

# The role of non-formal education for peacebuilding in Medellin, Colombia

*An analysis of three non-formal education  
programs*

**Karina Leija Urías**



Master of Philosophy in Comparative and International  
Education

Department of Education  
Faculty of Educational Sciences

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

2016

***The role of non-formal education for  
peacebuilding in Medellin, Colombia***

*An analysis of three non-formal education programs*

© **Karina Leija Urías**

2016

The role of non-formal education for peacebuilding in Medellin, Colombia. An analysis of three non-formal education programs.

Karina Leija Urías

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Printing: Representralen, Universitetet i Oslo

# Abstract

In general, with some exceptions, non-formal education has remained unexplored in research concerning education for peacebuilding. In an attempt to fill this gap, this master thesis explores the role than non-formal education programs may have for peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies. In particular it engages with the case of Medellin, Colombia through three non-educational programs belonging to underprivileged and conflict-affected environments: a hip-hop group, a social organization and a library-park. With the purpose of understanding the role of non-formal education for peacebuilding, the study focuses on analyzing the perceptions of members and facilitators about the programs. Thus it is motivated by a general research question: *What is the role of the non-formal education programs for peacebuilding in Medellin?* and two specific research questions: *How do members perceive the role of the non-formal education programs?*, and *How do facilitators perceive the role of the non-formal education programs?* For answering the research questions, first the notion of non-formal education for peacebuilding is defined by an in-depth deconstruction of the term. Then the study gives the contextual background of the city of Medellin where a six-week-length fieldwork was carried out. For the data collection, there are in total 31 people interviewed, a focus group and 10 participant observations. Different conceptual categories are issued from the data analysis of the findings: *Consciousness raising, The making of political subjects, Community organization, Dialogue, Social transformation, Social inclusion, A life project, and Appropriation of the public space.* Such conceptual categories are analyzed from the lenses of a comprehensive analytical framework based on Freire's model of critical consciousness and on Smith's framework for education for peacebuilding. The key points that emerged from the interpretation of findings indicate that non-formal education programs may be a powerful platform for peacebuilding in conflict affected-societies as non-formal initiatives hold the potential to arise self-consciousness and collective consciousness, namely the notion of community organization for social transformation, to foster dialogue and life projects through implicit elements for peacebuilding such as community cohesion, consensus-building, dialogue, appreciation of the otherness, social inclusion, decision-making and critical thinking.

**Key words:** non-formal education, education for peacebuilding, consciousness raising, Medellin, Colombia

# Acknowledgments

First of all I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the people that welcomed and guided me in Colombia: María Mercedes Molina, Pacho Correa, Esteban García, Juan Carlos Tabares, Jorge Luis Bonilla, and Diana Agudelo. I was touched by your precious help and kindness. Thank you for sharing your time and opening new paths for me in your beautiful country. In addition, I would like to sincerely thank the organizations that hosted me in Medellin and authorized the research in their programs. I really appreciate your hospitality. I also would like to express my gratefulness to all the participants during the research process. Thank you for your open cooperation and enthusiasm but most of all for letting me know your experiences and stories. I totally admire the capacity of resilience by the Colombian people.

Furthermore, I would like to deeply thank Professor Fengshu Liu, my supervisor, who along with her accurate and constructive critical feedback, always showed understanding and openness to my work. Thank you as well to Camilla Bakke for being so helpful with the administrative process.

I also wish to openly acknowledge those that read my work and gave me insights during my research process: Carlos Vargas, Carlos Ruiz, and my well appreciated Professor Lene Buchert. Your help and assertive comments were priceless during important stages of my writing.

The presence of my friends, both those that are nearby and those that are miles away, has always been inspirational. I really appreciate your friendship and words of encouragement. I would like to thank as well my classmates and colleagues that were a significant part of the process of learning. Moreover there were also plenty of people that helped me in one way or another, sometimes maybe even through a comment, a suggestion, a reference or an advice related to my work. It is not possible to name you all on this page, but I am aware you were part of the building of my inner self.

On the other hand, coming to study to the University of Oslo in Norway has been an enormous and wonderful challenge and I have had the opportunity to treasure every stage

thanks to significant people that helped me along the way and have made part of my life. I am very grateful to them.

Nothing would have been possible without the moral support and love of my family throughout the years. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to my father, Jesús, and my mother, Irma, for your unconditional love; thanks to my siblings Lorena, Viviana and Leonardo for all your love, laughter and support; Natalia, Valeria, Leonora, Julian and Nicholas, my adorable nieces and nephews, the memory of your smile and joy of living always helped me to carry on. I love you all.

Oslo, November 2016

# Table of contents

- Abstract ..... IV
- Acknowledgments ..... V
- Table of contents ..... VII
- List of figures, tables and photos. .... X
- 1 Introduction ..... 1
  - 1.1 Background of the topic ..... 1
  - 1.2 Rationale ..... 2
  - 1.3 Purpose of the study and research questions ..... 4
  - 1.4 Literature review ..... 5
  - 1.5 Structure of the thesis ..... 9
- 2 Defining non-formal education for peacebuilding ..... 10
  - 2.1 Non-formal education ..... 10
  - 2.2 Peacebuilding ..... 14
  - 2.3 Education for peacebuilding ..... 17
- 3 Analytical framework of the study ..... 21
  - 3.1 Paulo Freire’s model of critical consciousness ..... 22
    - 3.1.1 Consciousness raising for social awareness ..... 23
    - 3.1.2 Critical pedagogy: problem-posing education ..... 24
    - 3.1.3 Dialogue ..... 25
    - 3.1.4 Praxis and pedagogy of hope ..... 25
    - 3.1.5 A final word about Freire’s model ..... 26
  - 3.2 Alan Smith’s framework for education and peacebuilding ..... 26
    - 3.2.1 Three ways to understand the role of education in conflict-affected societies. . 27
    - 3.2.2 Contexts and levels of action in education and conflict ..... 29
    - 3.2.3 A final word about Smith’s framework ..... 30
- 4 Contextual background of Medellin ..... 31
  - 4.1 Social cartography of Medellin ..... 31
    - 4.1.1 A brief description of the conflict in Medellin ..... 35

4.2	Some sociocultural initiatives in Medellin in the twenty-first century .....	38
4.2.1	Accessibility and mobility in the city.....	38
4.2.2	The case of the library-parks ( <i>parques biblioteca</i> ) .....	39
4.2.3	The case of hip-hop urban culture.....	41
4.3	Remaining challenges.....	43
5	Methodology and methods .....	45
5.1	Methodological approach and research design.....	45
5.2	Reflections on the fieldwork.....	45
5.3	Research site .....	47
5.3.1	The hip-hop group.....	49
5.3.2	The social organization .....	50
5.3.3	The library-park.....	51
5.4	Sampling of participants.....	52
5.5	Data collection.....	53
5.5.1	Interviews .....	53
5.5.2	Focus group.....	54
5.5.3	Observations.....	55
5.6	Data analysis procedure.....	56
5.6.1	Trustworthiness of the research.....	56
5.7	Ethical considerations.....	57
6	Findings.....	59
6.1	Consciousness raising.....	61
6.2	The making of political subjects.....	65
6.3	Community organization .....	68
6.4	Dialogue.....	70
6.5	Social transformation.....	73
6.6	Social inclusion.....	77
6.7	A life project.....	79
6.8	Appropriation of the public space .....	82



6.9	Concluding thoughts.....	85
7	The role of the selected non-formal education programs for peacebuilding.....	87
7.1	Interpretation of the perceptions of members and facilitators about the programs ...	87
7.1.1	Interpretation based on Paulo Freire’s model of critical consciousness .....	87
7.1.2	Interpretation based on Alan Smith’s analytical framework.....	95
7.2	Concluding remarks.....	97
8	Conclusions .....	100
8.1	Key findings .....	100
8.2	Identified challenges for the programs .....	102
8.3	Strengths of the study .....	105
8.4	Limitations of the study .....	106
8.5	Recommendations for future research .....	107
8.6	A final word.....	108
	References .....	109
	Appendix: Research instruments.....	118

# List of figures, tables and photos.

## Figures

Figure 4.1: Location map of Colombia in South America ..... 31  
Figure 4.2: Location map of Medellin in Colombia ..... 32

## Tables

Table 3.1: Summary of Smith’s proposal of contexts of educational intervention, levels of action within an education system and three perspectives of the role of education in conflict-affected societies ..... 30  
Table 4.1: Social stratification in Medellin showing the percentage of population and housing based on the six social strata scheme. .... 33  
Table 5.1: Total number of participants per program divided by members and facilitators. . 53  
Table 5.2: Total number of observations per program during the fieldwork. .... 55  
Table 7.1: Summary of the interpretation of conceptual categories based on the analytical framework of Freire ..... 94  
Table 7.2: Summary of Smith’s proposal of contexts of educational intervention, levels of action within an education system and three perspectives of the role of education in conflict-affected societies ..... 95  
Table 7.3 Summary of the interpretation of data of the three non-formal education programs based on the analytical framework issued from Alan Smith thinking. .... 97

## Photos

Photo 4.1: Line J of the metro-cable in comuna 13 and Line K of the metro-cable in comuna 1 ..... 39

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the topic

The role that education may have for peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies has been critically discussed during the twenty-first century by educationalists at the international level (Bush and Saltarelli 2000; Sultana 2006; Novelli and Lopes 2008; Smith 2011; Smith 2014). It seems the role that education might play in a complex scenario of conflict is of great significance since “education systems can be both *victim* and *perpetrator*” (Novelli and Lopes 2008:478). It has been shown that there might be a strong relation between education and peace just as between education and conflict (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). Thus the interconnection between conflict, education and peacebuilding might be understood as a complex triad. It has also been shown that the relationships between education and conflict are “complex, multi-scalar and non-linear” (Novelli and Lopes 2008:474). Furthermore, the role of education might be central both during and in the aftermath of conflict. Nevertheless, little is known about the role that specifically non-formal education programs may have for peacebuilding in conflict-affected contexts. This is probably due to the fact that educational activities outside the formal system are normally taken into consideration in lesser degree when analyzing education phenomenon; non-formal education practices are not usually reflected in national or international evaluations and often remain unknown in spite of the “abundance of its practice” (Romi and Schmida 2009:260). Therefore, bearing in mind this gap of knowledge, the particular interest of this research focuses on the role of non-formal education initiatives in a conflict-affected context aiming at a deeper understanding of “their implicit and explicit peacebuilding potential” (Smith et al. 2016:80).

For doing so the study explores the particular case of Medellin, Colombia through three specific experiences of non-formal education programs: a grassroots hip-hop school, a grassroots social organization and a public library-park that works as an educational and entertainment center. The choice of the programs has leaned on the fact they are situated in local underprivileged communities that have been affected by the national conflict. The exploration is addressed towards the understanding of their potentiality for peacebuilding in spite of their challenging context specifically through the members and facilitators’ perceptions of the programs.

## 1.2 Rationale

Regrettably, the number of countries that have been in conflict in the second half of the twentieth century up to the present days is remarkable. One case of particular significance with regard to conflict is Colombia, which has suffered a more than 50-year armed conflict through violent confrontations between guerrillas, military and paramilitary groups, and drug trafficking gangs. The civil war in Colombia is considered the longest internal conflict in the modern world (Alvarado et al. 2016). According to the Global Peace Index 2016, Colombia is ranked 147 out of 163 countries regarding the level of peacefulness (IEP 2016a). During decades, the country has grieved due to violence, abductions, homicides, anti-personnel mines, internally displaced people, orphans and child combatants. In fact, Colombia has been in war during most of its existence as a Republic; just during the nineteenth century there were nine civil wars and 52 armed uprisings. Afterwards, although it was not a continuous and uniform process, bloody conflict was present during most of the twentieth century because of different causes: the harsh confrontation between liberals and conservatives and later between extreme right and extreme left parties, the strong oligarchy, the social and political marginalization of the rural and working sector, the exclusion and even brutal extermination of all kind of political opposition, among other questions (Pärssinen 2001). Sadly it is likely a nation whose collective imaginary seems based on the idea of war, thus it is believed war has been internalized and naturalized by most of the Colombian society (Girón 2015). In this regard, Molano considers that during the Colombian history “violence has been legitimized as a form of political change”<sup>1</sup> (2001:33).

It is well known that conflict is detrimental and wasteful in many senses; for instance the Global Peace Index 2016 (IEP 2016a) states that just the total cost of violence containment in Colombia has been 139,481 million in purchasing power parity terms (2014 PPP), meaning a 30% as percentage of GDP that could have been invested in other sectors such as health or education. Therefore, positioning the study in the specific case of the Colombian conflict in which there have been 220.000 losses, 7 million displaced people and thousands of victims is relevant for the global matter of peace.

---

<sup>1</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

Moreover, while most of the conflict in Colombia was issued in the countryside the urban spaces have been also crucial protagonists of it. Such is the case of Medellín –the second most populated city in Colombia– where in many ways conflict was installed in micro-territories within the city (Jiménez 2007) and the expression of war seized a very unique way. Being under the control of local criminal gangs for many years, Medellín was considered one of the most dangerous and violent cities in Latin America in the 80s and 90s. In the last decade, however, the case of Medellín has been noteworthy in terms of peacebuilding. A significant process of peacebuilding based on social investment, including mobility, interconnection, cultural programs and non-formal education initiatives, has been taking place in the city since the early 2000s. Through a collaboration of private and public efforts, and several bottom-up initiatives, different strategies for reducing violence through an urban social integration program aiming at improving the life of residents and working on culture and education for social transformation have been implemented, leading to a considerably lower rate of violence in the city. To illustrate this, Brodzinsky highlights:

Medellin witnessed 6,349 killings in 1991, a murder rate of 380 per 100,000 people. The rate has since fallen more than 80%, thanks in part to a string of innovative mayors who laid out plans to integrate the poorest and most violent hillside neighborhoods into the city centre in the valley below (2014:1).

Thus social change towards the reduction of violence has been significant in Medellín in the last years and it has had different expressions aiming at peacebuilding (Salazar et al. 2009), among which non-formal education initiatives. Consequently, the uniqueness of the case of the city of Medellín in the topic of social change and peacebuilding is central part of the rationale of this thesis.

In addition, Galtung (2012) points out that peace does not arise automatically in any case; conversely a process of peacebuilding is necessary to prevent, cope with or transform conflict. Peacebuilding is a holistic and multi-dimensional process for which different social factors such as the economy, politics, culture, health and education should be considered. When talking about conflict –either during or in its aftermath– the urgent necessities for alleviating it are normally related to economic, health and political structures. They are definitely crucial for the reconstruction of a country and the welfare of communities. Nevertheless, if education as a whole is neglected or ignored in the process of peacebuilding, several risks remain latent and could probably lead to a relapse into conflict. So, in particular, why precisely should it be

important to explore the role of non-formal education for peacebuilding? Non-formal education might provide the possibility of reconstructing communities by empowering them and might represent an opportunity to think critically about the sociohistorical context and eventually transform it aiming at peaceful societies (Smith et al. 2016). Therefore it seems essential to rethink peacebuilding as a multifactor process where non-formal education could be included. Besides, it is worth learning from different types of educational practices in order to expand the understanding of the potentiality of education; indeed this work intends to understand other forms of learning different than formal education.

Finally, the exploration of the non-formal education programs is based on the perceptions of their members and facilitators. This intends to contribute to the understanding about how these programs are being embraced by the community, and to listen to the voices that stay normally omitted when analyzing education phenomenon. To sum up, putting together the significant case of the Colombian conflict, along with the noteworthy case of Medellin, and the potentiality of non-formal education programs understood from the participants' voices, build the rationale of this research. Hopefully, this thesis will foster dialogue about the role of non-formal education for peacebuilding through the explored programs in Medellin, Colombia.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study and research questions**

The main purpose of the research is to explore the role of non-formal education for peacebuilding in Medellin through the analysis of the members and facilitators' perceptions of the programs. To achieve this, the following general and specific research questions are pursued:

General research question:

- *What is the role of the non-formal education programs for peacebuilding in Medellin?*

Specific research questions:

- *How do members perceive the role of the non-formal education programs?*
- *How do facilitators perceive the role of the non-formal education programs?*

## 1.4 Literature review

As early as 1975, Johan Galtung introduces the concepts of *peacebuilding* and *sustainable peace*. Galtung (2012) distinguishes between two main concepts of peace: *negative peace* and *positive peace*. The first relates to the idea of the absence of violence whereas the second term corresponds to the absence of structural violence and a presence of cooperation, equity, equality and dialogue. Cortright (2012:121) adds to such thesis the idea that “positive peace means transcending the conditions that limit human potential and assuring opportunities for self-realization”. In addition, the Global Peace Index 2015 considers positive peace as “the attitudes, institutions and structures which create and sustain peaceful societies. These same factors also lead to many other positive outcomes that support the optimum environment for human potential to flourish” (IEP 2015:4). Thus it seems that achieving sustainable peace requires strengthening social structures, among which, the education system. In fact, Novelli et al. (2015) consider a sustainable peacebuilding model which means a long-term and holistic intervention for achieving peace.

In 2000, Bush and Saltarelli edit *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict. Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children*, published by UNICEF. Since then, the topic of education in conflict becomes a central concern in the international education field, because it shows that conflict is one of the main reasons for out-of-school children and it affects the quality of the education system. Moreover, the authors emphasize that education might have a negative or a positive face according to its destructive or constructive impact. In this regard, Datzberger points out that “while it is argued that education can foster social justice and build sustainable peace, experts simultaneously acknowledge the fact that the way in which education programming is implemented can also trigger new forms of structural violence” (2016:1-2). With this, it is highlighted the strong necessity of strengthening education for peace; besides considering that conflict is an intrinsic part of human beings and its inherent condition makes it unavoidable, the goal might be to learn how to deal with it and education might be part of the answer.

The United Nations Secretary General called “for the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in 2006” (Smith 2011:4) in order to respond to the critical number of at least 28 million children living in conflict-affected countries (Smith 2011). With this, the idea of the dumbbell

relation of peacebuilding and education is discussed in the international education field. Indeed “in his 2009 report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon places social services, including education, among the five recurrent priorities for peacebuilding in post-conflict transition” (Smith 2012). Furthermore in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011, it is pointed out that “violent conflict is destroying not just school infrastructure, but also the hopes and ambitions of a whole generation of children” (EFA 2011:131). In addition in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, it is stated that “the problem of out-of-school children is becoming increasingly concentrated in conflict-affected countries, where the proportion increased from 30% in 1999 to 36% in 2012” (EFA 2015:8). It is possible to infer from this that education is a critical factor for peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies.

From this point different research are undertaken. In particular, UNICEF publishes, in 2011, a literature review concerning the role of education in peacebuilding and emphasizes the necessity of considering transformation processes such as inclusion, socialization, social capital and social benefits to achieve peacebuilding. In addition, Alan Smith (2003, 2005, 2011, 2014) offers in-depth reflections about education, conflict, peacebuilding and citizenship (explained later in the analytical framework chapter). It is interesting to observe that in Smith’s article of 2005 *Education in the twenty-first century: Conflict, reconstruction and reconciliation*, the author talks about education and conflict as an “emerging and increasingly important field of study” (Smith 2005:373). In such paper, he highlights the recommendation of “a systemic analysis of education systems from a conflict perspective as a routine part of educational planning and practice” (Smith 2005:387). Six years later, in 2011, he discusses the notion of peacebuilding in the article *Education and Peacebuilding: from ‘conflict-analysis’ to ‘conflict transformation’?*, by putting the dot on the i about the fact that education may make a difference and contribute to transformation in conflict-affected societies. In 2016, together with Datzberger and McCully, the synthesis report on findings from four different countries (Smith et al. 2016) reinforces the idea of the integration of education into peacebuilding processes and is clearly connected with the role of teachers and the role of formal and non-formal education programs addressed to youth. Thus the understanding of the relationship between education and peacebuilding is likely in constant evolution. Then, Gill and Niens (2014) publish an article entitled *Education as humanization: a theoretical review on the role of dialogic pedagogy in peacebuilding education*, where they



rethink the potential role of education in supporting peacebuilding and societal transformation through a renovated connection between theory and practice. Several studies, including some on South Africa (Barbarin and Richter 2001; Badat and Sayed 2014), Northern Ireland (Cannon 2003; Smith 2003; Niens and Cairns 2005; Hayes and McAllister 2009), Sierra Leone (Matsumoto 2011; Smith 2012) and Palestine (Sultana 2006), are enlightening regarding the link between education and conflict. Besides their critical analysis of a certain context and the outcomes in terms of education and conflict, what we can learn from them all is that each country has a specific background that makes it unique and that leads to different outcomes when referring to the platform of education for peacebuilding. It seems there are no general formulas that can be applied hastily and there is no perfect international case to be proudly shared. So there is still the remaining challenge of keeping the purpose of understanding the deep potential of education for peacebuilding through a contextualization of cases (Novelli et al. 2015).

Particularly with regard to conflict in Latin America, the research experience by Wood (2006) during the civil war in El Salvador promotes reflection about the ethical challenges that arise when conducting research in conflict-affected countries. Specifically in Colombia, there are different sources of research about the ample topic of conflict and peace. It is relevant to state that there are indeed dozens of publications related to the Colombian conflict as a whole, for instance, about peace agreements, the process of reconciliation, the agrarian question, transitional justice, displaced people –among others– that help to deeply understand the context and implications of the Colombian conflict. However about the role of education in the process of peacebuilding in Colombia there is likely less research done. We can find the case of the article of Areiza-Madrid (2014) about the potentiality of education for peace through strategies for conflict transformation. Or also the research of Berents (2014) addressed towards the situation of children and how to build everyday peace in Colombia. Then, explicitly about the case of the department of Antioquia, whose capital is Medellin, Rodríguez et al. (2014) argue about the strengthening of education in adverse environments. While about the case of Medellin, Cerda et al. (2012) analyze the impact of social strategies for reducing violence by the transformation of neighborhoods. Such illustrations of research are valuable since they have been published during times of conflict and show the existing state of educational efforts towards peacebuilding in conflict-affected contexts. Thus, it appears that, in general, the research on the topic of education for peacebuilding in Colombia

needs to be strengthened. Even more necessary when the Ministry of National Education in Colombia, announced in 2010 the decree related to the mandatory implementation of an independent subject named *Chair of Peace*, in all private and public pre-school, basic and secondary educational institutions “with the aim of ensuring the creation and strengthening of a culture of peace in Colombia”<sup>2</sup> (Ministerio de Educación Nacional 2010:1).

Concerning the topic of non-formal education, Romi and Schmida (2009) give significant insights about the consideration of alternative education as a major force in the postmodern era. They argue that non-formal education challenges the traditional understanding of education and moreover it has even influenced formal education. But in particular, non-formal education for peacebuilding has been researched in lesser degree. We can find the in-depth case study about North-Western Uganda by Van der Linden (2015), where she highlights the constructive role of non-formal education for youth and adults and emphasizes the significance of the participation of people in rebuilding their communities. In addition, Lopes et al. (2016) present their synthesis report on findings from Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda where they analyze both formal and non-formal education for peacebuilding explicitly concerning youth. Moreover, Datzberger (2016) discusses peacebuilding through non-formal education programs through the case study in Karamoja, Uganda. The author points out not only the possible relevance of non-formal education for peacebuilding but the relation between non-formal programs and security. In deep reflection, the just mentioned studies insist on the need of better understanding the role that non-formal education may play in conflict-affected environments. Furthermore, little research concerning the topic has been pursued in Latin America and much less in Medellín, Colombia. There is hence the necessity of more context-specific research that could enrich the understanding of the potentiality of alternative education for fostering peace. Regarding this, Smith et al. conclude that

non-formal education is a multi-faceted endeavour and its success largely depends on the country context, history of conflict and political as well as religious motivations by its implementers/designers. More research is necessary on whether and how NFE programmes address societal transformation and peacebuilding more explicitly than nationwide formal education initiatives at regional and country level (2016:84).

Thus there is still the need of understanding how non-formal education may contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected societies. Specially, it seems essential to understand the

---

<sup>2</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

potential of non-formal education programs in deprived and conflict-affected communities. Thus the overarching rationale of this study is based on a scarcely explored area, that is, the role of non-formal education programs for peacebuilding in conflict-affected environments. Specifically, taking into consideration the case of Medellin, this study wishes to fulfill a particular missing point in the literature review which is the exploration of the community's point of view and their experiences of non-formal education initiatives aiming at a more peaceful society in Medellin, Colombia.

## **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

After this introductory chapter where the research topic and the research questions have been defined, the structure along the thesis is as following:

In chapter 2, the notion of *non-formal education for peacebuilding* is conceptualized in order to delimit the research in its epistemological sense. For doing so the notion is disaggregated in three terms: 1) non-formal education, 2) peacebuilding, and 3) education for peacebuilding; a definition of such terms is presented. In chapter 3, the framework of analysis is explained. Such analytical framework is based on the theories of Paulo Freire and Alan Smith, in particular, on Freire's model of critical consciousness and on Smith's framework for education and peacebuilding. Chapter 4 offers a brief social cartography of Medellin and a summary of some sociocultural initiatives that are related to the topic and that are taking place in the city. The conflict in the city of Medellin is also briefly stated. All this gives a helpful contextualization for better understanding the phenomenon. Then, chapter 5 provides the methodology and methods followed in the research: methodological approach, research design, reflections on the fieldwork, sites, sampling of participants, data collection methods, data analysis procedure, and ethical considerations. In chapter 6, the findings from the data collected during the fieldwork are presented by conceptual categories. The interpretation of such findings is shown in chapter 7; findings are reviewed through the lenses of the analytical framework of the study with the purpose of revealing implications and answering the research questions. Finally, chapter 8 offers conclusions of the study namely a summary of the key findings, identified challenges, strengths and limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for future research and final remarks.

## 2 Defining non-formal education for peacebuilding

In this chapter *non-formal education for peacebuilding* is conceptualized. For doing so, the term of non-formal education (NFE) is explained and contrasted to the concept of formal education; although the “traditional dichotomy of formal and non-formal no longer fits the diversity of education today” (Rogers 2005:231) is still relevant to clarify the connection between them. Afterwards the concept of *peacebuilding* is analyzed. Finally the notion of *education for peacebuilding* is discussed by a deconstruction of the idea itself in order to understand it holistically.

### 2.1 Non-formal education

It is common to relate the idea of education to the one of school. We normally consider formal education as the *right* way of learning and teaching. However along history the education that takes place out of school has always existed and has always been part of the community. In a certain way, it has even been the forerunner of school itself. Formal education as it is understood nowadays is the one that is confined and controlled by the state or authorities; the one that represents the system where policies, curriculum, programs and conditions define the educational practice. Besides, it is normally graded and it is expected to achieve a certification of degree through the stages of formal education. On the other hand non-formal education is an alternative to formal education mainly when the latter, due to different reasons, is not able to cover the society educational needs. In fact the term non-formal education was issued at the end of the 1960s to refer to the local educational efforts aiming at development in poor and developing countries (Rogers 2005:13). However in the last 50 years the idea and practice of non-formal education has been expanded so much that the former discourse is not anymore universally agreed (Romi and Schmida 2009). Furthermore, it is relevant to clarify that informal education –a third implicated concept on the topic– is considered a spontaneous process of learning through natural experiences of social life that goes from early childhood to late adulthood differing from both non-formal education and formal education as it is neither a conscious nor a structured process (Rogers 2005; Romi and Schmida 2009).

