (see ANNEX I). The interviews were all performed in a relaxed and intimate atmosphere and no major problems were reported by the interviewer.

The participants had to sign a long consent document, and this created some hesitation due to the fact that many of them had lost their land by signing disadvantageous contracts. They were often told by many social workers to be very careful when signing something. Therefore, the interviewer had spent considerable time explaining every detail of the consent form and the purpose of the research. Only one participant refused to sign the consent form but wanted to be interviewed.

A few respondents wanted to know what would they gain by participating in the research and the answer was always “nothing”, except for the help that they were given. The researcher also explained them that he was not paid to carry out this research and that the investigation was not funded by any scholarship. This helped in creating a climate of confidence. Apparently, many scholars were well paid to interview poor people who did not get anything themselves and this was perceived as highly unfair (personal interview, AFRODES, min 52).

The average length of the interviews was 30 minutes, the shortest lasted 11 minutes and the longest one hour and a half. The difference depended on many factors.

Firstly, it depended on how the interview was conducted. In the first interviews the researcher did not use many probes and observed how the participants reacted to the basic script. This first observation shows that asking for a simple list of hopes

and dreams risks being a sterile exercise as the respondent is not able to let the mind free and to reveal much information. In the second set of interviews the researcher used many probes such as asking the reason and a complete description of every hope/dream. The resulting interviews were longer and richer in details.

Secondly, a few respondents started long monologues about their life and the interviewer did not stop them, even if often they exceeded the scope of the interview.

The respondents reacted in different ways to the beads. Some really concentrated and chose a bead that represented their hope.

In this case, the beads most frequently used were the biggest ones as well as the ones representing a letter of the alphabet. The biggest beads were often used to emphasize the importance of their dream. The letters were used to represent the initial of relevant people in their life (like the mum, the daughter,..) or the initial of the object of their dream (e.g. “L” for lavadora, washing machine). Shimmering beads and crystals represented money or valuable dreams. Finally, coloured beads were used in different ways, for example red for one person represented the dream of red motorbike, while white for another represented peace.



Picture 4 - Resulting bracelets

Some respondents did not pay much attention to the beads and selected them randomly. In at least one case (picture 5), a respondent who had already seen the previous interview and understood that the bracelet was going to be given as a present, selected the beads thinking about how he/she wanted the bracelet to be and not because it represented his/her dreams.



Picture 5 - "untruthful" bracelet

Anyway, the research did not focus on the analysis of the resulting bracelet. The use of the beads in the interviews was only to trigger the imagination of the interviewees and help them express their thoughts. As regards to this aspect, the beads resulted being a very useful tool. They introduced an element of game and fun in the interviews. Respondents seemed to be highly stimulated by them and tried to express as many dreams/hopes as possible in order to continue searching for the corresponding bead.

Shy respondents filled the moments of silence (and possible embarrassment) by touching and looking at the beads, while more extrovert interviewees often forgot about them and kept talking continuously. In these cases, the interviewer did not interrupt them and only at the end asked them to choose the corresponding beads.

The fact that they received the bracelet as a present at the end of the interview was highly appreciated especially for the meaning attached to the gift. Francisca Castro, leader of the "Escuela se quien soy" said:

*“This accompaniment of the victims is of paramount importance because it helps us understand our dreams and to have them here present”.
(Personal interview n.19)*

The perceived importance of the bracelets is shown also by the fact that many respondents still wear it days or weeks later.

The major risk of this method of interviewing was that the participants might have had the illusion that the researcher was somehow going to help them see their dreams come true. In fact, two participants perceived the researcher as a helper:

“God put you as a helper in our way, so we trust him... he is going to motivate us to keep going on with our project...” (personal interview n.8)

And the participant who dreamt of being an actress, said:

“For me this is a dream becoming reality, I don't have words... thank you to be here at this moment... ...nobody asked me about my dreams before, and it makes me happy... I already see myself in another place... in a movie...” (Personal interview n. 10)

In both cases the respondents perceived the interviewer as a helper but it seemed that they had not expected him to help them afterwards. They mainly saw him as sign of destiny/God indicating that their dreams might become reality one day.

As regards to the general reaction to the interview, most of the participants seemed to feel comfortable and enjoy the exercise. Only a few times the participants got blocked and the interviewer had the feeling that he had asked too much. This happened when he asked about the reason for their displacement. The interviewer promptly told them that they were not obliged to answer and skipped the question.

