Understanding and Communicating Risk Factors Affecting Youth in Comuna 13 Through

Participatory Action Research

Stephanie Cajiao Gouthro

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Education

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts (Educational Studies) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2013

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Stephanie Cajiao Gouthro

Entitled: Understanding and Communicating Risk Factors Affecting Youth of
Comuna 13

             Through Participatory Action Research

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Educational Studies)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to
originality and quality.

Signed by the final Examining Committee:

                        Adeela Arshad-Ayaz   Chair

                         Ailie Claighorn   Examiner

                         M. Ayaz Naseem   Examiner

                      Natasha Blanchet-Cohen   Examiner

                      Paul Bouchard   Supervisor

Approved by   Richard Schmid
             Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

August 20th 2013

                         Joanne Locke
                         Dean of Faculty

ii

Abstract

Understanding and Communicating Risk Factors Affecting Youth in Comuna 13

Through Participatory Research

Stephanie Cajiao

Each community defines the meaning of risk according to its history, social-economic concerns and current lived realities. I went in to Comuna 13 having a historical and sociopolitical understanding of the area, which shaped my ideas of what the risks were for the youth in such an environment, as well as what my role should be, having done my best to familiarize myself with Freire's and Fals Borda's ideas of popular education and participatory action research (PAR). I was aware, however, that my ideas didn't go beyond assumptions, and these assumptions changed considerably as I got to know the participants and the research we did as a collective.

This thesis details my attempt to use participatory action methodology in order to have the youth themselves investigate and reflect on their own realities to explain the main risk factors that plague their community and peers. This thesis asks: Using a PAR methodology, how can youth investigate what the main risk factors in Comuna 13 are for them and their peers? How do they want to communicate these factors and to whom?

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

I would like to thank the youth of Comuna 13, my teachers at Concordia, my parents and sister for their support and all the students I've had along these few years who have been wonderful teachers in return. Thank you.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Preamble

I began the idea for this thesis in the fall of 2011 as I entered the office of Dr. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen for an interview to become her teaching assistant for a diversity course. Throughout our conversation, she found out that I was born and raised in Medellín, Colombia, a city she had visited and was currently doing a participatory research project in with several youth in one of the comunas. I was just starting to look for ideas for my thesis in education, and she proposed that I do some coding and translating work for the project, and, if it interested me, I could incorporate my thesis work in the particular project she was participating in. It was perfect. It had all the elements I was looking for: the participatory element, which was essential for me, and a qualitative methodology, with some elements of quantitative methods, which I was more comfortable with. The fact that the project itself took place in my hometown was the most exciting part. I have always wanted to take the knowledge I acquired from my studies back to Medellín, where I still have my family and home, and this experience was the perfect transition. This thesis will detail my experiences from the moment I decided to do this thesis in Dr. Blanchet-Cohen's office all the way to its completion.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Growing up in Medellín, it was hard to escape the realities of extreme poverty. Whole families, many displaced from the countryside due to war, slept on the streets, and it was a common sight to see children begging. In 1999, as a junior in my high school, I joined an organization called Gente Unida, which was headed by my local priest, padre Jorge Villalobos. My effort to make a difference and address the extreme social disparities was to join a church establishment that was more about charity than about social transformation. As a 16-year-old, I could sense that my contribution was very minimal, that no real change was coming to the lives of the people we wanted to help, but at the time I could not think of another thing that could be done, just as I could not understand the reasons behind the social inequalities I was confronted with on a daily basis. This help consisted of us bringing used clothes, shoes and blankets, as well as art supplies to paint or do crafts with the local children of Moravia, a barrio that had erected itself on the city's local landfill. Paulo Freire describes this charity work as "false charity" that is ultimately disingenuous. True generosity, Freire explains,

> consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity.
> False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life" to extend
> their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands —
> whether of individuals or entire peoples — need be extended less and less in
> supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and,
> working, transform the world.
> (Freire, 2000, p. 2)

In doing the research for this thesis, I have discovered the richness of popular education and transformative action in Latin America and in Colombia. Freire's work in implementing popular education strategies has spread like wildfire in Latin America, and Orlando Fals Borda, a Colombian sociologist and educator, described to be one of the most important Colombians of the twentieth century (Santa, 1976), helped make *juntas comunales* (community councils) a common practice throughout the Colombian territory, both in rural communities and in urban centers. Transformative education policies have even been used by city mayors such Antanas Mockus and Sergio Fajardo, who place education at the center of their mandates, using pedagogical methods to educate the population on how to be good citizens. These strategies have brought down crime rates over 50% in the cities of Bogota and Medellín from what they were a decade ago by raising what they called *conciencia ciudadana*, citizenship consciousness (Sanín, 2009).

1.1   Structure of Thesis

The second chapter of the thesis presents relevant literature regarding my role as a researcher, some ideas about popular education, and an in-depth look at participatory action research (PAR). I will concentrate mainly on theorists who are from Latin America and who write from a Latin American perspective. I will look at the importance of participation from local stakeholders, especially as it pertains to youth. What are some of the ethical concerns of working with youth as co-researchers? This chapter will also seek to contextualize the work of this thesis into contemporary Colombia and the community of Comuna 13. What have been the roots of participatory citizenship in a country like Colombia? What is its history, and how did it come to be introduced to the social landscape?

Chapter 3 reviews the project's methodology. I discuss the quantitative and qualitative methods I used and describe my main methods, which are participatory, both in the research of risk factors with the youth, as well as in the communication of these factors to the community. The chosen method for communicating factors was photovoice, a methodology that is in-line with the goals and ethics of PAR. I will also look at how these methodologies are useful not only in helping us to understand and communicate risk factors but also as ethical methods when working with youth. I discuss how I use certain research frameworks from Freire, Fals Borda, Hugh Mathews, Melanie Limb and MarkTaylor when structuring and approaching the meetings I had with the youth.

In Chapter 4, I go on to explain the plan of action, which included a total of six meetings. I describe the first two as meetings where relationships and trust are established. In the first few meetings with the youth, I describe how they, through helping with the creation, implementation and analysis of a survey to the community's youth, managed to choose four risk factors they believed to be most relevant and important to communicate. I also explore why they chose these factors.

In Chapter 5, I discuss how the group worked together to find out *how* to best communicate the risk factors. This chapter will explain why the method of photovoice was chosen and how it was used in the research process.

In Chapter 6, I describe the closure of the process. What was the community´s feedback to the issues the youth communicated in their photovoice exhibition? What were their reflections on the whole experience? What were mine? I end the work with a conclusion that explores what else could have been done or improved and what the future could hold for this project.

1.2   A Note About Terminology

Comuna 13. A *comuna* has been wrongly associated to mean f*avela* or slum. Comuna is the Spanish term for district. The city of Medellín is divided into 16 comunas. San Javier is the name of Comuna 13, although both outsiders and community members alike often call it by its number rather than by its name. This is why I refer to San Javier as Comuna 13 throughout this thesis, not because of any socioeconomic status it may or may not have. The socioeconomic status of Comuna 13 is described in official local terms as being of stratas one and two — in other words, the two poorest stratas amongst the six that the people of the city are divided into according to income.

At Risk Youth. Caroline Wang (2006), an academic who has worked with youth in researching health practices, describes youth as "spanning all of childhood through maturity" (p.159) and has having a wide range of cognitive development, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, among other things. The age group of the youth co-involved in the research process for this project are between the ages of 14 and 19. They all come from the same neighbourhood and from the same socioeconomic background. A World Bank study on youth in Latin America and the Caribbean, describes At-Risk youth as being "a group of young people who have risk factors in common that could lead them to fall in behaviours, or live experiences that are unhealthy for them or for society" (Banco Mundial, 2007). These factors could lead them to potentially drop out of school, be unemployed, abuse illegal substances, be involved in violent and or unlawful activity, practice unsafe sex that could lead to STDs and teen pregnancy. The youth involved in this study are at-risk due to the fact that they live in what is considered the most dangerous neighbourhood of Medellín, and one considered having high incidences of violent crime and teen pregnancy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

My literature review revolves around the work of Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda. Both are South American pedagogues who center their theories on the importance of participation in research and education as well as in democracy. I also chose these two theorists for their understanding of the Latin American perspective. As Fals Borda states, it is important for work done in Latin America be analyzed and framed by our own lens since "the product of our work must be judged primarily for its originality, pertinence and usefulness for our own society" (Fals Borda & Mora-Osejo, 2002, p. 16). I also use Caroline Wang's (2000, 2006) work on photovoice, a participatory action research method that utilizes photographs taken by local stakeholders to record, reflect and promote social dialogue. Photovoice was used in this project more to reflect, create dialogue and communicate findings that were already procured by other qualitative and quantitative methods such as interviews, meetings and survey results, which provided ways for youth to identify the four risk factors they most wanted to communicate. In other words, photovoice in this case was used more as an expository method to communicate and reflect upon four issues already identified.

2.1   Paulo Freire: Building Relationships, Conscientization and Objectivity vs. Subjectivity

Paulo Freire (1921–1997) was a Brazilian pedagogue born in the state of Penambuco, a region considered to be among the poorest in Latin America. It was there that he grew interested in developing a style of education that would empower and thus transform the reality of the people, particularly the poor. The pedagogical method he developed follows two principles in particular: first, that education must center around the particular context and lived reality of the individual,

which will help identify who is in possession of the fruits of their labour (who is the oppressed and who is the oppressor) and; second, to understand that this consciousness-awareness is part of the social liberation for the oppressed (Lawrence, 2008).

Dialogue and action are needed for consciousness-awareness, or *conscientizao*, in order to understand the reality that is lived and the road that must be fought to achieve social justice. In other words, *active education*, *dialogue* and *reflection*, in constant motion, enable conscientizao, the most critical way to understand reality in order to transform it (Ocampo, 2008). This cycle must be continuous, since reality itself is fluid and ever changing. Freirian pedagogy is, therefore, not only a way of teaching but also a way of living, a method that must be internalized and applied on a daily basis.

Active education, dialogue and reflection are intrinsically connected. Action, Freire states, is "human only when it is not merely an occupation but also a preoccupation, that is, when it is not dichotomized from reflection" (2000, p. 7). Education must be actively searching for transformation of the lived reality. It is a relationship established between teachers and students (leadership and the people) in which both are regarded as subjects, where not one individual is placing upon another knowledge procured from another place and time, but where all the stakeholders are working together to understand a particular context. This pedagogical practice is called co-intentional education, where both subjects

> not only have the task of unveiling reality and thereby coming to know it critically, but have the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent recreators. (Freire, 2000, p. 18)

2.1.1   Building Relationships

The intention of all subjects and stakeholders participating in co-intentional education must be the same. The intention must be to understand reality together and then actively reflect and participate to change it. For a subject that is entering a community as an outsider or as a member of the oppressor group, this has to be very clear. Freire explains,

> The oppressor is in solidarity with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labour — when he stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love. True solidarity is found only in the plenitude of this act of love, in its existentiality in its praxis. To affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce. (Freire, 2000, p.5)

2.1.2 Concientization

The road to concientization passes through three stages; the magical stage, the naïve stage and the critical stage (Lawrence, 2008). In each stage, the individual must reflect on the problems he or she faces as well as the nature of their causes and, ultimately, act upon these problems to change them.

The *magical stage* refers to the overwhelming feeling of helplessness the oppressed have towards the reality that surrounds them. There is no real understanding of the causes of the problems they face, and they simply accept the cards that they have been dealt.

In the *naïve stage*, there is an understanding of some of the causes of the problems that may plague the oppressed, but only on an individual basis, which leads individuals to act out their frustration onto other members of their same social class, family or general community, (also

known as horizontal aggression).

In the *critical stage*, the oppressed individual has a clearer understanding of the structure of oppression, how both the oppressors and the oppressed are both facilitators and accomplices in maintaining this structure. This understanding empowers the oppressed rather than overwhelms them, and the oppressed are more likely to act with their community members rather than against them to procure change (Lawrence, 2008).

Following Freire's concept of conscientization, Luis Lawrence details five phases needed to raise awareness and transform social reality. They are:

1. Motivation: The presentation of the project and the voluntary participation of local stakeholders to take part.

2. Capacitating: To help participants with designs that are structured based on the particular context and the problematic chosen to be investigated.

3. Diagnostics: This phase involves a situational analysis by all stakeholders in the project.

4. Managing Structures: To bring up possible solutions and ways to properly manage the application of the solutions.

5. Formulating Projects: How to move plans forward into tangible actions.

I organized my meetings with the youth in relation to accomplishing theses five phases. Within the phase of Motivation, I worked on building relationships and trust with my co-researchers and established a safe environment in which they felt free to participate. To capacitate I made sure that they understood their role in the research, what that research is, and answered questions to the fullest. Diagnostics was a phase where analysis and reflection lead to understanding of the research. Managing structures and formulating projects sought to motivate the participants into action. Formulating projects was the culmination of the concrete

action.

2.1.3 Objectivity vs. Subjectivity

"One cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity. Neither can exist without the other, nor can they be dichotomized." (Freire 2000, p. 50) Freire states there cannot be a separation of objectivity from subjectivity, for objectivity without subjectivity results in objectivism that will likely miss the value and knowledge of lived experience. However, denying objectivity will lead to another extreme, subjectivism, a denial of obective reality and action that will surely lead to inaction.

Reflection is a basic step in the process of Freire's liberating pedagogy. However, this reflection must exist in a place where subjectivity and objectivity are in constant dialectical relationship (Freire, 2000). To deny subjectivity, as it has been traditionally done in many areas of academia, is naïve. Only in the relationship between the subjective and objective can a proper understanding of reality take place. To fall into purely subjective reflection and analysis is also naïve, for it only enables a mere perception of a reality in which the oppressed cannot confront it critically, objectify it or transform it. It is only through a reflection that stems from both the objective and subjective that true transformation and action can take place.

2.2 Orlando Fals Borda: The Importance of the Local, Participation and PAR as a Research Methodology

Orlando Fals Borda (1927–2008) was born in Barranquilla, Colombia. He was respected for his studies in sociology, education, history, regional culture, theory and social practice, participation action research and territorial organization (Ocampo, 2008 p. 3). He founded the Faculty of Sociology at the National University of Colombia in 1959 and served as its dean for the next

eight years and as such created the first postgraduate program for sociology in education in Latin America (Ocampo, 2008).

The 1940s and '50s were a time of extreme violence in Colombia, and a time that convinced Fals Borda of the necessity of making definite changes to Colombian society. He stated the need for "social agrarian reform, social justice, the movement of Communal Action, and the development and progress for the wellbeing of the community" as well as the need for the "co-existence of two different societies; the rural archaic society and the modern industrial one" (Ocampo, 2008, p. 4). Fals Borda helped implement the movements of Communal Action (Juntas de Acción Comun or JACs) that are now found in most rural communities and urban centers all throughout the country, (Borjas & Ortiz, 2008) including in Comuna 13. The JACs, made up of only members of the community, give each community an opportunity to participate in social reforms and decide on how money will be spent, since each JAC is given a percentage of its municipality's budget. The projects chosen are usually those that improve infrastructure, but social and education programs have also profited from the JACs. According to the Ministry of the Interior's website (n.d.), these JACs were formally institutionalized in the government in the mid-1960s.

During the 1970s, Fals Borda's interests were centered around the participatory action method as a way to investigate the social reality of popular cultures, understand their reality, promote consciousness and transform reality based on a particular culture's needs (Ocampo, 2008). In the 1980s, he "organized Colombia Unida, participated in M-19's Democratic Alliance and founded the Institute of Political Studies and International Relations in the National University" (Ocampo, 2008, p. 7). Colombia Unida is a non-profit organization that aims to help the most vulnerable in society, especially the poor and the young, and the M-19, or *Movimiento 19 de Abril*, was a political group and an insurgent rebel force, created due to political and

10

election fraud in the 1970s that illegally placed Misael Pastrana as president. After demobilizing, it became a political party known as M-19's Democratic Alliance, one that would be a major contributor in the creation of the new constitution in 1991.

In 1991, Fals Borda was a committee member in the creation of the new Colombian constitution, and, in 2001, along with the biologist Luis Eduardo Mora Osejo, he created the *Manifesto for the Self-esteem in Colombian Science*, which called for the use of more contextual and relevant frameworks in the areas of science and education.

2.2.1   Importance of the Local

By 1968, FalsBorda was already interested in the subject of intellectual colonialism when he published the article "Ciencia propia y colonialismo intellectual," which stated that social scientists of Latin America must strengthen autonomous and independent research methods that are focused on the context of the social realities being investigated.

In their manifesto, Fals Borda and Mora Osejo voiced their preoccupation with how the country's use of scientific frameworks developed in other realities that did not fit into our own, and they called for Colombian educational and scientific institutions to apply frameworks that were more congruent with their own social reality and environment. They specifically targeted institutions such as "COLCIENCIAS, ICFES, Asociación Colombiana para el Avance de las Ciencias, as well as academies, universities, journalists, and politicians" (Ocampo, 2008, p. 16).

In their work, *Superando el Eurocentrismo*, Fals Borda and Mora Osejo reunited once again to explain how

> the frameworks of scientific reference, as work of people, are inspired by
> geographical, cultural and historical contexts. This process is universal
> and is expressed by different modalities. It justifies the search for life

11

fulfillment and spiritual and material satisfaction for those that intervene in

the investigative process, as well as those who create it, share it or practice

it. (Fals Borda & Mora-Osejo, 2002 p. 7, own translation)

The two scientists expressed the need for developing a methodology that could be applied

to Colombian realities, and they agreed that participatory action research (PAR) complied with

all of the aforementioned requirements. PAR, a methodology developed in the South according to

Fals Borda, but which spread throughout the world, had been created precisely for these purposes

(Fals-Borda, 2000). Its purpose is not to isolate us from the external world but to meet the need

for accumulating knowledge that is congruent with our growth and progress, or "sum of

knowledge" as it is described in the PAR process (Fals-Borda & Mora-Osejo, 2002, p. 14).

2.2.2 Participation

The participatory discourse or counter-discourse, on the other hand, initiated in the

Third World — quite probably as an endogenous dialectical response to the

actions of the developed world — postulates an organization and structure of

knowledge in such a way that the dominated, underdeveloped societies articulate

their own socio-political position on the basis of their own values and capacities

and act accordingly to achieve their liberation from the oppressive and exploitative

forms of domination imposed by opulent (capitalist) foreign powers and local

consular elites and thus create a more satisfactory life for everyone. (Fals Borda,

1987)

Creating a scientific framework and methodology, which is inspired by geographical,

historical and social contexts is important, but it is only part of the equation. Action must be an

essential part of any methodology that has the purpose of understanding and transforming social

realities. There arises a need "to empower the common people to gain control over processes of knowledge production, … as well as the use and storage of these" (Fals Borda & Rahman, 1989 as quoted in Borjas & Ortiz, 2008, p. 617). This is only possible through a methodology that acknowledges all subjects' participation, because, according to the authors, it is indispensable for research to account for people of the social base's "empiric, practical, common sense knowledge, that has been of cultural possession and ancestral ideology" (Borjas & Ortiz, 2008, p. 617). It is through the tension between theory and practice that one can achieve what Freire calls "dialogic conscientization," due to the different "sums of knowledge," both theoretical and practical, which enable the investigator to transform into educator. Even though theory and practice cannot exist each on their own, practice must always be prioritized (Borjas & Ortiz, 2008) because theory must serve for the betterment of practice and action, rather than these serve for the improvement of theoretical frameworks.