A crucial notion about non-formal education is to admit that education practice can take place *in* and *out* of school. Rogers states that “the term NFE covers both small-scale very localised learning programmes and large-scale national programmes of flexible schooling” (2005:231). Although the term has been used with different connotations, for instance, adult education, lifelong learning, out-of-school basic education, compensation hours, literacy, etc., the major consensus consists of the idea that non-formal education is not the education received in the schools through a formal system. At least the difference between “education in formal contexts and education in more informal settings” (Rogers 2005:235) is clear. What it is still in debate among practitioners and stakeholders is the limitation of the term. Rogers points out the possible range of non-formal education:

In practice, NFE today can range from the small-scale individual or small group educational activities to large-scale national programmes; from highly contextualised to standardised programmes; from adult to children’s education; from temporary learning programmes introductory to formal schooling to a permanent alternative to formal schooling; from literacy and basic education to post-initial, vocational and advanced continuing professional development; from state programmes to those offered by commercial agencies; from quite separate educational activities to practical exercises inside schools (2005:234).

And specifically about the content Hoppers shows the ample diversity found as non-formal education:

The term non-formal education has come to cover education (and training) initiatives as far apart as extension services for farmers, HIV/AIDS peer group support, community schools, functional literacy programmes, programmes for street children, ‘shepherd’ schools, entrepreneurship development programmes, language classes, multimedia community development centres, youth skills development projects, self-therapy groups, heritage centres, evening classes, computer courses, environmental awareness groups, and in-service courses for teachers (2006:22).

As we may notice trying to confine the practice of non-formal education today to a single idea is not an easy task. Regarding this, Hoppers (2006) distinguishes several types of non-formal education:

- Para-formal education: out-of-school activities but still with a strong connection to the formal system, sometimes even sponsored by the state or authorities.

- Popular education: addressed to the poor communities through a practical and contextualized approach for learning, grounded on critical awareness and social action.
- Personal development: encourage individualized leisure-time activities for the improvement of oneself.
- Professional and vocational training: aiming at national diplomas and employment practices through the development of initial skills training.
- Literacy with skills development: offers a combination of literacy and skills training willing a preparation for life and work.
- Supplementary NFE programs: support services especially for children in vulnerable situations such as conflict, poverty, marginalization, displacement, etc.
- Early childhood care and education: home-based or community-based efforts related to pre-schooling.

So with all this variety offered as non-formal education programs, the main question that remains is if formal and non-formal education complement each other or they are opposites one from another. About this concern, it is common to assume formal education as the rigid, non-flexible, static and out-of-date structure whereas non-formal education is seen as an innovative, diverse, contextualized and freer space of education, sometimes even called by the term *training*. Moreover, UNESCO has promoted as a relevant necessity the fact of considering all education levels in order to achieve major educational goals: “Recognizing the importance and interdependence of all education levels and delivery modes, whether formal, non-formal or informal, UNESCO promotes a holistic approach to education to foster balanced development of education systems that respond to a range of learning needs” (2014:33). In fact an active articulation between conventional and non-conventional education is highly suggested:

To ensure that lifelong learning becomes a reality for all requires a holistic, sector-wide approach in which the entire education system is designed to facilitate lifelong and ‘life-wide’ learning and the creation of formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities for people of all ages (UNESCO 2014:34).

Another important issue is to wonder who is promoting and organizing non-formal education and with which purpose. Is it a public service? Are the schools themselves trying to expand their educational offers? Are the local communities trying to compensate the lack of educational services? Is it a common aid-agencies practice? Is it mainly a bottom-up initiative

or an up-bottom one? Finding the answers to these questions in each particular case might give more insights about the purpose and conditions of different non-formal initiatives.

In addition it is necessary to contemplate the specific characteristics of non-formal education. First, NFE is related with non-structured programs. And the lack of a rigid structure can be both useful and risky. On one hand not having a rigid structure or syllabus forced by an accelerated calendar may give the opportunity of innovative ideas, of an education focused on the learners and in their own rhythm of learning; on the other hand this freedom can be risky in terms of lack of clarity, of organization of topics or of scheduled hours. Furthermore “if the NFE discourse is to be useful as a tool of planning, of developing new educational activities, it must be clear about its aims” (Rogers 2005:237). Secondly, there is less bureaucracy in the administration processes which might be helpful to facilitate the enrollment but it can also give an opportunity for quitting easily these kinds of programs. Thirdly, it encourages a participatory local environment that might empower communities. In fact in some cases several non-formal programs are part of social and resistance movements. Fourthly, it helps to avoid isolation provoked by geographic and sociocultural characteristics. Fifthly, it opens opportunities and challenges of multicultural, multiage and multi-language environments. Finally, the well-known teacher-student relation becomes vague in non-formal settings. In fact appellatives such as facilitator, monitor, and coordinator are more common than teacher; and the term learner instead of student. (Rogers 2005; Hoppers 2006)

Given the diversity of non-formal education practices, Romi and Schmida (2009) propose a set of categories of variables for classifying non-formal education programs. The first category is the organizational-administrative level of the program, namely to observe who the supervision authorities are and if there are institutional affiliations. The second category is the analysis of the macro and micro levels, to wit, to observe if the program is addressed to the individual or rather to strengthen the education system. The third category is the analysis of the pedagogical approach; for instance the level of flexibility, if it is situated learning or a life-long process. The last category is related to the value orientations of the activities, this is if the program is guided by an ideological or a universal orientation. Such categories seem helpful for a thoughtful understanding of the non-formal education practices.

To conclude non-formal education has been so ample and varied that there is not a universalized meaning of the term, however it is a fact that it is an existing and widespread practice in different contexts for fulfilling diverse educational purposes such as the one of peacebuilding (Romi and Schmida 2009; Datzberger 2016).

## 2.2 Peacebuilding

The concept of peacebuilding is definitely complex and multidimensional; in its morphology it is granted that peace should be built, namely that it cannot appear spontaneously but conversely there should be a conscious decision about it. Moreover the *-ing* suffix points out the idea that we are talking about a phenomenon that *is being*, meaning that it is a *process*, a ceaseless procedure. As such the term has been discussed by the international community over the last years (cf. UNPBSO 2010). In particular, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund exalts the concept that the Secretary-General's Policy Committee shared in 2007 about peacebuilding: "A range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development" (UNPBSO 2016:1). In other words the term is recognized as a process that may prevent "a relapse into violent conflict" (UNPF 2016:1) through different strategies that address the root causes and strengthen national structures leading to Positive Peace (Galtung 2012). Specifically, Positive Peace means "the presence of attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies" (IEP 2016b:8) whereas negative peace is "the absence of direct violence or the fear of violence" (IEP 2016b:11). The question still in discussion in the international community is which measures should be followed in peacebuilding and which particular social spheres these measures should be focused on. By its part, the Global Peace Index 2015 considers eight interconnected pillars that comprise Positive Peace:

- a. Well-functioning government
- b. Equitable distribution of resources
- c. Free flow of information
- d. Good relations with neighbors
- e. High levels of human capital
- f. Acceptance of the rights of others
- g. Low levels of corruption
- h. Sound business environment (IEP 2015:85).



On the other hand, it is remarkable that normally the terms of *development* and *peacebuilding* usually go together in international discourses about peace as they seem intertwined. For instance, already in 1995 “demilitarization, the control of small arms, institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, the monitoring of human rights, electoral reform and social and economic development” (UNPBSO 2010:47 citing Boutros Boutros-Ghali) were considered essential measures in peacebuilding. In addition, in 1998 the Secretary-General reinforces the idea of *reintegration and rehabilitation programs* for achieving peacebuilding: “Peace-building may involve the creation or strengthening of national institutions, monitoring elections, promoting human rights, providing for reintegration and rehabilitation programmes, and creating conditions for resumed development” (UNPBSO 2010:48 citing UN). Moreover, it is relevant to highlight the incorporation of the concept of *institutional development* as part of the measures for peacebuilding in the *Inventory: United Nations Capacity in Peacebuilding* of 2006:

Important parts of such an overall peacebuilding strategy include the provision of transitional security through peacekeeping and other efforts to maintain public order, support to a political process, life-saving humanitarian assistance, efforts to create a framework for economic recovery, and institutional development (UNPBSO 2010:49 citing UN).

Later the report of the Secretary-General on *Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict* (UN 2009) designates the most urgent and important peacebuilding objectives as: “establishing security, building confidence in a political process, delivering initial peace dividends and expanding core national capacity” (2009:5) and finally, the field of education is considered as a priority area for international assistance for peacebuilding as we can see in the list below that shows the suggested areas for support to peacebuilding:

- Support to basic safety and security.
- Support to political processes.
- Support to the provision of basic services, such as water and sanitation, health and primary education.
- Support to restoring core government functions.
- Support to economic revitalization. (UN 2009)

In addition, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office states that peacebuilding comprehends “from the disarming of warring factions to the rebuilding of political, economic, judicial and civil society institutions” (UNPBSO 2016:1). On the other hand the

Peacebuilding and Statebuilding goals proposed in 2012 by the OECD through the Development Assistance Committee are intended to be applied in conflict-affected and fragile countries towards more peaceful societies. Such goals are:

1. Legitimate and inclusive politics: Foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution.
2. Security: Establish and strengthen people's security.
3. Justice: Address injustices and increase people's access to justice.
4. Economic foundations: Generate employment and improve livelihoods.
5. Revenues and services: Manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery. (OECD 2012:1)

Another question about the topic is related to the actors for peacebuilding: who shall be responsible in the process? Indeed different stakeholders are essential when talking about peacebuilding: "humanitarian, development, political, security and human rights actors" (UNPBSO 2010:45) are all involved. From the international organizations to local communities, all are related and should be somehow committed to the process of peacebuilding. "The key to effective peacebuilding lies in an agreed common strategy, nationally owned, with clear priorities" (UNPBSO 2010:6). Lately there has been a special emphasis on the role of civil society as it has been shown that civil society is a fundamental driver for sustainable peace: "Civil society has the potential to play an important and effective role in peacebuilding during all stages of conflict, and has often contributed positively to the peacebuilding process" (Paffelholz 2009:6). Although the international level through donors and international organizations has been crucial for the strengthening of peacebuilding, empowering the national and local levels for achieving national and local ownerships has been of more importance when talking about sustainable peace. That is why UNICEF promotes the notion that "peacebuilding helps individuals, communities, and systems become more resilient to conflict through strengthening local capacities for managing conflict, building peace and promoting social cohesion" (2014:1).

Furthermore peacebuilding is a complex and a continuously discussed term that makes part of a transformative way of thinking about how to build peace. In fact it was first understood as a post-conflict series of activities, carried out once the peace has been signed, nevertheless this idea has evolved and peacebuilding is now understood as well as a prevention process. As Lund mentions: a shift of paradigm from "emergency relief to nation-building" (2003:4) has taken place in peacebuilding sphere of action.

To sum up, I quote UNICEF's description of the process: "peacebuilding is multidimensional (including political, security, social and economic dimensions), cuts across sectors (education, WASH, health, nutrition, child protection, gender) and occurs at all levels in a society (national to community levels), and includes governments, civil society, the UN system, as well as an array of international and national partners" (2014:1). Hence building sustainable peace is synonym of strengthening of foundations in all social platforms. "Its implementation engages people at the political, socioeconomic, and cultural level" (Herrington 2015:11). One of these critical platforms is education. Indeed it has been shown that education can have two faces: a negative which is destructive or a positive which is constructive (Bush and Saltarelli 2000) so the role that education can play in peacebuilding becomes crucial. This subject is pursued in the section below.

## **2.3 Education for peacebuilding**

Once discussed the concept of peacebuilding, the possible relationship between education and peacebuilding is examined in this section. Indeed "education can be either a driver of conflict or positive transformation, and thus plays a core role in building sustainable peace" (Herrington 2015:12). First, it is essential to recognize that such as peacebuilding education is a process; so we are talking about a process confronted to another process and both are likely vital for social cohesion and development. Education might indeed contribute in different ways to peacebuilding as it has different components like curriculum, practices, programs, texts, schools, courses and theories. In this sense the whole education sector should be strengthened in order to enhance the potential of education as an agent of change, as a transformer of conflict, namely as a peacebuilder. And for doing so it is necessary to understand that it is a long-term project more than an emergency-type project (Smith 2005).

The question then is how education may contribute to peacebuilding. UNICEF highlights that education can contribute to specific dimensions of peacebuilding "such as conflict prevention, social transformation, civic engagement and economic progress" (2014:1). It is noted as well its contribution "to improve governance by addressing underlying inequities that fuel conflict, providing education and employment opportunities to disenfranchised youth, empowering adolescent girls and women as actors in the peacebuilding process, imparting civic and political education and modelling democratic participation and decision-making" (2014:1).

Alternatively Herrington (2015) proposes four core ideas about the notion of education for peacebuilding:

- When talking about education for peacebuilding, education becomes a medium for the latter due to the fact that is through education that social cohesion and peaceful societies are built.
- Education for peacebuilding is a system approach.
- Education for peacebuilding pursues the task of creating peacebuilders.
- Education for peacebuilding programming should be contextualized and be conducted from the local in order to address conflict drivers issued in the education system.

So certainly education for peacebuilding is a multidimensional notion. In order to capture the notion of education for peacebuilding and therefore strengthen the conceptual framework of the research, a deconstruction of the concept is now proposed by the author based on the arguments that Bush and Saltarelli (2000), Galtung (2012), IEP (2015), Smith (2005, 2011, 2014), UNPBSO (2010, 2016) and UNICEF (2011, 2014) have shared through different publications in the last years, along with Freire's thinking (1974, 1994, 2000). This set of elements is a proposal aiming at an in-depth understanding of the notion of education for peacebuilding to support the research process. It is surely not fully comprehensive but hopefully may give a platform for further discussion about the topic. So here below a brief explanation of the components of *education for peacebuilding*:

- **Social justice:** Peace cannot be achieved unless social justice becomes a reality, namely having an equal and inclusive society through an eradication of poverty and injustice. Poverty fuels conflict. Thus education for peacebuilding should be a contribution for a just society.
- **Human rights:** Respect for human rights is the platform for social fairness and it is a crucial part of education for peacebuilding. "Human rights are essential to human dignity. They drive development, trigger social cohesion and trust in the future" (Bokova 2016).

- **Pedagogy of hope and optimism:** To believe a better world is possible is one of the first steps for peacebuilding. Education should encourage creativity that allows thinking differently through hopefulness and optimism (Freire 1994).
- **Learners' participation in decision-making:** Giving the opportunity to children, youngsters or adults to take active part of their own education means accountability on people and makes part of education for peacebuilding.
- **Citizenship participation:** Empowering people to have influence in public and political decisions through active participation in order to transform social reality.
- **Consensus-building:** Understanding the use and potential of the WE / US is crucial for creating a peaceful society where all parts participate equally.
- **Dialogue:** As Freire puts it: “dialogue with the people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution” (2000:128), as for the revolution of the mind that can create a peaceful world.
- **Conflict resolution by peaceful means:** Education for peacebuilding should encourage the capacity of finding peaceful solutions to conflict such as negotiation or consensus.
- **Cooperative learning strategies:** School has been normally a hierarchical institution that promotes competition. Education for peacebuilding should evidence that learning is more efficient when it is done collectively.
- **Community cohesion:** “Education has an indispensable role in strengthening the bonds that hold communities and societies together” (EFA 2014:27). This promotes tolerance and the spirit of communion and belonging.
- **Awareness of history and of the world:** To study and to analyze history allows the awakening of the consciousness to engage with the world (Freire 1974).
- **Appreciation of the otherness:** Education for peacebuilding should exalt empathy, tolerance and respect for those who are different and have unlike beliefs.

- **Conscientization and critical thinking:** Freire believed that “a full realization of the human task is the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of people” (2000:102). This can be achieved only through the awakening of the mind for which a critical thinking and a process of consciousness are necessary.

Thus education for peacebuilding is a complex process, hence the importance of recognizing its elements. It has been considered above in its ample sense. However, as for the present research the interest in understanding the term relates in particular to non-formal education. In fact, it seems non-formal education initiatives have been the more opted form of programs concerning education for peacebuilding due to the fact that it is a flexible choice versus broken or fragmented education systems in conflict affected countries (Datzberger 2016). Specifically this research is addressed to non-formal education programs in Medellin, Colombia aiming at enriching the understanding of the potentiality of this kind of initiatives for peacebuilding.

So once the notions of non-formal education, of peacebuilding and of education for peacebuilding have been clarified, in the next chapter the analytical framework of the study is explained.

### 3 Analytical framework of the study

The topic of non-formal education for peacebuilding is likely a sensitive concern for humanity, and in a country in conflict such as Colombia where the process of peace is taking place at the moment of writing, the discussion and research about it turns out of great importance. Therefore having a robust analytical framework seems crucial for the research. In particular in this thesis the findings emerged from the fieldwork in Medellin are interpreted from the lenses of a theoretical framework composed by two schemes of analysis: the critical thinking of Paulo Freire (1974, 1994, 2000) about education as a process of *conscientization* or *critical consciousness* together with the scheme of Alan Smith (2003, 2005, 2011, 2014) about *education, conflict* and *peacebuilding*. To be precise, in order to have a holistic scheme of analysis, I make use of both theories as they complement each other. I decided to take Freire's and Smith's principles as analytical framework for different reasons. On one hand, I was searching for a critical voice issued in and for Latin America. Freire is one of the most relevant Latin American thinkers emerged from an unprivileged reality from which he is capable to draw away in order to analyze it. His thinking is still current as it still corresponds to an unjust social context like the one in Colombia. In addition his method has been particularly widespread within non-formal education programs such as the case of this research. Nevertheless Freire's model is not explicitly concerned with peacebuilding; at least the notion of peacebuilding as such was not an issue on the lips of thinkers of his time. However his principles of education seem well related to the current notion of education for peacebuilding explained in chapter 2, for instance to the notions of pedagogy of hope and optimism, learners' participation in decision-making, citizenship participation, consensus-building, dialogue, awareness of history and of the world, appreciation of the otherness, and conscientization and critical thinking that are essential to his thinking. Moreover, Freire's model is concerned to give voice to the oppressed and to those that have not the opportunity to share their voice, a relevant fact for this research which is focused on participants from unprivileged communities.

On the other hand, by his part, Smith analyzes directly the notion of education for peacebuilding. He is one of the most renowned current thinkers about the role of education in conflict-affected countries and peacebuilding. His proposal embraces an international perspective and experience about the topic which enrich this research. I have decided to

complement the Freire's model with the Alan Smith's framework for education and peacebuilding due to the accuracy and in-depth understanding of conflict-affected societies of the latter that helps to contextualize the case of Medellin and offers criteria specifically in the topic of peacebuilding. Therefore the use of both frameworks together helps to deeper understand the phenomenon as it gives an enriching and comprehensive standpoint of data analysis for the research. Specifically in this study, the Freirean model helps to understand the micro level, namely the one concerning the individual, whereas the Smith's framework helps to understand the macro level, namely the role of the programs as a unity.

Thus I introduce first the Freire's model of critical consciousness; secondly, the Smith's framework about education, conflict and peacebuilding.

### **3.1 Paulo Freire's model of critical consciousness**

Born in 1921 in Brazil, Paulo Freire became one of the most significant thinkers and activists in Latin-American education in the 1950s and 60s. He discovered his vocation in 1947 by working on the field with deprived adult illiterates for whom he created a revolutionary method of teaching and learning. Since those years he tried to reach millions of illiterate people in his country. During the first years of his academic career different principles of his model started to get stronger; for instance, education for freedom, popular education, the need of active participation of students and workers for becoming a democratic country, the relevance of experience and practice for learning, or the significance of education for transforming the world. His program started to gain acceptance in different regions of the country. However due to a military *coup d'état* in 1964 in Brazil he was imprisoned for his apparent subversive educational theory. Subsequently, he found exile in Chile where he continued applying his method successfully. He later collaborated for UN programs and other international institutions. Freire returned to Brazil in 1979 and continued his work of educational praxis and liberation, most of it, through non-formal education programs. He passed away in 1997 leaving a crucial legacy for Latin American pedagogy and social progress. As Arnove et al. put it: Paulo Freire is "one of the most important public intellectuals of the second half of the twentieth century" (2013:330).



Freire's model considers that education should be a process of critical consciousness raising having as an ultimate aim the transformation of the world. Freire criticizes the traditional model of education where the teacher simply deposits knowledge in the student who has a passive role in the process. He calls it the *banking model*. He believes this model is an anti-democratic process in which a blind relation of oppression occurs (being the teacher the oppressor and the student the oppressed). The role of the student in the banking concept of education is limited and constraint. Freire states: "the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (Freire 2000:72). According to Freire, such oppression does not allow real learning as it ignores the voice of the deprived and their experiences.

Certainly the thinking of Paulo Freire is complex and deep. Considering the scope and limits of this research I highlight purely the main concepts issued from Freire's model that are linked to my topic according to my own interpretation of Freire's model (1974, 1994, 2000). Thus the following notions are briefly explained further below:

- Consciousness Raising as Social Awareness
- Critical Pedagogy: Problem-posing Education
- Dialogue
- Praxis and pedagogy of hope

### **3.1.1 Consciousness raising for social awareness**

Paulo Freire considers education as an act for critical consciousness. In essence the concept of conscientization means consciousness raising. It is indeed one of the most important concepts in Freire's theory. In his words: "*conscientização* represents the *development* of the awakening of critical awareness" (1974:19). Such awareness is directly related to social change especially concerning equity and justice in favour of the dispossessed. Although the process of consciousness happens as an individual level, its ultimate purpose is the raising of social awareness. But of course self-awareness is an indispensable step for achieving the latter. About this, Freire encourages the own consciousness raising in order to understand the own potentiality for transforming the world. He insists on "a form of education enabling the people to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities, and their role in the new cultural climate –indeed to reflect on their very *power* of reflection" (Freire 1974:16).

Considering specifically the field of education, Freire assure that for raising consciousness it is crucial to first have teachers that have already been through a process of emancipation of their minds. Otherwise they would only be reproducing the banking model. Moreover, in order to develop consciousness through education it is indispensable to assume a critical pedagogy namely to be engaged with a problem-posing education, explained in the following subsection.

### **3.1.2 Critical pedagogy: problem-posing education**

Contrary to the banking model where education “becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (Freire 2000:72), the critical pedagogy works towards the generation of critical thinking. This kind of thinking can only be achieved if a conscious participation as subjects takes place, as only subjects are capable of transforming the world. Being a subject means a liberated person conscious of the intrinsic relationship with others and with the world in his or her reality and capable of questioning them. Freire insists on this topic: “To be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world. It is to experience that world as an objective reality, independent of oneself, capable of being known” (Freire 1974:3). According to Freire, critical thinking can be developed by a problem-posing pedagogy whose goal should be to question permanently about the problems in the social context such as injustice, exploitation, oppression, violence or the unjust order. Furthermore a problem-posing pedagogy is humanistic as it fights for the solution of such problems through the liberation of the oppression that a class-based society might have enforced for decades.

The open and constant analysis and debate of problems are extremely important in Freire’s model. Learners should have the opportunity of active participation of discussing the world. The following statement illustrates clearly this idea:

If education is the relation between Subjects in the knowing process mediated by the knowable object, in which the educator permanently reconstructs the act of knowing, it must then be problem-posing. The task of the educator is to present to the educatees as a problem the content which mediates them, and not to discourse on it, give it, extend it, or hand it over, as if it were a matter of something already done, constituted, completed, and finished. In the act of problematizing the educatees, the educator is problematized too. (Freire 1974:152-153)

In fact such problem-posing education is based on dialogue as without it the possibility of debate would not exist. Let me expose what dialogue means in Freire's model in the following paragraphs.

### **3.1.3 Dialogue**

For Freire, dialogue is a human phenomenon that allows men and women to reflect about the world and to act upon it. Indeed Freire's model of education is based on a dialogical teaching and learning. In his words: "Education is communication and dialogue. It is not the transference of knowledge, but the encounter of Subjects in dialogue in search of the significance of the object of knowing and thinking" (Freire 1974:139-140). Thus education is a dialogical process where two subjects are needed. In his model, he promotes a permanent dialogical encounter with others in order to name the world. That means dialogue demands a critical thinking through questioning the world before naming it.

In like manner it is critical to accept that the possibility of dialogue carries the opposite existence of anti-dialogue which "involves vertical relationships between persons" (Freire 1974:46). This notion leads once more to the banking model of education where real dialogue between educators and educatees does not exist but an anti-dialogue that in fact "does not communicate, but rather issues communiqués" (Freire 1974:46).

According to Freire, believing in dialogue means having faith in humankind as dialogue is an act of love and humility that necessarily implies hope, topic discussed in the next subsection.

### **3.1.4 Praxis and pedagogy of hope**

Beforehand Freire considers extremely significant the context for learning. The socio-historical context should be a platform for every educational decision as understanding it allows responding to concrete realities and social necessities by truly engaging with the world. In fact he considers humankind as a project for which it is possible to struggle if and only if the subject transcends himself or herself by acting in the world; as Freire puts it: "human beings are human because they exist in and with the world. This *existing* implies a permanent relation to the world as well as an action on it" (Freire 1974:111). This "action on it" is what Freire calls *praxis*.

The consideration of praxis leads intrinsically to the idea of hope. That is to say the fact of searching of the transformation of reality by praxis implies the hope for a different world. For instance, Freire criticizes the idea of history as determinism and propose instead the notion of history as possibility. Men and women are capable of intervening in the world in order to change it. This shows a very strong connection between praxis and hope. Acting in the world certainly carries hope in the others, hope in humankind.

### **3.1.5 A final word about Freire's model**

The four notions aforementioned: 1) Consciousness raising as social awareness, 2) Critical pedagogy: problem-posing education, 3) Dialogue and 4) Praxis and pedagogy of hope are crucial for understanding the Freire's model of education. However it is indispensable to remark that they not embrace his whole thinking which is quite more complex and debatable. In fact what I have just exposed is an interpretation of his pedagogy addressed to the main topic of this research which is non-formal education for peacebuilding. The order and understanding of ideas is my personal version of Freire's insightful thinking. As stated at the beginning of this section, Freire's model is not explicitly concerned with the concept of peacebuilding as such; nevertheless most of his pedagogy has a strong connection with the current understanding of education for peacebuilding. It seems that the latter cannot be understood without a process of consciousness in the micro level, namely the individual one, in order to be able to transform the macro level, the collective one. Additionally, dialogue is a requisite for transforming conflict such as community cohesion and praxis, essential notions for understanding Freire's model. Thus with the purpose of complementing the analytical framework of this study, I now present the specific framework for education and peacebuilding proposed by Alan Smith which gives a contextualized analytical structure for the purpose of this research.

## **3.2 Alan Smith's framework for education and peacebuilding**

Alan Smith has been the chair holder for 15 years of the UNESCO Chair in Education for Pluralism, Human Rights and Democracy. He has solid experience on the field of education and conflict, young people's understanding of human rights and the development of social, civic and political education. He was participant and adviser in the UNESCO Education for

All Global Monitoring Report: The hidden crisis (EFA 2011). His work about education and conflict has covered several countries such as Bosnia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Serbia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland. One of his main research topics has been the role that education may play for social transformation in conflict-affected societies (UNESCO 2009; University of Ulster 2013).