Regarding the relation between the participant and his/her dreams, the participants had a generally clear idea on what they wanted but a few participants struggled. There were two women who were so identified with their role of mother that they initially did not express any hope/dream which was not related to their children.

4.2.2 Contents of the interviews

The following section presents the results of the interviews with IDPs, divided in three categories: dreams, problems and resilience. This division implies an apparent repetition of some results but it allows to distinguish between the

information gathered from the mechanic analysis of the list of dreams (“Dreams “) and the information emerged by a deeper analysis of the interviews (“problems” and “resilience”).

4.2.2.1 Dreams

The following list shows the categories of dreams and hopes resulting from the interviews and their frequency.

Hope/Dream	frequency
Where to live	(all)
A house	(13/17)
Objects	(12/17)
A job	(11/17)
Future for the children/relatives	(11/17)
Education	(9/17)
To help	(7/17)
To travel	(6/17)
Peace	(3/17)
Health	(3/17)
Security / protection	(3/17)
Money	(2/17)
Spiritual / religious	(2/17)
To create a family / marry	(2/17)

Table 2 - List of hopes and dreams

This categorization is arbitrary and was created by the researcher during the analysis of the interviews.

Where to live

Regarding the issue of where to live, the respondents had very different dreams. Four people wanted to stay in Cali, four would love to go back to their place of origin while three would like to move to some other place even abroad, like Canada and United States. It is worth noting that many of them, including the ones who dreamt to go back to the Pacific area, underlined that it is not possible mainly for economic and security issues. For example, a lady with a handicapped daughter said:

“I would like to live in the country and feel relaxed. I like very much working with animals, with chicken and so on... .. but at the moment, owing to the condition of my daughter, as there is no assistance in the country, I need to find a solution and to survive in the city...” (personal interview n.5)

Another woman said:

“I don’t go back to my land, I don’t know who took it, more than thirty hectares of land, animals... anyway, I don’t go back there... the people say that it is very nice but there is much war... they told me that if I go and claim my land they will kill me, that’s why I don’t go back...” (personal interview n.6)

A house

Having a large house was the most common dream revealed by participants. Most of them described the interior and the numbers and placement of the rooms. Just a few respondents said something about the exterior. For one person the house of her dreams is in front of a beach, and for the other on a hill in facing a river.

Objects

The most required object was a mean of transport: a big car, a motorbike or a boat. The reason given for this hope was to take the family around for pleasure, to work and, in case of the boat, to help the community in the Pacific area to go around in spite of the expensive private boat services. Other dreamed objects were a washing machine, a big fridge and a musical instrument desired by a young musician.

Job

Four people wanted to work in the social sector such as taking care of children. A woman who was a midwife in the Pacific area expressed the need for an official recognition of her knowledge so as to be able to practice it legally. Three adult women wanted to have their own business, such as a restaurant or a shop. Three people hoped to be artist: a poet, a musician and an actress. A respondent said that she wanted to be a lawyer and another a manageress. The youngest participant dreamed of being a football player.

Future for the children / relatives

Most of the interviewees hoped that their children/relatives would have a good future and be professionals. Somebody dreamed that they would manage their own activity such as a shop, others hoped that they could be policemen or study in a military college. The military college in particular is considered to provide a high level of discipline. Only one person said something really different: she hoped that her son would learn about the Afro-Colombian traditions such as building and playing traditional musical instruments. When the researcher asked her if her son had the same dream, she showed the person she was referring to and it turned out to be a very young child who could barely speak a few words.

Education

Nine people dreamed to start or complete some kind of studies. The area of the studies was not always specified. Two respondents wanted to improve their reading and writing skills, one wanted to study nursing, another one nutrition and another one to drive a car.

To help

Seven people had dreams related to the idea of helping somebody else. In one case the dream was to help the mother, in the others, to help the community.

Two people expressed the desire to provide a free service of transport on boat on the rivers for their communities of origin. The young woman who wanted to be an actress dreamt of creating create a school of theatre for children. A respondent affirmed that for her helping others is more important than having the desired car. Another participant said that:

“It seems to me that to be rich it means to be able to help the people in need, to take care of them and not wait for them to come to me, but it is up to me to see what they need...” (38 years women, personal interview n.15)

Travel

Six people dreamed to travel for pleasure. The main destinations would be the Caribbean coast of Colombia and the United States. One young woman would like to discover more about African culture by travelling in Brazil and Africa.