Youth Participation One of the purposes of this project is to understand risk factors in Comuna 13 with the help of youth. Why is it important to have the help of youth in the first place? In most cases, individuals who conduct unhealthy behaviours not only begin to do so at a young age, but peak in doing these behaviours at a young age as well (World Bank, 2007). According to a study done in Colombia by the World Bank, in 2007, there were 318 murders in Colombia; 212 of those murdered were youths between the ages of 16 and 25, and most who committed the murders were also between these ages. In their study, they also found that 30% of boys in Colombia stated that they have had some sort of violent altercation or fight in their school. The government of Medellín's website (n.d.) states that, in 2009, one out of every four pregnant women was under the age of 19. It is only by understanding youth, their lived experience and their own personal perceptions that we can understand and identify the particular risk factors that most affect them are and how we can elicit change by dealing with the issues our

13

young people identify. Without their participation in the research process, there can be no real change in our communities.

I wanted youth to participate in understanding and communicating risk factors not only because risk behaviour starts at a young age, but because youth participation is needed for a strong democratic society. The voices of the marginalized and powerless must be heard, and empowering them to do so will only strengthen our communities and societies. Barry Checkoway and Katie Richards-Schuster (2003) identify five reasons why youth involvement in communities is desireable. Youth participation

1. Is a legitimate way to allow youth to develop knowledge for social action;

2. Enables youth to exercise their political right to participate, obtain information and express their views;

3. Allows young people to be involved in the democratization of knowledge by being part of the under-represented knowledge production that comes in the form of lived experiences and active citizenship;

4. Prepares young people to actively participate in a democratic society; and

5. Strengthens the social development of young people by their ability to create change and produce knowledge that enables that change to happen.

Youth participation enables a better understanding of risk factors, contributes to the democratization of knowledge, knowledge that too often priviledges certain voices and academic authority over others less powerful with what some may perceive as "only" lived experiences to offer, and can also empower youth to participate in democracy and help their communities rather than participating in risk-taking behaviour. Checkoway and Richards-Schuster (2003) also identify the evaluation roles of young people as they participate in research.

According to the roles as identified in Checkoway and Richards-Schuster's table, the evaluation of research roles of youth are the following:

Youth as subjects, where the extent of their participation is in answering questions for adults, who in this case take the lead in all stages of the process and relay the results to professional and or academic audiences;

Youth as consultants also play a limited role, yet they are involved in the structuring of questions and other instruments to make them kid-friendlier to other youth who would participate in the research process. The youth may also have input on how the results are relayed to professional and or academic audiences;

Youth as partners participate equally in all areas of the process, a process that was initiated by adults and where the results are relayed by adults as well, with the assistance of youth; and

 Youth as directors make all the decisions and adults may or may not play a role in the process. The youth initiate and also choose how and to whom they disseminate results. Findings are for the benefit of their community and not to primarily serve professional or academic audiences.

I agree with Fals Borda and others who state that participation must engender action that leads to social transformation. In this thesis, I will show how the participants in this process were partners in the understanding of risk factors and were directors in the communication of the results. They were at the helm of all decision making in terms of deciding how to communicate factors, where, to whom and why. Their main concern was to reach their community and to empower other youth to help their communities as well, as opposed to help me gather and understand information about their community to relay to unknown audiences.

It is easy to understand why it is important to have the involvement of youth, but what are some differences to keep in mind when working with youth as opposed to adult participants? As

stated by Wang (2006), the term youth has a vast range of age, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, among many other things. Because youth ranges from childhood to maturity, any work with youth should have the same ethical considerations that working with children has. In the following section, I detail the ethics of working with youth and why PAR in particular is a good methodology to use when keeping in mind these ethical considerations. A more in-depth analysis of working with youth in a PAR approach can be seen in the next chapter on methods.

2.3　Ethics

With the understanding that research in communities must be done primarily to advocate for conscientization, social change, action and transformation comes the knowledge that the only way to do so is by empowering community members to join, motivate and participate in the struggle. The need to incorporate youth, especially when it comes to understanding the risk factors of a particular community, is especially necessary. With the plethora of social sciences depending more and more on local stakeholders to contribute and participate with these processes of understanding and social transformation, what are some of the ethical issues that can arise, especially when working with youth?

The timespan that constitutes youth is unclear. *Youth* has lengthened due to the earlier onset of puberty and the prolonged period of both academic and professional formation (Vicario & Gutiérrez 2007) as well as a cultural obsession with youth that has delayed the onset of social traits attributed to adulthood. For this reason, I establish that the ethics of working with youth can resemble both those of working with children and adults. I borrow from Mathew, Limb and Taylor's 1998 study on the ethics of working with children and add to Fals Borda's and Freire's ethical requirements of doing research with participants that will enable positive transformation of their lived experiences and communities. This I do as well because of the youth ages 14-19

have at this age a more advanced cognitive ability than children which can enable to act as directors in the process of research.

I will look at three aspects of Mathew, Limb and Taylor's article, which details how one must work with as opposed to children, the ethics of working with children and what constitutes good practice when working with children.

Working with Children: The idea of working *with* children as opposed to *on* children also changes the practice of how this work is done. The focus must change from simply observing and understanding children, to understanding, working with, learning from and empowering them.

As their involvment becomes more profound, so do the practices of ethics. Mathews, Limb and Taylor (1998) narrow down the ethics of working with children to the following 10 categories.

1. Involvement: Children and youth must clearly understand the project and their involvement in it and also understand that they are free to drop out of the project at any time.

2. Consent: After involvement has been clearly explained to both parents and youth, consent must be given to participate, preferably in writing.

3. Confidentiality: Confidentiality must be guaranteed. The level of confidentiality must be addressed in the consent form and agreed to by parents and participants.

4. The nature of the project: Children and youth must be trusted to understand and investigate the issues that are being tackeled. Sufficient time and effort must be given to discuss and reflect upon the issues at hand.

5. Practice and commitment: Children and youth should be aware of the length of time and the effort necessary to undertake and complete the project as well as what methods of

practice they will be involved in. I add that it would be ideal if youth participate in deciding what the methods of practice will be.

6. Safety issues and complaints procedures: Researchers entering a culture very different from theirs should be made aware of these differences to avoid offense, as well as to make sure that children and youth have an avenue where they can complain. Researchers must have a clear procedure to dealing with complaints.

7. Setting of the project: Set the project in a place that is both safe for children/youth and any other participants.

8. Benefits of the project: The project must have a direct or indirect benefit to the children or youth.

9. Feedback: Proper feedback of the project, what was accomplished and learned must be reflected on with the participants.

10. Context: Precaution must be taken to avoid generalizing the youth or the project itself, and keep in mind the context in which the study is taking place.

Good practice when working with children. Mathews, Limb and Taylor (1998) have also narrowed down what enables good practice when working with children into nine categories. I have added my own interpretation to reflect more on a slightly older audience whose participation as equals in the research process is essential.

1. Getting the balance right: Balancing power between those who have it and those who don't to establish equal partnership and ensuring an environment of trust.

2. Establish ground rules: Establish rules of respect for others and for others opinions and remind participants that they are not obligated to be there.

3. Provide a comfortable setting: Provide an environment that is safe, easy to access, and that ensures the ability of talking, discussing and performing different tasks and activites can take place.

4. Communicate clearly.

5. Listen and respond.

6. Encourage openness: Encourage questions and comments and take the time to answer any question to the fullest of your ability.

7. Be flexible: Keep in mind the busy contradicting schedules of children and youth and prepare for changes, delays or a group of youth or children tired or not completely involved in the days activities. Keep activities engaging and not too long.

8. Dealing with distress: Have strategies in mind for dealing with distress.

9. End positively: Reflect on future gatherings, and state what has been accomplished so far. Thank participants for their time and work.

Good ethics and practice are reliant on a good methodology (Mathews, Limb, & Taylor, 1998). See the section on youth and PAR as well as Youth and Photovoice for a continued look at the ethics of working with youth.

2.4 Colombia: Fostering Participation

Historically, what has participation looked like in Columbia, and specifically in Comuna 13? How have citizens participated democractically within and outside their communities? Has there been any kind of direct citizenship involvement in communities? If so, how did it begin and what forms did it take? Returning to Colombia, and entering Comuna 13, I realized I held no knowledge of social movements or citizenship participation. Was the community I was entering already familiar with ideas of participation?

As mentioned earlier, FalsBorda has played an important role in regards to participation structures in Colombia, in citizenship action and community participation, including helping with the implementation of JACs in the 1950s, introducing PAR to Colombia in the 1970s and helping to draft the new Colombian constitution in 1991 as a member of the Constitutional Assembly. The new constitution describes Colombia as a participatory republic rather than a representative republic as it was referred to before. This shift in perspective helped solidify and expand existing social participatory structures such as the JACs.

Seventy elected members belonging to eight different political parties composed the Constitutional Assembly. Fals Borda was one of 19 who represented the *Alianza Democrática del Movimiento-19* party, or AD M-19. The party began as an insurgent group after election fraud was committed on April 19, 1970. The party had the second highest number of representatives, after the Liberal Party; and the Conservatives came in third. The process of rewriting the constitution began in May of 1990 when the overwhelming majority of the Colombian population voted yes to a new constitution. The plebiscite that asked Colombians whether they wanted the convocation of a constitutional assembly made a specific reference to its intention to "strengthen a participatory democracy" (Fals Borda, 1991, p. 7). Fals-Borda describes the new constitution he helped draft, the current Colombian constitution, as

> unclassifiable in regards to universal categories, that is to say, it cannot be
>
> regarded as Christian democrat or social democrat; nor as socialist or Marxist; it
>
> didn't turn out to be neoliberal, nor simply liberal … It is patented as a democratic
>
> constitution, participative, pluralist, Bolivarian and neofederal. … It is nationalist
>
> and Colombianist, with the defects and qualities of our diverse cultures and
>
> historical personalities since it reflects our united plurality. It translates that which
>
> is macondian in us, in order to combine the reflection of the present with the

imagination of that which we want to become. It is not a motive for shame, either

for the country or for us who signed the Charter (1991, p. 11).

The idea of participation is not only invoked in the constitution, it is also manifested

through a department of the Ministry of Justice and the Interior called Democracy and

Citizenship Participation, the branch in charge of the Community Councils, also known as Juntas

de Acción Comunal or JACs. These JACs, integrated into Colombia in part by sociologists and

others such as Fals Borda in the 1950s, are non-profit organizations made up of volunteers and

elected members of the community who, through participatory methods, develop sustainable and

integral action plans for the social benefit of the community (Ministerio del Interior y de Justicia

n.d.). This is to say that participatory methodologies are integrated in the political and social

structures of Colombia, as is the case in Comuna 13. In the city of Medellín, the department of

Local Planning and Participatory Budget, or PP as it is known in its Spanish abbreviation, is in

charge of funding the JACs, giving each JAC 5% of the total budget of their municipality (PP,

n.d.). Elected local leaders sit down with their community to then decide where the money

should go. According to the PP website, "Youths over the age of 14, adults, senior citizens,

afrodescendents, indigenous, the LGBT community, those who are incapacitated, and the

displaced" are encouraged to attend. The government of Medellin's website (n.d.) specifies that

there are 465 communal organizations in the city's 16 comunas, 428 of which are JACs. (City of

Medellín, n.d.) Most of the people I encountered in Comuna 13, including some of the youths,

were well-aware of many of these organizations in their community.

2.5 Participation in Comuna 13

Some problems with participation in Comuna 13 go back to its very creation. When the city of

Medellín was divided up into 16 Comunas, the result was the forced union of various

neighbourhoods, or *barrios*, that were sometimes at odds with each other in some respects. In the

book *Memoria Cultural Comuna 13* (n.d.), written by anthropologist Natalia Quinceno Toro,

JAcobo Cardona Echeverri, Herman Montoya Gil (and available as a PDF on the government of

Medellín's website), the authors state that "the limits of territorial order do not necessarily

coincide with the historical, social or cultural limits that are established between the barrios and

the sectors of a population" (Quinceno Toro et al., n.d., p. 6). The study goes on to describe the

historical and cultural background of each of Comuna 13's 32 barrios,[1] some of which started off

as illegal settlements, others as old and well- established rural communities that were integrated

into the city limits, and others that had religious origins (Quinceno Toro et al., n.d.). According

to the study, there are four reasons why community participation began and continues in Comuna

13. The first stems from the need of the overall community to come together to find ways to

protect the land and settle any territorial disputes. The second reason was to create committees

that sought to meet basic needs of the community, especially those that pertained to water and

energy. The third was setting up organizations that could specialize in community interventions,

and, lastly, the time came for "different formalized organizations to consolidate networks of

community work that are articulated around common goals" (Quinceno Toro et al., n.d., p. 19).

Such goals are detailed in the government of Medellín's local development plan of Comuna 13,

also available in the city of Medellín's website, which recognizes 76 separate goals and their

corresponding projects. Some of these center around education, communication, sports, health,

culture and the arts, human and animal rights and so on (Plan de Desarrollo Local Comuna 13,

---

[1] The number of barrios is different in all the sources on Comuna 13 that I have read so far. According to the
Municipal Agreement 346 of 2000, Comuna 13 San Javier had exactly 19 barrios. The book *Dinamicas de Guerra y
Construccion de Paz* (2008) identified 20 official barrios, while the city's Local Development Plan of Comuna 13,
San Javier (2010) identified 32 non-official barrios, represented by 32 official JACs. I have taken this latest figure
into consideration for this thesis, well-aware that even this figure is subject to change due to the complicated and
sometimes unpractical way these barrios were delineated in the first place.

22

2010).

However, there is a lack of full citizen participation in these organizations. The lack of participation stems from poverty, a distrust of state police, and the overall armed conflict fuelled by drug trafficking that has put many of the 32 barrios at war with each other (Quinceno Toro et al., n.d.). To illustrate the level of poverty in Comuna 13, I will use a quantitative analysis done by the city of Medellín, which, after the 2005 census, divided each of the city's 590,026 homes into comunas and then divided each of the communas into six stratas. The number pne stratum represents the poorest strata; the sixth one represents the richest stratum. Households are billed a different rate by the city's utility company according to stratum. Stratum one households pay a lower bill than stratum two, and so on. This helps the poorest households to afford water and electricity, but it also causes a very marked stratification in the city, where portions of the population with a differing socioeconomic status will seldom interact with each other. The following graph represents the socioeconomic status of Medellín's 16 comunas and four neighbouring municipalities. In San Javier, or Comuna 13, there are 34,023 homes, a figure that represents 5.65% of the total homes in the city, as the graph below, provided by the government of Medellín´s website, shows.

Figure 1: Comunas of Medellín According to Socioeconomic Status

MUNICIPIO DE MEDELLÍN
ENCUESTA CALIDAD DE VIDA 2005
VIVIENDAS POR COMUNA O CORREGIMIENTO SEGÚN ESTRATO SOCIOECONÓMICO

Vivienda

Comuna o corregimiento	Viviendas		Estrato de la vivienda					
	Total	%	1. Bajo bajo	2. Bajo	3. Medio bajo	4. Medio	5. Medio Alto	6. Alto
1 Popular	31.438	5,22	7.722	23.716				
2 Santa Cruz	24.228	4,02	852	23.376				
3 Manrique	41.702	6,93	5.355	30.128	6.219			
4 Aranjuez	39.082	6,49	3.859	11.218	24.004			
5 Castilla	37.578	6,24	1.477	4.115	31.640	346		
6 Doce de Octubre	48.835	8,11	6.170	29.441	13.224			
7 Robledo	44.039	7,31	3.834	25.913	9.598	4.338	356	
8 Villa Hermosa	29.183	4,85	8.848	11.241	8.822	272		
9 Buenos Aires	36.861	6,12	3.496	8.951	22.075	2.144	163	32
10 La Candelaria	26.270	4,36	163	1.940	11.384	12.711	72	
11 Laureles Estadio	37.637	6,25		58	514	9.626	27.439	
12 La América	29.841	4,96	4	4.545	5.179	13.097	7.017	
13 San Javier	34.023	5,65	12.134	9.441	10.506	1.942		
14 El Poblado	34.444	5,72		194	442	1.436	9.474	22.899
15 Guayabal	23.046	3,83	3	2.661	16.362	4.020		
16 Belén	53.148	8,83	334	10.321	19.294	16.285	6.914	
50 Palmitas	2.209	0,37	568	1.442	199			
60 San Cristóbal	7.399	1,23	888	4.633	1.878			
70 Altavista	899	0,15	100	747	52			
80 San Ant de Prado	17.695	2,94	1.065	9.892	6.628	110		
90 Santa Elena	2.545	0,42	546	1.304	655	25	15	
Total	602.104	100,00	57.419	215.279	188.675	66.351	51.449	22.931
Total Acumulado			57.419	272.697	461.372	527.723	579.173	602.104
%	100.00		9.54	35.75	31.34	11.02	8.54	3.81
% Acumulado			9.54	45.29	76.63	87.65	96.19	100.00
ECV 2004	590.026		56.359	209.969	187.018	65.276	49.494	21.909

Fuente: Encuesta de Calidad de Vida. Medellín 2005 Expandida
Procesamiento: DAP. Subdirección Metroinformación. Unidad de Clasificación Socioeconómica y Estratificación

Out of the 34,026 homes, 12,134 are considered stratum one; 9, 441 are stratum two; 10,506 are stratum three; and 1,942 are stratum four. There are no homes considered to be of stratums five or six. The graph also references Comuna 13 with regards to all the other comunas in the city. Compared to the others, Comuna 13 has got by far the largest number of homes in the strata one category.

Distrust of state police and armed conflict are also issues in Comuna 13. Comuna 13 is a microcosm of life in Colombia, a small scale representation of the armed conflict that takes place across the nation (Angarita Cañas et al. 2008). All the actors of the Colombian armed conflict, both legal and illegal, are found in Comuna 13. The legal actors are the national police and military armed forces. As for the illegal actors, on one side, there are the main left-wing guerrillas, the Fuerzas Revolucionaria de Colombia (FARC) (a Bolivarian-inspired radical reformist group bent on kidnapping, ransom and drug trafficking) and Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) (an armed group advocating a form of Marxist-oriented liberation theology). At the other extreme are various far-right paramilitary groups such as the self-promulgated self-defence group Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC). The conflict among these groups has contributed to the high death toll in Comuna 13. In 2002, the government sent in a full-scale military operation into Comuna 13 to fight the illegal paramilitary groups. This operation, known as Operación Orion, was the largest military operation of its kind to take place outside of the countryside in an urban setting with high numbers of civilians present. In the years after Operación Orion, community leaders complained that illegal actors posing as non-profit groups were taking the participatory budget designated to the JACs. These practices were specifically attributed to a non-profit group named Corporación Democracia, which had been created by demobilized paramilitary members (Angarita Cañas et al. 2008). Many of the paramilitary members, both active and demobilized, were accused of having links with the armed forces and politicians. This situation was again a reflection of what was occurring in the rest of the country, where many politicians and members of the armed forces were being tried and jailed for their associations with paramilitary groups.