### **3.2.1 Three ways to understand the role of education in conflict-affected societies.**

Smith (2005, 2011, 2014) analyzes different forms by which the role of education can be assumed in conflict-affected communities. In particular, he provides three ways in which the role of education in conflict-affected societies can take place:

1) Education as a humanitarian response: It is related to ‘education in emergencies’ and its main goal is to give service to children affected by conflict or natural disasters based on the idea that “children should not lose their fundamental right to education simply because they live in the midst of a conflict” (Smith 2011:2). In this perspective, education is understood as the one that provides a physically safe space that might give stability and hope for the future; it might also represent a place for learning and interacting with other children and trusted adults, and on many occasions even the provider of food and medical attention. In addition, according to Smith, education as a humanitarian response works towards the development of “critical information and problem-solving skills that may protect children and youth from exploitation, harm, and abduction” (Smith 2014:114).

2) Conflict-analysis of education and ‘do no harm’: Smith (2011, 2014) points out that as education is associated with political ideologies, it is possible to critically analyze how these ideologies form part of the education system through curriculum, textbooks, language of instruction, segregated structures or administrations. According to Smith there are studies that highlight the fact that education can perpetuate conflict maintaining “inequality between groups, unequal access to education or the manipulation of history and textbooks” (2011:3). This situation has headed to the idea of ‘conflict sensitive education’ which is “the provision of education in a way that is sensitive to the dynamics of conflict in the context in which it operates and in a way that does not exacerbate conflict (does no harm)” (Smith 2014:114).

Within this perspective education is understood as a first approach to the awareness about conflict and its possible deterrent.

3) Education and peacebuilding: Reconsidering the concept of positive peace proposed by Galtung (2012) it is important to recognize that the fact of reaching a peace agreement do not mean to have a peaceful society. Smith (2005, 2011, 2014) highlights that peacebuilding is based on transformation processes at all social levels, including education. A process of reconciliation and reconstruction is needed and education can contribute significantly to this process in three different ways (Smith 2011):

- Providing basically education services; here attention goes normally to access and quality of education with the intention to recover normal functioning of the education system in general;
- Driving the attention to the education sector reform where “opportunities arise to raise questions about the extent to which education system will reproduce the previous social order or provide the basis for new forms of power relations” (2011:5);
- Propelling education to contribute to conflict transformation through special programs that encourage truth, reconciliation, justice, civic and citizenship education. In general education “has an important role to play in underpinning these transformations with human rights values and commitment to non-violence” (2011:5).

Smith’s proposal (2011, 2014) is to shift from a merely ‘doing no harm’ education to a proactive peacebuilding that could eventually transform conflict. He argues (Smith 2005) that education has a relevant role to manage specific programs of reconciliation in order to promote apology, forgiveness, mutual understanding and therefore, addressing the legacies of conflict. In like manner programs encouraging human rights education, citizenship, interculturalism and peace are key points. However it is crucial to consider that these programs working individually do not promote peacebuilding; a holistic educational structure embracing all these aspects is needed in order to achieve a proactive and long-term peacebuilding (Smith 2005).

### **3.2.2 Contexts and levels of action in education and conflict**

On the other hand, Smith (2005) distinguishes two main parameters when analyzing education and conflict which are the contexts and the levels of action. The first ones are related to the idea that education strategies can vary significantly depending on the circumstances in which they are being led: it could be during relatively peaceful stability, during conflict, in the aftermath of conflict or in the long-term post-conflict process of peacebuilding. Smith states that “educational priorities and concerns may be quite different depending on each of these circumstances” (2005:373). The second ones, the levels of action within an education system are the stages for action that carry different dimensions of education, among which:

- Political context, policy, administration: policies and administration tasks can be undertaken based on a specific political ideology. In this case education can be seen as a tool for “social control or empowerment” (Smith 2005:379).
- Curriculum, skills and content: a current tendency of curriculum is to work towards learning outcomes understood as skills, attitudes and values. Considering the field of education and conflict the analysis of which skills, attitudes and values are being endorsed by the education system turns out of great importance. In addition, content pertaining to language, history, geography, religion and culture are susceptible of exacerbating or alleviating conflict.
- Learning resources and textbooks: very close to content, the learning resources and textbooks carry with them explicit and implicit values and stances that might be intensifying either peace values or segregation and violent attitudes.
- Teachers and teacher education: Teachers are the mediators among curriculum, content, values and pupils and therefore they have a strong connection with the transmission of ideologies. They often do their job being part of the community, fact that might address a sensitive and risky teaching. Additionally, how teachers are being trained is also a relevant factor for analysis of education, conflict and peace.

### 3.2.3 A final word about Smith’s framework

Alan Smith thoughtfully maps the elements embracing the relationship between education, conflict and peacebuilding. I summarize Smith’s framework about the possible role of education in conflict-affected societies, the contexts and levels of action in the table above:

<p><b>The role of education in conflict-affected societies:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education as a humanitarian response</li> <li>• Conflict-analysis of education and ‘do no harm’</li> <li>• Education and peacebuilding</li> </ul>
<p><b>Context of educational operation:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During relatively peaceful stability</li> <li>• During conflict</li> <li>• In the aftermath of conflict</li> <li>• Post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level of action within an education system:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political context, policy and administration</li> <li>• Curriculum skills and content</li> <li>• Learning resources and textbooks</li> <li>• Teachers</li> </ul>

Table 3.1: Summary by the author of Smith’s proposal of contexts of educational intervention, levels of action within an education system and three perspectives of the role of education in conflict-affected societies (Smith 2005, 2011).

The framework proposed by Smith is valuable for this research in the sense that it offers clear criteria for analysing the role of education in conflict affected-contexts. It is essential to mention that he considers education in its broader sense which opens the possibility to use the framework both for formal and non-formal education. However there are specific indicators such as curriculum or textbooks that correspond mainly to the formal education system. Therefore it is important to bear in mind the adaptation of some criteria when considering non-formal education programs.

Once explained the analytical framework of the research, the city of Medellin is presented through a social cartography and an approximation of sociocultural initiatives that have been taking place in the city in the last years with the purpose of contextualizing the phenomenon.



## 4 Contextual background of Medellin

Once the analytical framework has been explained, a contextual background of the site is given in this chapter. First a social cartography helps to locate and to offer an overview of the city of Medellin. Later on, although challenging to summarize, a brief description of the conflict in Medellin is given in order to show a sociohistorical overview. Then some of the different sociocultural initiatives that have been taking place in Medellin in the twenty-first century are presented as they are related with the research. And finally, a short consideration of the identified remaining challenges in the city is conferred.

### 4.1 Social cartography of Medellin

The research refers to Medellin, the capital city of the Department of Antioquia in Colombia. Colombia is situated in the Northwest side of South America (figure 4.1) and it is well known as a country with one of the highest biodiversity in the world. The national population in Colombia is of 48.625.458 (DANE 2016a), which makes it the third most populated country in Latin America.



Figure 4.1: Location map of Colombia in South America (eMapsWorld 2016)

By its part Medellin has approximately 2.300.000 inhabitants, which makes it the second largest city in Colombia. That means 42% of the Antioquia population and 5.8% of the national population (Jaramillo and Gil 2014 citing Alcaldía de Medellín 2011). The city of

Medellin is located in the Northwest of the country (figure 4.2) and it has an extension of 380.64 square kilometers. It is found in the Aburra Valley which offers a particular scenario for urban development due to the mountain ranges that surround the city and give a very diverse portrait related to its topography as on the banks of the river, Medellin has a height of 1300 meters above sea and on the tops of the mountains 1900 meters (Rodríguez 2009).



Figure 4.2: Location map of Medellin in Colombia (Worldatlas 2016)

In addition the Medellin River bisects the city in West and East side. Administratively the urban zone is divided in 16 city districts which in turn are divided into 249 neighborhoods (Alcaldía de Medellín 2015). The city districts are called *comunas* in Medellin and it is a term that has a profoundly rooted significance because of its sociocultural weight and its social and historical representations. For the people of Medellin saying “I am from one or another comuna” has a social burden almost impossible to remove. Therefore I have decided to make use of the term in its original language along in the thesis; so from now on the term kept in the paper will be *comuna* (singular) or *comunas* (plural) referring to the city districts.

Furthermore Medellin has been the second most important economic and industrial center of Colombia after Bogota, the capital city, mostly because of the textile industry. The sectors of commerce, communications and services have gained importance in the last couple of decades. But despite its economic growth there is a high level of inequality. For instance, Medellin was the most unequal city of Colombia in 2014; according to DANE (2016b) the Medellin’s Gini Coefficient was the highest in the country in that year. “Medellin in 2003 had a coefficient of 0.557, the highest in the last 11 years. And although it dropped to 0,500 in

2012, it climbed back to 0,526 in 2014”<sup>3</sup> (Sierra 2015:1). Then an important upgrading is showed in 2015 with a Gini Coefficient of 0,489 (DANE 2016b), however, paradoxically, the level of extreme poverty went up from 2,8 in 2014 to 3,3 in 2015 (DANE 2016b). Regarding social stratification<sup>4</sup> there is a significant unbalanced panorama in the city as we can see in the table below:

Stratum	1 (low-low)	2 (low)	3 (low-middle)	4 (middle)	5 (middle-high)	6 (high)
Population %	12.38	37.80	29.41	9.63	6.96	3.82
Housing %	11.78	36.12	29.12	10.80	7.96	4.21

Table 4.1: Social stratification in Medellin showing the percentage of population and housing based on the six social strata scheme (Medellin Housing Secretary 2011).

It is estimated that “from a total of 600,000 housing units, 77% of them are in the stratum 1, 2 and 3; 19% in strata 4 and 5; and 4% in stratum 6”<sup>5</sup> (Salazar et al. 2009:29). Every *comuna* vary in population and strata. Certainly, the level of poverty is strongly related to the history of urban expansion in the city. Castrillón and Cardona (2014) accurately enrich the topic of urbanization in Medellin: since the last decades of the nineteenth century an important impulse to make of Medellin a modern city aiming at a high industrial progress took place. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the goal was to create functional urban spaces as part of the longed international project of modernity. Already in the 1940s and 1950s Medellin became the most dynamic urban enclave across the country, situation that, of course, stimulated regional and national migration. Compared to the population today of 2.300.000 inhabitants, Medellin used to have 358.189 inhabitants in 1950. Due to the violence in the countryside, thousands of people migrated to the city in the 1950s and 1960s and since then Medellin became a center for displaced people and families of peasants lacking basic services in their regions or fleeing violence. So because of the strong conflict that started to explode in Colombia coupled with the global economic crisis, the landscape of the city did not fit a pure functional concept of modernity but it was correlated to other economic and

<sup>3</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.  
<sup>4</sup> “In Colombia, a socio-economic stratification system was implemented in the 1980’s to classify urban populations into different strata with similar economic characteristics. The system classifies areas on a scale from 1 to 6 with 1 as the lowest income area and 6 as the highest. In 1994, this stratification policy was made into law in order to grant subsidies to the poorest residents. The system is organized so that the people living in upper layers (strata 5 and 6) pay more for services like electricity, water and sewage than the groups in the lower strata” (Esbjörn and Pérez 2012:1).  
<sup>5</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

political causes that made of Medellín not “a territorially recognizable homogeneous unit, but a fragmenting, divided and disjointed territorial extension”<sup>6</sup> (Castrillón and Cardona 2014:39). The urban area kept on growing exponentially mostly in the outskirts of the city towards the hillsides of the surrounding mountains. Apparently these new neighborhoods were synonym of not only spatial fragmentation but also of social disintegration and stigmatization. These lands were illegally occupied leading to a messy building process where hundreds of very poor brick houses with corrugated metal roofs were densely built lacking of basic services such as electricity, treatment of sewage, access to drinking water, waste regulations, health, education, paved roads, public transportation and security.

At the beginning these sectors were ignored and eventually branded as threatening by the elite of the city. Tensions between the municipal administration and the displaced communities set in the outskirts of the city came off with intense periods of forceful confrontations. When people claimed their rights, the answer from the state used to be a violent and repressive stance (Girón 2013); however the fact was that the socioeconomic and urban transformation of Medellín was unstoppable. Far ahead in the 1970s policies of decentralization and privatization related to urban projects flourished showing in many cases a clear balance in favor of the most privileged and of just few sectors. Later on an additional central phenomenon emerged: the rise of drug-trafficking since the late 1970s and the 1980s. Certainly this was conceivable in neighborhoods whose precarious economic and social conditions are described by Jiménez referring to the *comunas* of those years:

High levels of unemployment or informal employment; narrow houses with fragile structures, lack of adequate public services and poor lighting; agglomerations, lack of space for recreation and healthy entertainment, and serious limited access to education, namely unsatisfied basic needs, low levels of democratic political participation and strong attacks, given the absence of a State that should be in charge of the regulatory function of relationships among inhabitants<sup>7</sup> (2007:111).

It is within this context that the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s have been the most violent decades in the story of Medellín through a multifactor and multi-agent conflict. Indeed it became one of the most dangerous cities in the world considered even the capital of *narco-terror*.

---

<sup>6</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

<sup>7</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

Nonetheless after several years of profound violence in the city a social renaissance started to emerge in the twenty-first century through different social investments that were addressed to the poorest *comunas* in order to connect them to the urban development. These efforts have been worldwide celebrated by different institutions; for instance in 2012, the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy recognized Medellin's efforts with the Sustainable Transportation Award; furthermore, in March 2013 Medellin was awarded as the most innovative city in the City of the Year Global Competition organized by the Wall Street Journal and Citigroup (Citigroup 2013). About this the Urban Land Institute stated:

Few cities have transformed the way that Medellin, Colombia's second largest city, has in the past 20 years. Medellin's homicide rate has plunged, nearly 80% from 1991 to 2010. The city built public libraries, parks, and schools in poor hillside neighborhoods and constructed a series of transportation links from there to its commercial and industrial centers (2013:1).

In addition in March 2016 the city of Medellin was awarded by the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize which is "a biennial international award that honours outstanding achievements and contributions to the creation of liveable, vibrant and sustainable urban communities around the world" (Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2016a) because "Medellin tells the compelling story of a city which has transformed itself from a notoriously violent city to one that is being held up as a model for urban innovation within a span of just two decades" (Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2016b). So it is unquestionable that nowadays Medellin is considered an innovative, effervescent and resilient city. Surely, all these awards are indeed representative of positive social and cultural change, nevertheless there are important remaining challenges concerning social disparity, security, education and other issues which will be discussed in section 4.3.

#### **4.1.1 A brief description of the conflict in Medellin**

As it was mentioned above, Medellin was a significant captor of migrant population fleeing the conflict in other areas. These mass displacements normally carried out important social challenges such as lack of housing with basic public services, work and education. The excessive growth formed along many years depressed shantytowns that lacked of opportunities due to the absence of the State. In addition the crisis of the industry in the 1970s and 1980s and the construction crisis in the 1990s provoked a high level of unemployment and informal employment in the city. Unfortunately with all this, "extensive excluded sectors

were created lacking of social and economic benefits”<sup>8</sup> (Angarita et al. 2008:24). The poor hillside neighborhoods of the city were the scenario in which the now world-famous Drug Cartel of Medellin could easily rise in the last years of the 1970s and the 1980s. Since that decade up to the beginning of the 1990s huge amounts of money inflows came from drug-trafficking and illegally enriched part of the city in different ways: cars, motorcycles, luxuries and arms. Hundreds of youngsters became active part of the informal school for paid assassins (*sicarios*) where they found a rapid way to make money and to empower themselves even if that meant to risk their own lives; as Lamb put it: “a new labor category emerged in the city: assassin” (2014:40). Adolescents from 12 to 17 years old were normally co-opted because as minors they could not be prosecuted. The Cartel of Medellin was so powerful that it even declared the war to the State. After several years of extremely violent confrontations and narcoterrorism, the partial dismantling of the cartel in the 1990s was achieved. However from that moment different expressions of violence appeared or were reinforced in the city of Medellin through urban militias formed by left-wing guerillas since the 1980s and later on through right-wing paramilitaries known as self-defense groups. Lamb clarifies the ups and downs of the level of violence in the city:

Medellin’s homicide rate skyrocketed beginning in 1984 when Escobar’s criminal network declared war against the government, then declined beginning in 1991 as it began losing ground to its rivals and the state. Violence rose again in 1998 as paramilitaries entered the city to eject leftist militias by force, and it peaked once more in 2002, but it declined rapidly once the leftists—targeted by paramilitaries, drug traffickers, and the state alike—were defeated (2014:41).

Indeed during the last years of the twentieth century and the first decade of the current one, Medellin held a highly bloody battle for the territory control among these different armed groups. Having the control of a territory still means controlling micro-trafficking, prostitution, smuggling and extortions to wholesale stores and transport units—all these, powerful ways of self-funding. These confrontations created invisible walls within *comunas* and neighborhoods forbidden to cross even for locals. In fact paramilitary groups and militias used the *comunas* as real war zones. A constant reality for civil society was to witness street clashes with indiscriminate shootouts, enforced disappearances, massacres, homicides and attacks on civilians. Afterwards there was a dramatic intervention of the State against the militias in 2002 in *comuna* 13. Thousands of militaries attacked indiscriminately the site and dozens of

---

<sup>8</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

civilians were also killed or disappeared. Several critiques about the applied strategies in that military Operation were set forth by the community; there has been however a high level of impunity on this topic. Nevertheless after the weakening of militias, various paramilitary groups gained force and later on, a violent fighting among them was born aiming at the control of the city. These groups were killing each other but also a high amount of civilians were involved. To sum up, deep humanitarian ailments were a daily matter in the city. This led to a high level of intra-urban forced displacement in Medellin: it is considered that circa 10.000 people were affected just in 2012 (El Tiempo 2013). Furthermore the map of the conflict changes constantly due to the dynamic of the alliances and coalitions of armed groups (Durango 2012).

Different strategies for reducing the conflict have been launched and non-aggression pacts have been reached through the years. But a general climate of insecurity has been present because the criminal activity has not been ended. For instance in 2003 a paramilitary demobilization of part of the most important group in that moment was attained, nevertheless there are severe critiques about the procedures and the risk of institutionalizing the paramilitary forces instead of demobilizing them (Amnistía Internacional 2005). It is thought that the paramilitary demobilizations have had a lot of irregularities. Those who have stayed in conflict have later formed criminal gangs (*Bacrim*) that still have the control of the territory and drug distribution sites, and are manipulated by heads of drug-trafficking organizations made up of former paramilitaries (Montero 2010). Currently there is still a strong organization with heads in each neighborhood of at least 123 criminal structures that gather circa 3600 men (Montero 2010). A new kind of urban silent violence is present: extortions, harassments, threats all masqueraded as an act of protection to the neighborhoods that Girón (2013) call *violent protection*. As Keeling states: “Yet drug gangs and paramilitary factions still dominate the *Comuna barrios*” (2011:43) leading to a possible destabilization.

Even if there is a relative calm in the city at the moment of writing, nowadays –with strong reminiscences of the conflict– there might be still open wounds in the community. Victimizers have not been prosecuted and the truth has not been stated. Clandestine mass graves have been found but still it seems impossible to know who and how many victims there are. Furthermore there are strongly divided opinions about what the peace process should be which could mean, regrettably under those conditions, a likely latent clash.

## 4.2 Some sociocultural initiatives in Medellin in the twenty-first century

Facing the dramatic scenario of conflict in the city, important social projects through public, private and public-private funding have been taking place since some years ago as a counterpart of violence, homicides and insecurity. In this section I mention specifically three social initiatives relevant to the research topic: the new paradigm of mobility in Medellin, the case of the Library-Parks and the rise of Hip-Hop culture.

### 4.2.1 Accessibility and mobility in the city

Medellin is hitherto the only Colombian city with a metro, a rail system inaugurated in 1995 as public transport. In addition, since 2004 an original public transport was started, namely *the Metro-cable* which is a cable car system –similar to a non-stop ski lift– that is interconnected with the Metro lines and go up to the steep hillsides to neighborhoods that used to have a difficult access (photo 4.1). “In integrating the public transport system, it is now possible to get to parts of the city that were once hard to reach” (Hull 2016). As it was mentioned above, the isolation and poor accessibility of the *comunas* in the periphery were detonators of violence, crime and lack of security. Nowadays there are three Metro-cable lines “carrying 20000 passengers a day” (CNN 2015:1) and interconnecting people of different sectors. As part of the mass transit system (*Sistema Integrado de Transportes*) there are also bus rapid transit routes, called *Metro Plus*, integrated to both the Metro and the Metro-cable lines. In addition in March 2016 a modern and sustainable Tramway, the *Tranvía de Ayacucho*, was inaugurated addressing also poor neighborhoods. To sum up, the transportation network in Medellin has been a high investment in not only physical infrastructure but also of social cohesion (Metro de Medellín 2016). In general the public integrated transport system is a safe zone. Furthermore since 2014 there is free Wi-Fi access in specific kiosks and stations along the metro system which promotes social inclusion through connectivity. There are also four stations that give access to small libraries with reading rooms and ICT services free of charge (*Bibliometros*). In general a strong process of informal education is daily launched by the authorities through posters, voice recorded messages on the metro cars and guides in charge that point out the importance of a respectful civic culture when using public transport, an “educational and culture-oriented marketing with an emphasis on the collective ownership of ‘our system’” (Borgman 2016:1).



All these projects are important to mention because “accessibility and mobility are critical elements in the promotion of social integration, especially for the residents of the poorer hillside communities” (Keeling 2011:43); they give an opportunity to access cultural, economic, political and educational issues centralized in the downtown core.



Photo 4.1: Line J of the metro-cable in comuna 13 (up) and Line K of the metro-cable in comuna 1 (down)

#### **4.2.2 The case of the library-parks (*parques biblioteca*)**

As part of the sociocultural and educational project led by the municipality at the beginning of the twenty-first century, an important network of libraries was created. Within this scheme a specific initiative was the creation of the Library-Parks (*Parque Biblioteca* in Spanish) which are urban complexes that constitute a sociocultural project aiming at social inclusion through cultural development. It is a combination of a *library* with usual services for borrowing books, magazines, newspapers and data bases, and a public space understood as a *park*, word that in Spanish is related to a place where people can play, gather or enjoy the day freely. This term was coined in Medellin. According to the municipality a library-park is a

center of cultural development that transcends the traditional concept of a library, from where social ties are strengthened through a range of services that give access to cultural opportunities in order to influence the transformation of environments and citizens that respect, value and protect life<sup>9</sup> (Alcaldía de Medellín 2016:1).

In fact these library-parks have been built in *comunas* that have the most vulnerable environments with the idea of offering to the more unprivileged new opportunities for approaching knowledge, as well as dignified public spaces where to enjoy spare time and recreational activities. In addition, important positive changes in transport and roadways surrounding the area go together as part of the urban complex.

In 2000 the Secretary of Civic Culture (*Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana*) was created and since then a network of libraries was formed aiming to strengthen the librarian system and to promote reading. In 2003 the Master Plan for Medellín Library Services was launched and through this the idea of library-parks was born. In the Development Plan 2004-2007 the strategic project of the library-parks was detonated having as a goal “to provide the city of quality public spaces with cultural, recreational and educational purposes as well as of training and support to the most disadvantaged communities” (Alcaldía de Medellín 2016:1). In 2006 the System of Public Libraries in Medellín (*Sistema de Bibliotecas Públicas de Medellín*) was shaped as part of a government policy in order to unify services and processes of all kind of libraries in the city. With this the Network of Libraries of Medellín and the Metropolitan Area (*Red de Bibliotecas de Medellín y el Área Metropolitana*) was launched. This helped to homogenize services especially with new virtual platforms containing a public and shared catalogue of services and resources as well as to integrate ICT services in the libraries in the city. The first library-park was inaugurated in December 2006 in *comuna* 13. During the period 2006-2008 five library-parks were built: *San Javier; Santo Domingo Savio; Belén; La Quintana; La Ladera*. Then during the period 2009-2011 four additional library-parks were opened to the community: *Doce de Octubre; Guayabal; San Cristóbal; San Antonio de Prado* (Red de Bibliotecas 2015). These local library-parks are part of the transformation that has been taking place in Medellín. With a spectacular infrastructure, extended hours of service, diversified and specialized staff, permanent and creative programs, it seems the libraries-parks give free access to knowledge and approach community. They have become indeed local meeting points for the community, “a crucial element of public

---

<sup>9</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

property and community space *par excellence*”<sup>10</sup> (Alcaldía de Medellín 2016:1) where people from all ages gather to search for information, make use of ICT services, to read the news, dance, learn and more. Nowadays there are 33 information centers (libraries) located in 13 *comunas* and 4 different rural areas of Medellín. Of these 33 centers, 9 are library-parks. A particular task done by the library-parks is related to social and cultural projects that seek to articulate community development, to work on memory activation processes, to lead sectoral working meetings and to strengthen social cohesion. Nowadays the Strategic Plan 2014-2018 has as a main campaign the motto *Connecting territories as a contribution to development of citizenship* (Alcaldía de Medellín 2016).

Certainly the project of the library-parks helps to strengthen cultural development and enhance cultural rights for all citizens; nevertheless there are some critiques about specifically the high amount of money that has been invested in huge and modern buildings that seem to be part of political strategies of current governments which appear to be urged to inaugurate public works during their periods of mandate. As an example of this there is the case of the library-park in *comuna* 1 –one of the building icons of the city– that has been temporarily closed because of important construction problems that have put at risk the safety of visitors. Unfortunately it is estimated that the architectural “arrangement of the library worth about the same as its building”<sup>11</sup> (El Tiempo 2014:1); so several critiques about the process of public expenses have been in discussion. On the other hand, it is debatable the possibility of incidence that the library-parks can have through non-formal education programs for peacebuilding.

### **4.2.3 The case of hip-hop urban culture**

Music has always been a powerful tool of expression, particularly by marginalized communities or youngsters. For instance the case of Jazz and Blues issued against racial segregation and aiming at emancipation by the Black community in USA, the Anti-apartheid music in South Africa, the socio-political criticism by Reggae music from Jamaica, the songs of protest against the dictatorships in Uruguay, Chile and Argentina, musical movement known as the New Latin American Song, among many others. Such is the case of Hip-Hop that was born in the 1970s from African-American and Latino communities of youngsters

---

<sup>10</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

<sup>11</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

living in very poor and violent urban environments (Bronx, New York) facing unemployment, inequality and racism. Nowadays hip-hop is an important musical component worldwide. In fact hip-hop is more than a solely musical expression; it contains four artistic elements: *rapping or MCing* (to tell/sing the spoken word), *DJing* (to give the rhythm by using old music to renew it through the turntablism), *graffiti* (the graphic expression on public walls) and *breakdancing* (acrobatic street dance by *breakers*) (Shami 2012). Hip-hop is a cultural expression where art is a means but also an end.

In Medellin hip-hop was born as an important movement of youth culture since the 1980s. In the first decades, it was not socially accepted because it was highly stigmatized as a kind of music and youth culture coming from the poor and dangerous neighborhoods. Although it is difficult to stand, it is believed the first manifestations were issued in *comuna 13*, one of the most conflict-affected sectors. Once the hip-hop movement started to take hold around the city and to give voice to a strong social criticism against the violent gangs and the absence of the State in their neighborhoods, the members struggled to fulfil their freedom of expression and to develop openly; due to the strong conflict affecting the city many hip-hoppers have been killed. Hip-hop in Medellin has been a synonym of social and political movement. Its lyrics are a mirror of the context. And as an urban musical genre its narration is mostly about stories of the marginalized and violent neighborhoods where the unprivileged have lived. Its members sing social problems, they sing their experiences in the conflict, they sing their social and political stance, and they sing their hope for a peaceful and just world. With regard to the visual manifestations, graffiti as a means of protest can be found all around the city; it has become a relevant element of the streets of Medellin.