Peace

Three people explicitly dreamed the peace, and only one of them hoped that there would be the conditions for the IDPs to go home safely.

Health

Only three people had dreams related to health. Two of them hoped that the handicapped daughter and the deaf son could get better. Only one person had a dream related to his own health.

Security/protection

Even if the problem of security was recurrent in the interviews, there were only three dreams directly related with it. One woman said that she dreams about freedom and running freely on the beach, and the other that her children could walk around in security, without having to run.

Money

Only two respondents expressed the dream of having money, while other two respondents explicitly said that they don't want a lot of money.

"...I have to be rich, but rich of heart, not of money... if I had money, I would buy a humble house... there are many rich people who humiliate the poor..." (19 years old man, personal interview n.4)

Religious

Only a few references to religion and spirituality were recorded by the interviewer. A woman expressed the hope that God would bless her, and another that God could mention her in the book of life.

Family-related dream

A young man said that he dreams of having his own family with two sons, while an adult woman dreamed of getting married to a nice man.

Other

A woman dreamed to fight corruption as well as environmental pollution and destruction. A young man hoped to be a good person in the life, mentally strong and self-confident.

4.2.2.2 Problems

This section presents the problems and challenges of IDPs' life, identified by the researcher through a deeper analysis of the interviews.

Violence

Many participants spoke about the violence in Cali and in the Pacific area although the interviewer had never asked anything about it. The following is a detailed description of the past violence in the Pacific area, cause of the displacement.

"At four o'clock a neighbour came and asked us for a favour. He lived on the other side of the ravine, and he told my mother that they were going away for a few days and he asked her the favour of taking care of their pig.

I remember going out at 6 o'clock in the afternoon and going to the other side to look after the animals and we had dinner... because these houses are big, I remember that the neighbour's house had no door to the street and I put up a curtain and laid down... I must thank God because it is a miracle if I am here to tell you this story because I should not be alive with everything that happened.

So, we went to bed with my sister, my mom, my dad and the baby next to the door in the corner... I tell this story and I cry a lot. They put my little sister in the middle of the couple, I was next to the courtyard where the fire was. We laid down, we watered the fire so that the wood would not burn. At 3 am we saw the candle, the flame had been lit, then my mother said "Francisco, who lit the candle if the candle had been covered? No, it should be off... no one turned it on and now it's on "

She got up about 4 am and looked out, the pig was running around the yard and the moon was shining! And my mom said that there was

someone out there and my dad says no, because there are no people around here. But my mom saw the pig running, she got up, looked at the creek, where there was a rock and she knew they were hiding there. She went back to bed because she did not see anything and at 5... PUM, PUM, PUM!! The shots... It was shocking, my mom and dad said, "I have been shot", my dad was shot in the leg and in one eye. What could I do with a four-year-old child and a four-month toddler? It is a serious trauma, I have a trauma here... my parents asked for water and I cried, I cried, and I thought, what do I do? And my mother told me to go and tell those on the other side that they had been shot. I had to pass the ravine and the river on a hanging bridge, but when I passed, the killers were standing there, there were three of them, some had short weapons, others long and it was a miracle that they did not kill me." (personal interview n.9)

A few respondents reported the present situation of violence in the Pacific area:

"I recently went to Charco Nariño a year ago, because there had been the peace process, the news said that there was peace and that all territories changed. I went, but the situation there is still the same, there is still production of coca, there are guerrillas, not the FARC but other groups. the peace is sold to us in the city. Since we began to talk about the peace, in some sectors of Colombia there has been an increase in war and disappearances, there is no more war between guerrilla and state, but between citizens, and in the territories it is the same thing..." (personal interview n.16)

"I came back to settle in Cali because (in the Pacific area) new groups are appearing, the things are already getting bad. My mother can't walk and I have a daughter... to be in the middle, if something happen I can't run away, so it's better to flee before..." (personal interview n.5)

While other respondents spoke about the violence in Cali. The youngest respondent, who dreamed of becoming a football player cannot train with the team of his zone because to get there he should cross some "invisible borders" and he would be attacked by some other gangs.