2.6 How I will draw all these concepts and frameworks together throughout my thesis.

When working with the youth, I will keep in mind the 5 phases to reach Freire´s idea of Conscientization as it has been defined by Lawrence (2008). These five phases are *motivation*, *capacitation*, *diagnostics*, *management of structures* and *formulating projects*. I would be organizing my meetings with the youth in relation to accomplishing these 5 phases. Within the phase of Motivation, I will be working on building relationships and trust with my co-researchers and establishing a safe environment in which they can participate. To capacitate will entail making sure they understand their role in the research, what that research is, and answering questions to the fullest. Diagnostics will be a phase where analysis and reflection will lead to understanding of the research. Managing structures and formulating projects will seek to motivate the participants into action. How can the research be structured and organized and what projects can be done that can communicate this information?

Freire's ideas on how to build relationships brought forth key points that I must keep in mind when pursuing any research done with co-participants in the field. I must enter as an equal and with complete trust in the participants I will work with. I must also enter this space with an intention that matches those which will collaborate in the project. The results must be, firstly, for themselves and their community, and any findings or outcomes should hold as its purpose to empower participants to understand and transform their social reality.

A PAR methodology prioritizes the balancing of power between the various stakeholders. It values trust, building relationships and empowering the voiceless and or the weaker of society to contribute to the understanding of their own lived experiences and realities. The focus of the work will not to be to take away knowledge by working on youth, but working with youth to

26

empower them to understand and transform their own reality. Freire and Fals Borda have stated

that focus as the most ethical one when entering and working with communities.

Photovoice, a PAR methodology, will be used. Since youth will be doing the photovoice

project, certain ethical and practical concerns must be observed. Caroline Wang's guidelines

will be observed in the practice of a photovoice project.

Chapter 3: Methods

Freire writes about the importance of combining objective knowledge with subjective knowledge in order to understand and transform reality. This thesis presents work done by both quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.1 Quantitative Methods

In chapter 2, I presented a chart showing the socioeconomic status of homes in all the comunas in the city of Medellín and the relative status of Comuna 13. In chapter 4, quantitative methods were again used, this time in the analysis of a survey, The creation of the survey was done by Dr. Blanchet-Cohen meeting several times with youth of Comuna 13, the co-researchers of this thesis, on several occasions. The interviews all centered on questions that dealt with both risk and protective factors in their community. These factors were divided up into areas such as the self (what are the risk and protective factors that are caused by the individual), family, school, community, and government.. My participation in the creation of the survey was limited and took place in Montreal where I listened to, and helped code some of these interviews. I was more fully involved, together with the youth, in the process of conducting and analyzing the survey. I administered the survey to 208 students who were attending school in Comuna 13 in grades nine through eleven. My analysis of the survey results blends quantitative and qualitative analysis, which will be discussed later. The quantified results show the number of students who answered what in each of the multiple choice questions.

3.2 Qualitative Methods

The main qualitative method was through structured meetings. In all the meetings the research questions were always brought up to keep them present in the day's activities. The research questions are: What are the main factors, protective or risk, (this would later change to risk factors since all the factors chosen by the youth were of risk) that you would most like to communicate and why? To who do you want to communicate these to? Where do you want to communicate them? How do you want to communicate them? These were the questions I wanted the youth to investigate and answer, and the findings of which this thesis in the end wants to present.

The structure of the meetings should enable conscientization, and for that I follow Lawrence's (2008) five steps to achieving this, which are *motivation, to capacitate, diagnosis, manage structures* and to *formulate projects*. This would not be a completely linear process, in other words sometimes motivation and diagnosis would be done simultaneously, sometimes diagnosis of the themes would be done several times, as knowledge is not static and must be re-visited and analyzed.

The meetings were structured by myself, and my experience as a teacher helped. Keeping a class with both children and adults on track and motivated requires a clear agenda, concrete questions, and activities where everyone can participate, which also means fostering an environment of trust. What was to be done in each subsequent meeting was not decided by me, however, but by the whole group at the end of each session.   My intention was to have the role of participants to be *youth as partners* and *youth as directors*. The general structure of these meetings was as follows.

- Reflection process: What was discussed in the last meeting, what has been done so far.

- Schedule and goal of the meeting: Discuss the schedule of the meeting and what is to be done or question to be investigated.

- Participatory activities: Divide the group of co-researchers into pairs or groups and have them do an activity where the main goal is to investigate and discuss the main point of the meeting.

- Closing: Discuss the main points of the meeting, and what is expected of the next meeting.

All the details of these activities, questions and discussions are provided in the following chapters. Usually, in the closing part of a meeting, I would ask the co-researchers to answer some of the questions that had been posed for the meeting. For example, how would they want to communicate the risk factors they chose as most important to communicate? I found that this served two purposes. It enabled me to keep accurate field notes of the meetings since it was my co-researchers who were keeping the records of what they thought. Secondly, it helped my co-researchers to narrow down the important ideas of the day, and writing them down seemed to help them remember their own ideas in future meetings. Another way I kept records in my fieldwork was by taking photographs. I took photos of each activity so as to help me remember what was done at each meeting.

As for the use of language throughout this thesis, I agree with Fals Borda's emphasis on the importance of accessible language. I hope my language throughout this thesis is accessible and easy to understand for readers inside and outside of the university.

I also did my best to build a relationship with my co-researchers based on trust, which Freire says is essential. It may appear, since I do not use their names or mention any personal stories, that I am quite far apart from my co-researchers, but I am only respecting their wishes. This is not to say that their subjective experience is not valued or cannot be discussed. I quote their ideas on risk factors, why they believe those chosen are important, why they want to communicate the things they do, to whom, how and where. What I do not share, however, are personal stories that go beyond the research questions I wanted to explore.

Since each meeting ended with the youth writing and using their own words to communicate key points and ideas, I provide many direct quotations.

3.2 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory action research (PAR) is a qualitative method of research and the main method utilized in this thesis. PAR is described as "a method of study and action that goes along an altruist philosophy of life in order to obtain useful and trustworthy results for the betterment of collective situations, especially those of the popular classes" (Ocampo, 2008 p. 19). It can be incorporated into various disciplines and be applied to both small groups or communities or, on a larger scale, societies. However, the method should never lose sight of its main purpose —social commitment and social transformation.   PAR meets the standards of prioritizing the local as well as the need for participation amongst all the various stakeholders. The tension that arises from participation and theoretical research produces a dialogue of conscientization, which leads to understanding and reflection. These things, however, are not enough. That is why Fals Borda uses PAR as opposed to participatory research (PR); PR is missing the importance of action. Understanding reality must come with a purpose — to actively transform it. Just as theoretical frameworks help in the betterment of practice, practice and theory are the steppingstones to

action. Empowerment of the people to produce social change is the true aim of PAR (Ocampo, 2008).

I wish to explore Participatory Action Research as a valid methodology for approaching and understanding the issues surrounding youth in Comuna 13. Based on defining knowledge as a participatory, dialectic and reflective process, this anti-positivist method tries to pose questions rather than answer them. It also aims to elucidate the constructed nature of power, allowing those that have been denied power to understand, reflect and act an opportunity to do so.

3.2.1   Principles of Participatory Action Research

Orlando Fals Borda was the first to introduce participatory action research in Colombia and was one of its most active contributors. PAR studies, sponsored with the help of Bogotá's Punta Lanza Foundation and Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC), began in the seventies on Colombia´s Atlantic Coast (Fals Borda, 1987) For Fals Borda, there was a need to revolutionize the way research was being done.

> Emerging from the confluence of Paulo Freire's revolutionary pedagogy (Freire, 1970), the liberation sociology of Orlando Fals Borda (Fals Borda, 1991), and feminist critiques and reconceptualization of sociocultural power (Maguire, 1996), community-based participatory action research (PAR) stands conventional research methodology on its head. In PAR, professional researchers do not enter communities to conduct studies on community members. Rather, they form partnerships with community members to identify issues of local importance, develop ways of studying them, collect and interpret data, and take action on the resulting knowledge. (Smith et al., 2010, p. 407–408)

Fals Borda argues that social movements are inherently campaigns for social reform in reaction to pathological situations that may be improved at their source, whether through community action, charity, civil defence and so on, only to be carried out within the sociopolitical context as it already exists (Fals Borda, 1987). Participatory action research, however, approaches social movement learning with an unwillingness to reproduce worldviews. Instead, PAR advocates the need of developing with, not for, the community a way to understand and identify issues in their particular context, in the belief that by identifying reality and identifying its problems at a local level, we can transform it (Fals Borda, 1978).

Meredith Minkler (2000) outlines the basic principles of PAR. The methodology is:

- Participatory;

- Cooperative, engaging community members and researchers in a joint process in which both contribute equally;

- A co-learning process with researchers and community members;

- A method for systems development and local community capacity building;

- An empowering process in which participants can increase control over their lives by nurturing community strengths and problem-solving abilities; and

- A way to balance research and action. (2000, p. 92)

PAR encompasses principles of research, adult education and political action, without situating one above another (Fals Borda, 1987). Using research rather than learning as a central concept implies a need to re-search and reflect upon experiences and knowledge rather than seeing learning as a finite thing. As for adult education, Fals Borda uses the concept in Freirian terms, one that stresses co-learning and teaching as opposed to a banking system approach (where students are seen to be empty containers into which teachers deposit knowledge), and from which

reflection, transformation and, ultimately, action can occur. These basic stages of PAR make up a process that Fals Borda calls experiential methodology — "a process of personal and collective behaviour occurring within a satisfying and productive cycle of life and labour" (Fals Borda, 1987, p. 330). This experiential methodology of life and labour enables the acquisition of transformative knowledge for grassroots communities and organizations to articulate knowledge in a way that places them as participants and protagonists in the advancement of their own lives, as opposed to mere objects that follow a plan of development that perhaps is not in their best interest.

Another tool for understanding what PAR is about is to try to conceptualize what PAR is *not*; in other words, we can try to understand that which PAR tries to move away from in terms of what is being done in more mainstream social movements, whose goals are more "developmental" in that they aim to integrate communities into open capitalist markets (eg. IMF, World Bank). PAR does not follow or advocate a developmentalist discourse. Developmentalism is a theory of linear progress that is ethnocentric, ahistorical and universalist (Nederveen-Pieterse, 1991); rationalizes and defends the worldwide dominance of the rich in conceptualizing and dealing with poverty, technology, growth, economics and so on (Fals Borda, 1987). Instead, PAR advocates for a counter-discourse in which the oppressed and underprivileged articulate their own sociopolitical position that can liberate them from foreign or local capitalist elites (Fals Borda, 1987). PAR is neither patriarchal nor hierarchical. Instead, it advocates a feminist way of looking at knowledge, a way of looking "which does not perpetuate hierarchical power relations and create voyeuristic, distanced and disembodied claims to knowledge" (Kindon, 2003, p.143). Voyeurism is a common occurrence in research, education, and even social movements, where researchers or "experts" observe and study particular individuals or a community. In PAR,

however, it is important to work and research alongside members of a community that will also be co-teachers and principal actors.

3.3 Photovoice: A PAR Methodology

Photovoice is a method whereby participants are encouraged to record their own environment and social reality through the use of photographs. It is a participatory method of investigation that integrates the use of photography together with principles of PAR in order to empower participants at the local level to understand and transform their reality.

Photovoice was developed by Caroline Wang as a process by which "people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000, p. 81). She describes it as having three main goals, all congruent with a PAR methodology:

(a) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, (b) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and (c) to reach policy makers and people who can be mobilized for change. (Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000, p. 81)

Orlando Fals Borda suggests that all projects must use simple, clear and direct language when communicating results (Fals Borda, 1978). He went so far as to write books and articles using two different types of language, one for an academic audience and another more suitable for an audience with a much lower level of formal education, since knowledge production was first and foremost to be used for the benefit of the popular classes. In his work, *Cuestiones de Metodología* he describes, in simple language, easy and simplified research methods that the people can use themselves. Fals Borda felt it an ideal situation for the popular classes "to realize and continue indefinitely their own studies with a minimum of systemization and analysis,

without needing external assessment or help: stimulating thus auto-investigation and solving the dilemma of the 'for whom' of the investigation " (Fals Borda, 1978, p. 21).

Photovoice is a good example of a PAR methodology in the sense that it facilitates investigation of a community by its own community members, whose participation is not only encouraged but also essential. It prioritizes the use of images taken by local participants to foster understanding, dialogue and reflection at a local level.

3.3.1 Photovoice: Working with youth

Photovoice is a PAR methodology, an ethical approach to doing research where priority is given to the powerless, voiceless and the local to participate in understanding their reality in order to transform it. What makes photovoice particularly an interesting methodology to use when working with youth is the fact that it "harnesses the desire of young people to exercise autonomy and express creativity while documenting their lives"(Wang 2003).

Caroline Wang describes and divides into 9 phases a methodology for photovoice when working with youth specifically:

1. *Select and recruit a target audience of policy makers or community leaders.* Community leaders and social workers with a long history of working with Comuna 13 would be present at the exhibition. These would be members of CINDE and community leaders who work with CINDE and other non-profit groups as well as the community in general.

2. *Recruit a group of photovoice participants:* The participants for this photovoice project are the youth who suggested it in the first place and who have been involved in the research process from the very beginning.

3. *Introduce the photovoice methodology to participants, and facilitate a group discussion about*

cameras, power, and ethics. In depth discussion of photovoice methods and ethics were done in the first meeting with photovoice. After an in-depth discussion on their won risk, where a set of rules were established by the group to minimize potential risks, other questions were raised to remind participants how the photovoice project can affect others around them. "What is an acceptable way to approach someone to take their picture? Should you take pictures of other people without their knowledge? When would you *not* want to have your picture taken? To whom might you wish to give photographs, and what might be the implications?" (Wang 2006, p. 150)

4. *Obtain informed consent.* Here, consent forms should deal with three types of consent; the consent that is given by participants and their parents if they are minors, consent given by people who appear in photographs, consent by the participants to display and or publish their photos. If consent to publish is given, they must also decide whether their names remain confidential or if they give permission to be named. When obtaining consent, it must be made clear that participants can freely and without consequence withdraw from the project at any time.

5. *Pose initial theme/s for taking pictures.* The themes were chosen in the first meetings that dealt with understanding risk factors, which is another reason that this group of participants was ideal to perform the project. Here, they chose the four themes to take pictures of. Discussions on how to accomplish this task were had in order to motivate and empower one another.

6. *Distribute cameras to participants and review how to use the camera.* Teach how to use the cameras, give tips on taking a good picture eg. Do not take pictures of subjects that have the sun or bright light behind them.

7. *Provide time for participants to take pictures.* The youth participating in this project have

school, other after school activities and some have jobs. Give adequate time to accomplish task and follow-up with telephone interviews in the mean time to motivate and discuss any problems.

8. Meet to discuss photographs and identify themes. When pictures have been taken and developed, divide the photos into the four themes they represent and discuss what other elements or topics of discussion they might bring to light. Analyze, write and discuss.

9. Plan with participants a format to share photographs and stories with policy makers or community leaders. How will the photos be shown to the public? What are the questions that you want the audience you have chosen to contemplate and discuss? How do you want to present yourselves, and what do you want to say to introduce the project?

This framework was a good reference to keep in mind, particularly when working with youth. Even though photovoice is a PAR methodology, some issues can arise and these are important to keep in mind. Wang (2006) outlines   instances where youth have had trouble remaining motivated as well as the fact that youth especially tend to downplay risks. That is why it is important to thoroughly discuss risk, especially if the project takes place in a neighborhood with high incidences of violence such as Comuna 13.

Chapter 4: Participatory Action Research in Comuna 13

My questions and methods were clear when entering the community of Comuna 13. My research questions were: What are considered to be the most important risk factors for the youth? Why? To whom and where do the youth want to communicate these risk factors? I wanted to understand these choices, and I wanted to do so not for my sake but because I sincerely believe that in order to transform reality you must understand it. Neighborhoods like Comuna 13 are not uncommon in Colombia, there is still a lot of poverty and violence, and many people have been oppressed and marginalized. I wanted the youth of this community, who I consider to be at risk due, to at least understand what the risks they faced were, and not because I told them, or because they saw it on the news. I believe PAR is the best method of research in attaining at least some understanding of these questions. I believe as well that whatever the answers, they are fluid and in need of constant reflection.

This chapter discusses my introduction to Comuna 13. I came in attached to a larger project that was being developed by Dr. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen for CAPE and CINDE, the latter being a non-profit organization with a long-standing history of working with local community members and youth of Comuna 13. Both CAPE and CINDE´s methods and goals are outlined in this chapter to demonstrate that they value local participation and research that privileges benefit over risk and the desire to do work that results in social transformation and citizenship action.

I give my personal impressions of the Comuna, discuss motivating the youth and how they in turn motivated me, building relationships and offering a setting that is safe for all participants.

I explore how youth were capacitated to understanding the expectations of the study and what it means to do research. Through quantitative methods as well as discussion, the youth participate in the diagnosis of the risk factors that plague their community. They manage to remian objective through this process despite their close associations and familiarity. Their subjectivity would later be drawn out through the photovoice activity done later on, bringing to light a wealth of new information about the four risk factors chosen and even reasons as to why they chose them.

4.1   Initial Process

The process began in the summer of 2011 in Montreal while working as Dr. Blanchet-Cohen's research assistant. As such, I was instructed to listen to interviews she had done with this particular group of youth from Comuna 13, who later would become my fellow co-researchers. These interviews consisted of the youth discussing what some of the protective and risk factors were in their community and to codify the factors that they raised. These recorded conversations mentioned risk and protective factors that were found and or caused by the self, the family, the school, the community and the government. For example, the government could be seen as a risk factor because policemen sometimes violated human rights. The government could also be seen as a protective factor because it opened libraries and sports centers aimed at helping the youth. The coding of these conversations was later used to design the first draft of the survey, which was later edited by our co-researchers and then filled out by over 200 youth of Comuna 13.

4.1.1 Child-Centered Accountability and Evaluation (CAPE) AND Fundación Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano (CINDE).

The second phase of the initial process began when I arrived in Medellín, my hometown. I was working with youth that were already collaborating in a larger project that Dr. Blanchet-Cohen

was working on together with the Fundación Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano (CINDE). The research project is connected to several organizations, but Dr. Blanchet-Cohen referenced one in particular called Child-Centered Accountability and Evaluation (CAPE). The project is part of the International Institute of Child Rights and Development (IICRD), which, according to its website, is a project "'centered' on trying to understand the meaning of risk, protection and well being from the perspectives of vulnerable young people then translating this knowledge into actions for child rights systems change in Brazil, Colombia and Thailand" (IICRD, 2013). Dr. Blanchet-Cohen is part of the Colombia team and CINDE, one of the local partners.

I was introduced to CINDE by Dr. Blanchet-Cohen, an organization with ties to Comuna 13 and the work being done with the youth and several community leaders. CINDE is a non-profit organization founded in 1977 by Glen Nimnicht and Marta Arango, with bases of operation in the cities of Medellín, Bogotá and Manizales (CINDE, n.d.).

Their mission is:

To promote integral human development in children and youth, in Colombia and other countries, by means of investigation and the development of alternative and innovative solutions according to the most relevant challenges of the context; the formation of human talent, the dissemination of experiences, the participation in networks and the incidence in politics. (CINDE, n.d.)