For most of the youngsters that belong to hip-hop crews is not just a hobby but a way of life. In the 1990s they used to gather to practice hip-hop in the outsides of the *Biblioteca Pública Piloto* which was at that moment the only large library. Nowadays the installations of the Library-Parks have become a meeting point for that as they are usually used by breakers to practice their dance movements. There are a few hip-hop schools in different *comunas* and there are already some hip-hop festivals in the city. In some way, and for some people, hip-hop has become part of their culture and heritage; it is now related to the idea of a peaceful revolution.

### 4.3 Remaining challenges

Certainly, as it has been stated on lines above, Medellin has significantly improved in different areas by social inclusion programs. Nevertheless, social disintegration has existed for many years and it might take longer to rebuild social order completely and to build social trust. Without the purpose of deepening, I will mention some of the remaining challenges I have identified:

**Security:** Probably the most imperative challenge for the city is security. The rate of homicides have been fluctuating in the last decade giving moments of optimism but also despair when it rises again. However it is not the only indicator for security. The State and the police should work on one hand, with civil society to strengthen the core of security which is based on education and socioeconomic processes, and on the other hand towards their own structure and operations to battle corruption and illegal infiltration. At the end of the day, why do people decide to practice homicides, kidnappings, armed robbery, and extortions as a way of life? Indeed “it is also important to develop the legal economy so that people have options other than illicit activity” (Lamb 2014:49).

**Pollution:** Although it is not an exclusive matter from Medellin, pollution has become a serious problem in the city. The large amount of cars, motorcycles and taxis carries terrible traffic and noise pollution. Due to the high level of air pollution, in April 2016 extreme environmental contingency measures were taken not without complaints of citizens. Different regulations for the industry sector have also been fixed.

**Education:** Since Sergio Fajardo’s administration (2004-2007) a city program named “Medellin, the most educated (city)” was launched and so, important visible projects of infrastructure were driven. Medellin has a high standard of educational offers compared to other cities in Colombia; nevertheless there is still the tough challenge to assure quality of education for all.

**Community empowerment:** Certainly Medellin is one of “the largest cities to successfully implement participatory budgeting, which allows citizens to define priorities and allocate a portion of the municipal budget. Community organizations, health centers, and youth groups have been formed, empowering citizens to declare ownership of their neighborhoods.” (The

Urban Land Institute 2013:1). This initiative has been of great importance for strengthening the community through political and economic inclusion. However there is still the challenge to assure the critical participation of all citizens in elections and in local decision making.

**Culture of legality:** It is necessary “to break the logic of informality which is now part of the social platform of mafia structures” (Girón 2013:1). To work in the strengthening of a culture of legality means to create a strong collaboration between education system, government, public opinion and media in order to praise highly the value of the path of legality (Girón 2013).

**Social disparity:** Social division is an evident problematic in Medellin. It seems the division by strata has been naturalized. As long as social disparity exists, it will be difficult to find peace. It is not an exclusive problem of Medellin, of course, but also a national and a regional problematic, considering the whole Latin America which is the region of the world that has the highest level of social disparity. To fight corruption, to give equal educational opportunities to all, to assure and dignify legal work are processes for mitigating social disparity; in sum to strengthen social inclusion is definitely necessary to diminish the problem of social disparity.

In conclusion, although Medellin has been violated for several decades, an important social and cultural transformation has made of it a captivating case for research as to understand how the residents are pushing and experiencing these changes, or as to observe the process of resilience of the community and in particular in this thesis to analyze the incidence of specific non-formal education programs and their remaining challenges for education for peacebuilding. Indeed my interest in choosing this site lies in the exceptional historical complexity and resilience of the city which represents a fascinating task within the topic of education and peacebuilding.

In the next chapter, the methodology and methods followed in the research are reported.

# 5 Methodology and methods

In this chapter the details of the methodology and methods that have been followed in the research are described, namely the methodological approach, research design, some reflections on the fieldwork, site, sampling of participants, data collection and data analyses procedure. In addition, the ethical considerations are also discussed in this section.

## 5.1 Methodological approach and research design

Considering what Drew et al. (2008:184) argue “the nature of the research question should be what drives the selection of methods and design”, the research questions of this project led to a qualitative approach which has allowed an in-depth exploration of the perceptions that members and facilitators of selected non-formal education programs in Medellin have had concerning their programs. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013), there are five main designs in qualitative methodology: *case study*, *ethnography*, *grounded theory*, *content analysis* and *phenomenological study*. Based on this categorization and on the interest of finding *meanings* a phenomenological study was chosen: this study aims to understand the phenomenon from people’s perceptions therefore I opted for a phenomenological study since it refers to “a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation” (Leedy and Ormrod 2013:145). Thus, the study has been carried out based on a qualitative approach and a phenomenological research design.

## 5.2 Reflections on the fieldwork

I conducted my fieldwork in Medellin, Colombia from the 24<sup>th</sup> of October to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2015. This means it was a six-week-length fieldwork. In general the fieldwork went well and it was a remarkable experience being in direct contact with people in the genuine context. In addition, I also had the fortune to participate in the five-day international conference organized by the Latin American Council of Social Sciences, CLACSO, that took place in Medellin in November 2015 and whose topic was *Democratic transformations, social justice and peace processes*; with this I fulfilled several theoretical and contextual issues and reached important contacts for networking and for interviews with specialists.

Several aspects were materialized and clarified during the fieldwork such as the selection of settings and participants. This is so, due to the fact that before arriving in the country there was no clear information of the different options of non-formal education programs in the city. Upon my arrival, I managed to talk to some specialists on the ground to understand the implicit context in the city and to create a network that could help me to decide the settings; so, although they are not being considered as participants, I had the opportunity to interview seven people involved with the field of education and conflict in Medellin or working in similar issues in order to enrich my understanding of the context (among them: researchers, human rights defenders, activists and faculty professors). This implied a rapid building of network at the site and a fast immersion in the neighborhoods to contact different possibilities. I had the opportunity to informally explore different non-formal educational practices related to peacebuilding that have been taking place in the city. All these lighted up my mind. Therefore, after several days, with lots of telephone calls and dozens of emails and most of all an in-depth reflection, I had the opportunity to officially gain access to three programs that are explained further ahead.

On the other hand being Latin-American was a positive trait for adaptability to the site and culture. Despite of some struggling with accent and lexical hitches it was pleasant to adapt and feel myself in an empathic environment. Nevertheless I faced three main challenges during the fieldwork. The first one was related to mobility within the city due to the fact that Medellin is a large and populated city and urban transportation between neighborhoods can take more than an hour or even longer than expected because of traffic jams. This was especially when going to one of the settings which lacked of a metro cable targeting the neighborhoods located in the highest points of the mountain. In this regard, the best way to cope with this situation was to optimize time of transportation as much as possible during the seven days of the week. Then the second challenge, related to the first one, was the schedule of appointments as time is a valuable element when conducting fieldwork in a foreign country. With no intention to generalize, some people at the site are not so used to follow rigid agendas or to stick rigorously to the appointments, so trying to formalize the meetings previously was not an easy task. In fact I had some appointments cancelled at the last minute. On this case, when it was possible I insisted on rescheduling or in some other cases I just had to quit as I did not have positive answer. A third challenge was the lack of silent places for recording the conversations. It was indeed very difficult to find quiet and calm places to



conduct the interviews. Despite trying to find silent spaces for interviewing, in most of the recordings it is possible to come upon background music, city noises, barking dogs, fireworks, children playing and even strong tropical rains.

### 5.3 Research site

The research site of the study is Medellín. My interest in choosing Medellín has lied in the specific sociocultural transformation that Medellín has experienced since several years ago: from being one of the most violent cities in the world to one that has been working towards a more peaceful society in a significant way. As it was mentioned in the former chapter Medellín is made up of sixteen *comunas*, each of them is known by an allotted number from 1 to 16. For the purpose of this research three non-formal education initiatives from three different *comunas* located in specific points of the city (the Northeast, the Northwest and the West) were selected with the intention of offering an overview of the site concerning some of the most unprivileged neighborhoods of the city. Moreover, for anonymity reasons and protection of data I deliberately have avoided the reference to the original name of each of the *comunas*, and just referred to them as *the corresponding comuna* or *the comuna*. Similarly, the sources of information about the *comunas* have been deliberately removed from the writing to avoid any reference. However an explanation of their context is stated below.

The corresponding *comunas* are located in different corners of the city that have shown a challenging sociohistorical and cultural scenario. Such *comunas* are part of the history of urban development and they have particular but also common sociohistorical features between them. Some of the common features are the following: first, all of them are places that have been settled spontaneously (through *invasions* as it is called in Colombia) by displaced people that escaped the conflict from the countryside in the 1930s, 50s and 60s. In fact it is believed that “when the settlers evoked the city, it meant for them a very distant place, not because of distance but because of social gaps that existed”<sup>12</sup> (Muriel 2014:11). This statement allows me to infer that in the very first years of settlement people did not feel part of the city of Medellín but they felt themselves outsiders. More than 45 years have passed now and despite the recent mobility projects that have been activated in the city the feeling of separateness seems still present. This is also linked to the second feature which is that such

---

<sup>12</sup> Translated from Spanish by the author.

*comunas* form part of the ends of the city namely the higher zones of mountainous territories. The notorious terrain slopes have been a challenge for the construction of housing due to the particular topography conditions of the zones. Third, the settlers have come from several regions of the country which has led to a presence of diverse ethnical groups in the neighborhoods recurrently Afro-Colombian and in fewer rates Indigenous. Fourth, the social strata<sup>13</sup> to which these *comunas* are related are mostly stratum 1 and stratum 2 and in some small areas stratum 3. This means they are inhabited by demographic groups that belong to vulnerable social environments. And finally, the three *comunas* have experienced extreme violence and strong insecurity through armed groups, paramilitary presence and internal conflict among neighborhoods in each *comuna* and against other *comunas* in the last thirty years. Not paradoxically this has led to resistance groups which have found different means of expression to struggle for peace and social justice such as religious, educational and sociocultural organizations.

Thus three non-formal education initiatives were selected. Such initiatives can be understood either as social organizations, social groups, sociocultural centers or programs. I have decided to keep mainly the term *program*, on one hand, for facilitating the reading and on the other hand, to identify them from an educational perspective. Moreover, due to protection of personal data, the real names of the programs have been changed. Likewise the sources of information about the three programs have been deliberately removed from the writing to avoid any reference.

The choice of the three programs was challenging. In fact, the selection of the specific settings was defined already in the fieldwork. This decision was mainly based on the particular characteristics found in the programs: indeed the three selected programs belonged to popular neighborhoods with vulnerable and conflict-affected environments, they were examples of dialectic and communal experiences aiming peaceful societies, and they had at least five years of experience. Furthermore, each program belonged to different underprivileged areas of the city, which together meant a good overview of Medellin as a site.

---

<sup>13</sup> “In Colombia, a socio-economic stratification system was implemented in the 1980’s to classify urban populations into different strata with similar economic characteristics. The system classifies areas on a scale from 1 to 6 with 1 as the lowest income area and 6 as the highest. In 1994, this stratification policy was made into law in order to grant subsidies to the poorest residents. The system is organized so that the people living in upper layers (strata 5 and 6) pay more for services like electricity, water and sewage than the groups in the lower strata” (Esbjørn and Pérez 2012:1).

In the next subsections I introduce a brief description of each program and of the *comuna* to which they belong in order to get a deeper picture of them.

### **5.3.1 The hip-hop group**

This program started in 2007 as a collective school of hip-hop. Its purpose is to promote artistic and cultural manifestations as a revolutionary resistance through critical, social and constructive meanings. Rap, graffiti and break-dance are its active manifestations. Although it is available for everyone it normally gathers youngsters from 13 to 26 years old, mainly males. It works usually with self-funded resources. However as it is a non-profit organization it has been able at times to use public funding through applications of municipal grants. The group has struggled to find a safe and appropriate place to gather drawing upon public spaces instead. The facilitators that work in the program do it voluntarily. They have also had the voluntary support of other social university networks to help them maintain their unity. Beyond the hip-hop school, its mission is to offer a choice of way of life to the people of the *comuna* driving them away from crime and drug addiction a reality that might be very common in these peripheral areas of the city.

It might be considered a non-formal education program for different reasons: first, because it is not related at all to formal schooling; secondly, it has a non-structured organization and a flexible planning for learning; thirdly, it is open to everyone interested in participating regardless their age, gender or academic background; and fourthly it is a bottom-up initiative raised by the local community. One may enroll in the program just by approaching the group. In some periods there have been around 50 members in the group. At the moment of the fieldwork, they were around 15 members. Considering the categorization of non-formal education that Hoppers (2006) proposes, the hip-hop group could be understood as popular education since it is addressed to the poor communities pointing on critical awareness and social action through the practice and learning of the hip-hop culture.

This initiative was born in the Northeast steep territories of the city where there are plenty of streams. The first inhabitants of these neighborhoods arrived around the 1960s. They settled through spontaneous urbanization and non-planned building areas. They struggled intensely for several decades to have later their neighborhoods legalized. There are 11 neighborhoods in the *comuna* with 116,312 inhabitants in total. It is mainly a suburban place so the economic

legal activity is reduced to some basic services. Due to the lack of urban planning during the time of settlement, the streets are like a cluttered network. In some parts it can be difficult to walk or drive because of the winding field and a very high slope (about 12 to 30%) in the streets. However since 2004 the *comuna* has been benefited due to the integration of the metro-cable that has allowed an easier mobility to inhabitants of the area to the city center.

### **5.3.2 The social organization**

This program started in 1994. I have decided to call it social organization as it is considered a community corporation whose purpose has been to strengthen community organizations in the area through training and support in order to promote better living conditions and development through local participation. It has its roots in a group of youngsters working in the discipline of communication: radio, posters, local television and editing of local newspapers. Little by little and through different processes and agents this initiative grew up and it took the form of community-corporation. It was born indeed during times of extreme violence in the city and especially in the *comunas* where marginalization and poverty reigned. Nowadays it is open to all public: they work with children, youngsters, adults and older adults through different educational and social programs. It is a non-profit and self-funded organization based on private funding with occasionally the combination of public resources since it has been able to use public funding through applications of municipal grants. The staff and most of the facilitators are modestly remunerated through the self-funding. In addition different agreements with national entities have been an economic and collective support for sporadic specific projects.

It might be considered a non-formal education program for different reasons: first, because it is not linked to formal schooling; secondly, it offers flexible programs for learning in various topics such as media and communication, social development, sustainable cooking and habits, among others; thirdly, it is open to everyone interested in participating regardless their age, gender or academic background; and fourthly it is a bottom-up initiative raised by the local community. One may enroll in the program by approaching the organization and following a quick signing-up. Considering the categorization of non-formal education that Hoppers (2006) proposes, the social organization could be assumed as two types: as popular education since it is addressed to the poor communities pointing on critical awareness and social action

through learning activities, and as personal development as it promotes leisure-time activities for the improvement of oneself.

The social organization is located in the steep Northwest area of the city. The first settlers arrived around the 1930s but it was in the 1950s where an increased incursion took place. There are now 12 neighborhoods in the *comuna* with 192,656 inhabitants in total. It is mainly a suburban place so the economic legal activity is reduced to some basic services. Due to the lack of urban planning during the time of settlement, the streets are like a jumbled network. In some parts it can be difficult to walk or drive because of the winding field and a very pronounced slope in the streets (more than 20% to 60%; in fact the streets of the neighborhood of the program are of more of 60%). To the present day there is no metro-cable line to this part of the city however its implementation has been announced. Due to the high slopes and the lack of a proper road infrastructure, the public transport is limited to a few main roadway corridors. Thus mobility within the *comuna* and from the *comuna* to the rest of the city is still a challenge.

### **5.3.3 The library-park**

This program started in 2006. It is mainly an information center with the purpose of approaching knowledge to the community; as explained in chapter 3, the library-parks are spaces where people can meet while enjoying, learning and developing art and culture. It has an audience of all ages: older adults, adults, youngsters and children. Its radius of impact covers 15 neighborhoods. It has been part of the urban complex projects where these kinds of spaces are integrated to public transport like metro and metro-cable in order to facilitate the access to them. It started as an agreement between the municipality and the business sector and just lately became wholly part of the municipal administration.

It might be considered a non-formal education program for different reasons: first, because it is not based on formal schooling; however, it is worth mentioning that some of its educational services could be seen as complementary to formal education such as bibliographic resources and information and communication technology; secondly, it offers flexible programs for learning about various topics such as literature, art, technology, photography, among others; and thirdly, it is open to everyone interested in participating regardless their age, gender or academic background. In fact, it is a public initiative controlled by the Secretary of Civic

Culture (*Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana*), not by the Ministry of Education. One may enroll in the program by approaching the site and following a quick signing-up. Considering the categorization of non-formal education that Hoppers (2006) proposes, the library-park could be assumed as the type of personal development as it promotes leisure-time activities for the improvement of oneself.

The program is located in the West area of the city. There are 134,472 inhabitants in the corresponding *comuna*. The first settlers arrived around 1930s and it was in 1950s and 1960s when spontaneous settlement of masses took place coming from the countryside or by inner-displacement. There is a violent history in this *comuna* since the 1980s marked by militias, paramilitary presence, guerillas and feared local gangs. Its geographic location has been strategic due to the fact that the West side is the gate to the highway that leads into the ocean, a route for (illegal) goods flowing into and out of the city. There have been military interventions in the area and the community has also witnessed fires on different sectors as part of the strife of hundreds of displaced people. Its urban cluttered distribution and the high slope in the streets (45- 60%) does not allow the development of an adequate public transport in certain sectors. Meanwhile for some of them the metro-cable has been a frank benefit since 2008 when it was open for to such area. Nowadays it is mainly a housing place so the economic legal activity is reduced to some basic services located mainly in the stops of the metro and metro-cable and the main roadways.

## **5.4 Sampling of participants**

The sampling implicated first purposive sampling with the idea to deliberately consider people of the community that have participated directly in the selected non-formal education programs. Then, due to the characteristics of the site and culture, a snowball technique was applied for which the first contact was always someone in charge of the program who could lead to other members and so on. The participants were mainly based on two categories: on one hand facilitators or people in charge of the programs, and on the other hand members of the programs. The achieved number of participants was as follows:

Program	Facilitators	Members	Total
Hip-hop group	2	10	12
Social organization	5*		5
Library-park	4	10	14
<b>TOTAL:</b>			31

Table 5.1: Total number of participants per program divided by members and facilitator.

\*In the case of this program participants considered themselves both facilitators and users due to the fact they all began in the social organization as solely users and after several years started to work also as facilitators so the purposes for each category were intentionally mixed during the interviews.

## 5.5 Data collection

For the data collection accordingly to a phenomenological study and the purpose of the research, the method was based since the beginning on lengthy semi-structured interviews. But, in addition, during the fieldwork observations were included with the authorization of the three establishments as well as a focus group in one of the settings.

### 5.5.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect information about the participants' experiences and perceptions. These interviews were semi-structured –almost like a conversation– with the initial idea of better knowing the participant and progressively going deeper and deeper through the meaning of the described experiences. The interviews were held in Spanish, the mother tongue of both the participants and the researcher, and entirely recorded for later transcription and analysis, a fact that enhanced trustworthiness to the research. Except for a couple of cases, the interviews were conducted at the site of each program.

I used two guides for the semi-structured interviews: one addressed to facilitators and the other one, to members (cf. appendix). Both tools were piloted before going to the fieldwork: for the case of the tool for members, I did the mock interview with a Colombian student who had experiences in some non-formal educational and cultural initiatives in Bogota; and for the case of the tool for facilitators I practiced it with a teacher who works in rural schools. Both cases were helpful to analyze the scope of the questions. During the fieldwork, I managed to

make 25 interviews, 5 of which were made in pair or trio, which means I managed to have 31 people interviewed. The main reason of having to make some interviews to 2 or 3 people simultaneously was because of the participants' will of not being interviewed alone. However the scheme of interview was maintained.

All the interviews were transcribed in order to work with genuine information. The interviews, originally in Spanish, had significant extracts translated into English by the researcher whose mother tongue is Spanish. This allowed working with chosen fragments based on the research questions *a priori* set.

### **5.5.2 Focus group**

In the case of the program of the hip-hop group I had a relevant discussion with the facilitator who suggested me having a focus group instead of individual interviews with the members due to, on one hand, security reasons of the area –because it is a paramilitary controlled zone– and on the other hand, the gain of recollecting information issued in a collective way as the participants are used to work, instead of making use of individual approaches. For the focus group I created a work scheme (by the way ratified by the facilitator) for which the common guide of questions followed in a focus group was replaced by an inventive questionnaire-like written activity that respondents answered individually before starting the collective discussion with the purpose of stimulating an in-depth thinking among respondents (cf. appendix). Another relevant reason for having the questionnaire activity was the previous acknowledge about where the focus group was going to take place; I was aware that due to external noise, recording would be affected so having written evidence would also support the oral narrations. Thus I had the opportunity to work as a moderator with 10 members in the place and time where they usually gather for educational sessions. It was a 60 minutes mediation that allowed me to recollect data of specific topics concerning the research questions that were asked in the written questionnaire first and then collectively discussed.

The advantages of using a focus group instead of individual interviews were first the potentialization of the expression of respondents as they are used to have collective discussions; second, the emphasis on the respondents as members of a group (Bryman 2012); third, the effective use of time as a researcher in an area where it was not openly allowed to be without the moral authorization of people in implicit control.



### 5.5.3 Observations

The interviews and focus group were definitely enriching but to deeply embrace the social phenomenon I decided to include observations directly on site. These observations would not have been possible without the welcome and hosting of people in charge of the programs. I did unstructured participant observations of at least one specific activity in each of the settings. In the case of the hip-hop group, I did five participant observations to the weekly sessions that were usually led by two facilitators. In the case of the social organization, I did two participant observations to activities addressed to youngsters led by one or two facilitators. In the case of the library-park, I did three participant observations to activities addressed to adults led by one facilitator per activity. Thus the number of observations per program was as follows:

Program	Number of observations
Hip-hop group	5 participant observations
Social organization	2 participant observations
Library-park	3 participant observations

**TOTAL:** 10 participant observations

Table 5.2: Total number of observations per program during the fieldwork.

In all the cases, my role as a researcher was known as I was introduced to the members before starting. My participation consisted in being part of the specific activity planned for that day; this means I joined a scheduled activity for instance a weekly session for the hip-hop group, a gathering for youngsters in the social organization, or a weekly session in the literature workshop in the library-park. I had a firsthand experience with participants as I got involved with the members by actively participating in the activities as if I were also a member of the group. I took field notes as far as possible, but most of the information was written just after the activity was over.

It is important to state that data issued from the observations enriched the data analysis procedure but they were not analyzed in the same way as the data collected from the interviews. The participant observations were useful to be in contact with people and to reveal implicit features that could be skipped in the interviews (Bryman 2012) such as the living

environment of the activities, some attitudes, interactions and behavior of the participants and facilitators and the relationships between members and facilitators. The observations allowed me as well to perceive the general environment of the sites.

## **5.6 Data analysis procedure**

The units of analysis should be the most basic entity analyzed in the study, and in this research the units of analysis were the perceptions by the informants. Once the data had been issued from the oral narratives in the interviews and the focus group, and then transcribed, “common themes in peoples’ description of their experiences” (Leedy and Ormrod 2013:146) were identified. Such task was the coding of the data and it allowed finding “meaning units” (Leedy and Ormrod 2013:146). The coding was an intense and long process of reading and reading again through the data and of taking marginal notes about significant issues related to the research topic. I had also in mind the conceptual frame of education for peacebuilding when doing the coding; the idea was to reach a high level of congruence between concepts, theories and entity analyzed (Bryman 2012). From the set of meaning units a mental map of terms was created separately by program. Later on, those maps were reviewed in order to find connections among the terms, remove those that meant the same and start a categorization. With this process, conceptual categories emerged and were shaped to structure the findings for a further analysis.

### **5.6.1 Trustworthiness of the research**

The evaluation of the quality of a research process takes normally into account the level of reliability and validity of the study. However particularly in the assessment of qualitative research the relevance of the use of such concepts seems highly discussed and it is suggested to talk about *trustworthiness* instead (Bryman 2012). About this, Bryman (2012) makes a summary of four criteria for the assessment of the level of trustworthiness proposed by Guba and Lincoln:

**Credibility:** This criterion is linked to the idea of triangulation of findings in order to ensure that the researcher’s account is trustworthy. In the case of this research findings were triangulated by confronting the data collected, for instance, the interview transcripts with

concepts and theories, or the notes from the observations with the given information about the settings.

**Transferability:** This criterion is related with the degree of generalizability that a study can have. Concerning this, it was assumed that when qualitative research is conducted results are not generalizable. Thus the idea of this study has not been to generalize but to deeply understand how the process of education for peacebuilding is being experienced by the community. So others should not generalize but they could learn from the experience of this research and maybe try to transfer it to other settings.

**Dependability:** This criterion is associated with the idea of taking care of the process as if it could be audited. In this way it should be necessary to have available and complete records of all the phases. In particular this study has a high level of dependability as all the original material has been kept since the beginning, for instance, the original recordings, the information about the sites, the participants or the data analysis procedure (nevertheless, as it is later stated in the ethical considerations, data related to participants and sites will be destroyed after finishing the whole academic process of thesis for reasons of protection of personal data).

**Confirmability:** this criterion is based on the researcher engagement towards a clean and transparent process of research; although the qualitative research has a strong sense of subjectivity, the criterion of confirmability intends to assess how objectively the researcher acts upon the whole process, for instance, by avoiding personal values or inclinations to interfere in the reading of the context or data analyses. In this sense, I was very careful of being impartial –as long as the process allowed it– during the research phases especially when collecting, coding and doing the interpretation of data.

## **5.7 Ethical considerations**

Education in conflict-affected areas is a sensitive topic and therefore the ethical issues involved particularly in this kind of research must be carefully considered before, during and after the study. Thus, it is clear that the researcher should have different ethical responsibilities during the whole process. The first responsibility is to guarantee the

protection of all the candidates or participants. The basis for this is to ensure that no human right is being violated throughout the investigation. As part of this the privacy and dignity of all the participants was fully respected during the time of research. The second responsibility is related to the obtaining of consent from the candidates who were free to choose whether or not to participate in the study once a clear explanation in their own language was given. For this, they were provided with the name of the researcher, name of the institution, purpose and methods of the research. They were also given absolute liberty to withdraw from the research at any time. The researcher ensured that the participants have good understanding of the involvement before making their decision. There were for example some cases where the participants asked not being interviewed alone but in tandem or groups, will that was respected. The third responsibility is related with the recording of the narrative descriptions shared by the participants or the written answers as the data collected could be sensitive and compromising. For this, anonymity has been held when reporting the narrations using fictitious names for each participant. In addition, all the information has been saved only by the researcher and kept private in a personal computer with password and a personal external hard drive. The documents and archives containing interviews or written answers will be destroyed once finished the process of the thesis in the educational program. Finally, if it is the participants' will, they would have access to the final version of the study once published. (Wood 2006; Drew et al. 2008)

On the other hand, as all the interviews were held in Spanish, I translated some fragments into English for the purpose of the writing of the thesis. So in case there was any misinterpretation from the original dialogue, it would be completely my own responsibility.