Bureaucracy

The impact of the laws and bureaucracy of the city on people used to living in a rural situation seems to be very strong. An example was a lady who used to be a midwife in the Pacific area and has a good knowledge of medicine and plants transmitted to her by her grandmother. Now that she lives in the city she is scared of practicing as a midwife without any certification. Her fear is to incur in legal problems.

Another lady adopted informally a child in a difficult situation, with the consent of the father and of the community. But now that she is in the city she cannot apply for

assistance for him because she thinks that they are going to take the child away from her.

Another problem which was reported concerns the legal status of victim and displaced person. A respondent reported that she is not receiving any assistance because she is not considered as a victim of the conflict, whereas in her opinion she is.

Life in the city

The problems related to the life in the city are many. Firstly, the fact that the IDPs often come from a rural context and in the city they do not know what to do and how to value their knowledge. Secondly, life in the city is much more expensive than life in the rural areas. In the city they need to buy things that they would have produced themselves or exchanged within the community such as “the chicken shanks” (personal interview n.5).

Domestic violence

The issue of domestic violence emerged from an interview in which the respondent was talking about the man of her dreams. She said that this man had to be a professional so as not to prohibit certain things to her (personal interview n.11). When the interviewer asked to clarify it, she explained that men are often so possessive that if the woman transgresses his orders, for example going out to dance, when she comes back the man would beat her.

Money

Only two people reported a problem of money. They would need money in one case to send the daughter to school and in the other to flee the country.

Health

Two respondents explained that their dream is related to health problems. Those two ladies in fact dreamed of having their own activities (such as a restaurant) so as to be able to manage their own time and rest:

“The dream is to have my own activity because I suffer from high blood pressure due to too much sugar. The problem of sugar is a very delicate

illness. I can't work because I always have to ask permission to go to the doctor... so my dream is to have my own activity!" (personal interview n.8)

4.2.2.3 Resilience

The main resilience strategies that emerged from the interviews were related to the Afro-Colombian culture and traditions such as music, cuisine, community life and traditional medicine.

Music seems to play an important role as it is widely recognized as a pillar element of the Afro-Colombian identity. One respondent was a musician, another a poet and another said:

"The only thing that helped me and sustained me during this stress was to sing. I always dreamed to be a singer. I sing a lot in the bathroom, when I'm angry, when I'm sad and when I'm happy...". (personal interview n. 4)

Traditional food also seems to constitute an important element of resilience. Many respondents dream to work in restaurants providing traditional dishes as fish cooked with coconut (pescado encocado), baked (pescado sudado) or cocktails of shrimps (ceviche). They seem to be particularly proud of the culinary tradition of their region:

"...The variety of dishes is so wide, the best cuisine of the world is the afro one..." (personal interview n.10)

The food is also connected with the issue of reciprocal help. Many respondents underlined that in the pacific area if a person of the community is hungry the others will share with him the food. Reciprocal help seemed to be soul of the community life. A few respondents nominated the "troque" (the barter) and "minga" as a method of resistance. The "minga" is a system used to help each other to do major works that require the help of everybody. Its basic principle is that "today I help you, and tomorrow you help me" (personal interview, AFRODES, min 34).

The key element of every oral culture is the transmission of knowledge. This issue emerged from the wish expressed by three respondents of writing a book on their traditions and on their roots. One in particular wanted to found an organization to

strengthen their culture and identity because she felt that they were getting lost.

Another respondent said:

“I would like to go back, and not stay, this is very sad. I would like to go back to extend our knowledge, which is roots, which is ancestral. There I born, there I learnt, so why not to go back and bring back my knowledge there? Not keep it here in Cali, there are many people who need it there...”
(personal interview n.15, min 17:00)

All these messages could also be a sign of the participants' fear that their traditions, their culture and their identity is going to be lost. Interview 15 in particular shows how this process of deterioration does not affect only the IDP community in Cali but also the communities who keep on living in the Pacific area.

CHAPTER 5: Analysis of findings

5.1 Method: interviews on hopes and dreams

The review of the literature revealed a number of participatory methods aimed at extracting information, some of them with the use of graphical tools and objects. One method specifically use beads, the so-called “proportional piling” (ICRC, 2008, pp. 53-54). Nevertheless, it seems that there is still no method developed with the purpose of asking about hopes and dreams, and in general there is no method that makes use of beads in the way proposed in this thesis.