Their mission is carried out through the implementation of four institutional objectives, which are to carry out programs and projects of investigation and human development, to form people committed to the social transformation in their country, to disseminate knowledge and incise on the construction and operation of policy, all in a framework of human rights and in ways that are educational, sustainable and that impact socially. (CINDE n.d.)

CINDE's emphasis on working with the local population, social transformation and participation when carrying out projects that pertain to their work with children and youth meant that they had many close ties to both community leaders and youth in Comuna 13. It was through them, and with them, that Dr. Blanchet-Cohen and I were able to gain access into the community. My first introduction to the organization and the people was done in person; therefore, no email of introduction was required on my behalf.

The first step to this access was through an invitation by Dr. Blanchet-Cohen to visit CINDE's headquarters in Medellín. Here, I met Gloria Carvalho, director of CINDE, Sonia Portillo, a social worker at CINDE, as well as Mayerly, a community leader who works with CINDE. Through this introduction, I was able to gain access into Comuna 13.

The following section details my encounters with the youth. They have stated that they would like to remain unidentified. Thus, *youth* or *co-researcher* will be used to describe any interaction with them. Any specification will only detail their age and their experience with either CINDE or other non-profit groups in the area.

4.2 Meeting #1, CEDEZO Building, March 15, 2012.

The two things I kept in mind for the first meeting were motivation and capacitation. I wanted to build relationships and gain trust with my co-researchers, especially since they were youth and motivation would be sure to play an important part in a research process that could possibly span a few months. Also, I wanted to see their level of understanding of the research that we would be doing as a collective. This did not concern me too much because I was entering a project that CINDE, along with Dr. Blanchet-Cohen, had already started. I knew this group of youth was aware of several concepts, including risk and protective factors, at-risk youth, and I knew that they as having already signed and discussed consent forms and minimizing risk in the research

process. In other words, I would be entering already trusting in the knowledge and capacitation of my co-researchers and ready to involve them as partners in all areas of the process.

My first meeting with the youth was through an encounter that Dr. Blanchet-Cohen, Sonia Portillo and others at CINDE organized. I was nervous before going. Various statements made about Comuna 13 in the weeks before — statements that have become commonplace not only through media but through the opinions of local people from various parts of the city, even from a person working at CINDE — made me nervous. Such statements included, "I know someone who was murdered there," and "Be careful, don't wear anything flashy or that might bring attention to yourself," among many others. These statements were not meant to be prejudiced against the people of the area, but to ensure my safety. However, they managed to impress upon me the idea that Comuna 13 could very well be a scary place and that I was, above all, an outsider.

My first impression when I arrived in San Javier, or Comuna 13, was that it looked like most any other part of the city. The metro station, like all stations, is new, modern and very clean. The meeting place took place just across the metro station in a modern looking building that belonged to *Centros de Desarrollo Empresarial Zonal* (Centers of Zonal Entrepreneurial Development orCEDEZO), a non profit organization that provides centers for the development of local businesses. The community library, a modern glass structure surrounded by sculptures and one that also had rooms available for community members to use for educational purposes, was just a short walk up the hill. This was a very different place than the one I had volunteered at the age of 16. That community was called Moravia and at the time it had been built over a landfill. Buildings like the ones I encountered now would have been hard to imagine. Further up the hill, you could see that the neighbourhood became poorer. However, I could not see any cardboard homes; all structures that I could see were solid and made of brick or cement. In any case, the

area that is Comuna 13 is very big and has in total 32 barrios that span across and beyond the steep hills that were in front of me. I would not get to see most of Comuna 13 and my experiences were constrained to the general safe haven of the library and its surroundings.

The room that CEDEZO had provided us seemed like a regular classroom with chairs that had small desks attached to them and a white board. Dr. Blanchet-Cohen, Sonia Portillo, two community leaders who worked with CINDE, three youth, and I were present at this first meeting.

The first part of the meeting focused on work having to do with CINDE, with which I was unfamiliar. The second part had to do with the survey that Dr. Blanchet-Cohen had created with the help of interviews and focus groups with the youth, which I had helped codify back in Montreal. The three youth were given a copy of the survey. For the next long while they had the task of eliminating redundant or unclear questions. From the 50 questions they were given, the youth managed to narrow the survey down to 35 questions.

A copy of the English version as translated by me and of the original Spanish document has been provided (see Appendix A).

4.3 Meeting #2, Administering the Survey (Day 1 and Day 2)

The purpose of this meeting was to administer the survey at the local schools. . The activity was not just about gathering information. It solidified the essential role local co-researchers hold in the process and thus cemented their motivation. Here, help from my co-researchers was invaluable. Two of the youth, the two with the most experience working with CINDE and who were both 19 years of age, were the ones to contact their respective schools to gain permission to enter and administer the survey. Permission for the access was simple and easy, seeing as they had called the director from each school the night before. Each youth called their respective

school (they had attended separate schools), and seeing that the director knew them personally from an early age, trust and access was easily gained.

4.3.1 Administering the survey, Day #1, March 21, 2012.

The first day I arrived at San Javier metro station where I then proceeded to take a cable car up the hill. I descended at the first cable car station where I was met by both youth at 8:30 in the morning and then proceeded to go to the first school, Coferrini. The school was new and fairly large. The facilities were very modern and well-equipped. The day I attended was National Men's Day, a day where men are celebrated. (There is also a National Women's Day.) The youth and I were able to attend a ceremony where students performed local songs and dances. A sound system and projector were available for these activities.

The co-researcher who had attended Coferrini was in charge of going into classrooms and taking out an average of 10 to 15 youth at a time. Each student had to bring their own pencil and eraser because we had none available to offer. Before handing out the survey, my co-researchers and I made it clear that their name was not to be put on the survey, only their gender and age. They read the introduction to the survey each on their own but we also explained that they must read each sentence and state whether they totally agreed, agreed, did not know, disagreed or totally disagreed with it. Even though our day started at 8:30 in the morning, after snack and lunch breaks, as well as assembly time, we finished the day at around 12:30 p.m. By the end of the day, we managed to get 112 surveys.

Issues that arose from this meeting had to deal with the clarity of some of the wording in the survey as well as some vocabulary. The statements that had to be explained the most were the following, which I have identified with their number as they appeared on the survey:

15. In my academic institution, there is bullying amongst classmates;

21. The youth in my community are associated with unhealthy behaviour;

24. In case of a child's or youth's rights being violated in my community, it is more common to request help from family or neighbours than from the state.

Here are the statements as they appeared in Spanish in the original document. (The words in bold are those that caused confusion amongst the respondents.)

15. En mi institución educativa hay **bulling** entre compañeros.

21. Jóvenes de mi comunidad están vinculados en comportamientos de conducta **malsana**.

24. En mi comunidad en caso de **vulneración** de derechos de los niños y jóvenes se acude mas a familiares o vecinos que al estado.

The first word that caused confusion was **bulling**. The reason is obvious as it is an English word being roughly translated into Spanish. During the first meeting at the CEDEZO building, the youth had asked what this word meant. After explaining it to them, we asked them if it was possible to use a Spanish word to replace it. There did not seem to be one word in particular that could encompass the meaning of the word *bullying*, so it was decided by the youth that we might have to use this word together with an explanation for it.

The second term that caused confusion was the word **malsana**, or unhealthy. The reason for confusion here is that it is not commonly used. According to one of the co-researchers, "Not good for you" or "bad for you" are the common terms used to refer to something as unhealthy. However, it was a simple word to explain.

The third term that had to be constantly explained was **vulneración**, or violation. This was the toughest term to explain, especially the first day of giving out the survey because the groups taking it at one particular time were so small, which meant we had to provide an explanation constantly. Due to this fact, a rapid textbook explanation was given rather than a more in-depth one with examples, as we provided the following day.

4.3.2 Administering the Survey, Day #2, March 22, 2012

I was met the following day by one of the youth (the other was unavailable) to continue administering the survey. My co-researcher came to pick me up at the same metro station where we took a bus that would drop us higher up the steep hill of homes and shops to where the second school was Estella Velez. The second school was much smaller and older than the first. The playground for the children was small and ill-equipped and each classroom had around 40 or 50 students. Instead of taking out small numbers of students from their classes, the director proposed we interrupt class time for about 10 or 15 minutes and go into two classes, one class at a time, to hand out the survey. We received the okay from the teacher and proceeded. Before entering the school, my co-researcher and I had made a detailed plan on what we would say to the students. We both decided we would begin by stating our names, although the students all recognized my co-researcher, which made a big difference in the process. We also decided to read the introduction of the survey, which details its sponsors, the instructions on how to answer and its guarantee of complete anonymity. We decided to do this rather that have each student read it to themselves because we noticed how some students skipped this section the day before, and we wanted the process to be as clear as possible. We also decided we would talk about the three vocabulary words (bulling, malsana, vulneración) because of the confusion they had caused the day before.

Upon entering each class, my co-researcher and I introduced ourselves. Everyone knew my co-researcher because she had just graduated from the school a few months before. She read the introduction to the students and I wrote the vocabulary words on the board. Together with the class, we identified what they meant and came up with different examples. Out of the 96 students, two students refused to take the survey. Due to lessons learned from the day before and the fact that there were two large groups taking the survey at the time, we were done by 10:30

a.m. Counting both days, we had a total of 208 surveys, and only two students refused to take the survey.

Looking back at the experience, I realize that without my co-researchers' participation in this process, it would most likely have not been this successful. Because they were alumni from the two different schools, trust and access were immediately granted — not only by school officials. All the students at both the schools knew both co-researchers. The first reaction I noticed by the youth was concern, especially when they found out some of the subject matter dealt with topics such as violence, gangs and the state. At moments, they appeared hesitant. However, knowing that the survey was done with the collaboration of youth from their community, and that it would be analyzed by youth of their community and non-profit organizations with which they were already familiar, put them at ease. Even the question, "So this isn't from the government for the government kinda thing?" was raised in the second day. I am sure that these factors also enabled the youth to take the survey seriously. I only noted very few instances where students seemed to breeze through the survey. The vast majority appeared to read and answer carefully.

My co-researchers were not only invaluable in the accessing of space and trust; they were also tuned in to some of the problems that several of the youth were encountering with the survey. My co-researchers noticed the confusion some students were having with the vocabulary, and they came up with solutions about how to make the application of the survey clearer (such as read the instructions at the beginning rather than have each student read it on their own). This demonstrates that having community participation is helpful not only in the elaborating of quantitative data but for the implementation of it as well.

4.4 Results of the Survey

Questions/Note	1. I believe I have control over the events in my life	2. I believe I can manage my life's social situations (relationships with classmates, family members, social networks, others)	3. I believe I can handle communication with my family members	4. I believe in a bright future	5. My family is affectionate with me	6. I often feel bored
N.A	4	0	5	2	11	5
1 Strongly A.	81	71	98	127	101	37
2 Agree	100	112	76	60	76	59
3 Don't Know	12	17	17	12	7	38
4 Disagree	8	5	10	2	4	39
5 Strongly D.	3	3	2	5	9	30
Total	208	208	208	208	208	208

7. I feel comfortable with my body and appearance	8. I have confidence in the people of my community	9. I give my opinion on the things that affect me to my family	10. In the last month I (or another member of the family) has had a violent experience in the family unit.	11. My parents or guardian provide me with the guidance I need for whenever I am in difficulty.	12. I have positive adult role-models in my academic institution.	13. In my academic institution there are opportunities in which students can make decisions on the things that affect us
4	3	11	3	4	5	4
109	29	69	19	80	74	73
78	62	64	17	75	75	73
8	59	25	32	28	32	38
8	39	23	45	11	11	8
1	16	16	92	10	11	12
208	208	208	208	208	208	208

14. My academic institution is a safe place	15. In my academic institution there is bullying amongst classmates	16. My friends have a positive influence on my life	17. My academic institution provides information on children and youth's rights	18. There are spaces for play and recreation in my community.	19. Youth in my community are aware of our rights and of children's rights	20. In my community, girls have less control over their lives than boys
3	9	9	4	4	2	4
67	57	54	100	91	68	29
81	48	78	74	72	75	38
40	54	29	20	22	44	89
11	19	26	6	13	15	29
6	21	12	4	6	4	19

208	208	208	208	208	208	208
21 *The youth in my community are associated with unhealthy behaviour*	22. *There is information on safe sex for youth in my community*	23. *In my community, youth are associated with hurtful, exploitative, or dangerous work*	24. *In case of a child's or youth's rights being violated in my community, it is more common to request help from family or neighbours than from the state.*	25. *In my community there exists groups of youths that are especially vulnerable*	26. *The homes in my community are safe for young people*	27. *In case of a child's or youth's rights being violated in my community, it is more common to request help from family or neighbours than from the state*
6	8	5	3	2	4	5
57	39	44	43	35	33	50
42	53	40	58	61	40	46
67	54	77	86	91	54	85
15	27	20	11	13	43	10
21	27	22	7	6	34	12
208	208	208	208	208	208	208
28. *It is safe for youth to move around in my community*	29. *In my community there are space in which youth can make decisions*	30. *In my community there exists services that keep children safe and protected (i.e. in case of abuse)*	31. *One can see the commitment with youth from the local government in my community (Juntas de Acción Comunal or JACs, Participatory Budget among others)*	32. *Youth are involved in the taking of local decisions*	33. *In my community, the police protect children*	34. *Cases of children's and youth's rights being violated are reported in the community*
8	8	4	5	6	8	7
33	28	34	39	26	44	35
29	36	42	44	26	52	47
33	73	66	71	95	46	71
53	44	34	21	33	26	27
52	19	28	28	21	32	21
208	208	208	208	207	208	208

35. *In my community there are spaces/places where youth are at risk*
6
83
55
29
14

21
208

Table 1: Results of the Survey

4.5 Meeting #3, San Javier Library, May 2, 2012

The purpose of this meeting was to analyze the results of the survey and to answer the questions posed for the study. The phase tackled in this meeting would be that of diagnosis. As Lawrence (2008) would decribe this phase, it is important to diagnose the problem stated though analysis of information gathered by local stakeholders. What would be my co-researchers diagnosis of the problem? What are the most important risk-factors to communicate to the community according them? The role of my co-researchers would be as partners in the sense that it was Natasha and I who organized the activities but their participation as local stakeholders would prove to be the most essential part of the analysis.

This meeting took place in the San Javier library due to a lack of space at CEDEZO. The building is an aesthetically pleasing modern structure surrounded by windows and even houses some indoor trees. The library has a large atrium. To the front left of it there is the actual entrance to the library, watched over by two guards who check all bags as patrons both enter and exit. To the right side of the atrium there are several offices and an amphitheater, and to the left you can find the library store and stairs that go down to the cafeteria. The atrium's open space is not wasted; there is always art works displayed in it. These works usually belong to local artists and are managed by the Mi Barrio organization, which also happens to have its offices in the inner part of the library.

This meeting was the longest and most productive of the meetings. Those present were Dr. Blanchet-Cohen, Aracelly, a community leader who works with CINDE, and nine of the local co-researchers. In this meeting, the youth were introduced to many aspects of the project, including a definition of research, the survey and what was done, what the results of the survey were, what

are the risk factors and protective factors, how youth see these factors in their community. They also had to be able to choose the factors they wanted to communicate the most and to whom. Dr. Blanchet-Cohen and I met a day before the meeting to properly plan the schedule and to prepare the materials and the activities for the day. We reviewed the survey. At first glance, we were intrigued by some of the answers the youths gave, particularly when the majority answered *I don't know* to certain questions (was it because they did not understand the question, did not know its answer or preferred not to answer?) and when answers seemed to contradict one another. We kept these questions in mind when preparing the activities for the next day's events. The design for the meeting follows in the table below. Included in this design are some notes taken after the meeting. Some emphasis on design and later analysis looked at how our co-researchers organized both protective factors and risk factors in terms of self, family, school, community, and government. I do not cover this because it focused on protective factors, and the factors discussed in this section were also not chosen as the final four to be communicated and presented to the community.

 Introductions*:* We gave our names, our age and talked a bit about what we liked to do. This was a good icebreaker and almost immediately we all felt very at ease with each other. Talking, questioning, laughing and an overall participation flowed easily. These young co-researchers, whose ages varied from 14 to 19, were very generous with their knowledge, even if they were a bit reserved with stories of their own personal experience. There were only a couple of co-researchers that I recognized, and the rest were new faces, some of whom were to be present throughout the entire process. Aracelly, a community leader who participates with CINDE and who keeps an eye on the youth, (she makes sure they signed consent forms and checks in with them) later let me know that one co-researcher would not be returning due to the danger of coming down from where he lived to the library.

What is Research? After the introductions, the youth were asked to describe what they believed research to be. Here are some of their answers as they was recorded, then transcribed and translated by me:

- Research is to find out about an unknown subject. To know its functions and its derivatives

- When we want to know about a certain subject, and to keep in mind certain questions as well as having in mind an objective of that which you want to do.

When asked if they had done any research in the past, the co-researchers answered that they had, for school and for school-related projects. None had done any research about their own community.

Survey. The co-researchers that were present at the first meeting explained to those that weren't what the survey was and what exactly was done that first day. Here, a co-researcher explains:

- Well, what we had to do was look at 50 questions, and we had to select those that went straight to the point, that didn't beat around the bush. Those that asked about children's rights in Comuna 13.

The co-researcher then went on to give a detailed explanation of some examples of questions, the possible answers, where the survey was given and to how many youth, as well as some of the issues in giving the survey (such as confusion, especially with three specific words).

After this explanation, Dr. Blanchet-Cohen raised an important question: Why is it important to have youth fill out a survey on protective and risk factors? Here are some of their answers:

- That way we can see just how vulnerable children's rights are. That way we can say we know there is mistreatment in the community but not sure how much. … Do youth even

know what it means to mistreat, or how much this treatment can affect children when they grow up? It's important to do a survey for these reasons.

- It is important to know the importance of each question asked and what children and youth answered and whether they understand the subject. If they don't, they have to be informed so it does not remain the same.

Another question asked by Dr. Blanchet-Cohen to the co-researchers was the following: Did they think these kinds of questions had been asked of the youth before? Their answer was, no.

Analysis. To begin the analysis of the survey with our co-researchers, the following questions were posed. What, after analyzing the survey, would be the factors that they would most like to communicate and why? To whom do they want to communicate them, how and where? These questions were to be answered after the following activities, but it was important that they keep them in mind while doing the analysis of the data.

To facilitate analysis, Dr. Blanchet-Cohen and I began by presenting some of the contradictory survey responses. We thought that sharing some of the contradictions would spark conversation and possibily give us some insights.