So, after explaining the methodology and methods followed in the research, the findings that emerged from the fieldwork are presented in chapter 6 as evidence of data collection but also as a way to approach to the research phenomenon. Further ahead, in chapter 7, such findings are discussed from the lenses of the analytical framework.

## 6 Findings

In previous chapters the notion of non-formal education for peacebuilding has been clarified, likewise the particular case of Medellin has been presented, and the methodology and methods have been explained. Now, the purpose of this chapter is to bring to light the major findings obtained from the fieldwork in Medellin; for doing so the oral narratives collected from the semi-structured interviews and the focus group supported by the notes from the observations have been used for the data analysis procedure.

The findings are presented divided by different conceptual categories that were unveiled from the analysis of data. For obtaining these conceptual categories, I searched for the voice of the informants: I sought to understand their deep perceptions and experiences concerning the research topic so I have left the data talk by themselves through a deep process of analysis. Moreover, the notion of education for peacebuilding, assumed upon the deconstruction of the concept found in chapter 2, was used as guideline for the selection of the conceptual categories. This means that the conceptual categories found in this chapter are those that have a stronger link with the topic of research. To sum up, by listening carefully the voice of the participants, themes emerged powerfully from the narrations. By building a sharp thinking around the narrations such themes were turned in conceptual categories through an integration that took into consideration the relevance given by the informants to the themes and their concurrence on the three programs. In addition, it is worth noting that “the writing up process became entwined with the analytic process” (Hunter 2010:48); it was a constant coming and going of concepts until saturation of data.

As stated in the section of ethical considerations, the names of all the informants and those of the programs have been modified for the purpose of confidentiality and anonymity; thus all names appeared on this paper have been made up in order to protect the participants’ identities. Besides, quotes have been translated from Spanish into English by the researcher.

In the program of the hip-hop group, there were twelve informants in total. I managed to interview two facilitators: Thiago and Liam, on an external site due to the fact of lacking of headquarter. One of them, Thiago, is directly related with the members of the group and as volunteer leads weekly non-formal educational sessions of discussion and engage with the

group in different communal projects like artistic graffiti or social activities. By his part, Liam is involved with the program design and general educational process of the social organization LASA<sup>14</sup> to which both facilitators belong and on behalf of which they voluntarily work with the hip-hop group. However, Liam is not directly related with the members. In the case of this program it was not recommended to make direct interviews to the members of the group mainly for security reasons. Therefore I decided to make one interview with one of the founders of the group, Derek, and one focus group with ten members. I also did five participant observations in this program.

In the case of the social organization, there were five informants in total. I managed to interview five people: Alexander who has been one of the founders and who has worked in different positions in the program; Violeta who has collaborated in different ways and has also held management positions; Ethan a young man who has participated in break dancing groups and media; Emma who has worked in different projects but mainly with youngsters and women; and Marina who has been part of the social organization through different ways from cleaning duties to secretary. A central issue of these participants is that all of them have been both members and facilitators. They started approaching the social organization for different reasons but mainly because of a specific personal need, and over the years they have found themselves involved in varied activities as leaders. As it was stated in chapter 5, the informants were interviewed considering both roles simultaneously –the one as a member and the one as a facilitator. However, it is important to mention that a thoughtful distinction of the voice of the member from the voice of the facilitator was made along the analysis. I also did two participant observations in this program.

In the case of the library-park, there were 14 informants in total. I interviewed four facilitators. Three of them, Jerónimo, Erika and Fernanda, work directly on site and one of them, María José, in the municipal offices. At the time the interviews were held, Jerónimo had been working in the library-park for almost one year in a position related to the promotion of reading. By her part, Erika had been working in the library-park for two years in social relations. There was also Fernanda, who had been working in the library-park for three years in two different positions, among them, the general coordinator. Finally, at the time of data

---

<sup>14</sup> LASA is a social and political non-profit organization that was born as a university students' movement in Medellín. It promotes critical thinking, democracy, social justice and education through social projects. At the moment of writing, it has more than 10 years of existence. Abbreviations have been changed for confidentiality reasons.

collection, María José had worked in the city project, matrix of the library-park, for more than 15 years and had witnessed the evolution that community had experienced in relation with these kinds of programs. Besides, I managed to make ten semi-structured interviews to members of the library-park: Diego and Paula, two break dancers; Luz, Constanza and Julieta, three learners of ICTs workshops; Samuel from the Photography workshop; Emanuel, Dulce and Milena, three devoted assistants to the Writing and Literature workshops; and Felipe who has been involved with the library-park through different activities over the years. I also did three participant observations in this program.

Thus the interviews, focus group and notes of the observations offered valuable sources for an in-depth analysis of data that led me to the following conceptual categories:

## **6.1 Consciousness raising**

To start with, the capacity of *consciousness raising* seemed a highly valued topic for most of the respondents. The findings in this study indicate that facilitators held optimistic perceptions about the capacity of the programs to raise consciousness through their work by fostering the building of the self. For instance when talking about his duties as a facilitator in the library-park, Jerónimo explained how he worked with literature workshops. He specified that literature can be part of the building of the self and explained how he drew upon the workshops for exalting such singularity. He stated:

I consider that literature makes you sensitive to life, because the more you read, the more it is possible to see the world differently, which is not only a feature of literature but of art in general. (...) So I think that literature has an impact as well in consciousness, in the way to think over the world. And that's exactly what I work with in the writing workshops. Such workshop is just an excuse to try to be more conscious in life (...) literature is also a training to raise awareness.

This statement allows perceiving how consciousness can be raised through different means in the programs. In particular, in the case of the hip-hop group, having created art has been meaningful to most members for consciousness raising. Some members recognized that they have generated a positive alternative of doing art. They considered hip-hop culture as a fresh and different kind of art and a strong popular expression. Moreover some of them believed they could be a good example for children and youngsters when showing them that even

being from the same neighborhood and carrying the same problematic the group has been able to grow through culture and art differing from a pathway of violence. They also believed they have been able to promote positive values such as solidarity, brotherhood and tolerance through artistic and cultural expressions. The findings indicate that they have aimed at raising consciousness in the community through their lyrics and artistic graffiti and that in a dialectical cycle they felt rewarded as their own process as a group seems to raise consciousness in each of the members. For instance, it is significant how some of the members like Rafa were conscious about their impact on the community; when talking about what he had learned most of all in the group, Rafa pointed out: “I have learned most of all that we search not only the wellness of ourselves but also the one of our surroundings. And that if we try to live from art then we should share our talent to our own neighborhood.” To illustrate this category related to consciousness, we can also read the perception Fernando shared about the most significant things of being part of the hip-hop group:

This group has helped me to open new doors, to open my mind; I can't find the words to describe it. One of the most significant things I appreciate is the change of the way of thinking I have experienced...you know, to see everyday things from a different perspective.

On the other hand, most of the respondents of the library-park supported the idea of the program as a place that might raise consciousness as it worked towards the building of the self. For instance, Fernanda argued that some members have built a project in life by discovering awareness around a certain discipline, such as photography, writing, dance, etc. offered by the library-park, idea which is linked with the category of *life project* explained further ahead. However not all the facilitators believed in an automatic connection between the fact of coming to the library-park and an immediate awareness; such is the case of Erika who perceived the library-park rather as an opportunity that could exist among others to take a nonviolent path in life.

I do think that the library-park is an alternative for people. It doesn't mean the disappearance of other alternatives, they exist and it's finally people's decision to follow one or the other one. (...) Most of the boys that could choice to belong to other kind of social logics, eventually decide to be here, but it doesn't mean those other options disappear. Reality and context keep being difficult but the library-park opens as a different space that can eventually change someone's ideas. (Erika)



Besides, according to Emma, from the social organization, the notion of consciousness raising has been strengthened during the last four years in projects with groups of youngsters or women through focusing on a psychosocial approach that works the *I*, the *We* and the *We are*. At the beginning -she explained- the projects used to focus only on urging people to become leaders or agents of citizen participation. However, in recent years, they have added the consciousness of the self as a central issue with the idea of helping people to find their capacity of learning to be. Emma explained that they aimed at promoting participation and decision-making not only in political platforms but mostly in more local or private settings such as the family, group of friends, school or neighborhood where the social practice began. It seems their goal has been to empower people for decision-making about their own life.

Furthermore, according to the findings a critical factor for raising consciousness in the programs was the use of the *Word*, namely being conscious about learning how to awake the use of language as a strong instrument for life and learning to live together. Emma told about how the Word might become a powerful tool for the process of consciousness; as we can see in the following statement, she highlighted that the Word was a healing element that must be boosted: “The Word is a healing element. We must allow it. In fact it can be even subversive in our society where it is normally not useful as it is seen as something with no economic benefit.” Indeed based on the observations and interviews I identified that in general the Word was driven and exalted as a potent tool for consciousness through different projects conducted by the programs, for instance, the group sessions in the hip-hop group, the writing workshops in the library-park or the collective activities with youngsters in the social organization. In such activities, there were open spaces to reflect on the use of the World and its potentiality.

In addition, another issue that emerged from the findings was the notion of consciousness but not only understood as an individual act but as a collective process addressed to the social being. It was indeed significant how relevant the notion of collective consciousness was for the respondents. In fact, the programs showed interest in self-awareness as much as in social awareness. Collective consciousness was considered a crucial element for social transformation, according to the informants. For example, the facilitators of the hip-hop group alleged they worked based on the assumption that social justice might be attained, if a construction of a collective will took place first. In addition, referring his experience in LASA, Liam explained that their strategy as a group was to learn to read the world by

creating study groups where different social topics were discussed based on a collective approach, to wit, in their study groups they did not read documents separately but always in a collective way so that a collective consciousness could take place. Liam also considered that reading alone those kinds of texts exclude the possibility of debate. He stated about this:

In our study groups we always read the texts collectively because only in this way debate can exist; you cannot debate with yourself... well, you can train but you cannot have a real debate when you are by your own. You can question things when you are alone but the real debate is given collectively, when you have the possibility of confronting a peer, question him or her, or let him or her question you... and it is not only based on what emanates from the text but on a critical consciousness about it.

It seems that in their work with the hip-hop group what the facilitators of LASA have tried to do is to replicate their strategy of collective learning for the purpose of motivating a collective consciousness and communal work among the members. They considered essential to promote social and political participation in a local and a national stage and for attaining this, they believed an assertion of oneself was necessary but yet more critical a collective consciousness. So what they did was to try to make of the hip-hop practice an opportunity of thinking and expressing their social context, in order to eventually make members to claim their rights and vindicate themselves as political subjects. The facilitators of the hip-hop group considered that having a historical consciousness and a consciousness of the world was critical for social transformation, and they believed hip-hop culture being a collective project allowed it. Thiago insisted on their purpose: “The idea is to determine ourselves as a collective project”.

Likewise, it was remarkable to see how participants perceived as critical their capacity of consciousness about their own territory. It seemed the members and facilitators have strengthened the idea of social consciousness by critically thinking about the territory, about its history, about how the territory has been built through social cohesion. Apparently an encounter of the living and active memory has been encouraged, mostly the one of how community organization has been constructed, how the community has been strengthened and how the force of the community organization was a central factor to the achievement of covering basic needs in the neighborhood. To illustrate this I point the case of Emma, a facilitator of the social organization, who explained how in her first participation as a member of the organization in a teenage group, she had the opportunity to go to a village in the bounds

of the city to enjoy a workshop. Being able to get away from the city and know a different place was very significant for her as she had never left the city before. According to her, the experience made her conscious about her own territory. She mentioned enthusiastically what she perceived that day:

That day I knew that it would be something different and that it would change my life because I had never left the neighborhood before, I didn't know any place outside; I believed that the whole world and life were just the four streets that shaped my neighborhood. I used to move around those four streets going from my place to the school or to the Church that were just two streets away from home.

In addition to the awareness about the territory, Emma emphasized that such particular workshop helped her to open up her mind about the potentiality of education. She later on continued participating in teenage projects and soon became facilitator for new generations of youngsters. Reflecting on her involvement with the organization, Emma recognized that the tie that linked her to the organization was the fact of “being able to be through the doing”; she stated that she has tried to extrapolate this issue to her work as a facilitator.

In conclusion a highly valued notion among the respondents was consciousness raising. In general facilitators and members agreed with the capacity of the programs to raise consciousness. It seems the programs are likely to raise consciousness about the self, about the social being and about the potentiality of the participants as agents of change. Furthermore, there is a significant association with other categories as with *a life project* because of the building of the self; *the making of political subjects* and *community organization* because consciousness raising helps to transcend particular subjects by a collective work and collective consciousness; and *dialogue* which is essential for social-awareness.

## **6.2 The making of political subjects**

Another significant category emerged from the data analysis was the notion of *the making of political subjects* as a critical need for the social well-being. This was especially emphasized by facilitators from the hip-hop group and the social organization. They considered that assuming the members of a community as potential political subjects was essential to empower them in order to cope with the main roots of the national conflict; indeed they

believed the Colombian conflict was essentially a political conflict and therefore there was a high educational urgency of making political subjects that could impel social transformation.

When talking about his experience with the hip-hop group, Thiago, one of the facilitators, acknowledged he has been asking himself how hip-hop culture can symbolize a scaffold for the making of political subjects. In addition questions like how to develop politics from the platform of hip-hop culture or how hip-hop could represent a political stance were conversed in the interviews. Essentially Thiago found that the idea of the amalgam between hip-hop and politics was possible if there was a promotion of critical thinking as a previous step. This is so because critical thinking helps to raise permanent questions about the social context and therefore might engage people with political participation as they realize that only through the latter is possible to transform such social context. This was clearly related to the previous category of *consciousness raising*. During the participant observations in the weekly non-formal sessions of work with the hip-hop group, I remarked that Thiago aimed to promote critical thinking in the members of the group by thought-provoking questions about their social reality but most of all by problematizing them. It seems that the intention of the facilitator was to drive people to go from a critical thinking to a practice of transforming the world through their actions, and take clear responsibility for such transformation. Thiago perceived hip-hop culture as a relevant means to attain such practice and therefore a powerful fuel for the making of political subjects; he added:

We search for the making of a political subject that is aware of his or her historical role and conscious about the fact that his or her actions determine the context as well as he or she is determined by it.

All in all it seemed that according to the facilitators of the hip-hop group politicization of subjects could be achieved by getting to know critically the social context, by trying to understand reality and specially by trying to understand the role of oneself in that reality.

On the other hand, concerning the social organization, questions like *how to assume citizenship* and *how to assume a political stance* appeared as permanent topics in the interviews. Indeed a relevant factor found was the question about how to urge people to truly assume citizenship by becoming political subjects. Alexander, one of the facilitators,

recognized there was an important challenge concerning citizenship education in the neighborhood and wondered to this regard as follows:

How is it possible to transform –in methodological and communicative terms– the imaginary about citizen participation and community organization? How can we continue opening paths to make more men and women to truly take responsibility as citizens? How can we make them feel significant part of the transformation of reality?

What he mainly pondered was how to achieve the transformation of a passive citizen to an active and purposing one; a citizen that could assume responsibility about his or her daily actions; a citizen that could critically discuss the political system in order to improve it towards a more equal and just society. And with this, eventually, the question would be how to promote a political impact for the development of the territory. According to Alexander, the practice of democratic participation seems extremely important for the making of political subjects, namely making of political participation a social habit. In addition the participants shared their pride about how the social organization has encouraged them to become political subjects. Some of the members as Marina recognized the learning that the organization had given her in the topic of political instruction as we can see in her following statement: “Little by little one learns all the mechanisms one has as a citizen. I have learned from the instructors here that it is imperative to have arguments when debating a topic or demanding a public request.” In fact, through Marina’s personal story told in the interview, it was possible to perceive how she had been politically empowered to face different processes in her life.

To sum up the making of political subjects seemed to be a topic of great concern for the facilitators and members of the programs. Most of them believed that in order to encourage political incidence it was necessary to raise consciousness in men and women about the significance of their role in social transformation in public topics such as health, education, culture and environment. Besides, it seems there is a strong connection between the category of *consciousness raising* and *the making of political subjects* as the latter needs a process of consciousness to take place. According to the facilitators, the programs were a powerful platform for the making of political subjects; therefore, they considered the programs had a high potentiality for educating people as political subjects by promoting their critical thinking, strengthening social and political responsibility through decision-making, and empowering them towards a political participation.

### 6.3 Community organization

In addition, a significant category issued from the data analysis was the notion about *community organization* which means conscious communal actions towards social well-being. In general, the findings in this study indicate that the participants held positive perceptions about the programs as a reference for the neighborhood of community organization that has contributed substantially to the development of the local area and has fostered the learning to live together. The informants believed that community organization had been developed due to solidarity, communion and stamina among people. The notion of community organization was seemed by members as facilitators as a highly powerful tool for achieving social development.

For example, in the case of the social organization, according to the respondents, the program seemed to be a reference of community organization especially in the following stages: first in local media and communication; secondly in specifically the social work with youngsters; and finally in the local development planning. Alexander, one of the facilitators with more years of experience in the organization, exalted this idea: “Organizations such as this one that started in the 90s were pioneers in the city for promoting the notion that a territory could exist only with the participation of people.” He later continued: “We have been a reference of an organization concerned about how to develop territories with greater dignity, more equity and more inclusion.” In addition, Ethan, another informant of the social organization, observed the presence of solidarity and determination among the facilitators of the program in their work with this statement:

What touches me more is the fact that when there is a committee meeting you can always find the facilitators talking about how to help others; it is the oddest idea! And even when there are moments that people don't appreciate or value their work, they insist and insist!

Thus it seemed that due to its capacity of community organization, the social organization had been able to last more than 28 years providing benefits to the neighborhood. Indeed dozens of social projects concerning the community have been run through the years as an example of community organization.

On the other hand, concerning the hip-hop group, the notion of community organization seemed as well significant for the members and facilitators. To this regard the feeling of

togetherness and unity as an identity issue was extremely appreciated. They expressed feeling themselves part of a group with a collective project based on community organization. To illustrate this, we can see the following statements concerning their feelings about being part of the group: “I feel myself in a constant feedback and fraternal union” (Pablo) and “I feel grateful with life and with my fellows who have pushed me to do and to be what I am today and also for being able to share with others” (Fidel). In fact, a good number of respondents have made part of their *comuna* since they were born or since an early age. As explained in a previous chapter, internal conflicts in the area built invisible walls around the neighborhoods of the same *comuna*. Thus several generations grew up with the restriction of crossing certain streets or blocks close to their homes. So the fact of joining a group made up of people that came from different neighborhoods has meant a brave act for the members, according to them. Almost all members have been part of the group for at least two years and some others for five or eight years. Most of them approached the group with an initial interest of learning about graffiti and rap. The findings indicate that they encountered over time much more than merely learning about hip-hop culture; when I collected data they expressed they had found friends that were almost like family, they had socialized more, they had learned from the others, and they had developed different social skills through community organization. When talking specifically about how they related to the others in the group, the majority considered to have good relationships despite some natural disagreements but even more they considered that they have learned to live together as a community. For instance, Bruce, one of the members, pointed out about this: “I feel myself in union and respect with people that are different from me.” And Rafa stated as well: “I get along with the others in a creative way, as if they were my brothers because they have been with me not only concerning my artistic life but also my personal life.” Therefore the feeling of togetherness appears to be an important component for them and for the strengthening of the group through the years. Moreover, Víctor pointed out what he had learned by joining the hip-hop group: “I have learned to dream, to teach, to live together, to love my community, to socialize.” It seems the idea of togetherness carries implicitly the idea of identity, belonging and unity. Although members of the hip-hop group have fluctuated because of different reasons such as age, work or personal priorities, the social fabric of the group is likely to have its bases in precisely the worth of belonging to a specific group where people together can feel committed to and part of a communal project.

Besides, concerning the library-park, it was possible to find positive perceptions about the capacity of the program to strengthen the learning to live together. The facilitators argued that one of the most relevant tasks they searched was to foster empathy by raising awareness of the necessity of it for society and eventual community organization. This was clearly illustrated by Fernanda in the following statement:

What we usually try is to generate knowledge of civic culture without making of it a literacy or official program; the idea is to promote a critical thinking about the significance of living in community or to learn how to live together, all this issued from the writing workshops, the cultural workshops, the librarian services. It's a way to educate people but not in a literacy or schooled way.

In conclusion, according to the respondents' perceptions, the findings show that the notion of community organization was a significant element, tightly linked with the idea of learning to live together. In fact, the respondents considered quite important the reflection about how to promote learning to live together as a powerful tool for strengthening social development. Furthermore, community organization is likely to be triggered by *dialogue*. The respondents believed that the programs, considered as social projects, might mean the possibility of the encounter and therefore an example of good practice for community organization and dialogue.

## 6.4 Dialogue

It was also possible to appreciate that the notion of *dialogue* was a strong category among members and facilitators of the programs. A significant theme that emerged among participants was indeed the significance of generating the encounter with the otherness. According to most of them the programs had worked continuously for the promotion of the relationships with others in the community exalting the necessity of dialogue. For doing so it seemed they have focused on how to create social fabric and cohesion highlighting that diversity made part of humankind and dialogue might be a platform for learning to live together.

In particular, I observed during the time of my fieldwork that the hip-hop group used to gather once a week in the evenings in non-formal educational sessions, guided by a facilitator, to discuss different topics related to social concerns; for instance I observed discussions of



topics such as environmental problems and social responsibility, the potentiality of teamwork, popular education, or the power of dreaming and fighting for one's dreams. These topics were usually discussed by first analyzing an image that was prepared by the facilitator detonating later a collective dialogue. Everyone was free to participate and sometimes members were asked directly to share their opinions or comments. It seemed that the fact of encouraging people to talk allowed a systematization of the practice of dialogue by the participants that led them to the habit of sharing their opinions in a respectful and peaceful way. In general the findings suggest that the members of the group had the idea of dialogue as a powerful tool for healthier relationships, e.g. Jason, one of the members, believed he had a good relationship with the other members because he had learned to respect them, listen to their opinions, and respect their ideas about plenty of different topics. Some of the respondents, as Juan David, noticed they were related to the others through their drawings –which is a form of dialogue– and through frequently talking to each other. There was also Bruce who stated the relevance of dialogue and action in the next statement: “We have shown that by talking and by action it is possible to make changes.” Bruce also reflected about how he got along with the others through dialogue when he mentioned: “I discuss with them; discussion joins us! Our relationship is just as if we were brothers and sisters.” In the weekly sessions of the hip-hop group, when a topic was being openly discussed they agreed to have opinions given by different means either orally or graphically, allowing members to draw their ideas and express themselves from their possibilities. Thus dialogue seemed a relevant component for the group. They perceived it as a crucial element for improving relationships as for learning to live together.

Indeed, in general, the notion of dialogue was highlighted by the facilitators. It seemed dialogue was a relevant element for facilitators as it was normally considered as their main scheme of work. When the facilitators were asked about what causes –in their opinion– the permanence of the members in the programs, they answered that, based on their reflection on the matter, they had perceived as one of the main reasons the interest in being part of a group where people can learn a different way to be related with the others; this way was based on dialogue, an element that members are not likely to have in their social environment. A second reason could be, according to the facilitators, the interest in having a space for social criticism as well as self-criticism which although was a challenge, meant a kind of anchor to

the programs. In their opinion, members felt positively driven by the opportunity to think their world, discuss it and eventually try to transform it.

Moreover, during the participant observations I noticed that dialogue was highly valued among members and facilitators as it was one of the most discussed issues and one of the stated objectives of the collective activities. I noticed as well they usually promoted dialogue in a thought-provoking way in such activities. For instance, the observations on site allowed me to perceive that in different projects led by the social organization the notions of *I* and *We* were exalted aiming at not only the acceptance but also the celebration of the otherness. This was done by in-depth reflections about the self in relation to the otherness. Besides, according to the interviewees, promoting dialogue has been an essential task of the social organization. In fact the informants stated that they had had to start from their own experience as they were natural differences among the facilitators and staff. They recognized there were indeed daily challenges concerning communication, acceptance, understanding, and even religious tolerance among the staff of the social organization. So, according to the respondents, how to dialogue and create community in their own organization had been a permanent challenge in the story of the program.

Another example of the relevance of dialogue was found in the library-park. In general terms, the findings indicate that the notion of dialogue that the library-park has proffered was quite significant for the informants. It seemed that such notion had been strengthened through frequent community practices. According to their point of view along with my observations, the library-park has helped to transform a formerly isolated place into an active and busy location; for most of the members it has become a point of reference, a meeting point for relationships and even friendships. There were several enthusiastic statements concerning this category. To illustrate this, we can read the quote of Felipe, a member of the library-park, describing what he thought the main role of the program was: “What we are doing here is falling apart walls, the community is being integrated, that’s the point of this macro-program: to integrate the society with cultural structures, with social structures, training, etc.” As for Felipe, the notion of a more integrated community seemed substantial for most of the participants’ experiences and dialogue played an important role for that. However the promotion of dialogue could not have taken place without the will of participation that the members have shown. It seems the community has contributed to their continuation over the

years and due to their commitment the site has become a meeting point, a place where plenty of events for children, youngsters and seniors have been developed. Eventually this has led to a significant change for the neighborhood, as most of the members pointed out.

Furthermore it is crucial to mention the high appreciation that members had about the relationship between members and facilitators in the programs. According to the oral narrations, it seemed that the process of learning had been based on horizontal relationships between the members and the facilitators; namely learning in an environment where it was not about a depository relationship –where one deposits his or her knowledge in the other one– but instead in an egalitarian relationship where everyone shares his or her knowledge and where participants’ experiences are highly valued. In addition it was also worth noting that the relationship between the facilitators and the members seemed of great importance for most of the facilitators as they considered it a blooming for dialogue and learning to live together. Some of the interviewees exalted the idea of a continuous sharing through an exchange of experiences as one of the most important things of learning in the programs. Specifically in the library-park, intergenerational relationships were perceived as a relevant learning practice because children, youngsters, adults and seniors could share together activities and dialogue could be promoted among them. About this issue Emanuel commented:

Considering the openness for all ages, with no limit of academic or intellectual path, I find wonderful the fact of being able of interchanging all that wealth of experience and knowledge between people that are apparently separated by culture or by age gap.

Thus the possibility of dialogue, its promotion and its practice were significant elements for the informants’ experiences in the programs. Moreover dialogue seemed to be associated with other categories, especially *community organization* and *social transformation* as it seems dialogue is crucial for social projects.

## **6.5 Social transformation**

Furthermore, a strong category that emerged from the findings was *social transformation*. According to the informants, one of the main foundations of the programs was to work towards social transformation which required the capacity of thinking that another reality was

possible. As Thiago, from the hip-hop group, mentioned: “It is necessary to think the world in a broader manner”. On the other hand, according to the facilitators, one condition for achieving social transformation was the build-up of social projects. In particular, Thiago stated that by belonging to the hip-hop group, he felt himself part of the construction of a social project. He strongly believed that the communal work emerged from the hip-hop group was a way of building social fabric in the midst of social and armed conflict. He perceived these kinds of programs as a possibility to strengthen social cohesion and create new social settings and therefore work towards social transformation.