The results of the interviews showed that the use of beads had positively stimulated the respondents and helped them express their hopes and dreams. This method was in fact able to create “a bubble” away from the present, where the respondents revealed the information in a playful atmosphere, but this depended mostly on the presence and responsiveness of the interviewer. The research showed that, in order to create such atmosphere, the researcher had to ask multiple probes on every revealed dream/hope, such as “How do you imagine the car of your dreams?” and “Where would you go with this car?”. Only at that moment, the participant started to take the interview as a game and to speak freely.

The importance of interviewer’s capacity was underlined also by the interview with Mr. Sanchez of ICRC and clearly emerged from the interview in the association “Lila Mujer”. In that case, the presence and internal strength of the director, Ms. Valencia Terma, made the two IDPs reveal information that they did not mention in the previous interview with only the researcher attending.

Mr. Sanchez also reported that the place where the interview takes place has a strong impact on the interview and he noticed that in general he had better results by going directly to the house of the participant. This is what happened for most of the interviews performed during the research. One of the unexpected outcomes is that the “individual interviews” became “participated” by family members, neighbours and friends. The researcher allowed it because it seemed to make the participant feel more at ease and the questions were not planned to deal with “sensitive information”. Furthermore, the group dimension could have a positive

effect on people lacking of motivation and listening to someone else's dreams and hopes could be of inspiration, as reported by the officer of PAPSIVI.

Another issue that emerged is the risk of giving false expectations to the participants. This appeared from the literature review of participatory approaches, from the interviews with Mr. Sanchez and in two cases, from interviews to IDPs, in which the participants perceived the interviewer as a helper. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to explain precisely the purpose of the interview before starting it. This can be simplified by including in the consent form a sentence which says that no benefit will derive from participating and by explaining in detail the consent form before starting the interview.

5.2 Dreams and hopes of the Afro-Colombians IDPs in Cali

The analysis of the interviews to Afro-Colombian IDPs in Cali resulted in a list of dreams and hopes, divided per category. A comparison of these findings with the literature review and the results of the interviews to social workers, shows that they properly represent the population under study.

As regard to where to live, the literature clearly indicates that IDPs prefer to settle down in the cities they fled to instead of going back to their place of origin, even if some of them miss some aspects of the rural life. The interviews performed showed that some of the respondents wanted to stay in Cali but others expressed their inner desire of going back to their land or to move to a new destination in Colombia or abroad. However, all the people who dream of going back to their land, also admitted that it is not a feasible option due to security reasons, while the option of moving abroad to Canada or the United States for most of them is also not feasible due to economic reasons. Therefore, the results of the interviews are consistent with the studies analysed in the literature review, which are focused on the concrete choices of the people and not on their wishes.

The dream of a house, which emerged from the interviews, is confirmed in the literature review by the high participation to the Free Housing programme and was also reported by the social workers interviewed.

To have a means of transport such as a car or a motorbike was a common dream amongst participants. It represents the individual solution to a problem underlined in the literature review and that Afro-Colombians face when they arrive in Cali, which is the mobility and the dependence on the expensive public transport.

The social workers interviewed reported that “to have a job”, “future for the children/relatives”, “education”, “help” and “travel” are common dreams of the Afro-Colombian IDPs in Cali, therefore confirming the validity of the list of the most common expressed dreams. In particular, three social workers indicated in different interviews the importance for Afro-Colombians of helping the community, which is a characteristic of a culture rooted in the rural dimension and community life.

A connection of these results with the R.Seginer’s theory of hope introduced in the literature review, would result in the splitting of the hopes/dreams into two categories: universal and culture specific domain (Seginer, 2008, p. 273). The majority of reported dreams would fall in the universal domain category, as they relate to universal needs such as having a house, a job, education and future for the children. The dreams that would be included in the culture specific domain are the dreams of helping and working in areas such as traditional food, music, poetry and theatre which are all expression of the Afro-Colombian culture.

With respect to the issue discussed in the literature review about asking about hopes and dreams to people who experienced traumas and violence, the interviews with social workers and with IDPs partially confirmed the findings. In fact, the interviews with social workers indicated that some IDPs struggle to dream and project themselves in the future whereas others keep on dreaming.

During the personal interviews with IDPs, the researcher noticed that no participant had no dream or hope to reveal, even if some of them struggled more than others to talk about them. It is worth noting that the majority of participants were women and their resilience emerged also by the repeated dream of ensuring a future to their children, as highlighted also by some social workers. It is therefore possible that a more balanced sampling within genders would have revealed more cases of “foreshortened future”.