For example, we pointed out the answers students gave for statement #22:

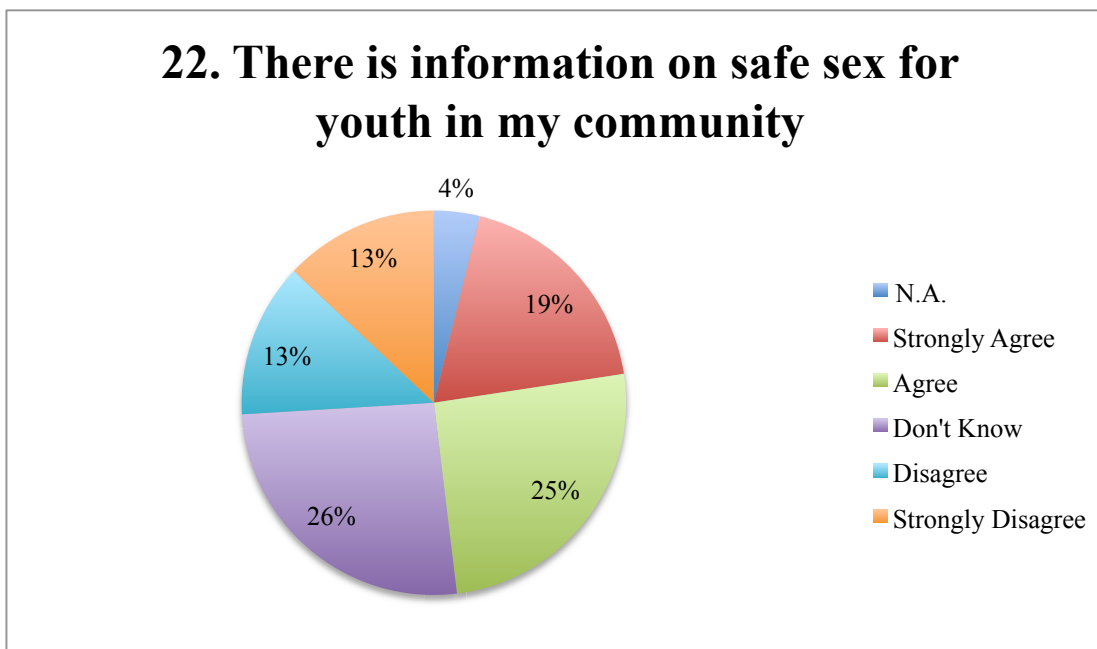## 22. There is information on safe sex for youth in my community

Figure 3: Results for Question #22

44% of students — not even half of all students — agreed and strongly agreed that there is information concerning safe sex in the community, but more students agreed than disagreed, despite the high teen pregnancy rates in the community. Our co-researchers were surprised also at the 26% who *disagreed* and *strongly disagreed* because, according to them, there is sex education in schools, although they also said that the quality is very low. What was interesting was the high number of *I don't know*, the option with the highest amount of answers with 26% of the students choosing it. The fact that there is sex education in schools, yet more than half either don't know if there is information available or simply disagree this information is available, seemed troubling to our co-researchers. Thus, the questions that Dr. Blanchet-Cohen and I posed created even more questions than answers. In the end, this would be a factor that the youth would want to communicate to the community as being one of the most important to focus on.

The next two statements that Dr. Blanchet-Cohen and I were curious about were #15: *In my academic institution there is bullying amongst classmates* and # 19: *Youth in my community are aware of our rights and children's rights*. What intrigued us was the very high number of *strongly agree* and *agree* for being aware of children's rights, yet many students did not know if there was bullying in their academic institution. A reason for this contradiction could have been the lack of understanding for the word *bullying*, but it had been clarified before each student

answered the survey. My co-researchers were also confused as to why such a high number of youth answered *I don't know*, since such a high number were under the impression that they were aware of their rights and other children's rights.
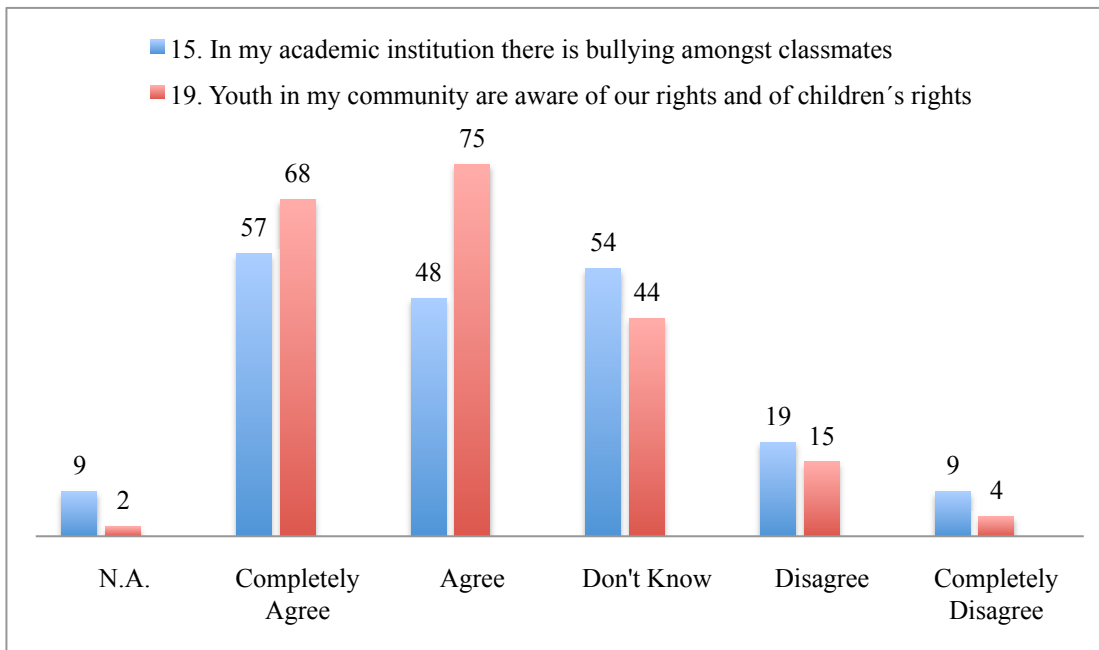

Figure 4: Comparison Between Questions #15 and #19

Statements #10: *In the last month I (or another member of the family) has had a violent experience in the family unit* and #26: *The homes in my community are safe for young people* also seemed to have contradictory responses when compared to each other. Even though the vast majority had totally disagreed to having experienced or witnessing violence in their family unit, the answer was not so clear when deciding if homes in the community were safe. Both the *agree* and *disagree* options had a similar amount of respondants, with most students responding *I don't know* to the statement. The few co-researchers who opened up about the topic only talked about positive experiences in their homes, and suggested that maybe the reason for a high number of *I don't know* answers really meant students did not know what happened in other people's homes, or perhaps it was a subject too personal to respond to.
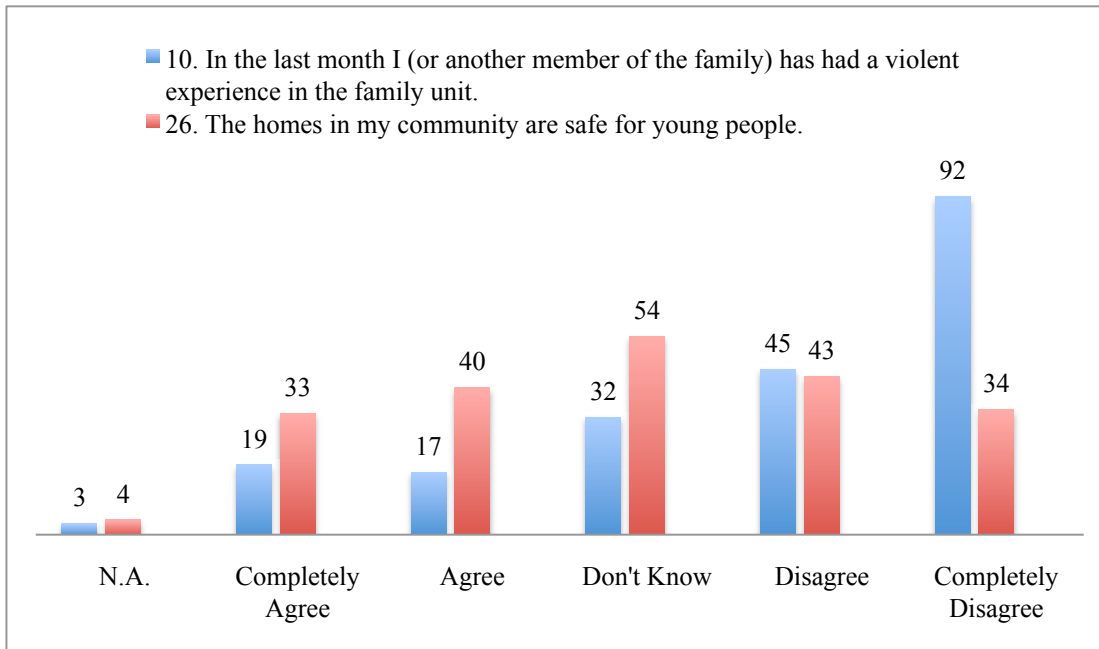
Figure 5: Comparison Between Questions #10 and #26

The answers to #18: *There are spaces for play and recreation in my community* and # 35: *In my community there are spaces/places where youth are at ris*k seemed to simultaneously state that community spaces were both safe and dangerous, so we asked the youth for more clarification. They stated that there were known public spaces where street gangs hung out, whether it was a basketball court or certain street corners, but there were also public spaces that were safe for everyone in the community, such as the library. I myself witnessed the importance the community library played as a safe space for the locals as a meeting place to do different activities. While I waited for all the co-researchers to arrive at the atrium of the library for the different meetings we had over the span of several months, I would see many different people converging in the atrium and entering the library. Those that hung out in and around the atrium would do various activities, from having a picnic, to a study session, to practising a dance routine or working on a song.
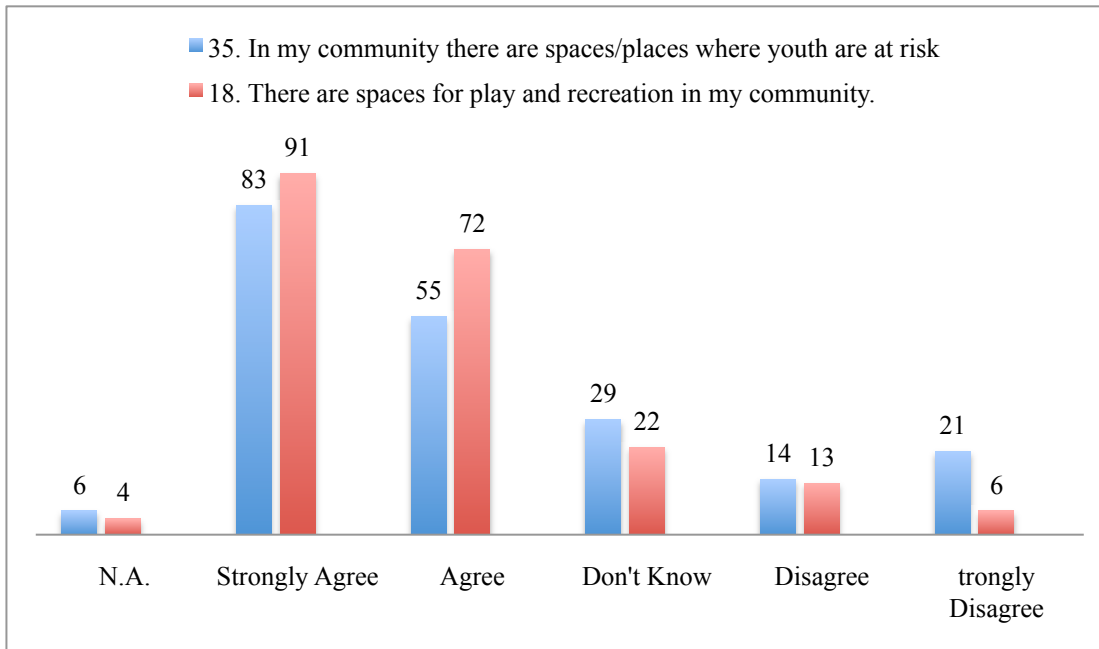
Figure 6: Comparison Between Questions #35 and #18

Another activity we did was to separate the youth into two groups and have them list the risk factors that were presented in the survey from most to least important. We wanted to see if there was a general consensus on what the most obvious risk factors in the community were. There was a consensus, both in the factors chosen and the order they were placed in, except for the fact that Group B added two factors in the number one slot, since they felt that both meant the same thing. Group A left out one of them precisely for the same reason.

Group A	Group B
23. In my community, youth are associated with hurtful, exploitative, or dangerous work	21. The youth in my community are associated with unhealthy behaviour *tied together with* 23. In my community, youth are

	associated with hurtful, exploitative, or dangerous work
35. In my community there are spaces/places where the youth are at risk	35. In my community there are spaces/places where the youth are at risk
15. In my academic institution there is bullying amongst classmates	15. In my academic institution there is bullying amongst classmates

Table 1: Risk Factors in order of Importance for Groups A and B

Both groups chose the same statements as being the ones that showcased the most important risk factors in their community. However, only one of these statements made it into their final selection of risk factors they wanted to present to the community, that which deals with bullying. Why? As one of the co-researchers pointed out, "Here we speak everyday about violence." The four factors ultimately chosen are important and in their opinion, somewhat neglected.

These activities helped our co-researchers understand that Dr. Blanchet-Cohen and I did not have the answers and that their experience and knowledge as locals were an essential part of the research. It also encouraged them to ask their own questions, and, after a couple of hours of looking at statements and how 208 local students answered them, our co-researchers had unanimously answered the first research question we had proposed for the day. What were the factors they would most like to communicate? Here are the four statements they chose, which

communicate factors that deal with boredom, lack of proper sex education, gender differences, and bullying. To our co-researchers, these were the most important factors to bring to light and discuss within the community.

6. I often feel bored.

15. In my academic institution there is bullying amongst classmates.

20. In my community, girls have less control over their lives than boys.

22. There is information on safe sex for youth in my community.

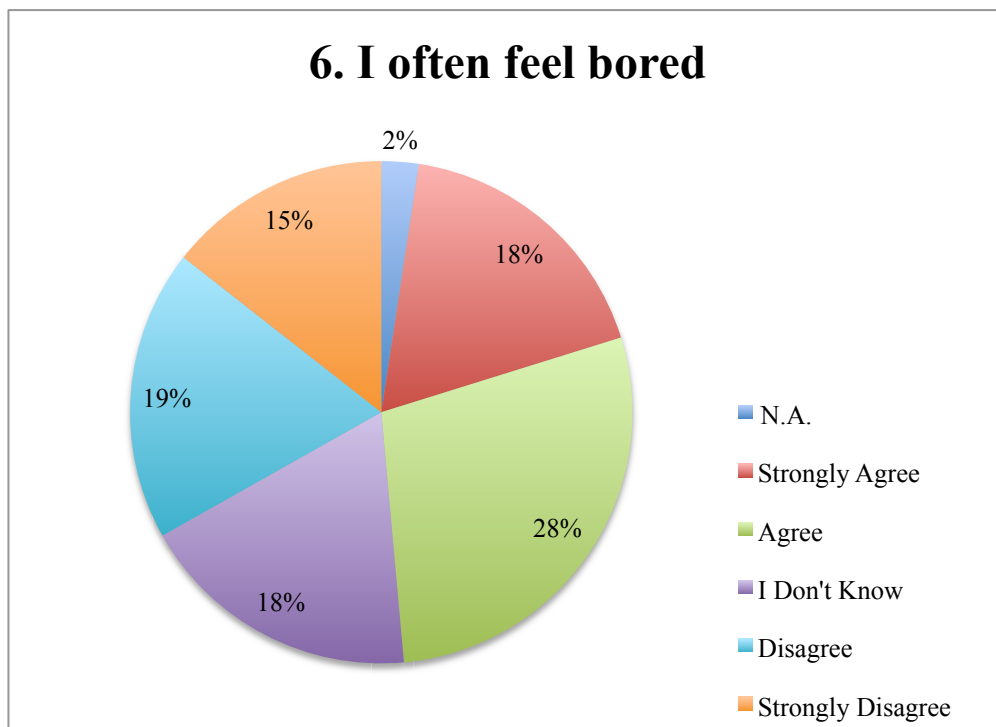Here are the survey results of the four statements chosen.

Figure 7: Results for Question #6

For # 6, out of the 208 youth to take the survey, 37 students completely agreed; 59 agreed, 38 did not know, 39 disagreed and 30 completely disagreed. Five students did not answer.

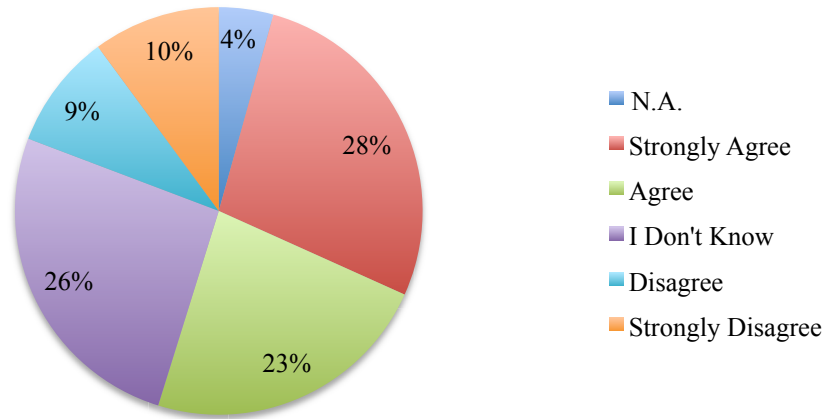## 15. In my academic institution, there is bullying amongst classmates

Figure 8: Results for Question # 15

With statement #15, 57 students out of 208 surveyed strongly agreed with the statement; 48 students agreed; 54 did not know; 19 disagreed and 21 strongly disagreed. Nine did not answer.