As reported by the facilitators, besides foreseeing a different reality, the idea of a social project was to have an approach to the context directly from social subjects to enable social and political transformation. In particular, along the interview, the facilitators insisted on the importance of reading the territory before taking an action on it in order to achieve a genuine social transformation; this is so because the assumptions issued from such reading could allow more accurate work methodologies and better decision making concerning the project. And not only reading but conversing continuously with the territory might make a strong social project. An example of this is the case of the social project of urban horticulture *La Huerta* which, according to Thiago and Liam, had been an emblem of social transformation in the neighborhood by the hip-hop group. In this context *huerta* means a garden for growing mainly fruits and vegetables but also flowers and ornamental plants. This action of urban horticulture might be really significant in sectors such as the hillsides of Medellin which were populated without an urbanization plan totally neglecting green areas. So, they considered *La Huerta* as a great example of solidarity and communal spirit led by the hip-hop group together with LASA. For achieving it, facilitators and members had to read socially and geographically the territory with the interest of having a geopolitically located strategic point in the neighborhood with the purpose firstly, of being able to enter the *comuna* without risk despite of the paramilitary presence; and secondly, for creating a meeting point that could work as an anchor for the hip-hop group. Although this second purpose had not been achieved at the time of my fieldwork, observations allowed me to remark the significant social transformation that *La Huerta* has likely meant for the neighborhood as it has set off different relationships among the members of the community. Therefore this example of social project aiming at social transformation has been crucial for the strengthening of the group. One of the facilitators pointed out when reflecting about this experience: “La Huerta has permitted to

generate a different logic of relationships in the area.” (Thiago) Thus this example allows identifying the perception of the facilitators about the programs as social projects. In fact, the question of how to make of the programs a strong link within the neighborhood that could think the context, analyze it and promote social transformation remained in the facilitators concerns.

Thus social transformation through social development has been one of the main purposes of the programs. However it might not be an easy task when being in a context of conflict. Particularly, during the interview with Alexander, from the social organization, he pondered about how an organization composed of people from the same community had been able to survive 28 years in a *comuna* that had grieved all kinds of conflict such as militias, gangs and paramilitary groups. Although there were different factors that could explain this, he thought the organization had been a reference of a series of resistance actions –from the everyday life– that has led to eventual social transformation. For instance Alexander told about an action they used to do in the years when there was a high paramilitary violence in the neighborhood; instead of closing the doors during hours of increased violence on the streets, despite of fear of violence, they left them open to public to express their resistance stance:

When the paramilitary forces were here, there were violent armed confrontations any day at any time, so during the confrontations we used to close the doors of the organization (for security reasons), but once the confrontations were over we immediately used to reopen the doors because our resistance action was to keep open doors.

As a matter of fact, although in their first years the facilitators did some social interventions of education for Human Rights with people belonging to armed groups, they decided later to rather work directly with the community due to the fact they considered that the community was who could legitimize the existence of armed groups in the neighborhood. In fact the social organization was pointing towards the roots of the problematic through educational processes, having as a goal dismantling social constructs of violence such as fear as bases of social interaction. About this Alexander pointed out the importance of creating strong horizontal relationships among the community that could eventually generate a culture of trust: “We have opted for the promotion of appropriate ways of relationships, more equitable, more horizontal, where nor the force, nor the imposition, neither the fear are the devices to impose our ideas.” With this, it seemed that the sought social transformation was based on deep changes of social constructs.

In addition a significant task of the social organization has been the development of media and communication projects for the community. In fact Ethan and Alexander they both have an important role in the progress of this field by the program. Such media and communication projects have turned out of great incidence for social transformation due to the fact they are normally addressed to educational processes that could eventually transform lives of residents of the neighborhood. For instance Marina, an around 50-year old woman, told about how her world was changed since she started to participate actively in the social organization and was able to develop different communication skills:

Where did I learn about computers? ...in the organization. Where did I learn how to answer the phone? ...in the organization. Where did I learn public speaking? ...in the organization. Before coming to this organization I was afraid of doing all those things, I used to be so shy. Now I am so grateful to this organization. It has been indeed my school of life.

So, social transformation seemed to be a crucial matter for the members and facilitators of the programs. In general the interviews and observations demonstrated that the social transformation that the programs have yearned for had been strongly connected with the conceptual category aforementioned *consciousness raising*. Alexander commented about this:

One essential task we have is to raise awareness in the community about the importance that all people –women and men included– have for social transformation (...) We must be more conscious about the powerful contribution this kind of organizations can make for a better society, for a different world. The issue is how to achieve this collectively. How can we become protagonists of the project of a different and better nation?

It is significant that the notion of social transformation seems well related to the category of *consciousness raising* in the way that just a subject that deeply understands his or her social context and considers him or her substantial part of it is able to transform it. Liam, from the hip-hop group, also mentioned about this:

If we wish a different reality, it is indispensable to change our subjectivities. I'm not talking about the rhetoric such as 'the change is inside you or the change is personal', no, no, what I'm talking about is the notion of recognizing ourselves as subjects that exist as a result of a social context.

Additionally, social transformation, such as *community organization*, is supported by the category of *dialogue* in the sense that the latter is a crucial element for achieving it.

## 6.6 Social inclusion

Moreover the data analysis demonstrated that *social inclusion* was very much appreciated by the members and facilitators. Although not being mentioned with such words, social inclusion was implicit in two main themes: first, gratuity, as the programs offered everything free of charge willing equality of access to the services; secondly, open access to everyone which meant no discrimination of age, confession, origin, ethnicity, strata, sexual orientation or gender.

Indeed gratuity was a well valued aspect by informants. Particularly in the library-park, acknowledgment about gratuity was a recurrent topic in the interviews: the fact of having free access to workshops, of being able to use the computers and internet, of being able to borrow the hall auditoriums or the dancing rooms, or of being able to enter a comfortable and peaceful space –all this free of charge– was highly esteemed by the respondents. On the other hand, the members of the social organization were grateful for having the possibility of participating in the workshops and activities free of charge. They perceived the social organization as a “free school of life”.

The interviews demonstrated that the concept of social inclusion was relevant for most of the facilitators. It seemed they all consented with the idea that in the programs people can gather no matter their confession, their political belief, their age or their social context; they exalted that the programs were open to everyone. In this regard, María José, the general leader of the library-park, explained how since the beginning, the program was thought as a place with open access to everyone specially targeting the idea of the whole family:

We were seeking to create a place that would become an opportunity center, a space for gathering, a space whose intention was to do something for those who are in the street. So of course, the goal was to generate strategies promoting the participation of the entire family: maybe the mother could come to a specific workshop, then her son could be in reading workshops for kids, a teenager could be in ICTs training, the grandfather in a social circle... it's about thinking in everyone, to think in a comprehensive way.

María José's narrative excerpt illuminates the idea of openness to the community with no discrimination of age, gender or role with an important focus on the family as a social axis. Another remarkable subject pointed out by the facilitators of the library-park was how the notion of inclusion concerned activities inside and outside the site. Indeed an important aspect

regarding social inclusion revealed in the interviews and observations was the decentralization process fostered by the library-park. About this Fernanda, the general coordinator, confirmed that 30% of their work was dedicated to decentralized activities, which has meant extending the common services to remoted areas in the neighborhoods surrounding the organization. She pointed out that the target has been the communities that cannot access the services because of mainly economic reasons. In fact there have been two initiatives that have framed the decentralization process in the library-park. The first one was born when they realized that much of the community that lived in the highest parts of the *comuna* could not access the site because of the cost of the transport that could be equal to a meal for their families. So the first strategy was having a day of immersion directly in such neighborhoods installing tents maybe in a public court, in a health center or in the street. During that day of immersion –along four to six hours– they offered a sample of each of the current activities in the library-park, for instance temporary PC-rooms, provisional reading rooms, local memory games, grandparents as storytellers sharing with kids, among other activities. Circa 100 or 200 people gathered around and participated willingly; at the time of my fieldwork the library-park had already visited 16 different points in the sector through this monthly initiative. The second initiative was more about the library-park functioning as a magnet for early childhood schools around the neighborhood. These schools were free to book special visits to the library-park every 15 days during two-months in order to take their students to the site to enjoy all the services for children. The observations on site allowed me to confirm that there was specialized staff in the library-park that worked with each group of children together with the schools' teachers; it was as well possible to see a good number of children enjoying all over the place almost every day through different activities especially in the play-library-room and the PC-room. So according to Fernanda although this strategy attracted indeed public to the site, the way of empowering early childhood schools by giving them the option of participating in the initiative has been part of the decentralization of the center. Decentralization strategies seemed relevant to strengthen social inclusion.

Some informants also highlighted the inclusion of marginalized communities as a strong asset of the programs. They seemed aware about the efforts that the programs have made to embrace marginalized groups although they have been issued in unprivileged environments and conflict areas. Besides, most of the people felt proud of having this kind of programs in their *comuna* free of charge as well as being open and inclusive of all audiences.



To sum up, social inclusion represented in general a significant theme for the members and facilitators of the programs. This category seems related with the category of *the making of political subjects* in the sense that if a community can enjoy social inclusion in educational settings then the possibility of generating critical thinking and reflections on the context may foster political education.

## 6.7 A life project

Another significant aspect that findings have shown was that a good number of participants were aware of the fact they have shaped *a life project* within the programs. For instance, Violeta told her story in the social organization: several years ago she used to be a communal mother (a volunteer woman in charge of taking care of eight to ten children of the neighborhood during good part of the day in their own home) and since then she recognized the necessity of having a larger space so the children could play. In those years she was appealed by the building of the social organization and she became curious about the possibility of being able to make use of a space there. When she decided to approach the social organization and talked to the person in charge to ask for the possibility of using some rooms, she was surprised by the answer she got which was “what we can offer you here is to open you the doors of the organization so you can come and collaborate with us; there are a lot of things to do here, let us work together and start doing things together”. She was touched by this answer. It was not only about just receiving something but instead about creating it with the others. About this Violeta made reference to the old saying “If you give someone a fish, you feed him for a day, but if you teach him/her to fish, you feed him/her for a lifetime”. That is what she believed the organization did with everyone who approached. About this Violeta stated:

In fact this social organization is like a school of life for everyone; those who have passed through here have learned a lot. That’s its purpose. Maybe some people are working now in different places, outside this organization; nevertheless they carry the essence of what they have learned here.

Since then she has collaborated with the organization in different ways doing community work; she got involved little by little with different administrative tasks and projects through the years, including among them the general direction. It seems Violeta has built a life project in the organization since she also explained how thanks to the verve that the facilitators

shared with her she decided to engage in higher education and pursue her career even having three babies to take care and a challenging economic situation. Indeed during the interview she highlighted the significance of the organization to her life story and how she has built a life project within it.

Another remarkable case is the one of Ethan who has been part of the social organization for four years at the time of the interview. He approached the site for the first time when he and his break dancing group borrowed a room for rehearsals. They made use of the dancing room for a year and during that time he accepted an invitation to an audio-visual communication workshop proposed by the organization. He told about how he was somehow shocked the first day of the workshop when he realized all the people attending were punks (while he was a far cry from that). He mentioned:

I remember that it was one reason for me to wishing to quit the workshop at the beginning, I thought it would be different and I had never related with people different from me before... that differed from my preferences. But when I started I ran across with people that had been previously in the organization, so, in that sense they were not radicals, by the contrary they had that integral education that the organization normally gives meaning they treated me as if I were already from their group, with no distinction just because of my preferences.

Moreover Ethan exalted that due to his early involvement with the organization he was able to address his vocational interests to a technical school in scriptwriting; he commented proudly that he eventually obtained a degree. Later on, during a couple of years he collaborated in different audio-visual entertainment projects within the group of communication of the organization. Shortly after, the group decided to strengthen the educational processes in order to train especially young people in audio-visual communication skills. Through this project he took the step of being a member to becoming a facilitator in charge of the ICTs training. He explained that he had observed in himself a great improvement not only in the audio-visual ability but also in his communication skills for life; he said that he had learned to share and discuss ideas in public boards due to his participation in different spaces representing the organization. During the conversation with Ethan, he often reflected on the constructive presence of the organization in his life. Specifically, reflecting in his own path, he stated:

If you look at me, what you can see is that I am the result of this organization, much of what I am comes from here; the way I speak, the way I think, everything, I owed it to the organization.

Thus through these two cases it is possible to perceive the social organization as a nest of possibilities that generates a life project to some people, a project in which they deeply believe. Moreover it seems that Ethan and Violeta have reinforced the idea of the magnitude of the self by appreciating *to be* through the *doing*, specifically a social doing that allows them to help others while helping themselves. In both cases, it was possible to observe along the interviews how proud they were about the path of life they have built and how grateful they felt to the social organization as a critical ground for achieving it.

On the other hand, it was remarkable to see how in many cases a sporadic participation in a workshop in the library park could foster a life project. It seems a key issue that there were several interviewees that considered that a life project was born for them by a first shy participation in some of the activities offered in the library-park. For instance, when talking about the significance of coming to the library-park and making use of the Writing and Literature workshops, Emanuel, who was around 50 years old, stated how his vocation for writing –which had been veiled before in his life– was awakened due to the opportunity given by the library-park:

It has meant for me a possibility of rediscovering and shaping my life at this point of my life. I guess it is an activity that I could have started earlier in my life or generated during my time in college, nevertheless I think it is wonderful of being able to do it and that the library-park offers it to me now.

A similar case was Milena, an around-50-year-old woman, who has found her passion in the Writing and Literature workshops as well. Milena shared in these lines her most significant experience in the library-park:

The most significant experience here has been my encounter with literature and the discovering of something inside of me, my passion for writing, as a particular experience, the possibility of writing. I didn't have that in mind before and suddenly I found it, I started to enjoy it, to do it... discovering that passion has been the best experience for me.

By his part, Samuel, a young man of 21 years old, has discovered his passion in life through the Photography workshops that he had been taking for more than a year: “My life has been

photography. I'm not capable anymore of walking around the street without shooting at least once per day." Samuel showed in the interview how by discovering such passion, he created a life project strengthening his participation and his own preparation in photography in the library-park and making it an essential part of his life.

With a similar enthusiasm, Derek pointed out he had made of hip-hop not only an entertainment activity but a life project. He insisted on the idea that being part of the hip-hop group has saved his life as it has meant a way of living away from violence addressing his life project to education of hip-hop culture.

This category seems associated with the category of *social inclusion* as the latter, once strengthened, may foster social programs for the community that may boost projects of life in some members. Besides, the category of *consciousness raising* is linked with the category of *a life project* as an awareness by the participants is needed for the building of their projects of life. Thus, in the declarations above it is possible to identify how a number of participants, by actively participating in the programs, have discovered or strengthened a new passion in their lives that has become an engaging life project.

## **6.8 Appropriation of the public space**

Last but not least findings show one particular issue: the relevance of *the appropriation of the public space* for the participants i.e. how the members and facilitators of the programs have assumed different public spaces as their own and how they have felt identified with them. A good example of appropriation of the space was found in the case of break dancers of the library-park that made use of the main entrance as their dance training room for practicing their acrobatic and rhythmic routines. Every day, during at least three hours per day, it was possible to hear loud hip-hop music that heated the spirits of passers-by, bounced off all corners of the place and offered a striking *impromptu* dance spectacle. Two members of a break dance group, Diego and Paula, who trained two to three hours per day in the library-park, expressed themselves about the opportunity of having a place available. Paula stated:

We have come here to train for about two years; before we were in another dance academy and we couldn't continue training there. Then the library-park gave us a space

to train. At the beginning they offered us dance rooms which we used, but then we decided to stay here outside in the entrance.

Diego followed:

We started to come because of the free-of-charge dance rooms but then we saw the space outside and we found it better, because inside it can get really warm, and also because the environment is cooler here –even if it is easy to get distracted– but we think it is more...more friendly here outside (at the entrance) than inside in the rooms. (...) And because here the atmosphere is something different, you can feel the people and so on; inside it is just us and that's it!

Additionally, the library-park has provided to the group of break dancers tools to organize local events and to participate in national competitions. Nowadays it seems difficult to imagine the library-park without the break dancers and their hip-hop beats at the entrance. Some participants even mentioned how at the beginning there were some people that complained about the noise as silence was supposed to be the essence of a library; however it seems they soon understood that a project as the library-park was different in such topic (in fact there were not silence ads in the building) and they accepted the appropriation that break-dancers had made of the space.

We can find another example of appropriation of the public space in the library-park with Felipe who went every morning to have a seat on a couch of the reading room for reading the main national newspapers. He told about how he could spend hours every morning in the library-park as he felt himself at home. In addition to the aforementioned statements, the observations at the library-park allowed me to witness how members have appropriated the site making frequent use of it in a very comfortable manner, enjoying freely the day at the site, just sitting, reading or talking with each other. This category was highlighted as well by the facilitators of the library-park. Most of them remarked how along the years the community has lived an important process of appropriation of the public space. Most of the interviewees agreed with the idea of how powerful the process of appropriation has been as they have witnessed it by observing members making use of gardens, outdoor areas, the reading-couches, the kids' room, etc. To this regard, Erika stated: "Everyone finds –according to his or her particular need– a niche where education is possible." And she continued: "People come here to look for a bit of their lives in the library-park bearing in mind what they like... from kids to adults...because here there's a wide range of programs; there's something different to do every day." So, in general, most of the facilitators perceived the library-park as

a place that has been openly appropriated by the members and they considered it a positive response towards it.

Moreover, Fernanda explained the significance of ensuring the members their right of making use of the space. According to her, as facilitators they should promote such appropriation constantly by proposing creative use of the space and by accepting members' demands. In particular, as stated by both Fernanda and Erika, a relevant project that has shown the empowerment of people in the public space has been *Agroteca*, a project for recovering open vacant spaces that surround the library-park to transform them in green areas with food gardens. It had been functioning for more than a year at the moment of my fieldwork and people seemed to have adopted the idea that the growing gardens were public spaces but responsibility of all. Every Wednesday several people from the community went to take care of the green areas and helped them to grow. Through this project it seemed they had appropriated the site as if it was their garden in their own home.

On the other hand, in the case of the hip-hop group it is interesting to observe that the appropriation of the public space has been addressed towards the *comuna*, as they lack of headquarters. Indeed when asked about how the group had impacted the community, most of them agreed they were an example of appropriation of the public space mainly through the collective artistic graffiti that have been painted from a critical perspective and with a social drive on different walls of the *comuna* about diverse topics such as sexual diversity or identity. They felt proud of having participated in such symbolic communal actions. On the other hand, most of them considered that the aforementioned project called *La Huerta* has been of great impact for the community and for themselves. So, hand in hand with the supporting social organization LASA, the hip-hop group managed to clear an abandoned urban ground, embedded between brick houses that had been functioning as rubbish dump for decades. According to the members, it was a colossal task to transform that piece of land into a garden, but it was possible with the collaboration of all. The idea was to turn such space into a community garden, namely a garden where the neighbors could participate, could make positive use of it and should take care of. Although there are still many challenges for the conservation and use of the garden, this project has shown different positive outcomes according to several participants. For instance, it has increased social activity among neighbors; and it has created a sense of dignity, and enhanced the community through

environmental responsibilities. The findings show that the majority of the members and facilitators of the hip-hop group experienced a process of consciousness raising and felt vastly satisfied about the project of *La Huerta* and found it one of the most significant communal actions of which they have been part.

In addition an interesting issue I noticed during the observations in the social organization was that the program constantly boosts the notion of *living the territory* which means enjoying living the neighborhood and the city by knowing them quite well and not being afraid of gathering around. After decades of violence, it seemed that going out for a walk or just enjoying the day outside were acts of resistance. In the case of the projects with teenagers, they were constantly taken to different corners of the neighborhood and nearby to enjoy recreational activities such as in the library-parks of the sector with the purpose of make them learn about their local history and live the neighborhood. On the other hand, Emma also illustrated the project they led with elderly women for whom recreational and educational activities were organized not only in the *comuna* but also in the city, for instance going to the theatre or having a picnic in the botanical garden, activities carried out for the first time for most of them. Ostensibly all these projects allowed people to live the territory freely as well as to expand their horizons.

Therefore the appropriation of the public space seemed a relevant feature to understand people's experiences thoroughly. The notion of the appropriation of the public space seemed highly valued by most of the respondents through the exaltation of co-responsibility and identification with the site. Besides, it seems well related to the category of *community organization* as it implies a communal work for a collective well-being.

## **6.9 Concluding thoughts**

The findings from the fieldwork have been shared in this chapter. When analyzing the data, several themes emerged from the interviews, focus group and notes of the observations; then, driven by the research questions those themes were integrated and categorized by an in-depth reflection leading to the following conceptual categories:

- Consciousness raising
- The making of political subjects
- Community organization
- Dialogue
- Social transformation
- Social inclusion
- A life project
- Appropriation of the public space

These conceptual categories were generated based on the relevance given by the informants and the concurrence on the three programs. It is interesting to observe that the conceptual categories have strong relationships among each other. For instance *the making of political subjects* needs *the consciousness raising*; at the same time, *social inclusion* entails *the making of political subjects*; *dialogue* may boost *community organization* and *social transformation*; *social inclusion* foster *a life project*; *the appropriation of the public space* is possible when *community organization* has taken place; and *consciousness raising* might be addressed to all the other categories as it might give a platform for critical thinking of the context. In conclusion, the conceptual categories show a complex structure of analysis and further interpretation.

With the main purpose of answering the research questions, in the next chapter, the interpretation of the findings is presented based on the aforementioned analytical framework composed by Freire's and Smith's thinking.



# 7 The role of the selected non-formal education programs for peacebuilding

In the preceding chapter findings that emerged from the data analysis were reported. To a large degree the central aim of chapter 6 was to approach the reader to the source as close as possible. Now the objective of this chapter is to discuss such findings with regard to the specific research questions through the lenses of the analytical framework composed by Freire and Smith's thinking with the purpose of engaging a profound understanding of the phenomenon under investigation that allows finding implicit issues of the potentiality of non-formal education for peacebuilding (Smith et al. 2016). For analytical reasons, the conceptual categories showed in the findings are first driven towards the research questions based on the notions of the Freirean model of consciousness raising taking into consideration as well the elements for education for peacebuilding explained in chapter 2, and secondly based on the framework proposed by Alan Smith about education and peacebuilding. As a reminder the specific research questions are

- *How do members perceive the role of the non-formal education programs?*
- *How do facilitators perceive the role of the non-formal education programs?*

The interpretation is made in order to answer the general research question: *What is the role of the non-formal education programs for peacebuilding in Medellin?* And therefore achieve the purpose of the research which is to explore the role of non-formal education for peacebuilding in Medellin through the analysis of the members and facilitators' perceptions of the programs.

## 7.1 Interpretation of the perceptions of members and facilitators about the programs

### 7.1.1 Interpretation based on Paulo Freire's model of critical consciousness

Earlier in chapter 3 the analytical framework was explained. As a reminder the four notions corresponding to the Freire's model of critical consciousness are stated here below; they are used as a frame of interpretation.

- Consciousness Raising as Social Awareness
- Critical Pedagogy: Problem-posing Education
- Dialogue
- Praxis and pedagogy of hope

To start with, based on the analysis of the conceptual categories it is possible to deduce that in general the members experience a noteworthy consciousness raising by participating in the programs. Based on the notions within the Freire's model of education, it is possible to link the conceptual category of *consciousness raising* with two concepts of the model, the one of *consciousness raising for social awareness* and *critical pedagogy: problem-posing education*. Evidences from the narratives show that the facilitators hold positive perceptions about the capacity of the programs to raise consciousness through their work by fostering the building of the self. It is as if the members could be aware of their own potentialities by participating in the activities and workshops offered by the programs. In addition the raised process of self-consciousness often demands social awareness by promoting a constant consideration of the otherness as part of oneself. In fact, about the concept of conscientization Freire states:

If it is successfully carried out, it allows individuals to assume critically the position they have in relation to the rest of the world. The critical taking up of this position brings them to assume the true role incumbent on them as people. This is the role of being Subjects in the transformation of the world, which humanizes them (1974:110).

So, findings suggest that the idea of consciousness raising that the respondents show is also understood as a collective practice. In this sense, it seems associated with the notion of *social awareness*. According to Freire the consciousness of the world is a strong task of education and the optimal way to raise it is by thinking oneself with the others and with the world; he states that "to be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world. It is to experience that world as an objective reality, independent of oneself, capable of being known" (1974:3). Furthermore the idea of collective consciousness drives to the category of *community organization* which implies an action as an answer to social awareness. The facilitators perceive the concept of *community organization* as a conscious way to engage with the world. Founded on the statements of the findings, it is possible to infer that through the process of consciousness raising, they become more concerned about their surroundings and their social responsibility for their neighborhood. This may lead to the willing of social

transformation. In this regard, Freire deeply believes in action for transforming the world. He states:

The normal role of human beings in and with the world is not a passive one. Because they are not limited to the natural (biological) sphere but participate in the creative dimension as well, men can intervene in reality in order to change it (1974:4).

Thus it is possible to deduce that the awareness of social responsibility by the members might lead them to transformative action. For instance most of the members of the hip-hop group consider their participation in the group not only as a personal benefit but also as a social action, a topic as well connected to the Freirean idea of liberation as praxis: “Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (Freire 2000:79). Indeed Freire considers that the reflection together with action is the foundation for knowledge and creation.

The category of consciousness raising has a strong connection with the rest of the categories due to the fact it seems crucial for fostering each of them. The awareness of the self and of the social being may be boosted by a critical thinking. Finally, the category is highly linked with several elements for education for peacebuilding such as *community cohesion*, *social justice*, *consensus-building*, *appreciation of the otherness*, and *conscientization and critical thinking* as a crucial component for each of them.

In particular, the conceptual category of *community organization* is related to three notions of the Freire’s model: *consciousness raising for social awareness*, *dialogue* and *praxis and pedagogy of hope*. To start with, it is linked with *consciousness raising for social awareness* because it implies not only an acknowledgment of the self but of the otherness, namely *community organization* gives rise to the awareness of the amalgamation of the *I* and the *We* which means that the *I am* is possibly because there is a *We are*. Freire states about this point: “The thinking Subject cannot think alone. In the act of thinking about the object s/he cannot think without the co-participation of another Subject. There is no longer an *I think* but *we think*” (1974:137). This category demands a process of conscientization through which the self can be understood only if it is perceived as part of a community. On the other hand for achieving community organization, *dialogue* seems an essential condition as it allows the encounter and the learning to live together. In like manner, the category of *community*

*organization* is linked with the notion of *praxis and pedagogy of hope*. This is so because the thoughtful meaning that the informants give to their projects reinforces the idea of action and hope for new contexts. The findings suggest the significance that respondents give to the communal actions that the programs have fostered in the neighborhoods for social development. Indeed, they consider community organization as a condition for social development. This category is clearly associated with some elements for education for peacebuilding such as *citizenship participation, consensus-building, dialogue and community cohesion* for which community organization seems a prerequisite. In general, the informants perceive the notion of *community organization* as a significant element that distinguishes the programs. Additionally they consider that the main benefit of having a strong community organization is social transformation.