One of the positive aspects following trauma underlined in the literature review was the increased importance of spirituality and religion as mental resource after a

traumatic event. This was not reflected in the results of the interviews, where religion and spirituality emerged only vaguely. The reason of this could be found in the reported disruption of spiritual and religious traditions within the Afro-Colombian IDPs in Cali (Figueroa & Chica, 2016, p. 171), or in the fact that Afro-Colombian religions were historically banned as witchcraft and people would not speak of it openly.

Another subject that did not appear often in the interviews was the sentimental sphere. This was reported also by the Hermana Alba Stella concerning the “notebooks of dreams” of the Association Paz y Bien.

Lastly, the researcher was surprised to notice that, even if the participants had the possibility of expressing any kind of dreams, they did generally not express unrealistic ones. According to Snyder’s researches (Snyder, 2002, p. 265), the fact that people set themselves realistic goals could be an indication that their hope is high.

As regards the issue of underreporting, other factors must be taken into consideration such as the fact that people might feel embarrassed (ALNAP, 2009, p. 152) or they might superstitiously believe that if they speak about their dream, it will not become reality, as reported by the consultant of “Proyecto Video-Reconciliación”.

A limit in the analysis was represented by the sampling. In fact, most of the participants were adult women and this did not allow a proper analysis of dreams and hopes per gender and age groups. Such differences emerged from the interviews with social workers such as the one with Mr. Santauz (SENA). He explained that age groups have different preferences of professional trainings which are supposedly the result of different projections in the future.

5.3 Most important present needs of the Afro-Colombians IDPs in Cali

Form the analysis of the interviews, the research identified not only a list of dreams but also a list problems in the Afro-Colombian IDPs' life, which were categorised in the area of:

- Violence;
- Health;
- Bureaucracy;
- Money;
- Life in the city;
- Domestic violence.

The initial method of interviewing asked the participants to reorder, at the end of the interview, their list of dreams according to priority. The objective of this procedure was to understand what are their most urgent dreams and consequently needs. This procedure failed because some of the participants on whom the method was tested, refused to indicate a clear order of priority. In fact, some of the participants correctly ordered their dreams, but others explained that all their dreams are important at the same level and they cannot be ordered according to their priority. Furthermore, the researcher had the feeling that asking to prioritize things such as the “future for their children” and “their health” could put the interviewee the difficult position of having to make a painful choice and therefore decided to eliminate the procedure. Therefore, even if the research succeeded in identifying a list of problems in the Afro-Colombian IDPs' life, it was not able to select the most relevant of them, partially failing to reach this specific objective.

5.4 Proposed method as an assessment in humanitarian assistance

The proposed method can be used in two possible ways. Firstly, it can be considered as a new participatory approach for the “old” purposes of a humanitarian need assessment. Secondly, it can be considered as a participatory approach for a new objective of humanitarian needs assessments: the identification of long-term aspirations of the people in need.

5.4.1 New approach for “old” purposes

As regards the first case, the literature review introduced the needs assessment methods in humanitarian assistance and described in detail their aim as regards Early Recovery and participatory approaches. The analysis with social workers highlighted the kind and scope of the needs assessment methods that they used in Cali and Valle del Cauca. From a comparison of these findings with the results of the interviews with IDPs it appears that the proposed method could be used for the following objectives:

- General evaluation of the community
- Assessment of existing strategies of resilience of the affected population
- Evaluation of a project by assessing its impact on the dreams of the people

A general evaluation of the community is done by ICRC in order to gather information on the main needs of the community. The analysis of the interviews showed that the method was able to provide an overview of the problematics and needs of the community, even if it was not able to prioritize them. Some of the information was confirmed by the literature review and the interviews with social workers, such as the increase of violence in the Pacific area, following the Peace deal with the FARC. However, it is difficult to assess whether the method provided a complete overview of the needs and problematics of the community.

As far as existing strategies of resilience are concerned, the interviews showed that they are mainly related to the Afro-Colombian identity: traditional food, music, poetry

and medicine. The influence of the afro-Colombian traditions can be seen in the reported dream of wanting to help the community, which is based on the same concept of the “minga”. The interviews with social workers confirmed that their traditions are the pillar of their recovery and the role of identity as a tool of resilience is reported by “Afro-Colombia” of J.Jordan (Jordan, 2008). Therefore, the method seemed to have provided sufficient knowledge on local resilience tools that a possible assistance could support. It is important to note that the Afro-Colombian case study presents some characteristics which are not shared with other IPDs around the World, such as this strong cultural identification, the fact that they speak the same language as the host community and that their first displacement dates back to the XVIth century at the time of slavery.