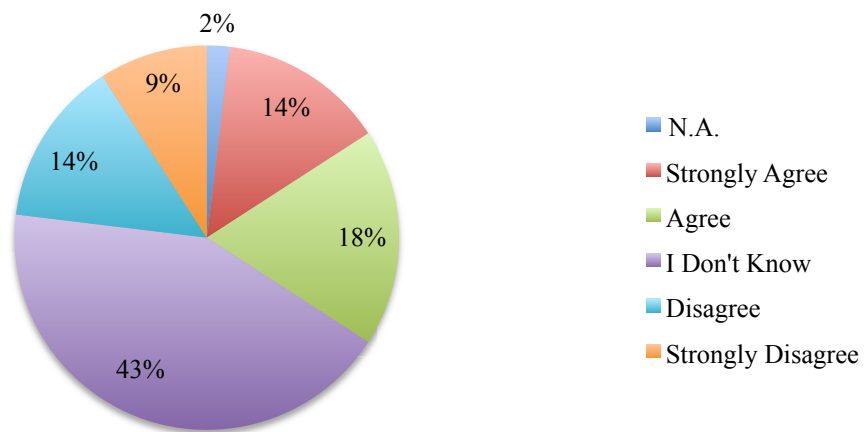## 20. In my community, girls have less control over their lives than boys

Figure 9: Results for # 20

For statement # 20, 29 out of 208 students surveyed strongly agreed, 38 agreed; 89 didn´t

know; 29 disagreed and 19 students strongly disagreed. Four students did not answer.
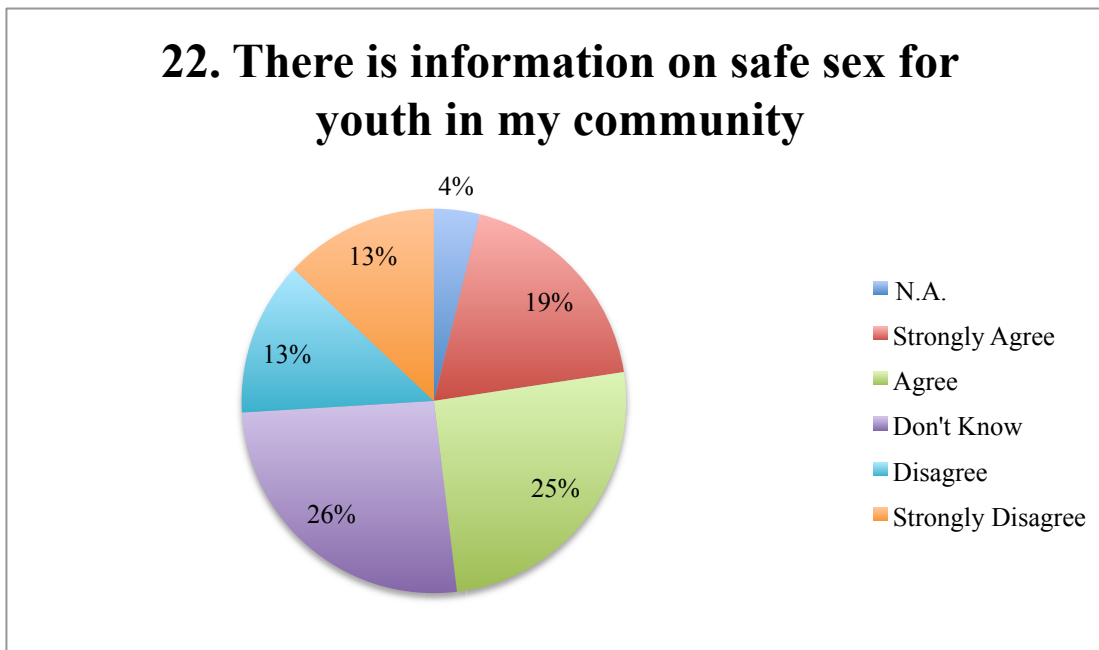

Figure 3: Results for Question # 22

For statement # 22, 39 out of the 208 students surveyed stated they strongly agreed; 53

agreed; 54 did not know; 27 disagreed and 27 strongly disagreed.

What these four statements had in common and what intrigued our co-researchers was the

high numbers of *I don't know*, especially in statements that they felt merited an easy response.

As one co-researcher pointed out, "I think they answered *I don't know* because of the fear

they must feel when asking, *should I put this?* I think they did know. The questions were very

clear." Whether it was due to fear or confusion, our co-researchers felt the statements with a high

I don't know percentage were worth looking into.

The factors that these questions deal with are about boredom, bullying, gender and sex. I was

surprised that the co-researchers identified these factors as the most important to talk about,

which reminded me just how much of an outsider I was in this community.. As a middle-class

Colombian woman whose knowledge of Comuna 13 came mostly from heresay and the local news, I expected that other factors would be more important to the youth of Comuna 13. For example, I expected factors that dealt with drugs or other illicit activity to be those chosen.

As an activity in the next meeting, but which I will mention here, the co-researchers, after a group discussion, wrote down why they had chosen these themes.

Boredom (I often feel bored.)

- We chose it because we found it strange that the youth would feel so bored so often, having everything. We believe it could be due to a lack of presence from their parents.

Bullying (In my academic institution there is bullying amongst classmates.)

- Because it is a problem that has always been plaguing the community, especially in the school. We must find a solution to this problem.

Gender (In my community, girls have less control over their lives than boys.)

- Parents say this and it is a thought that has never changed in our society, which puts men above women, so to say. "The weaker sex" for being loving, understanding but we have demonstrated the opposite, that this makes us strong.

Sex. (There is information on safe sex for youth in my community.)

- In the survey we realize that there is a high volume of information lacking on the subject of safe sex, even though we daily receive some kind of talk on sexuality and there is more information regarding this subject. In our society, sexuality and youth has not stopped being a taboo subject thus causing a lack of comprehension and support from parents. It is not about the quantity of information we receive, but the quality. The way the information is given and by who has a great influence. If an adult gives it, there is more apprehension, if it's peer to peer there will be more confidence to talk about the subject.

63

Their answers reminded me that my co-researchers do not see Comuna 13 as a particular kind of neighbourhood, just a regular neighbourhood. They were not focused on certain risk factors but instead, by both being locals and yet looking at the situation objectively, were able to pinpoint the factors and themes that most affected them, which may be seen to affect most young people in the city. In the past, I myself, as a youth from a different class background, could relate very well to these issues; yet, unlike them, I could not vocalize or pinpoint these concerns or word so well their causes. Their concern with sex education is a good example. There was a lack of good sex education when I was in school. My sex education focused on morality and abstinence, and the teachers were usually older women teaching in mixed classes of both girls and boys where participation from students was non-existent. There was, of course, a problem with teen pregnancy, even among the wealthier social class. I personally knew of five girls my age that got pregnant as teenagers.

Communication. Through the analysis portion of the meeting, the youth were able to answer the question, what were the factors that they most want to communicate and why? These risk factors had to do with boredom, bullying, gender and sex. Now that the themes were identified, and the reasons why they were chosen discussed, it was time to answer the following questions: To whom did they want to communicate this information, how did they want to communicate it and where?

The answer to the *who* question was simple. They wanted to communicate these issues to everyone — adults and youth, teachers and students, parents and children. The *where* was to be a safe place where as many people as possible could witness their message. They suggested that the place could maybe be a school.

The *how* they wanted to communicate these issues was somewhat more complex. They presented the following suggestions:

- March

- Billboards

- Video

- Photographs

- Workshops

- Talks

After posing the question of safety, on whether all these options were safe, they immediately

rejected the idea for a march. They said, in Comuna 13, moving from one neighbourhood to

another could definitely present a risk. Workshops and talks could also be problematic. In terms

of ease, video was also rejected due to the lack of filming equipment. They liked the idea of

photographs and or billboards because they felt an image in itself could inform the public about

what the youth wanted to communicate regarding their reality, and the image could also be the

steppingstone to more dialogue. As one co-researcher commented, "Most of the time, when you

show an image, the image can speak for itself and it's not necessary to have a long speech to give

because the image is there and what people will do is give their opinion on it, and all opinions are

valuable." Photography is a good way to open the channels of discussion and it can also be a

good way to introduce a subject matter.

To end the day, I reminded them to keep in mind what they researched and analyzed and to

keep thinking of the ways to communicate. I also told them, because they brought up the idea of

photographs, I would talk to them about photovoice in the next meeting and to think about safety

issues that might arise should they choose this method of communication.

At the end of the day, when our co-researchers had already left, I met with Dr. Blanchet-

Cohen to discuss the day's events. It was a very productive day that gave answers — some

unexpected — to many of our questions. They wished to focus on factors that seemed to be the

root of a bigger problem or problems that were generally ignored in order to speak about

concerns that were more commonly discussed either in their community or in the media, such as

those that dealt with poverty, violence and drugs. They were not led by the common discourse,

but instead reflected on the results in a way that I perceived to balance their objective perception

and their subjective experiences. These youth, aged 14 to 19, reminded me of why local

participation in understanding and transforming communities is so important. Judging from my

limited experience and knowledge with Comuna 13 and my own personal assumptions, the four

factors I would have chosen would have been very different indeed.

Chapter 5: Communicating Risk Factors

The previous chapter focused on how participatory action answered the questions about the risk factors that the youth wanted to communicate and why. In this chapter, our co-researchers, though PAR, answer how those factors will be communicated. In the last meeting, the youth decided to use photography to communicate the themes that they chose after analyzing the results of the survey. I presented the youth with information on photovoice and how it began. Using some of the information I gathered from photovoice.org, my co-researchers and I developed a plan of how to proceed with the project by discussing what we wanted to convey and what we should try to avoid. We made sure that what we wanted to communicate was clear; we also identified dangers to avoid, and we mapped out what we expected in terms of content.

I brought in various examples of photovoice projects to help them better understand the photovoice methodology and get ideas flowing. The examples I chose to present to my co-researchers were examples of photovoice projects in which the community inspired change at a political level with the images they took. For example, one photovoice project showcased how local women at a village taking photos of a dirty puddle that served as a toilet was enough motivation for local officials to invest in a proper public bathroom. I took these examples from photovoice.org but when I went back to get those examples to name them in this thesis, they were no longer there. (However, there are several similar examples still available at photovoice.org.)

5.1 Meeting #4, CEDEZO, May 12, 2012

When introducing the method of photovoice and using it with youth, I go back to Wang's (2006) 9 phases of photovoice when working with youth.

1. Select and recruit a target audience of policy makers or community leader

2. Recruit a group of photovoice participants

3. Introduce the photovoice methodology to participants,

4. Obtain informed consent

5. Pose initial theme/s for taking pictures

6. Distribute cameras to participants and review how to use the camera.

7. Provide time for participants to take pictures.

8. Meet to discuss photographs and identify themes

9. Plan with participants a format to share photographs and stories with policy makers or community leaders

Many of these steps had already been accomplished in previous meetings. We knew who we wanted to present our results to, who were the participants of the project going to be, and what the four themes were. Some talk of safety had already been discussed as well. Things to discuss in this meeting were to introduce photovoice and give examples, discuss the three forms of consent and especially what are any potential risks of doing a project like this in Comuna 13, and discuss ways to photograph the themes to motivate and inspire the youth for the project. Other phases would be accomplished in other meetings.

The meeting took place at the CEDEZO building. Five of the youth and I attended. Several youth could not make it due to work and other responsibilities. However, it seemed like everyday of the week was not good for one of the co-researchers, so I did my best to choose the day in which more people could attend.

I scheduled the meeting the following way:

Time	Activity	Materials

30 min.	Reflection-Summary of the last meeting. • Discuss the 4 risk factors chosen to communicate and why. • How do you want to communicate them? To who? Where?	Paper, pens and markers
45 min.	What is Photovoice? What could be the potential risks? Break.	Paper, pens and markers
20 min.	Examples of Photovoice	Examples printed from internet to facilitate discussion
45 min.	Disposable Cameras • Hand over disposable cameras and explain to the participants how to use them. • After this, they wanted to discuss examples of things to photograph. Co-researchers were divided in two groups and discussed ideas.	Cameras Paper, pens and markers

Table 2: Photovoice Meeting Schedule

Summary and Photovoice. For the summary, the co-researchers went into detail about the survey, the four themes they had chosen to communicate and why, and to whom they wanted to communicate these reasons. For the how part, they brought up photography once again. Here I stepped in and mentioned photovoice. I told them how it was a participatory methodology that valued above all the perspective of local people and mentioned its three basic principles as stated

by its creator, Caroline Wong (2000). These are to enable the reflection of community's strengths and weaknesses by its members, to promote a critical dialogue through the issues presented in the photographs and to reach comunity members and policy makers and elicit change.

All the research done until this point had been done through participatory methods that placed the participation and the reflections of the local youth at the center. This is true with the creation of the survey as well as with the editing, implementation and analysis. It was even these co-researchers themselves who chose the four factors to communicate, and so it was logical to follow the same path when looking for an expository method with which to communicate the results. The youth chose photography, and the photovoice method continued with the PAR methodology. What I especially liked about photography in this case is that it merged the objective side of my co-researchers, the youth who on many occasions tried to be as unbiased as possible when they had been editing, implementing and analyzing the survey, with the more intimate and subjective side that taking a photograph naturally demands. By taking photographs, they were being asked to tap into that more subjective side, to frame the risk factors that they had chosen to communicate in a way that was personal to them. With photographs, the community and whoever had the opportunity to view them, would have access to something much more personal, and that was powerful too.

Ideas for Photovoice and understanding the risks. Rather than give them an already-made list of rules concerning the risks of photovoice, I wanted my co-researchers to properly discuss and understand any risks they would face if they were to take photographs in their neighbourhood. Having them reflect, discuss and decide on their own preceptions of the risks of photovoice meant that they wouldn't internalize someone else's (namely, other researchers') rules. I would bring up any issues if I felt it was necessary for their safety if they were not brought up as a group. However, the rules they

chose, in the end, proved to be insightful and sufficient. Here is the list of rules they collaboratively established:

1. Do not take any risks with your photos.

This meant that youth were not to go to places they felt were unsafe or use their camera if they felt something negative could happen to them at any time. Examples included, don't go to unsafe areas where local gangs are known to hang out.

2. Take pictures of people you know or make sure you have their consent.

If kids were fighting and they decided to take their picture, how would those kids react? The project was not about them being undercover journalists but about communicating the themes they had chosen. If they had to "stage" a fight to portray bullying, then that was okay.

3. Do not take photos where the faces are clearly visible.

My co-researchers wanted to protect the identity of people in their community.

4. If you take a photo of a person with a school uniform or within a school, it will appear in black and white so as not to identify the school that person belongs to or the school it was taken in.

My co-researchers did not want a school in particular to be labeled as a place of bullying or as having problems. They wanted to keep the focus on the factors discussed and not have it be about a particular school. Bullying happens everywhere.

5. If you take a photo inside someone's home, it will appear in sepia so as to distinguish it from a school environment, but also take the photo so that the home is not easily identifiable.

6. If you feel uncomfortable taking a photo, or don't want to, you don't have to and can stop at any time.

All these issues were later reiterated when I handed them the consent forms (see Appendix B). The consent form helped reiterate the idea that they could stop participation

at anytime. It also served to let them know that their photos would be presented in the community and published in my thesis. Their names would not be used at any time, not even to identify them as a photographer.

After this, I gave them the disposable cameras and opened one to show them how they were used, how to turn on the flash, which button to press and so forth. As for photo ideas, I encouraged them to be as creative and open as possible as long as they followed the rules we had just established as a group. They did, however, suggest certain people focus on just one or two factors to facilitate the task. Therefore, I divided them into two groups and assigned *gender* and *boredom* to one, and *unsafe sex* and *bullying* to another. In these groups, they came up with ideas of how to shoot the factor they were in charge of.

In closing, we discussed and wrote down the main ideas, such as the rules to keep in mind when doing the photovoice project and ideas to capture bullying or unprotected sex (such as showing kids fighting in school and images of pregnant girls). I would follow up with their progress either with a meeting or by phone to discuss how the photo project was coming along and to discuss any issues with the cameras or with the project itself.

5.2 Telephone Follow-up

Wang (2006) described the challenges of photovoice and the importance to give sufficient time and keep participants motivated. Due to the very busy schedules of the participants, the deadline was extended from 2 weeks to over a month. Because it was impossible to get all the participants together during this time, I thought it was easier to follow up on the phone. During one of my follow-up phone calls, one of the co-researchers told me that they would prefer not to take pictures. No reason was given. I said that to not take pictures was absolutely okay, and that their presence would still be valued and appreciated. Others talked about having difficulty finishing due to a lack of inspiration and others even needed reminding of how to use the

cameras. It proved a necessary follow-up and all except one saw the activity to the end. After a month of having given the youth the cameras, one had not been used, and another was damaged and did not give out any photographs. In total, we had five cameras worth of photos, each camera with a roll of 26 pictures. For the exhibition, we had roughly 130 pictures to choose from.

5.3 Meeting # 5 and # 6 San Javier Library, July 4 and July 23 2012

Freire mentioned how knowledge is not static but fluid, and learning is a lifelong practice. We must reflect on what we have done to improve future action. Through photovoice, we would reflect on the process, and re-see that which we had already diagnosed and discussed, but rather than through an objective lens, through a more subjective one. We took a look at the four factors through the eyes of my co-researchers, that is, through their photos. Remaining of Wang's 9 step photovoice methodology was to meet and identify, or in this case re-identify, themes and to finish planning how to present and exhibit the findings.

5.3.1 Meeting #5

The meeting took place at the San Javier library. Five co-researchers and I attended. I had all the cameras developed in both CDs and hard copy. I brought the hard copies to the meeting, each one numbered on the back. The schedule for the meeting was as follows:

Time	Activity	Materials
20 min	Reflection: Discuss experience taking photographs. What issues did you have?	
45 min	Dividing and choosing the photographs • Divide the photographs into each of the four factors. Which photos represent which	119 photographs, each one numbered in the

	factors?	back. Paper, pens.
	• From each pile, each person chooses his or her three favorites. The thirteen photographs with the most votes will be in the exhibition.	
1 hour	Discussing and Writing about the photographs	Pens, paper.
	• In the exhibition, the photographs will be accompanied by a text. After discussing the chosen photographs, write a brief text about it.	
	• Write about what factor the photograph represents.	
	• If you are the photographer, what was going through your mind?	
	• What can you tell us about the photo?	
	• If you were not the photographer, what feelings does this photo evoke?	
	• How can you relate to it?	

Table 3: Reflection Meeting Schedule

Before going into these activities I let the co-researchers know that I had received the news from the library, specifically Mi Barrio, which was the organization in charge of showcasing local art in the atrium. I had written the organization about the work we were doing,

including the photo project, and they had been happy to accept us into their August 14 to September 3, 2012 time slot.

For activity number one, the co-researchers basically repeated what was said in the telephone follow-up. They were having problems getting inspired and some had problems using the cameras; some forgot how to turn on the flash, for example. When I asked the co-researchers if they encountered any dangers or felt at risk, they all said no.

The following are the photos chosen by the youth along with what they had to say about the photo. I also include another picture chosen the following meeting where I asked two co-researchers who were not present at meeting #5 to choose photographs as well. They chose three but we decided as a group not to include two because faces were clearly visible. Under the photograph is the small text that was written by the youth. The text tries to answer the questions that were asked in the beginning of the meeting, which are presented in the third activity in the previous table.

5.3.2 The Photographs

Photo # 54

Factor: Boredom

This photo touches upon how in the community youth are often bored.   It caught my attention because I want to know the why this affects me and because I don't want people who feel bored to surround me.

Photo #26

Factor: Gender

I took this photo because now girls are not allowed on the streets because of the insecurity. This girl stares at the horizon.

Photo #8

Factor: Bullying

I took this photo to show how fights are generated at the academic institution. Two youth were arguing about a problem and a fight broke out. The way it relates to my life is that due to a fight, one can also become affected with a problem.

Photo # 61

Factor: Unprotected Sex

I took this photograph in a home. It tells the story of a young girl with two children and who is also the head of the household. The father did not want to look after the children and left. This relates to the community because there are a lot of underage girls in the same situation. I want to share it so that we no longer see these situations.

Photo # 31

Factor: Boredom/Gender

It is of a young woman bored and sleeping in her home. It calls my attention because it showcases that men are given more freedom. It relates to me because I am a woman and I am given less freedom.

Photo# 34

Factor: Gender

This relates to man´s supposed superiority. I want to share it because his form of expression

intrigued me. It relates to my life because it is a way to express that needs a certain liking.

Photo #46

Factor: Gender

I took this photo to show how boys, even from a young age, are allowed to be on the streets.

These two boys are on the road and in danger of a car coming or of something happening to

them.

Photo #32

Factor: Boredom

This photo relates the boredom and the solitude that is trying to be hidden by listening to music. I share it because it is a good way to pass the time. This relates to my life because I also listen to music to distract myself.

Photo # 48

Factor: Unprotected Sex

This is the image of a girl that, despite her young age, is pregnant.