Moreover, the category of *the making of political subjects* seems linked with the Freirean notion of *critical pedagogy and problem-posing education* as well as with the notion of *consciousness raising for social awareness*. This category is perceived to be highly relevant by the informants as they consider that a conscious and critical political participation is a central need in their context. In this regard, it seems that especially the hip-hop group and the social organization encourage the learning and practice of reading the world with the purpose of promoting political participation in the community. The facilitators of the programs seem aware of the fact that for being able to read the world, a process of conscientization is needed. In fact it is a mutual relationship: consciousness leads to the reading of the world and vice versa. Indeed Freire (1974) ponders about the significance of reading the world for the awakening of the consciousness and the importance of the latter for becoming politicized. Specifically the participants highlight the necessity of thinking the territory in order to transform it. So, for making political subjects, a problem-posing education seems necessary. In particular this kind of education is a strong component of the programs according to the facilitators and it seems they intent to do it by constantly problematizing the subjects. Freire states specifically about the critical pedagogy that “In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (2000:83). Furthermore, this category seems linked to different elements for peacebuilding such as *citizenship participation, consensus-building, community cohesion, and awareness of history and the world* for which a politicization of the subject is a

condition. With regard to this, Freire (2000) talks about the critical assumption of the status of historical subjects in the process of conscientization; he considers it essential for transforming the world.

Furthermore, the category of *dialogue* –a recurrent theme among the respondents– is directly connected with the homonym notion of *dialogue* that Freire suggests. It seems the members and facilitators recognize what Freire argues which is that “only through communication can human life hold meaning” (2000:77). Indeed the idea of the promotion of dialogue was highlighted as one of the most important duties of facilitators. The findings suggest that dialogue is understood in a comprehensive way connecting with the idea of learning to live together. Freire states about this: “Dialogue is an I-Thou relationship, and thus necessarily a relationship between two Subjects” (Freire 1974:52). This means that to be able to dialogue demands the assumption of the other as a subject, therefore it suggests the learning to live together.

On the other hand, the way the group perceives their dialogical participation in their collective activities and workshops highlights the relationship between dialogue and education that Freire points out: “Education is communication and dialogue. It is not the transference of knowledge, but the encounter of Subjects in dialogue in search of the significance of the object of knowing and thinking” (1974:139-140). It is interesting to observe in the findings the exaltation that members make about the way of learning in the programs that is mainly through a horizontal relationship instead of a traditional vertical relationship between facilitators and members. Indeed most of them highlight the positive environment that facilitators can create by promoting a kind of learning where people freely share their experiences and are able to dialogue with each other. These thoughts may be associated with the Freirean notions of dialogue and anti-dialogue. Freire believes anti-dialogue is the opposition of dialogue as “it involves vertical relationships between persons” (1974:46). Evidence shows that the participants value more the experience of learning in terms of experiencing a dialogical act than the fact of acquiring knowledge. In this regard, Freire states:

Knowledge is not *extended* from those who consider that they know to those who consider that they do not know. Knowledge is built up in the relations between human beings and the world, relations of transformation, and perfects itself in the critical problematization of these relations (1974:109).

Dialogue seems well connected with several elements for peacebuilding such as *consensus-building*, *community cohesion*, *cooperative learning* and *appreciation of the otherness*. I can infer from this that the promotion of dialogue may be a powerful tool for building peace as it exalts the recognition of the other.

Moreover the conceptual category of *social transformation* is mainly related with two Freirean concepts: *dialogue* and *praxis and pedagogy of hope*, showing as well a link with *consciousness raising*. Freire considers that the essence of dialogue is the word, and by using the word, it becomes possible to name the world. Naming the world seems a condition for social transformation because in order to transform the social environment, it is necessary to think and name it first. Besides, dialogue gives occasion to make use of the word which is a prerequisite for humanization, according to Freire: “Dialogue, as the encounter among men to “name” the world, is a fundamental precondition for their true humanization” (2000:137). Most of the respondents consider their experiences in social projects within the programs as an opportunity of encounter with the otherness through social activities. Furthermore, *social transformation* implies *praxis* which means action and decision-making. On the other hand the conceptual category of *social transformation* is a positive factor for peacebuilding as it means an awareness of the possibility of action and choice which is related with the notion of hope. Moreover this category seems to keep away –at least in the mind of people– the conditions of oppression and fear as the actions addressed towards social transformation represent the capacity of building a new reality through social projects.

Additionally the conceptual category of *social inclusion* is a significant issue emerged from the data. Although not mentioned with such words, the respondents were highly appreciative of the inclusion they perceived through gratuity and open access to the programs. Whereas the category of social inclusion is not clearly related to any of the notions of the Freirean model of education, it shows the awareness that members and facilitators have about the openness and integration that the programs offer to the community so it may be indirectly linked with the notion of *consciousness raising as social awareness*. It is still significant to mention that particularly the decentralization process that the library-park has boosted is a powerful tool for fostering social inclusion. And in turn social inclusion is a necessary component for peacebuilding as it is based on the recognition of human rights.

On the other hand the category of *a life project* seems related with the Freirean notions of *praxis and pedagogy of hope*, and *consciousness raising*. This is so due to the fact that being able to imagine and work towards a conscious path of life seems based on the notions of praxis and hope which antagonize defeatism. It seems some of the members, despite their tough social conditions, recognize enthusiastically the life project they have been able to build by actively participating in the programs. They acknowledge as well the potentiality of the programs to encourage constructive paths of life such as photography, literature, hip-hop, communications or working for social development that may help people to keep away from paths of violence. Freire supports the significance of hope for humanity with this statement: “I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream. Hope is an ontological need.” (1994:8) However, he argues that hope alone can lead to pessimism if it is not accompanied by action. The life project that most of the members have boosted is an example of praxis grounded on hope. From the findings I infer that several respondents are able to foresee a turning point in their lives that makes them feel optimistic about the future as long as they commit themselves. Thus it seems the notion of hope for a better future through action is a strong element for some members. Freire reinforces the notion for hope and action by saying: “Hope is rooted in men’s incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search” (2000:91). This is well related with one element of education for peacebuilding which is *pedagogy of hope* and *optimism*. There is a direct link that highlights the relevance of the notion of hope and action in educational settings based on self-realization. And certainly hope is a powerful tool for building peace.

Furthermore evidence suggests that the conceptual category of *appropriation of the public space* is linked with two notions of the Freire’s model. First, it seems linked with the notion of *consciousness raising as social awareness* due to the fact that the findings show a strong awareness by the participants about the potentiality of the programs to boost social integration by offering public spaces for gathering. They highly value the library-park, the social organization and the hip-hop group as meeting points for socializing in a peaceful manner and most of all as places where dialogue and relationships can take place. It seems they have appropriated the space not only because of the space itself but because of the opportunity to make use of it for socializing. Secondly, the conceptual category seems linked with the notion of *praxis and pedagogy of hope* because most of the respondents recognize the significance of feeling themselves safe in a public space for their hope about a better future. Moreover, the

category is related with the notion of pedagogy of hope when observing how the projects as *Agroteca or La Huerta* -explained in the previous chapter- may foster people’s hope and action for an enriched future in the neighborhood. However it is not clear if there is a direct correlation between the conceptual category of *appropriation of the public space* with elements of peacebuilding. That means that the positive perception that the respondents have about the space, does not necessarily implies the promotion of peaceful environments. Nevertheless is relevant to state that the category highlights the necessity of respect of common rules to make of a public site a peaceful and enjoyable one and safe for everyone. This supposes the promotion of community cohesion which is an element of education for peacebuilding.

To sum up, once the members’ and facilitators’ perceptions have been discussed, a schematised summary of the interpretation of the linkage of the conceptual categories issued from the findings to the notions of the model of education of Freire is presented here upon.

Freire's notions: Conceptual categories:	Consciousness raising for social awareness	Critical Pedagogy / problem-posing education	Dialogue	Praxis and pedagogy of hope
Consciousness raising	✓	✓		✓
The making of political subjects	✓	✓		
Community organization	✓		✓	✓
Dialogue	✓		✓	
Social transformation	✓		✓	✓
Social inclusion	✓			
A life project	✓			✓
Appropriation of the public space	✓			✓

✓ = probable existing link between the Freire’s notions and the conceptual category.

Table 7.1: Summary by the author of the interpretation of conceptual categories based on the analytical framework of Freire.

As we can notice in the table above there is a strong perception by the participants about the program as a platform for consciousness raising for social awareness. They give a strong relevance to such category. Likewise the consideration of praxis and pedagogy of hope are well avowed. The idea of dialogue is acknowledged in lesser degree however it seems still significant for the conceptual categories concerning collective perceptions such as community



organization, social transformation or social inclusion. Finally, the table shows that the notion of critical pedagogy: problem posing education is perceived mainly in relation to the making of political subjects.

**7.1.2 Interpretation based on Alan Smith’s analytical framework**

With the purpose of complementing the exploration of the programs that concerns the topic of peacebuilding, I will make use of the analytical framework based on Alan Smith’s thinking that I recapitulate here above for facilitating the reading:

<b>The role of education in conflict-affected societies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education as a humanitarian response</li> <li>• Conflict-analysis of education and ‘do no harm’</li> <li>• Education and peacebuilding</li> </ul>
<b>Context of educational operation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During relatively peaceful stability</li> <li>• During conflict</li> <li>• In the aftermath of conflict</li> <li>• Post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation</li> </ul>
<b>Level of action within an education system:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political context, policy and administration</li> <li>• Curriculum skills and content</li> <li>• Learning resources and textbooks</li> <li>• Teachers</li> </ul>

Table 7.2: Summary by the author of Smith’s proposal of contexts of educational intervention, levels of action within an education system and three perspectives of the role of education in conflict-affected societies (Smith 2005, 2011).

According to the interpretation of findings and based on the above mentioned framework of analysis, it is possible to find some differentiation but also similarities between the programs that allow me to take the following argumentative stance: the study has shown that the selected programs may play two types of roles. In the case of the library-park it plays the role of education in the level of ‘do no harm’ whereas the hip-hop group and the social organization play the role of *education and peacebuilding*. For more precision, the library-park works on the bases of a conflict-sensitive approach which means they are aware of the conflict but try not to drive their educational efforts directly to it. It is important to mention that they make an intentional effort not to fuel conflict by considering, among other things, social inclusion as a foundation of the library-park such as equal access for all. In addition, the fact of having created a peaceful environment identifies the library-park with a do-no-

harm place. On the other hand the hip-hop group and the social organization play the role of *education and peacebuilding* in the sense they deliberately works towards the building of more peaceful societies through consciousness raising initiatives and critical pedagogy workshops. Moreover their endeavours of promoting critical political analysis and the making of political subjects are clear stances towards the building of more just and more peaceful communities and towards the commitment to non-violence (Smith 2011).

Concerning the context of educational operation, the programs have been born during conflict. In particular the social organization, which is the program with more years of existence, has last 28 years despite violent armed conflict in the neighborhood. By its part the hip-hop group was also issued during conflict and has had to halt activities during times of rise of conflict in the area. And finally it is important to note that in the case of the library-park, although it was launched during remaining national conflict, the inaugural year is particularly related with an aftermath of a strong local conflict, a significant historical fact according to participants. However, at the time of my fieldwork, there was a relatively peaceful stability.

Lastly, regarding the level of action with an education system, it seems the hip-hop group works mainly with curriculum skills and content, as well as with political context. Their focus has been on developing the necessary skills for participating in the hip-hop culture as a liberating process, on one hand; and on the other hand, analyzing social content to promote critical thinking and making of participants political subjects. Next, the library-park works likely in the level of learning resources as it offers an open public center of information and material to the members related to culture, literature and sciences. It also works in a lesser way on publishing their own material from literature and writing workshops (for instance newspapers and literary works). Finally it seems the social organization works in the level of facilitators (teachers) as well as of content and political context. This is so because it has a strong focus on forming leaders such as on empowering participants as critical political subjects. To sum up, it is possible to observe that non-formal education may have different levels of action in conflict affected-contexts.

To recapitulate, we can find here below a summary table of the interpretation of findings based on the framework of analysis (Smith 2005, 2011) of contexts of educational

intervention, levels of action within an education system and three perspectives of the role of education in conflict-affected societies met with the selected non-formal education programs:

	The role of education in conflict-affected societies	Context of educational operation	Level of action within an education system
<b>Hip-hop group</b>	Education and peacebuilding	During conflict	Curriculum skills, content and political context
<b>Social organization</b>	Education and peacebuilding	During conflict	Facilitators (teachers), content and political context
<b>Library-park</b>	Do no harm	During conflict	Learning resources

Table 7.3 Summary of the interpretation of data of the three non-formal education programs based on the analytical framework issued from Alan Smith thinking (2005, 2011).

## 7.2 Concluding remarks

Finally to answer the research questions, I state that the facilitators and members perceive the programs as a significant platform for building peace. This statement is based on the following concluding observations:

In general, the participants believe that the programs raise consciousness about the self as a transformative element for society. *Conscientization* seems a strong component of participants’ experiences. Furthermore, the process of consciousness seems also strengthened towards social awareness. In addition, they consider that the programs are dialogical. And, most of all, they held an optimistic perception of the facilitators as promoters of dialogue. According to the members and facilitators’ perceptions, the programs promote principles and actions that contribute to build peaceful societies, specifically they endorse community organization, social transformation, appreciation of the otherness and dialogue. Furthermore, they work towards the making of political subjects by fostering citizenship participation through political engagement based on a process of consciousness of the role one can play for social change by engaging with the community through social projects and decision-making. About this, Romi and Schmida point out that “NFE uses democratic forms of persuasion and decision-making –characteristic of the post-modern era– as substitutes for traditions of behaviour and coercive, authoritative regulations” (2009:269).

The study has shown that the potentiality of non-formal education programs for peacebuilding may have different forms of expressions: in particular the hip-hop group offers a peaceful alternative of way of life to youngsters in the correspondent *comuna*. The experience that members may get by actively participating in the group gives them the opportunity to rethink themselves as active contributors to their social surroundings through art, specifically through hip-hop music and graphic street art. They do achieve to see themselves as agents of change by a process of problematization and politicization of themselves. In addition, through this non-formal education program, participants exalt dialogue and collective consciousness as a necessary element for building peaceful societies. On the other hand the social organization is a grassroots initiative that has represented an act of peaceful resistance against conflict groups in the correspondent *comuna*. The experience that members may learn by actively participating in the activities gives them the opportunity to make part of an education process that exalts community organization and socialization as crucial elements for building peaceful environments. Besides, consciousness raising and politicization are both essential strategies used by this program with the purpose of promoting social transformation in the community. Moreover the library-park, being a public cultural center, offers an alternative for social and non-educational practices and use of spare time in the correspondent *comuna*. They offer learning and socialization activities based on social inclusion. The experience that members can have by actively participating in the activities may lead them to collective consciousness and building of the self through life projects. Additionally, a positive appropriation of the public space seems to be a significant element for contributing to building peaceful environments by this program.

Most members and facilitators are aware of different benefits they enjoy by participating in the initiatives. Indeed, based on their experiences of being part of the programs, it seems they have a positive perception about the sites as peaceful places. Particularly in the cases of the library-park and the social organization, they perceive their participation in the activities as an opportunity to make use of a peaceful and safe site in the neighborhood where to gather and learn. The programs seem to offer the opportunity of appropriation of a safe and peaceful public space to a community whose neighborhood has been built in underprivileged and conflict conditions. In this sense, it seems the programs work based on social inclusion and through community cohesion.

As a final remark, I would like to highlight the significance that the explored programs have for education for peacebuilding in Medellin, Colombia. Although each of the programs is located in a specific comuna, the three of them may be observed as models of good practices for other *comunas* in the city. Two of them are grassroots initiatives whereas one of them is a result of public-private cooperation; however the three programs show a similar interest in social inclusion and social change capable of transforming conflict. In particular, concerning the notion of pedagogy for hope, the study has evidenced that the members and facilitators of the selected programs are hopeful about a just and peaceful society and they believe in the collective consciousness for achieving it. Most of them feel active part of the peacebuilding process, but although they do not necessarily name it like such, their perceptions support several implicit elements for peacebuilding such as community cohesion, consensus-building, dialogue, appreciation of the otherness, social inclusion, decision-making and critical thinking. Concerning this, Datzberger states that “although not explicitly designed as peacebuilding interventions, NFE programmes show great potential to address multiple forms of structural and indirect forms of violence; something necessary for any sustainable peacebuilding project” (2016:19). Finally, it is relevant to point out that the selected initiatives make part of the whole social movement that has been burgeoning in Medellin for the last years in the quest of a peaceful society and that they must be understood as a long term process; as Smith states about programs of this kind: “It is unrealistic to expect that such programs will have immediate impacts within short periods of time” (2005: 386). Thus the impact these programs may have in the future remains open.

After the discussion of findings, in the next chapter general conclusions of the study are stated to complete the path of thinking entailed in this research.

## **8 Conclusions**

The purpose of the study has been to explore the role of the selected non-formal education programs for peacebuilding in Medellin, Colombia from the perspective of their members and facilitators. To achieve the objective, an explicit sequence was charted. I offered in chapter 1 an introduction to the topic, and framed the research. In such chapter, I conducted as well the literature review to better understand the existent knowledge in the field of non-formal education for peacebuilding. In chapter 2, I clarified non-formal education for peacebuilding by a theoretical deconstruction of the notion in order to formulate definitions and help to delimit the research problem. In chapter 3, the analytical framework that served as the lenses for analysis was explained. Then, in chapter 4, the background of the city of Medellin was described with the purpose of deeply understanding the context of the phenomenon of the study. Later on, in chapter 5, the methodology and methods were presented to clarify the scientific process carried out which was based on a qualitative approach and a phenomenological research design. Afterwards, as an approach to the source, findings issued from the fieldwork were unveiled in chapter 6. Then I analyzed such findings in chapter 7 in order to finally answer the research question. In this last chapter, a summary of the key findings and identified challenges that have been told apart for the programs are exposed. In addition, strengths and limitations of the study are conferred taking into account the process of research and the thesis as a whole. Finally some recommendations for future research are stated as well as a final word.

### **8.1 Key findings**

This thesis has been guided by a general research question and two specific research questions. They were arisen based on the findings of the literature review which showed that there was still the need of understanding the potentiality of the role that non-formal education programs might have for peacebuilding through a more context-specific research. In an attempt to fill this gap, I conducted research on non-formal education programs in Medellin, Colombia based on the participants' perceptions. Indeed, the case of the Colombian conflict showed of great significance as well as the case of Medellin. The study allowed finding key issues concerning the role these programs might have for peacebuilding in conflict affected-

societies as the one in Medellin, and with this contributing to the knowledge of the field of education for peacebuilding.

It is possible to learn from this research that non-formal education may have a strong potential for peacebuilding when elements mentioned in the following lines are present. To begin with, an important element found was the practice of consciousness raising as a crucial element for the building of the self on one hand, and on the other one, for the building of the self *with* the others. The findings have shown that consciousness raising could be achieved by developing critical thinking based on the promotion of different strategies such as the analysis of social context, the awareness of the otherness or the problematization of oneself. Such problematization could be pointed towards the making of political subjects as learned particularly from the experience of the hip-hop group and the social organization. In general a strong implication to peacebuilding by the programs was their engagement towards conscientization about the self as a possible agent of social change, about the social-being, and about their contexts. Besides, the study has shown the significance of promoting dialogical encounters within the community in order to reinforce the collective consciousness, and therefore community cohesion and community organization aiming at an eventual social transformation. In this regard, findings indicated that developing the appreciation of the otherness was a necessary element for dialogue. On the other hand, the non-formal education programs may foster proactive life projects for individuals that may empower them and strengthen the capacity of hope. Moreover a significant element that emerged from this study was the relevant contribution that the public space can have for peaceful societies. For instance, the positive attitudes that participants showed about the appropriation of the space of the library-park as if it were their own, or the members of the hip-hop group gathering despite everything in the installations of the metro due to the lack of headquarters, or the participants of the social organization promoting the awareness of the neighborhood and streets of the city; all these have been efforts of not only making use of the public space but also of making sense of it. Being Medellin a city where years ago just crossing the street could be unsafe, having nowadays available non-violent public spaces represents a noteworthy matter; but even much more substantial is the fact of integrating them in a sensitive way in the life of people, a task that might be achieved if pointed consciously as in the cases of projects such as *La Huerta*, *Agroteca* or the collective graffiti. It is essential to mention that the amalgam

between community organization and social action has been shown of great significance in the explored programs.

Furthermore the experiences of the selected programs have also shown that working towards education for peacebuilding was possible even during time of conflict. The spirit and presence of the programs have represented a stance of an act of resistance in hostile environments against violence and injustice. What we can learn from this is that it seems there are no limited schemes for the type of non-formal education program that could be followed even in times of conflict. The creativity found in such grassroots experiences have revealed that hip-hop could be a positive alternative for promoting social engagement, that a bottom-up social organization could be a bastion for community organization, and that a cultural center could be an example of the practice of social inclusion, even during conflict.

To sum up, there was sound evidence that non-formal education programs could be an important platform for peacebuilding if they are addressed towards the building of the self and towards transformative actions through community cohesion and social projects. Grassroots or local non-formal education programs might boost a strong social change towards peacebuilding if they are based on conscious community participation and community empowerment.

## **8.2 Identified challenges for the programs**

Although both the members and facilitators hold positive perceptions about the programs, in general there are still remaining challenges to work with.

One of the main challenges that the programs face is the financial concern. Since they are non-profit programs, they have the permanent challenge of the strengthening of the budget. Especially the social organization and the hip-hop group since they are grassroots initiatives and may lack of a defined and liable budget. In this regard, the general director of the social organization mentioned how usually they started the year with no clear information about how much budget would be available. Moreover, during my observations to the hip-hop group and the social organization, I noticed their struggle for bearing expenses. A possibility for sorting out the problem could be to generate in a systematic way different sources of own



income by a culture of entrepreneurialism and self-sustainability (Datzberger 2016). In fact it should be noted that a powerful project of proper use of food and sustainable cuisine has been already launched by the social organization in the last year with an important success in the neighborhood as an example of sustainable generation of income.

The participants have as well the challenge of systematizing the writing and storing of their story as non-formal programs. There was little available in-depth information about their process, their values, their experiences and the path of the members and facilitators in the group. It would be of great significance for the history of the neighborhoods and of the programs themselves to save such valuable information. Indeed telling and saving the story of their experiences through the years may become relevant for the neighborhood and for the inspiration to other similar programs. In particular the social organization has already part of the information preserved in old format that could become rapidly obsolete. Thus the program meets the challenge of keeping the material in a digital version that could be eventually shared with other generations. Furthermore, the library-park, according to the general coordinator, has already very accurate quantitative data about the program. So, it meets the challenge of systematizing more qualitative data about its story.

Another important challenge is to create more organized programs of learning with stronger pedagogical strategies. Despite of being non-formal education programs, it is relevant to have a planning of work in order to strengthen their educational processes. Forasmuch as some facilitators are not experts in pedagogy, they could search for external support with the purpose of developing a clear syllabus for the programs based on consensus. On the other hand, especially the hip-hop group could set a plan of work with clear priorities. This could maybe represent another strengthen for attracting people to join the programs and for finding public funding support. In addition, there is the challenge of reinforcing the process of internal evaluation of the programs. A clear and permanent assessment might be significant for improving even more their workshops, initiatives and interventions and have a stronger impact on the community.

Furthermore at the time of the fieldwork, most of the facilitators agreed with still having the challenge of expanding their scope of influence. Particularly for the library-park, although it is already situated in a strategic place for giving service to groups in social needs, one of its

challenges is to reach the poorest parts of the neighborhood that are usually the most remoted zones up hill. This might be a difficult task considering that most of the people living in the highest parts of the area are socially and economically deprived which means that going to the site could represent a significant expense for them. Therefore it becomes critical the presence of the program directly in such areas in a systematic way, maybe through branch offices or local workshops. This effort could foster social inclusion and engage people from the poorest areas with non-formal education processes.

On the other hand, a subtle issue that the programs might face is the possibility of becoming charity processes instead of understanding themselves as non-formal grassroots or public programs. Particularly the library-park should be understood as a public place offered by the State that meets the right of citizens, specifically, the right to education as well as the economic, social and cultural rights. To be exact, as it is a public initiative whose activities and services are free of charge it is risking of being understood as a process of assistentialism because the community seems very grateful of having access to it but it seems they are not aware that the library-park is a manifestation of the economic, social and cultural rights they have. The challenge for the program is to entail quite more the community in decision-making and co-responsibility in order to strengthen the understanding and demand of educational, economic, social and cultural rights by citizens.

Last but not least, making of education for peacebuilding a priority is another challenge that the programs meet. Most of the informants agree with the idea of the programs as peaceful spaces for recreation, learning and enjoyment. However few of them openly perceive the programs as conscious peacebuilders. Some of the facilitators identified the fact that due to the historical moment that Colombia was passing through, to openly call the programs peacebuilders was risky because they felt that using the term *peace* in the advertising could be ambitious and even ambiguous. This may be right, nevertheless I consider it a challenge not to forget in their planning and decision making the potentiality of education for peacebuilding that non-formal education programs may have.

### 8.3 Strengths of the study

This study corresponds to the master program in Comparative and International Education of the University of Oslo, Norway. The fact of conducting research addressing one of the ample range of topics related to Comparative and International Education as *education and peacebuilding* is a first strength. In addition, there has been a particular triangulation of contexts taking into account the background of the researcher (Mexico), the site of research (Colombia) and the place of writing and defending the thesis (Norway). Already this connexion makes part of the International Education field.

Another solid aspect of the study is the relevance of the topic of peacebuilding. In fact, peacebuilding is an international matter that is related to humanity since in general peace might touch all human beings as war might affect them all. Therefore the thesis has discussed a topic of great significance for society. Furthermore having engaged specifically with the case of Colombia –a country that has endured a more than 50 years conflict and whose peace agreement is in process at the moment of writing– might have been risky; however it has shown to be rather a strength as it has revealed the braveness and dynamism that educational research can bare. Besides, the study has tried to be conflict sensitive by respecting neutrality and by taking care about the anonymity of the participants.

On the other hand, the fact of having addressed the research towards non-formal education has reinforced the polyvalence of education phenomenon. Indeed the study placed particular emphasis on non-formal education programs. With this, a significant aspect that the study has shown is that non-formal education may be a powerful platform for education for peacebuilding. However the potential role it plays nowadays is maybe not fully recognized as such. There are perhaps still general limitations in the understanding of the potentiality that non-formal education programs can have for contributing to building peace. Engaging research to a different reality in education rather than just focusing on formal education essentially yields the possibility of social inclusion as a recognized practice. This is so because –although it is not a rule– usually non-formal education programs are committed to deprived social groups that for different reasons have not been able to take formal education (Romi and Schmida 2009). Thus having opted for non-formal education experiences and having selected three programs with sensitive and unprivileged contexts has been certainly a strength of this study.

Furthermore concerning the methodology and methods, the process of research has been judiciously conducted based on academic recommendations by research authorities with the determination of making it trustworthy. For instance the main concepts of the research have been clarified in order to create a strong platform for discussion; the context has been analyzed in depth with the purpose of expanding the understanding of the phenomenon; and the methods and tools have been clearly specified for the sake of a transparent process. Moreover having opted for a qualitative approach has offered the opportunity to analyze a complex issue such as non-formal education for peacebuilding from the perspective of the participants since it has allowed working with robust data. Besides the data collection process was cost efficient. Although the results have not been generalized with the applied methodology, it has been possible to learn from the experience in non-formal education in Medellin concerning the field of education for peacebuilding.