The possibility of using interviews on dreams for the evaluation of projects emerged from the interview with a consultant for Proyecto Video-Reconciliación). In fact, the consultant reported that they included interviews on dreams in the diagnostic part of the project to evaluate how the project changed their life and cultural coordinates. A similar idea came from I. Sanchez Vargas (ICRC) who proposed to use such interviews to assess how displacement affects the people.

5.4.2 New approach for “new” purposes

The new approach regards a change of humanitarian assistance due to its involvement in protracted crisis and a need to have a longer-term view of its actions. For this reason, the proposed method identified a list of hopes and dreams of the local people for their future with the idea that the assistance could include them into the projects planning and design.

The main challenge is represented by the fact that most of these dreams regard things that are out of the scope of humanitarian assistance and are generally the objective of development programmes. However, there is already a list of actions that humanitarian can do to respond to some of the disclosed dreams. An example of these actions and their related dream is the following:

Dream	Action
Job	Cash-for-Work ⁴
Education Future for children	Education in Emergencies ⁵
To help the community	Involvement of a high number of local volunteers

Table 3 - Dreams and related actions

The feasibility of including the hopes and dreams of the people in humanitarian assistance depends on the context and on the crisis. Therefore, further research is needed to assess under what circumstances and what kind of humanitarian actions can take the dreams and hopes of the people into consideration.

⁴ Cash-for-Work: conditional cash-transfers with the aim of involving the community in public or community work programmes (ECHO, 2013, p. 3).

⁵ Education in Emergencies: access to formal and non-formal education in emergencies, by activities such as rehabilitation or reconstruction of schools, provision of uniforms and materials and ensuring transport to school (ECHO, 2017, p. 2).

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions

This research is the result of a three-month fieldwork in Cali (Colombia) between June and September 2017, carried out in collaboration with the Instituto de Estudios Interculturales of the Universidad Javeriana Cali.

The aim of the research was to assess how and to what extent interviews concerning hopes and dreams can be used as an assessment method in humanitarian assistance.

For this purpose, the study created a unique method of interviewing and tested it on seventeen Afro-Colombian IDPs in Cali. The findings were then compared with the literature review and with the results of sixteen interviews to social workers in Cali and Buenaventura.

The method consisted in semi-structured interviews helped by the use of beads which represented every hope/dream revealed. At the end of the interview, the participant received as a present a bracelet made of those “dreams”. This method turned out to be very useful, as it helped the people to express themselves and it created a playful atmosphere, even if this depended a lot on the capabilities and responsiveness of the interviewer. An issue to be seriously considered was the risk of false expectations. Therefore, the researcher had to carefully explain that no benefit would result from participating.

The method was tested on 17 Afro-Colombian IDPs living in Aguablanca and its analysis produced not only a list of hopes/dreams but also a list of problems and tools of resilience. A comparison with the literature review and with the opinion of the field workers interviewed showed that the results obtained are an accurate representation of the reality.

The hypothesis according to which asking about traumatic events risks blocking the communication was corroborated by the experience of the researcher. When he asked about the reason for their displacement, many respondents hesitated, and others refused to answer. This shows that an approach focused on positive things might be able to create a better communication channel with the participants.

The importance of thinking about long-term projects also in humanitarian settings was reported in the interview with Mr. Sanchez Vargas (ICRC) when he talked about

the preferences of affected communities, while the feasibility of performing participatory assessments in humanitarian contexts emerged from the literature review.

On the one hand the analysis showed that the proposed method can be used as a participatory approach in humanitarian assistance to assess:

- General needs and problems of the community
- Existing strategies of resilience
- Psychological impact of a project.

On the other hand, the thesis suggests a more innovative usage of the method as a tool to assess future aspirations of the people in need. This could represent an important step in the evolution of humanitarian assistance which always more often has to respond and adapt to protracted crisis. However, the feasibility of including hopes and dreams into humanitarian action should be assessed by a deeper investigation.