Photo # 58

Factor: Bullying

This photo describes to me the violence that is being lived in our community, which now is

stronger with kids.

Photo #60

Factor: Bullying

This photograph shows us all the conflict or bullying that is being manifested in all our academic

institutions.

Photo # 43

Factor: Boredom

I share this image because it inspires a lot of tranquility. It relates to my life because I look for a way to relax. Looking up at the sky I find tranquility and a way to communicate with myself.

At the end of the meeting, several co-researchers stated that they wanted to include a way to get community feedback. Ideas about what these slips of paper would look like or what they would say would be presented at the next meeting.

Personal Reflections: The photographs touched upon another theme that was not presented at all in the whole process. There was an overwhelming quality of loneliness. Boredom and loneliness seemed to be factors that went hand in hand. Had the photovoice project been used to identify themes in the beginning, it might have brought up even more factors that we were not yet even aware of. The caution taken by the participants to not showcase faces or identify any individuals, even through their uniforms or homes, is a testament to how conscientious these young people are of the world and its potential risks. I had not encountered the challenges that Wang states could arise when working with youth, "such as through their potential tendency to

84

downplay risks or adverse consequences of incriminating photographs¨ (Wang 2006 p. 158). On the contrary, they had presented ideas on how to downplay risks that even I had not thought about, like using black and white and sepia to make certain identifiable traits less so. It speaks to the real risks that are lived in their environment, and one that if I come to think about, comes naturally to me too. I never state my name when receiving a call on the phone, I don't let people know of my parents name or sister to people I just met or who ask me on the phone or of my relationship to them, and I would never ask personal, even if apparently harmless questions to someone I just met in the city (where did you go to school, what neighborhood do you live in). These kinds of questions are charged with information on class and wealth, and even political affiliation, information that could put people at a real risk. The open hearts and the generosity of the people of Medellín are often times coupled with a severe mistrust. I was not a local of Comuna 13, but as a resident of the city, I was well informed on the delicate dynamic that trust represents. I was reminded of this even more so when looking at these photographs and I looked forward to hearing from the youth to see what risks they encountered during the whole process.

This mistrust, the fear, seems to trap people into their respective neighborhoods, regardless of what strata these are which brings me to discuss another theme raised by the photographs. Entrapment. In photos # 54 and #26, which are labeled as gender and boredom respectively, I got the sense that the youth felt trapped. Trapped in their neighborhood, trapped in the role as it has been defined by society. And not only is this feeling of entrapment visible in these photographs but in the photographs that were not chosen. Photos were taken from behind walls, fences and wires. Imprisonment seemed to be a theme that was as visible as the other four themes chosen. These photos were not picked perhaps because they spoke more of being trapped than of the four factors chosen to be communicated. It would have been an interesting theme to add to the discussion, and one certainly that proved relevant through the whole process. It's relevant

because outsiders face a risk of entering a new neighborhood, like I faced when entering Comuna 13. It's relevant because one of the co-researchers who came to the first meeting never came again because he had to walk through areas that could be precarious to his well being in order to reach the safety of the library. Entrapment is felt by young men who can't leave their neighborhoods but especially for women who feel they can't even leave their homes. That is why the picture of the open blue sky is so powerful and touching. It was one of the pictures that was open and free, free from loneliness or entrapment. Is that what youth dream of in their boredom, in the social prison? I asked the youth why that photo was of boredom. "Because when you're bored, you dream, in your mind you can be free".

5.3.3 Meeting #6, San Javier Library, July 23, 2012

The meeting took place at the San Javier library. Seven co-researchers, a community leader linked with CINDE, and I were present. The schedule for the meeting was as follows:

1. Prepare the Exhibition

   o What is the title of the exhibition? Did they want to give themselves a name that separated them from any entity or institution?

   o Individually prepare a text to introduce the exhibition, and then combine all to make one.

2. Design Community feedback slip

After a long debate, the co-researchers both chose a name for the exhibition and decided on a name for their collective as well since they didn't want to give their actual names. The exhibition was to be called *EXPO-VIDA: Dejando Huellas y Gritando Cambios* (Leaving a Mark and Screaming for Change). The name of their collective was VEEX 13 (*Voces, Espejos y Experiencias*) (Voices, Mirrors and Experiences). Each person gave a couple of options, which I

wrote down on a big piece of paper. Both names were chosen by popular vote. The summary to be presented with the photographs was prepared a bit differently. Each co-researcher prepared a summary of what they believed the exhibition to be about. The questions they had to answer in making this summary were the following: Who were they? What were they communicating and why? What were they expecting to get back from presenting these photos to the community? The summaries would be edited and combined to make one. The final summary appears below, except for one detail. The co-researchers mention factors of risk but in the original document they write *safe sex* instead of *unprotected sex*. I missed this too and it was only brought to my attention on the first day of the exhibition by one of the women who work at CINDE. Here I have made the correction.

> Us, youth of Comuna 13, see the necessity to reflect and discuss the factors of risk
>
> that are most visible in our society such as bullying, unprotected sex, experiences
>
> related to gender and boredom. Armed violence and drugs are not the only things
>
> permeating our lives. We want to see beyond and create a consciousness in the lives
>
> of family members, neighbours and friends. We think that with the help and
>
> collaboration of the community, we can reflect and create pertinent changes. Let us
>
> not look to the past since it is not at our reach. Let us look to the future, which can be
>
> a better tomorrow. We will do this each day, for ourselves and the children, who are
>
> the most vulnerable of all.

The feedback slips would be small pieces of paper with some information on the front, finished off with a couple of questions. In the back there would be space to write their comments. Next to these slips we would place a comment box and several pencils. This is what the youth decided to write on the feedback slips:

In our community, after analyzing the results of a survey that was done to more than 200 youth that live here and a survey that we helped elaborate, we feel the need to talk about four topics in particular: Bullying, sex, lived experiences as a girl or as a boy and how they are different, and boredom.

Is there anything else? For these, what do you recommend as a solution.

Chapter 6: Reflections and Conclusions

In this chapter, I will discuss reflections on the whole process as they were done by my co-researchers in meeting # 7, and then write about my own reflections, doubts, challenges and conclusions. I also discuss the feedback given by some of those who visited the exhibition and the reaction of the co-researchers to their feedback in my final meeting with the youth. To end, I wish to explore possibilities of this research to inspire future projects. What are some issues that were left out but have a lot of potential to be explored?

6.1   Meeting #7, San Javier, August 13, 2012

This was the final meeting before the exhibition and its purpose was to get the group's approval of the suggestions they made from the last meeting, which I had been entrusted to do. Those present were me and seven co-researchers. The schedule was the following:

1. Revise the materials for the exhibition.

2. Reflect on the process as a whole.

Revising the materials for the exhibition. The youth were content with all the materials presented. However, they felt the need to incorporate flyers so that the public could have something to take home with them. They agreed to print the summary on small pieces of paper and to have 200 available copies for the public to take home.

Reflecting on the process as a whole. I asked my co-researchers to think of questions they thought we should ask in order to reflect on the whole process. They came up with nine questions and I added two of my own (#6 and #8), which I felt were absolutely necessary to ask. Here are the questions and the answers they discussed and provided as a group. The following was taken from an interview that I videotaped and then translated to English.

1. What did you learn in this process?

   • We learned to know some of the risk factors that we thought were not really as important in our community that were really affecting our 13th district. We also learned to give possible solutions to this matter.

   • The learning that we encountered will also benefit and help us in the environment that we live in.

2. What was the subject of this process?

   • Issues I did not know. Risk and protective factors. I did not know about those.

   • Issues that truly one wonders about, given it may be questions that one asks, or asking them to people who have no clue about them.

3. Do you plan on continuing with this subject?

   • Yes because it helps us to learn things we did not know that would help us later in our lives.

   • Of course, because everything we learn, we can put into practice.

   • I think it would be necessary to cover other subjects — not always show the bad of the community but also provide other positive points that also promote community.

   • I'd like to know, study and analyze, as my classmate said, on other issues of Comuna 13 that are positive.

4. What do you plan to do from your personal surroundings, socially and within your family, in order to find a possible solution to these issues?

- Be part of the solution and encourage people who are close to their families. That society is part of the solution and it is based upon the individual itself.

- First, one should apply what is learned on a personal level, because if you don't apply it for yourself you cannot make others do anything. After, you apply it in the family and then socially, which involves colleagues, neighbours and others.

5. How can you apply what you have learned?

- I think the most viable way to resolve this is to apply what we learned, such as with a dialogue with family and neighbours.

- I think projects like this help our community to be informed and to seek solutions to the problems they are having in terms of risk environments.

- That applies a lot to our homes mainly for us because if we learn, family and children will understand. The most important thing is to know how to dialogue. Secondly, children join in these issues through play.

- We can project the problem in society, also in the home so it can be resolved.

6. What would you change in this process?

- I would improve the lack of attendance and lack of commitment amongst some friends or classmates.

- They should be motivated showing videos, videos based on the exhibition or presentation.

- Show the before and after, as we have changed in the process, set an example and videos.

7. What did you like most of the process?

- We learned that one can put into practice what we have learned with our family.

- That we learned about risk factors.

- What I like is to have known more about the issues, researching and investigating, and also knowing people's stories that we come in contact with, and then sharing with others and other institutions as well. Also giving possible solutions to the factors.

8. Did you feel in danger or unsafe during the process?

- No, because we had space to take the pictures and we already know the territory.

- I think we felt safe. Well, they chose people from the community. Who else is going to know any better than we do about where we can go to or not than us, just taking precautions.

- Very safe.

9. What were your expectations?

- To learn more about these issues. Learn more about the issues we chose. It is about how to resolve it and how to transmit it to others. Where and when is it important to know.

10. Were your expectations met?

- We still don't know because of what is left for tomorrow … since we need to know what will happen at the exhibition … there we will know the reaction of others.

11. If you could do another project like this one, how would it be and what would it be about?

- In the same way, we can all be present. One issue that I would like to show is not only the bad but also the good.

- Start talking to parents — also involve the whole family.

- Have different activities, encourage others.

- Have more effective conversations and have more time.

Caroline Wang (2006) had detailed some of the issues that could arise when working with youth on a photovoice project. Even though this reflection does not speak just on the photovoice project, her statements are still valid when it comes to the rest of the process. Issues that could arise according to Wang were problems with motivation, signalling that youth needed significant encouragement to complete a task that for some of them could be daunting, especially considering that many youth could have other problems to deal with at home and or school. The second issue brought forth was the tendency youth have to downplay risks. I personally felt that the youth were not in danger. They did not downplay risks, in fact, they were more aware of possible risks than even I was, and they were always aware not just of themselves but of any person being portrayed in the photograph. They made sure that faces and places such as homes were not recognizeable.

However, there were issues with time, and double the time had to be given to the participants to complete the photovoice project, but thanks to Wang's outline of a photovoice methodology, I already anticipated that the process could take much longer than expected. As for motivation, I felt the participants were starting to lose it when they were having trouble getting inspired as to what to take pictures of. They needed encouragement and more time. One of the participants decided not to even go through with this part of the process. No reason was given, but judging from other conversations, it was probably because this youth was already overwhelmed with other things and perhaps just couldn't bother.

In this process I learned that youth are qualified to investigate and reflect on their own reality, and that their reflections give answers that are more relevent because as local stake holders they are simply more aware of the context they are living in. An example of this is in their choice of risk factors, where I as an outsider would have chosen other factors with my

93

limited knowledge of their community. The process taught me that without working with community members, focus might be given to the wrong issues. As to whether my expectations were met, I also agree with my co-researchers when they state that we must first see what the community's feedback is and see what dialogue was created. This would raise more issues for discussing photovoice as a methodology that brings about community change.

Setting up the exhibition. I met with three of the co-researchers the following day to set up the exhibition. We were given by the staff at Mi Barrio three large panels on which to put our photographs. I was joined by my sister and a friend, both who wanted to see the work. My co-researchers also brought friends. Many people from CINDE and the community also came to the opening. By some comments I was given the impression that I should have kept more in touch with some community adults and people at CINDE because they were not present during some of my meetings with the youth. It was not directly stated, only implied, and I felt bad for not having realized this myself and for assuming that the meetings were being mentioned by two of the most experienced and senior co-researchers to their community leaders. However, people seemed pleased and interested at what the youth had to show and say. The following hour was spent with my co-researchers, siblings and friends having lunch and then seeing auditions at the library's amphitheater for a big citywide show that would be showcasing local talent from some of the city's poorest neighbourhoods. This is how the exhibition looked at the end of the day:

The summary, along with the title of the exhibition and a brief explanation of VEEX 13, is in the top right hand corner. The text used in the feedback slips is placed to the left of it. The photos measured 35" by 25"

The panels would ultimately be moved to occupy more space in the atrium. We had the use of a total of three panels with photographs pasted on both sides.

Here is the comment box made by two of the co-researchers. Pasted on top of it are the two sides of the feedback slip. In front were piles showcasing the two sides as well as some pencils for people to use and give their feedback. There were flyers with the text of the introduction written on them for anyone who wanted to take it home.

6.2 Meeting # 8, San Javier Atrium, September 4th 2012

We met the last day of the exhibition to pick up the materials, and reflect on the comments made by the community. Since I was not able to book a room, we gathered on the steps of the atrium. There were four co-researchers and myself. The schedule was the following:

1. Collect photographs and distribute them to co-researchers.

2. Collect and discuss comments from the comment box.

3. What did they think of the feedback? What surprised them? What did they like?

This was also to be our last meeting. We collected all the photographs, which I then returned to the youth. Since many had not attended, the four youth present volunteered to distribute the photos to the others. However, one co-researcher insisted I keep one photo, the one of the sky, one that was taken by that person. They knew I had a personal attachment to that photo and insisted I keep it. I was deeply touched.

As for the comment box, not a lot of people left a comment. Here I have translated all the comments, a total of exactly 16.

1. I like the comment of this work because it gives suggestions that one can share.

2. Excellent photos and how nice that everyone was young.

3. Very good photography exhibition and excellent work with youngsters that find activities in which they can be outstanding at them and lead them to reflect upon them.

4. Beautiful investigation. Very good photos.

5. Everything is beautiful. Thank you for this that is beautiful for everyone.

6. I think that this exhibition is very valuable because through these photographs that were taken by young people, they have a way to expose reality.

7. It is a beautiful way to take into account how young people and adolescents feel, literally, and cruelly how we have forgotten them in our community. May God grant other ways of doing things and that may it have an impact on us.

8. Speaking for example about boredom, I think that more than that it is misinformation; well basically all problems are because of misinformation.

9. Continue, wonderful.

10. I thought it was great and real. Since it shows the problems of young people that they face today.

11. I think that the photos are very good since it is a way to inform our society.

12. Very cool photographs; so nice that they cheer young people towards the art, this is art expressed in photographs. Keep up the good work!

13. The photographs I think are very good, parallel to the concept that they use, and the message that they want to convey. A word of advice is that each photograph should have the name of the person that took the photo, and improve the comments of the photos. Overall the project is very good.

14. I didn't like anything. Just kidding, everything.

15. You could comment or talk to them, make them understand.

16. Excellent! Congratulations VEEX 13!

The first reaction of my co-researchers after reading all the comments was a slight disappointment for not having received more comments and more feedback regarding the four factors they were communicating. Even the suggestion to put their names on each photo gave the impression that some people could view this exhibition as a form of artistic representation rather than a dialogue that was being brought forth to the community. However, they were really happy about the positive reactions. Here are some of the reactions in their own words:

- I found it interesting that the comments were positive but very few stated what I expected.

- The important thing was people's acceptance and the encouragement in the comments. I think that we had to stress to people if they had any new proposal and how they could complement our work and motivation. Very good acceptance from the people!

The fact that the comments did not state what the participants expected, or even wanted, is problematic. Was the place of exhibition a cause of the problem? The atrium was a place where artwork was displayed, but many times that artwork has been of social problems plaguing the community. I recall at one point an exhibition of personal items belonging to people from

Comuna 13 who had disappeared, probably murdered by either government or paramilitary forces. However, the vast majority of projects are artistic works done by people in the community. Could that have influenced people's perceptions of the exhibition's intended purpose?

6.3   Conclusion

Understanding Risk Factors. I divided the process into two sections, understanding and communicating risk factors. Within both processes there had to be an active attempt at conscientization, in where participants are motivated, capacitated, actively diagnose and analyze, manage structures and suggest methods; in other words, they are trusted to be directors in the process and not just partners, and they formulate projects to disseminate knowledge as well as to the future. In the process of understanding risk factors, quantitative methods were used and an objective analysis was given. Although the co-researchers were both youths and locals, which gave them inside knowledge, they analyzed the results as objectively as they could. At the same time, they presented valid solutions to the factors they viewed as most problematic. For example, for the factor of unsafe sex, the main problem in their opinion was a lack of education. As a solution they stated that education must be peer-based and genders must be separated to ensure that students are less embarrassed to ask questions. For the other factors, however, they were less sure of possible solutions; thus, the main thing they wanted to do was to present these four factors, which they considered to be very important, to the community and policy makers and hope that a dialogue that could produce tangible solutions might be had.

      Communicating Risk Factors. Their objective was clearly stated. They wanted to present their findings to the community and inspire dialogue. The method chosen was

photovoice and it followed the basic principles of PAR. In this section of the process, the youth were clear directors. They chose the themes, the method of communication and the audience to whom they wished to present. The only thing that fell short of tour hopes for the project was the feedback from the community. The vast majority who saw the photos did not comment, and those that did not even read the questions the youth had posed for them. Could the exhibition been done somewhere else? Could it have been done at schools as well where talks with students and teachers regarding the project been organized? Even though the location chosen was one of the most visited by people in the whole Comuna, I can't help but feel like it is just a transitory space, a place where people just stop and look on their way to somewhere else. If I were to do this project again, I would focus more time on where the exhibition of the photos takes place. Perhaps the images of the four factors stayed with the community, maybe the idea that bullying, differences in lived experiences for girls, boredom and unsafe-sex are now issues more present in the minds of people in the community, but right now there is just no way of knowing. What is good about these images, though, is that they are still there, still available, and most of all, still relevant. Lessons learned from this experience can still be applied in the future.

The work of the youth has not been lost. These themes have been identified, and their photos remain. CINDE was present at the exhibition, and they have long and strong ties with the community and policy makers. I will have to reach out to different people, community members and the local JACs to see if funding and programs that tackle these particular factors are possible. These programs would have to bring a more effective dialogue than the one that was achieved in the atrium of the library. It has to be brought into the classrooms of schools, community centers and into the offices of the JAC's and hopefully to the local newspaper.   This was not an art project, this was a project aimed at inspiring dialogue. Hopefully this can be achieved.

Working with youth. Working with youth brought forth special ethical and methodological considerations. Keeping in mind the importance of Freire's ideas on research and placing importance on conscientization allowed me to focus the importance of doing research to inspire participation, action and social transformation. Youth participation is essential as they are part of both problem and solution, yet they are hardly given a voice. To involve youth is to involve them

> in knowledge development at the community level. It includes efforts by adults to involve young people in the research of public agencies and private institutions; work done by young people to organize their own research projects, with or without adult assistance; and efforts by youth and adults to work together in intergenerational partnerships. Youth participation refers to their active participation and real influence in the decisions that affect their lives, not to their token or passive presence in adult agencies. (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003 p. 22)

Frameworks for the research were based on PAR concepts, and, for this reason, photovoice as a methodology was chosen. I kept in mind Wang's methodology in particular and used all of her nine phases in the research process. She described the challenge I encountered as well. Dealing with the youth's busy schedules and outside factors was a challenge when keeping appointments and also proved overwhelming for a participant to even finish the work. However, overall motivation was high throughout the process, which I believe was due to the role the youth had as directors in the process. They knew that without their participation there was no process, and it was a process that in the end sought to improve the life of the youth in their community. This was a high incentive for them to keep participating in the process.

Personal reflections. This entire process yielded a wealth of information. After analyzing the survey and even taking the pictures (there were over a hundred pictures and just focusing on

that would have been enough for a thesis), I had to remember my own research questions and realize that my main focus was on creating and documenting a journey that was participatory, firmly based in its local context, built relationships and dialogue and was reflexive while being both subjective and objective — all so that youth could feel empowered enough and secure enough to investigate their own reality in order to change it. The subject of investigation had been protective and risk factors, with an emphasis on risk. The factors they had found to be most important were those that dealt with bullying, unprotected sex, gender and boredom. My co-researchers were the captains, or directors, of the entire investigation; they pointed the boat in the direction they wanted to go at all times. Being objective and looking back, had I participated in any decision-making, I probably would have chosen different factors and photographs. My background, context, education and lived experience are very different from this group of youth. That is why a participatory research methodology is so important when dealing with social issues — because it prioritizes the perspective of the people who live in the particular community that is investigated. Even youth as young as the ones I worked with were committed and beyond capable of the tasks they performed. They were objective about the issues while not disregarding their own subjective lived experience in the community. Just as I tried to build trust with them, they built it naturally amongst each other and were incredibly supportive of one another. Just as I tried to be ethical and trustworthy by assuring them I would not use their names or personal information they entrusted me with, they were very careful of not showing faces or embarrassing anyone with any of the photographs that they took. I did not discuss many of these issues with them. They suggested most of the rules for the photovoice project, and they showed an innate knowledge that to understand and help people and a community, you did not have to embarrass or put others at risk. Perhaps they were even more careful because they themselves belonged to

the community, and an outsider might see things differently. I will be eternally grateful to them for their intelligence, kindness and commitment.

There has been much interest in the results of this project with people I have spoken to from different education programs and several non-profit groups. There were no tangible solutions to the four factors presented by the youth; the only change was in realizing that these factors were considered to be the most important by them. Freire and Fals Borda state that the best kind of education motivates people into action, and I firmly agree. The motivation by others to participate in the dialogue was insufficient probably because the project was perceived to be more artistic than a call for dialogue and social transformation. However, my latest conversations with my co-researchers show me that the youth of Comuna 13 are very motivated to procure a positive change in their community, and they know that change can come about from the simplest things. Like they said in their reflection, it starts with oneself and then with those closest to you. This project made a change in the lives of these young people and to possibly their friends and family. I am happy to see that not only are they at that stage but they are motivated to go beyond, to reach out to their community and even policy makers.

References

Angarita Cañas, P.E., Jiménez Zuluaga B.I., Gallo, H., Atehortúa Arredondo, C. I., Londoño

    Berrío, H. L., Sánchez, L. A., Medina Pérez, G., Ruiz Botero, L.D., & Ramírez Ortiz, M.

    E. (2008). *Dinámicas de Guerra y Construcción de Paz.* Bogotá: L. Vieco e Hijas Ltda.

Banco Mundial. (2007). *El potencial de la juventud: políticas para jóvenes en situación de riesgo*

    en América Latina y el Caribe. Washington: Banco Mundial Publicaciones.

Borjas, B. & Ortiz, M. (2008). La Investigación Acción Participativa: Aporte de Fals Borda a la

    educación popular. *Espacio Abierto,17*(4), 615–627.

Checkoway, B. & Richards-Schuster, K. (2003) Youth Participation in Community Evaluation

    Research. *American Journal of Evaluation* 24: 21

Fals Borda, O. (1978). Por la Praxis: El problema de como investigar la realidad para

    transformarla. Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo.

Fals Borda, O. (1987). The Application of participatory action research in Latin America.

    International Sociology, 2(4), 329–347.

Fals Borda, O. (1991). *Democracia y Participación; El Reciente Caso de Colombia*. Medellín:

    Universidad Nacional.

Fals Borda, O. (2000). *Peoples' spacetimes in Global Processes: The Response To The Local*.

    Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Fals-Borda, O., & Mora-Osejo, L. E. (2002). . Bogotá: Universidad Bolivariana.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). New York: Continuum.

Gobierno de Medellín: Juntas de Acción Comunal:

http://www.mij.gov.co/econtent/newsdetailmore.asp?id=2724&idcompany=2&idmenucat
egory=50

Kindon, S. (2003). Participatory video in geographic research: A feminist practice of looking?
Area, 35(2), 142–153.

Lawrence, L. (2008). *La concientización de Paulo Freire*. Pasto: Universidad de Nariño.

Ministerio del Interior y Justicia. (n.d.). Acción Comunal. Retrieved from

http://www.mij.gov.co/econtent/newsdetailmore.asp?id=2724&idcompany=2&idmenucate
gory=50

Matthews, H., Limb, M., & Taylor, M. (1998). *The geography of children: some ethical and
methodological considerations for project and dissertation work.*. UK: University
College Northampton, Centre for Children and Youth.

Minkler, M. (2000). Using participatory action research to build healthy communities. *Public
Health Rep., 115*, 191–197.

Nederveen-Pieterse, J. (1991). Dilemmas of development discourse: The crisis of
developmentalism and the comparative method. *Development and Change, 22*(1), 5–29.

Ocampo López, Javier. (2008). Paulo Freire y la pedagogía del oprimido. *Revista Historia de la
Educación Latinoamericana,*(10) 57–72.

Plan de Desarrollo Local San Javier:

http://www.medellin.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/wpccontent/Sites/Subportal%20del%20Ciuda

dano/Planeaci%C3%B3n%20Municipal/Secciones/Plantillas%20Gen%C3%A9ricas/Docu
mentos/Plan%20Desarrollo%20Local/CARTILLA_PDLC13_final.pdf

Quinceno-Toro, N. et al. (n.d.) *Memorial Cultural de Comuna 13*. Retrieved from
http://www.medellindigital.gov.co/Mediateca/repositorio%20de%20recursos/SecretariaC
ultura_MemoriaCulturalComuna13.pdf

Sanín, F. G. (2009). *Politics and security in three Colombian cities*. London: Crisis States
Research Centre.

Santa, E. (1976). *Historia del Siglo XX*. Bogotá: El Tiempo, Intagral S.A.

Smith, L., Bratini L., Chambers, D. A., Jensen, R. V., & Romero, L. (2010). "Between idealism
and reality: Meeting the challenges of participatory action research."Action research.
8(4), 407–425.

The International Institute for Child Rights and Development
http://www.iicrd.org/work/projects/child_protection/cape

Wang, C., Cash, J.L., & Powers, L. S. (2000). Who knows the streets as well as the homeless?
Promoting personal and community action through photovoice. *Health Promotion
Practice,.1*(1), 81–89.

Wang, C. (2006) Youth Participation in Photovoice as a Strategy for Community Change,
Journal of Community Practice, 14:1-2, 147-161

Appendix A: Survey (English and Spanish Version)

4.4 Survey
Project to Protect Early Childhood from Violence; Survey of protective factors and risk of violence against early childhood in the community

This survey is part of the project Protecting early childhood against violence, project that is being developed with the IICD, Cinde, ICDP, Golondrinas Foundation, Visión Mundial-Antioquia, Universidad San Buenaventura y Programa el Buen Comienzo and the Mayorship of Medellín.

Its objective is to count on the general information of the protective and risk factors most common in your community.

Please choose one of the following five options;

Totally agree
Agree
Don't Know
Disagree
Totally Disagree

Your answers will remain absolutely anonymous, therefore your identification will not be required at any time.

Sex:_____Age: _____

Date:_____

Place an X in the option that you most identify with.

No.		Totally Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1.	I believe I have control over the events in my life					
2.	I believe I can manage my life's social situations (relationships with classmates, family members, social networks, others)					
3.	I believe I can handle communication with my family members					
4.	I believe in a bright future					
5.	My family is affectionate with me					
6.	I often feel bored					
7.	I feel comfortable with my body and appearance					
8.	I have confidence in the people of my community					
9.	I give my opinion on the things that affect me to my family					
10.	In the last month I (or another member of the family) has had a violent experience in the family unit.					
11.	My parents or guardian provide me with the guidance I need for whenever I am in difficulty.					
12.	I have positive adult role-models in my academic institution.					
		Totally Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Totally Disagree
13.	In my academic institution there are opportunities in which students can make decisions on the things that affect us					
14.	My academic institution is a safe place					
15.	In my academic institution there is bullying amongst classmates					
16.	My friends have a positive influence on my life					
17.	My academic institution provides information on children and youth's rights.					
18.	There are spaces for play and recreation in my community.					
19.	Youth in my community are aware of our rights and of children´s rights					
20.	In my community, girls have less control over their lives than boys					
21.	The youth in my community are associated with unhealthy behaviour					

		Totally Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Totally Disagree
22.	*There is information on safe sex for youth in my community*					
23.	*In my community, youth are associated with hurtful, exploitative, or dangerous work*					
24.	*In case of a child's or youth's rights being violated in my community, it is more common to request help from family or neighbours than from the state.*					
25.	*In my community there exists groups of youths that are especially vulnerable*					
26.	*The homes in my community are safe for young people.*					
		Totally Agree	**Agree**	**Don't Know**	**Disagree**	**Totally Disagree**
27.	*In case of a child's or youth's rights being violated in my community, it is more common to request help from family or neighbours than from the state.*					
28.	*It is safe for youth to move around in my community*					
29.	*In my community there are space in which youth can make decisions*					
30.	*In my community there exists services that keep children safe and protected (i.e. in case of abuse)*					
31.	*One can see the commitment with youth from the local government in my community (Juntas de Acción Comunal or JACs, Participatory Budget among others)*					
32.	*Youth are involved in the taking of local decisions*					
33.	*In my community, the police protect children*					
34.	*Cases of children's and youth's rights being violated are reported in the community*					
35.	*In my community there are spaces/places where youth are at risk*					

What other factors of risk or protection from violence do you think exist in

your community?

_____

–

Proyecto Protegiendo la Primera Infancia de la Violencia
Sondeo factores de protección y riesgo de la violencia contra la primera infancia en la comunidad

Este sondeo hace parte del proyecto Proteger a la primera infancia de la violencia, proyecto que se vienen desarrollando con IICRD, Cinde, ICDP, Fundación Golondrinas, Visión Mundial-Antioquia, Universidad San Buenaventura y Programa el Buen Comienzo de la Alcaldía de Medellín.

Su objetivo es contar con una información general sobre los factores de protección y riesgo más característicos de tu comunidad.

Para el diligenciamiento del instrumento, señala para cada enunciado en la casilla correspondiente a una de las siguientes cinco opciones de respuesta:

- Totalmente de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- No sabe
- En desacuerdo
- Totalmente en desacuerdo

Tus respuestas a este instrumento son <u>totalmente anónimas</u>, por lo que no se te solicita en ningún momento tu identificación.

Sexo:_____Edad: _____

Fecha:_____

Coloca en la casilla una X en la opción que mas te corresponde.

No.		Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	No sabe	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
1.	*Creo que tengo control sobre los acontecimientos de mi vida*					
2.	*Creo que puedo manejar situaciones sociales de mi vida (relaciones con los compañeros(as), familiares, uso de redes sociales, otros)*					
3.	*Creo que puedo manejar la comunicación con los miembros de mi familia*					
4.	*Creo en un futuro positivo*					
5.	*Mi familia es cariñosa conmigo*					
6.	*Me siento aburrido con frecuencia*					
7.	*Me siento cómodo con mi apariencia y mi cuerpo*					
8.	*Tengo confianza en las personas de mi comunidad*					
9.	*Opino sobre las cosas que me afectan en mi familia*					
10	*En el último mes yo (u otro miembro de la familia) he tenido experiencias de violencia dentro de mi familia*					
11	*Mis padres u otros cuidadores me proporcionan la guía que requiero cuando estoy en dificultades*					
12	*Tengo modelos positivos de adultos en mi institución educativa*					
		Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	No sabe	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
13	*En mi institución educativa hay oportunidades para que los estudiantes tomen decisiones sobre las cosas que nos afectan*					
14	*Mi institución educativa es un lugar seguro*					
15	*En mi institución educativa hay bulling entre compañeros*					
16	*Mis amigos influyen positivamente en mi vida*					
11	*En mi institución educativa se brinda información sobre los derechos de los niños y los jóvenes*					
18	*En mi comunidad hay espacios para el juego y la recreación*					
19	*En mi comunidad los jóvenes conocemos nuestros derechos y los de los niños y jóvenes*					
20	*En mi comunidad las niñas tienen menos control sobre sus vidas que los niños*					
21	*Jóvenes de mi comunidad están vinculados en comportamientos de conducta malsana*					

		Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	No sabe	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
22	En mi comunidad hay información para los jóvenes sobre sexo seguro					
23	En mi comunidad hay jóvenes vinculados a trabajos dañinos, de explotación o peligrosos					
24	En mi comunidad en caso de vulneración de derechos de los niños y jóvenes se acude mas a familiares o vecinos que al estado					
25	En mi comunidad existen grupos de jóvenes especialmente vulnerables					
26	En mi comunidad las casas son seguras para los jóvenes					
27	En mi comunidad en caso de vulneración de derechos de los niños y jóvenes se acude mas a familiares o vecinos que al estado					
28	En mi comunidad la movilidad es segura para los jóvenes					
29	En mi comunidad existen espacios toma de decisiones de los jóvenes					
30	En mi comunidad existen servicios para mantener a los niños seguros y protegidos (i.e. en caso de abuso)					
31	En el gobierno local (Juntas de Acción Comunal, Juntas Administradoras Locales, presupuesto participativo, otros) de mi comunidad se ve el compromiso con la protección juvenil					
32	Los jóvenes están involucrados en la toma de decisiones locales					
33	En mi comunidad, la policía protege los niños					
34	En mi comunidad se denuncian casos de vulneración de derechos en contra de los niños y jóvenes					
35	En mi comunidad existen espacios/lugares donde los jóvenes podrían correr riesgos					

Qué otros factores de riesgo o de protección de violencia consideras que existen en tu comunidad?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B: Consent Forms

Consentimiento por padres para que jóvenes participan
Protegiendo a los jóvenes de la violencia

Por medio de esta carta autorizo a mi hijo/a _____, a participar en el proyecto cooperativo realizado por el Centro Internacional de Educación Desarrollo Humano –CINDE- de Colombia y el Instituto Internacional de Desarrollo y Derechos del Niño –IICRD- de Canadá. Este proyecto cooperativo es dirigido por la Dra. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, profesora del Departamento de Ciencias Humanas Aplicadas de la Universidad Concordia en Canadá, tel.: 514-848-2424 (x 3.347) *nblanche@alcor.concordia.ca* y su asistente de investigación, Stephanie Cajiao, tel.: 300 650 9234, o en Medellín al 300 787 1558.

A. PROPOSITO DEL PROYECTO
He sido informado que el objetivo de este proyecto de investigación es evaluar lo siguiente:
1. El conocimiento de los niños, jóvenes y familias sobre los factores de protección y de riesgo contra la violencia infantil.
2. Como monitorear la protección contra la violencia a nivel local.
3. Como mejorar la protección formal e informal de la primera infancia.

B. PROCEDIMIENTOS
Mi hijo/hija participara en sesiones de 4-8 horas que tomaran durante dos meses en la biblioteca publica de Comuna 13, y esto con el objetivo de aumentar la protección de la primera infancia contra la violencia. Un máximo de 5 sesiones que incluyen actividades participativas como por ejemplo sesiones de fotografía donde los participantes comunicaran imágenes de factores de protección. Estas sesiones serán grabadas en audio. Entiendo que ambos, yo y mi hijo/a somos libres de retirar nuestro consentimiento y suspender la participación de mi hijo/a en cualquier momento y sin ninguna consecuencia negativa para mi o mi hijo/a. En este caso aunque los aportes de mi hijo al grupo serán entonces eliminados de las transcripciones, no sea posible eliminar todas las contribuciones anteriores específicas del niño.

C. RIESGOS Y BENEFICIOS
Entiendo que con este proyecto no existe ningún riesgo de intervención física pero en el caso de que alguna información demuestre que la protección de mi hijo/a esta comprometida, las instituciones responsables identificadas bajo la Ley Colombiana 1098 serán contactadas. Este proyecto servirá para mejorar el sistema de protección de la primera infancia en acuerdo con las necesidades de los niños, adolescentes y familias de Comuna 13.

D. CONDICIONES DE PARTICIPACION

- Las grabaciones serás transcritas y sólo el equipo de investigación tendrá acceso a ellas.
- Las contribuciones de mi hijo a la discusión no serán identificadas pero estarán combinadas con las de los demás niños participantes.
- Los datos de este proyecto serán publicados en informes de investigación, en una maestría de educación, artículos, y currículos accesibles en el internet.

Nombre (letra de molde) _____

Firma _____

Si tengo alguna pregunta o duda en cualquier momento, o si dese retirar a mi hijo, me contactaré con Gloria Carvalho (gcarvalho@cinde.org.co) en Colombia o Dr. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen en

nblanche@alcor.concordia.ca o 300 787 1558. Si en algún momento usted tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante, por favor contáctese al Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Universidad de Concordia, tel.: (514) 848-2424 x7481 o por correo electrónico a "ethics@alcor.concordia.ca".

Consentimiento para los niños participantes

Entiendo que participare en las actividades de investigación dirigidas por la Dra. Natasha Blanchet-Cohen y CINDE Colombia y su asistente de investigación Stephanie Cajiao, y que me harán preguntas sobre cómo veo los riesgos de y los factores de protección contra la violencia infantil. También conversaremos sobre las formas en que se pueden comunicar y evaluar la violencia contra niñez y el diseño de un plan de acción.

Las 5 sesiones de grupo tendrán una duración de aproximadamente de 4-8 horas y estas sesiones serán grabadas para que podamos recordar lo que se dijo.

Si me canso, me aburro, o simplemente no tengo deseos de hacerlo, puedo suspender. Nadie me molestará si decido hacerlo.

Este proyecto servirá para mejorar el sistema de protección de la primera infancia en acuerdo con las necesidades de los niños, adolescentes y familias de Comuna 13.

Entiendo que:
- La información de este proyecto puede ser publicada.
- Puedo retirar mi participación en cualquier momento y sin consecuencia alguna.
- Mi participación es confidencial.

Por favor circule su deseo de participar.

Yo quiero participar.   Si   No

Firma del joven: _____

Firma del adulto responsable: _____

Si en algún momento usted tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante, por favor contáctese al Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Universidad de Concordia, tel.: (514) 848-2424 x7481 o por correo electrónico a ethics@alcor.concordia.ca. En Medellin, pueden comunicarse con Stephanie Cajiao al 300 650 9234.