Suggested objects of further research are:

- Testing of the proposed method on a different case study with a special attention on a balanced sample between gender/age groups.
- Assessing what kind of action can better incorporate the disclosed dreams into humanitarian actions.

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Annexes

ANNEX I – interviews to IDPs

interview n.	gender	age	displaced from	n. of years since displacement	interview performed on
1	f	40	Nariño	10	29/07/2017
2	f	58	Cauca	13	29/07/2017
3	f	53	Nariño	34	29/07/2017
4	m	19	family from Chocó born in Cali		01/08/2017
5	f	50	Nariño	11	02/08/2017
6	f	40	Cauca	4	02/08/2017
7	f	60	Nariño	2	02/08/2017
8	f	58	Nariño	8	02/08/2017
9	f	47	Cauca	15	02/08/2017
10	f	29	Nariño	11	09/08/2017
11	f	40	Nariño	7	09/08/2017
12	f	39	Nariño	8	09/08/2017
13	m	58	Nariño	10	09/08/2017
14	f	50	Nariño	10	14/08/2017
15	f	38	Nariño	10	14/08/2017
16	m	19	Nariño	6	14/08/2017
17	f	50	Cauca	15	29/08/2017

Table 4 - Annex I - interviews with IDPs

ANNEX II – interviews to organizations

interview n.	name of organization	person interviewed	role in the organization	date
18	Jesuit Refugee Centre - Buenaventura	Anonym.	membr	25/07/2017
19	Se Quien Soy	Francisca Castro	Founder	02/08/2017
20	AFRODES	Anonym.	active member	02/08/2017
21	ICRC (Cali)	Ismael Sanchez	Agronomist engineer	18/08/2017
22	Proyecto Videoreconciliación	Anonym.	Consultant	24/08/2017
23	Unidad de Victimas	Cristina Quintero Escobar	Psychologist	28/08/2017
24	Lila Mujer	Janeth Valencia Terma	Founder	30/08/2017
25	PAPSIVI	Anonym.	Officer	31/08/2017
26	Paz y Bien	Olga Barreta Caro (hermana) Alba Stella	Founder	07/09/2017
27	SENA - Pondaje	Alex Amed Valencia	Subdirector -Pondaje	08/09/2017
28	SENA - Pondaje	Edwin Piedradito	Officer	08/09/2017
29	SENA - Pondaje	Victor Huver Recalde Rincones	Officer	08/09/2017
30	Foro Nacional Colombia - Capitulo Valle	Veronica Ramirez Monienegro	volunteer	11/09/2017
31	Foro Nacional Colombia - Capitulo Valle	Katherine Escobar	Coordinator	11/09/2017
32	SENA - Agencia Publica de Empleo	Victoria Padilla	Officer	11/09/2017
33	SENA - Agencia Publica de Empleo	Alfonso Santauz	Officer	11/09/2017
34	Colombian Red Cross - Valle	Carlos Vallesterro	Director of youth programme (Valle del Cauca)	12/09/2017
35	Colombian Red Cross - Valle	Carlos Andres Perez	Coordinator of cooperation (valle del Cauca)	12/09/2017
36	Casa Cultural "El Chontaduro"	Vicenta Moreno	General coordinator	13/09/2017

Table 5 - Annex II - Interviews with organizations

Annex III – Interview Script

Demographics:

1. When and where were you born?
2. When did you arrive in Cali?
3. What is your place of origin?
4. Where is the origin of your family?
5. What was the reason for displacement?

Hopes and dreams:

1. What does it mean for you to be happy?
2. What does it mean for you to be rich?
3. I would like you to take your time and tell me what your hopes and dreams for your own life are. Don't worry if they are little or big things, feasible or not. And don't worry if you don't know what to say, I can wait in silence. For every one of them, after referring it to me, you have to pick one of these beads which, according to you, represents your dream. Is everything clear?

[when the participant starts telling the list of dreams, the interviewer has to write them down in a synthetic list and to place every chosen bead on the correspondent dream]

Probes (if the respondent doesn't know what to say):

- Where would you like to live?
- What kind of job would you like to do?
- If you had a lot of money, what would you buy?

Probes (for the specific revealed dream):

- Why do you desire this?
- What would you do like to do with it?
- How do you imagine it? Can you describe it in detail?

4. Thank you very much for participating!

[It is then that the interviewer makes the bracelet (or necklace) and strings all the beads on an elastic, in the order in which they were selected and reminding the participant of what they represent]