## **8.4 Limitations of the study**

As it was specified in chapter 4, important measures concerning social changes have been taking place in Medellin. Specifically grassroots initiatives have been emerging in the last decade as a response of civil society. Limited on resources and time, this study did not have the purpose to generalize to the whole community and did not have the capacity of capturing the whole phenomenon as such. Perhaps it could have been quite more enriching to be able to analyze the majority and diversity of non-formal education programs in the city, however due to the fact of limitation of scope, time and budget just three programs were part of the study. On the other hand, I consider the study could have gone more in depth if an ethnographic approach had been followed with a much longer time for fieldwork. Nonetheless I followed the corresponding master program's curricular structure.

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of non-formal education programs for peacebuilding in Medellin. In that manner the focus was directly to members and facilitators of the selected programs. However the research could be yet expanded by having a detailed description of the programs based on quantitative long-term data that could embrace the phenomenon from different angles.

In addition writing about education for peacebuilding in a country that has grievd conflict for so many decades has been an enormous challenge. This thesis is probably in debt with the Colombian people and their struggle and willing of peace, particularly with the people of Medellin. Their capacity of strength and resilience is admirable and this thesis might not rise to the occasion. Furthermore, the fact that the process of peace is taking place at the time of writing might limit the durability of the findings.

Lastly, as all human activity this thesis is perfectible. Each new reading will give a new interpretation and will detect corrigible issues. But indeed one of the purposes of academic research is generating dialogue and this study intends to do it. I am confident that although this thesis has been limited in scope and resources it might contribute to the understanding of the challenges of non-formal education for peacebuilding.

## **8.5 Recommendations for future research**

I would like to add some suggestions for further research about non-formal education for peacebuilding based on how much I have learned in the path. First of all, it is essential to understand that each case of research is unique as each conflict-affected community has a different background, different actors, and different sources of conflict that led to a distinctive social reality. Therefore it becomes of great importance to deeply understand the context and to carefully select the approach of the research. Secondly, talking about education for peacebuilding demands to take epistemological position on the topic due to the fact the understanding of the term is still in discussion and because it is still debatable the priority-level that educational issues should be given in the process of peacebuilding. Thirdly, I strongly believe a key factor for conducting research on this topic demands a high level of hope. Although it is not indeed proved, I supposed the majority of the researchers investing more than time and resources on the topic of education for peacebuilding do it because they believe in the possibility of having peaceful societies. However along the way many times when being awaked by conflict and its dehumanizing consequences, it might turn tough to keep hope alive. Nevertheless being aware of it might be reassuring. Finally I highly suggest to institutions, social organizations, stakeholders and practitioners, no matter if being part of a conflict-affected country or not, to persist –from their possibilities– in making of non-formal

education for peacebuilding a relevant and a necessary theme of research and action with the ultimate motivation of making of peacebuilding a reality for most of people.

## **8.6 A final word**

“What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals”. This quote by Henry David Thoreau embraces the spirit of these last lines. When I started the Master of Philosophy in Comparative and International Education my goal was perhaps merely to achieve the corresponding studies. Later on, once decided my topic of research my goal was writing a good paper about education for peacebuilding for achieving the master degree but also for contributing to the field of Comparative and International Education. Then approaching myself in depth to the case of Colombia such goal was transcended towards the yearning of a better world by the building of peaceful societies through education. I cannot assure my contribution to this point has been accomplished. What I can assure is that by conducting this research and writing the thesis about non-formal education for peacebuilding in Medellin in unprivileged environments, I have been heartened and I have been transformed. And education for peacebuilding starts by the transformation of minds. I deeply wish Colombia can reach an inclusive peace agreement and most of all can make it a reality for all. I hope the current and new generations can learn from the past and make of a peaceful society part of their lives as a collective project for building sustainable peace.

# References

- Alcaldía de Medellín (2015). *Datos Generales de la Ciudad*. Retrieved 06.06.2015 from [www.medellin.gov.co/irj/portal/visitantes?NavigationTarget=navurl://77dfcedc6ca49e88aa8db85caa77ce82](http://www.medellin.gov.co/irj/portal/visitantes?NavigationTarget=navurl://77dfcedc6ca49e88aa8db85caa77ce82)
- Alcaldía de Medellín (2016). *Sistema de Bibliotecas Públicas de Medellín*. Retrieved 31.03.2016 from [www.medellin.gov.co/irj/portal/ciudadanos?NavigationTarget=navurl://996e04b4e99d2186eca963034bce6843](http://www.medellin.gov.co/irj/portal/ciudadanos?NavigationTarget=navurl://996e04b4e99d2186eca963034bce6843)
- Alvarado, Sara et al. (ed.) (2016). *Paz en Colombia: Perspectivas, Desafíos, Opciones*, Buenos Aires: CLACSO.
- Amnistía Internacional (2005). *Colombia, Los Paramilitares en Medellín: ¿Desmovilización o Legalización?*, Londres: Amnistía Internacional.
- Angarita et al. (2008). *Dinámicas de Guerra y Construcción de Paz, Estudio Interdisciplinario del Conflicto Armado en la Comuna 13 de Medellín*, Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia and Universidad de Medellín.
- Areiza-Madrid, Giovany (2014). Education for Peace in Colombia: Strategies for Transformation and Negotiated Resolution of Conflicts, *Ra Ximhai*, Vol 10, Iss Especial 4, pp 313-336.
- Arnove, Robert et al. (2013). Education in Latin America: from Dependency and Neo-liberalism to Alternative Paths to Development in Arnove, Robert et al. *Comparative Education. The Dialectic of the Global and the Local*, United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Badat, Saleem and Sayed, Yusuf (2014). Post-1994 South African Education: the Challenge of Social Justice, *Annals AAPSS* 652.
- Barbarin, Oscar and Richter, Linda (2001). *Mandela's Children, Growing up in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, New York: Routledge.
- Berents, Helen (2014). It's about Finding a Way': Children, Sites of Opportunity, and Building Everyday Peace in Colombia, *International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol.22 (2), pp. 361-384.
- Bokova, Irina (2016). *Director-General Irina Bokova*, News and Activities, 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council in 29.02.2016. Retrieved 7.03.2016 from [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/about-us/who-we-are/director-general/singleview-dg/news/at\\_the\\_human\\_rights\\_council\\_irina\\_bokova\\_calls\\_for\\_global\\_mobilization\\_to\\_advance\\_human\\_rights/#.Vt2TkX3hDMw](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/about-us/who-we-are/director-general/singleview-dg/news/at_the_human_rights_council_irina_bokova_calls_for_global_mobilization_to_advance_human_rights/#.Vt2TkX3hDMw).

- Borgman, Nolan (2016). *Transit tourist: Medellin, Colombia*, The Source, Transportation News and Views. Retrieved 03.04.2016 from <http://thesource.metro.net/2016/01/11/the-transit-tourist-medellin-colombia/>
- Brodzinsky, Sibylla (2014). *Murder capital to model city*, The Guardian, Retrieved 14.05.2015 from <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/apr/17/medellin-murder-capital-to-model-city-miracle-un-world-urban-forum>
- Bryman, Alan (2012). *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bush, Kenneth and Saltarelli, Diana (eds) (2000). *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict. Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children*, Siena: Innocenti Research Centre, UNICEF.
- Cannon, Matt (2003). *Human Security and Education in a Conflict Society: Lessons from Northern Ireland*, Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan
- Castrillón, Alberto and Cardona, Sandra (2014). El urbanismo y la planeación moderna. Glocalidades en la formación de la modernidad urbana de Medellín, *Historia y Sociedad*, no. 26, Medellín, Colombia, enero-junio de 2014, pp. 17-51
- Cerda, M et al. (2012). Reducing Violence by Transforming Neighborhoods: A Natural Experiment in Medellín, Colombia, *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol.175 (10), pp. 1045-1053.
- Citigroup (2013). *Wall Street Journal and Citi Announce Medellín Wins 'City of the Year' Global Competition*. Retrieved 29.03.2016 from [www.citigroup.com/citi/news/2013/130301a.htm](http://www.citigroup.com/citi/news/2013/130301a.htm)
- CNN (2015). *How giant outdoor escalators transformed a Colombian neighborhood*. Published 14.12.2015. Retrieved 03.04.2016 from <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/14/travel/colombia-medellin-neighborhood/>
- Cortright, David (2012). What is peace? in Webel, Charles and Johansen, Jørgen (Eds), *Peace and Conflict Studies, a Reader*, London: Routledge.
- DANE Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (2016a). *Indicators: Population Colombia today*. Retrieved 08.04.2016 from <http://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/eng/>
- DANE Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (2016b). *Pobreza monetaria y multidimensional en Colombia 2015*, Boletín Técnico, Bogotá. Published 02.03.2016. Retrieved 07.04.2016 from [http://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/condiciones\\_vida/pobreza/bol\\_pobreza\\_15\\_](http://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/condiciones_vida/pobreza/bol_pobreza_15_).



- Datzberger, Simone (2016). Peacebuilding through non-formal education programmes: a case study from Karamoja, Uganda, *International Peacekeeping*, Retrieved 26.11.2016 from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13533312.2016.1214073>
- Drew, Clifford et al. (2008). *Designing and Conducting Research in Education*, California: Sage
- Durango, Gerardo (2012). *El Conflicto en Medellín: Desplazamiento Intraurbano y Menores como Botín*, razonpublica.com, Published: 30.01.2012. Retrieved 31.03.2016 from <http://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/regiones-temas-31/2684-el-conflicto-en-medellin-desplazamiento-intraurbano-y-menores-como-botin.html>
- EFA Global Monitoring Report (2011). *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education*, Paris: UNESCO.
- EFA Global Monitoring Report (2014). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013-2014, Teaching and Learning: Achieving quality for all*, Paris: UNESCO.
- EFA Global Monitoring Report (2015). *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and challenges*, Paris: UNESCO.
- El Tiempo (2013). *El Desplazamiento Sigue Siendo el Talón de Aquiles de Medellín, Informe de la Personería Revela que los Niños y Mujeres son Principales Víctimas de Combos*, published 28.02.2013 Retrieved 01.04.2016 from <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12626243>
- El Tiempo (2014). *Arreglo de biblioteca España vale casi lo mismo que su construcción*, published 13.09.2014. Retrieved 31.03.2016 from [www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/arreglo-del-parque-biblioteca-espana-en-medellin/14530486](http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/arreglo-del-parque-biblioteca-espana-en-medellin/14530486)
- EMapsWorld (2016). *Location Map of Colombia in South America*. Maps of Colombia. Retrieved 11.03.2016 from [www.emapsworld.com/colombia.html](http://www.emapsworld.com/colombia.html)
- Esbjørn, Anna and Pérez, Emmy (2012). *The IFHP Travel Squad reports from Bogotá: A socio-economic stratification system ranging from 1 to 6 divides all cities in Colombia into high and low income neighborhoods*. International Federation for Housing and Planning. Retrieved 08.04.2016 from <http://www.ifhp.org/ifhp-blog/colombia-social-stratification-law>
- Freire, Paulo (1974). *Education for critical consciousness*, New York: Continuum.
- Freire, Paulo (1994). *Pedagogy of hope*, New York: Continuum.
- Freire, Paulo (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, New York: Continuum.
- Galtung, Johan (2012). Positive and Negative Peace in Webel, Charles and Johansen, Jørgen (Eds), *Peace and Conflict Studies, a Reader*, London: Routledge.

- Gill, Scherto and Niens, Ulrike (2014). Education as Humanization: a Theoretical Review on the Role of Dialogic Pedagogy in Peacebuilding Education, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 44:1, 10-31.
- Girón, José (2013). *En Medellín no todo es color de rosa*, Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, Published 04.03.2013. Retrieved 30.03.2016 from <http://www.arcoiris.com.co/2013/03/en-medellin-no-todo-es-color-de-rosa/>
- Girón, José (2015). Panelist of Paz, memorias y posconflicto en Colombia in CLACSO VII Conferencia Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Ciencias Sociales, Medellín, Colombia 11.11.2015.
- Hayes, Bernadette and McAllister, Ian (2009). Education as a Mechanism for Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland, *Oxford Review of Education*, vol. 35, no.4 (accessed 03.03.2015).
- Herrington, Rebecca (2015). *Emerging Practices in Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Education for Peacebuilding Programming*, Washington DC: Search for Common Ground.
- Hoppers, Wim (2006). *Non-Formal Education and Basic Education Reform, a Conceptual Review*, Paris: UNESCO IIEP.
- Hull, Robert (2016). *Medellin in bloom: the city of Pablo Escobar now flourishes with art and orchids*, The Guardian. Published 11.03.2016. Retrieved 27.03.2016 from [www.theguardian.com/travel/2016/mar/11/medellin-colombia-marquez-documentary](http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2016/mar/11/medellin-colombia-marquez-documentary)
- Hunter, Sally (2010). Analysing and Representing Narrative Data: The long and Winding Road, *Narratives*, 2, 2010, 44-54. Retrieved 28.10.2016 from <http://ro.uow.edu.au/currentnarratives/vol1/iss2/5>
- IIEP Institute for Economic and Peace (2015). *Global Peace Index 2015*, New York, Sydney, Mexico City: IIEP. Retrieved 01.03.2016 from [www.economicsandpeace.org](http://www.economicsandpeace.org).
- IIEP Institute for Economic and Peace (2016a). *Global Peace Index 2016*, New York, Sydney, Brussels, Mexico City: IIEP Retrieved 22.10.2016 from [http://static.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/GPI%202016%20Report\\_2.pdf](http://static.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/GPI%202016%20Report_2.pdf)
- IIEP Institute for Economic and Peace (2016b). *Positive Peace Report 2016, a Compilation of the Leading Research on Positive Peace and Resilience*, New York, Sydney, Brussels, Mexico City: IIEP. Retrieved 13.10.2016 from <http://economicsandpeace.org/research/>
- Jaramillo, Ana and Gil, Max (2014). Medellín en su Laberinto, Criminalidad y Violencia en los Comienzos del Siglo XXI in Jaramillo, Ana and Perea, Carlos (eds.). *Ciudades en la*

*Encrucijada: Violencia y Poder Criminal en Río de Janeiro, Medellín, Bogotá y Ciudad Juárez*, Medellín: Corporación Región y Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Jiménez, Blanca (2007). El Conflicto Armado en la Comuna 13, Obstáculos y Posibilidades para la Participación y el Desarrollo Organizativo, *Revista Trabajo Social* No. 6. Medellín, julio-diciembre 2007 pp. 107-122.

Keeling, David (2011). A Picture is Worth a 1000 Words: Medellín, *Focus on Geography*, volume 54, number 1, New York: American Geographical Society of New York

Lamb, Robert (2014). Case Studies: Medellín, Colombia –How the Public and Private Sectors Have Coped with Violence, in Goldberg et al. *How Firms Cope with Crime and Violence: Experiences from around the World*, Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize (2016a). *About the Prize*, Retrieved 16.03.2016 from [www.leekuanyewworldcityprize.com.sg/about\\_prize.htm](http://www.leekuanyewworldcityprize.com.sg/about_prize.htm)

Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize (2016b). *Prize Laureate: Medellín*, Retrieved 16.03.2016 from [www.leekuanyewworldcityprize.com.sg/laureate\\_medellin.htm](http://www.leekuanyewworldcityprize.com.sg/laureate_medellin.htm)

Leedy, Paul and Ormrod, Jeanne (2013). *Practical research, Planning and Design*, Boston: Pearson.

Lopes et al. (2016). *Youth Agency and Peacebuilding: an analysis of the role of formal and non-formal education, Synthesis report on findings from Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda*, Research Consortium Education and Peacebuilding, University of Amsterdam.

Lund, Michael (2003). *What kind of peace is being built? Taking Stock of Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Charting Future Directions*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Matsumoto, Mitsuko (2011). Expectations and Realities of Education in Post-conflict Sierra Leone: a reflection of society or a driver for peacebuilding? In Paulson, Julia (ed.) (2011), *Education, Conflict and Development*, Southampton: Oxford Studies in Comparative Education, Symposium Books.

Medellin Housing Secretary (2011). *Social stratification in Medellín*, Medellín. Retrieved 08.04.2016 from [https://www.google.com/fusiontables/DataSource?docid=1\\_7yewm22NHhTPNg\\_wdIAyQnurwdI1uUT\\_qf7f8eo#rows:id=1](https://www.google.com/fusiontables/DataSource?docid=1_7yewm22NHhTPNg_wdIAyQnurwdI1uUT_qf7f8eo#rows:id=1)

Metro de Medellín (2016). *¿Quiénes somos?* Retrieved 03.04.2016 from [www.metrodemedellin.gov.co/Quiénessomos.aspx](http://www.metrodemedellin.gov.co/Quiénessomos.aspx)

- Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2010). *Educación para la paz*. Retrieved 26.11.2016 from <http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/article-351620.html>
- Molano, Alfredo (2001). Panorama del conflicto Político Actual in Pärssinen, Martti and Talero, Maria (eds.), *Colombia, Perspectivas de Paz en el 2001*, Helsinki: Instituto Renvall, Universidad de Helsinki
- Montero, Dora (2010). *Violencia en las comunas de Medellín: No futuro*, La Silla Vacía. Published 25.08.2010. Retrieved 27.03.2016 from <http://lasillavacia.com/historia/17593>
- Muriel, Erica (2014). Barro Barrio in Ministerio de Cultura, *Memoria Viva CARA Sistematización Proyecto Memoria Viva de los Barrios de la Comuna 2 Santa Cruz-Medellín-Colombia*, Medellín: Ministerio de Cultura and Corporación Cultural Nuestra Gente.
- Niens, Ulrike and Cairns, Ed (2005). Conflict, Contact, and Education in Northern Ireland, Theory into Practice, vol. 44, no. 4, *Peace Education*, Taylor & Francis
- Novelli, Mario and Lopes, Mieke (2008). Conflict, Education and the Global South: New Critical Directions, *International Journal of Educational Development* 28
- Novelli, Mario et al. (2015). *A Theoretical Framework for Analysing the Contribution of Education to Sustainable Peacebuilding: 4Rs in Conflict-Affected Contexts*. University of Amsterdam. Retrieved 25.11.2016 from <http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/partners/research-consortium/research-outputs/>
- OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2012). *Building blocks to prosperity: The Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs)*, Development Assistance Committee (DAC), OECD.
- Paffenholz, Thania (2009). *Summary of Results for a Comparative Research Project: Civil Society and Peacebuilding*, Geneva: The Graduate Institute, The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding. Retrieved 04.03.2016 from [https://www.sfcg.org/events/pdf/CCDP\\_Working\\_Paper\\_4-1%20a.pdf](https://www.sfcg.org/events/pdf/CCDP_Working_Paper_4-1%20a.pdf).
- Pärssinen, Martti (2001). Antecedentes Históricos, Políticos y Sociales de la Crisis en Colombia in Pärssinen, Martti and Talero, Maria (eds.), *Colombia, Perspectivas de Paz en el 2001*, Helsinki: Instituto Renvall, Universidad de Helsinki
- Red de Bibliotecas (2015). *Quiénes somos*. Retrieved 10.05.2015 from [www.reddebibliotecas.org.co](http://www.reddebibliotecas.org.co)
- Rodríguez et al. (2014). Strengthening Education in Adverse Environments, the Educational Commitment of the Department of Antioquia, *Ra Ximhai*, Vol 10 (Especial 4), pp 337-361.

- Rodríguez, Pablo (2009). *Medellín: La ciudad y su gente*, Bogotá: Banco de la República. Retrieved 16.03.2016 from <http://admin.banrepcultural.org/node/74706>
- Rogers, Alan (2005). *Non-formal Education, Flexible Schooling or Participatory Education?*, New York: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong, Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Romi, Shlomo and Schmida, Mirjam (2009). Non-formal education: a major educational force in the postmodern era, *Cambridge Journal of Education* Vol. 39, No. 2, June 2009, 257–273
- Salazar, Alonso et al. (2009). *Medellín, transformación de una ciudad*. Medellín: Alcaldía de Medellín and Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo.
- Sierra, Juan (2015). *Baja pobreza en Medellín, pero hay más desigualdad*, El Colombiano. Published 25.03.2015. Retrieved 27.03.2016 from [www.elcolombiano.com/negocios/economia/baja-pobreza-en-medellin-pero-hay-mas-desigualdad-1-DY1573401](http://www.elcolombiano.com/negocios/economia/baja-pobreza-en-medellin-pero-hay-mas-desigualdad-1-DY1573401)
- Shami, Muna (2012). Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Possibility, Arab American Hip-Hop and Spoken Word as Cultural Action for Freedom in Porfilio, Brad and Viola, Michael (eds.). *Hip-Hop(e), the Cultural Practice and Critical Pedagogy of International Hip-Hop*, New York: Peter Lang.
- Smith, Alan (2003). Citizenship Education in Northern Ireland: beyond National Identity? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol. 33, no. 1: Carfax Publishing.
- Smith, Alan (2005). Education in the Twenty-first Century: Conflict, Reconstruction and Reconciliation, *Compare: a Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 35:4.
- Smith, Alan (2011). Education and Peacebuilding: from ‘conflict-analysis’ to ‘conflict transformation’? *UNESCO Chair, Bonn: FriEnt*
- Smith, Alan (2014). Contemporary Challenges for Education in Conflict-Affected Countries, *Journal of International and Comparative Education*, Volume 3, Issue 1 ISSN 2232-1802, pp. 113-125
- Smith, Alan et al. (2016). *The Integration of Education and Peacebuilding. Synthesis Report on Findings from Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda*, Ulster: UNICEF, Ulster University.
- Smith, Christine (2012). The Role of Education in Peacebuilding: an Analysis of Five Change Theories in Sierra Leone, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 44:2

- Sultana, Ronald (2006). Education in conflict situations: Palestinian children and distance education in Hebron. *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies* 11, 1, 49-81.
- The Urban Land Institute (2013). Statement from Urban Land Institute in the City of the Year 2013. Retrieved 29.03.2016 from <http://online.wsj.com/ad/cityoftheyear#videos>
- UN United Nations (2009). *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, General Assembly Security Council, A/63/881-s/2009/304.
- UNESCO The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009). UNESCO Chair - U.K. University of Ulster, *Meet with Alan Smith*. Retrieved 20.08.2016 from [http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/?s=films\\_details&pg=33&id=532](http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/?s=films_details&pg=33&id=532)
- UNESCO The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2014). *Education Strategy 2014-2021*, Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 29.02.2016 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002312/231288e.pdf>
- UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund (2011). *The Role of Education in Peacebuilding: Literature Review*, New York: UNICEF.
- UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund (2014). *Key Peacebuilding Concepts and Terminology, Learning for peace, Advancing learning, Building Peace*, UNICEF. Retrieved 06.03.2016 from <http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/cat-about/key-peacebuilding-concepts-and-terminology/>
- University of Ulster (2013) UNESCO Centre, *Meet the team*, Retrieved 20.08.2016 from [http://www.unescocentre.ulster.ac.uk/about/team\\_profiles/alan\\_smith.php](http://www.unescocentre.ulster.ac.uk/about/team_profiles/alan_smith.php)
- UNPBSO United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (2010). *UN Peacebuilding: an Orientation*, United Nations. Retrieved 01.03.2016 from [www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/peacebuilding\\_orientation.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/peacebuilding_orientation.pdf)
- UNPBSO United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (2016). *Peacebuilding and the United Nations*, New York: United Nations. Retrieved 02.03.2016 from <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pbun.shtml>
- UNPF United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (2016). *What is Peacebuilding*. Retrieved 29.02.2016 from <http://www.unpbf.org/application-guidelines/what-is-peacebuilding/>
- Van der Linden, Josje (2015). Non-formal education and new partnerships in a (post-)conflict situation: 'Three cooking stones supporting one saucepan', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 42, pp.54–62.
- Wood, Elisabeth (2006). The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones, *Qual Sociol* 29:373-386, New Haven: Springer.

Worldatlas (2016). *Location Map of Medellín, Colombia. Where is Medellín, Colombia?*

Retrieved 11.03.2016 from [www.worldatlas.com/sa/co/ant/where-is-medellin.html](http://www.worldatlas.com/sa/co/ant/where-is-medellin.html)

Følg instruksene ditt fakultet/institutt har for skiving av litteraturlister

# Appendix: Research instruments

## Interview guide 1.1 for members

Questions	Subquestions in case the topic is not mentioned
-----------	---

**1. To begin with, tell me about yourself.**

**Let's talk about your experience in the program ...**

**2. How and when did you approach the program?**

*What motivated you to come?  
What were your expectations?  
How did you come to hear about them?*

**3. What is it like to be in the program?**

*How often do you come?  
Could you describe the activities you engage in?  
How long do you stay?  
What do you focus most on when you are in the site?*

**4. In your experience, how do you relate to other people in the program?**

*Do you normally come alone or accompanied?  
Do you have opportunity to meet new people?  
Does the risk of conflict with other people exist in the program?  
If so, how do you handle these conflicts?*

**5. To what extent has the program changed your way of life?**

*Does the program provide opportunities for learning new things? Could you give some examples?  
Are you hoping for increased opportunities by coming to the program?  
In your opinion, does the program provide you with hope and optimism for a better future?  
If you were not in the site of the program, what would you be doing?*

**6. In your opinion what does the program mean to the community?**

*Does it provide the local community with a sense of identity?  
How has it contributed to the overall environment of the community?  
Describe the community before the starting of the program.  
Who participates in it?*

**7. If you could change something about the program what would it be?**

*What are the challenges for the program?*

**8. Is peace ever discussed in the program?**

*If not, why do you think it is so?  
Would you like that to change? To what extent or how?*

**9. Is there anything else you would like to add?**



## Interview guide 1.2 for facilitators

### Questions

### Subquestions in case the topic is not mentioned

**1. Could you tell me about how you started to work in the program?**

*What were your motivations?*

*What were your expectations?*

**2. What is the main purpose of the program?**

*Has it been feasible?*

**3. Tell me about how the members in the program relate.**

*How do you promote cohesion in the program?*

*How significant is the appreciation of diversity for the programs?*

*How do you stimulate collaboration?*

*How often are cooperative learning strategies used? Could you give some examples?*

**4. How does the organization of the members work?**

*Which are the different kinds of members?*

*Who takes the decisions for the daily social routine?*

*To what extent people from the community can participate in decision-making?*

**5. Have you witnessed violence or conflicts at the program?**

*If not, why do you think it is like that?*

*If yes, how do you manage these expressions of anger?*

*What is suggested to do with the otherness, with those who think differently?*

*Are there any inputs to promote no-discrimination?*

**6. In your opinion what does the program mean to the community?**

*Does it give any kind of local identity?*

*To what extent has it contributed to a specific environment in the community?*

*How was it before without it?*

*Who gets involved in it?*

**7. As facilitator of the program, do you consider yourself responsible for building peace?**

*To what extent does this program impact for a better understanding within the community?*

*For learning to live together?*

*What are the challenges you face regarding this?*

**8. Are there any specific projects for building peace in the program?**

*If not, why do you think it is like that?*

*Would you like that to be changed? To what extent?*

*If yes, in which ways?*

*Does the story of the conflict in Colombia is ever mentioned or addressed in the activities?*


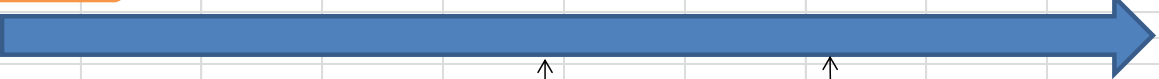





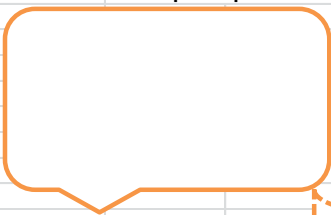
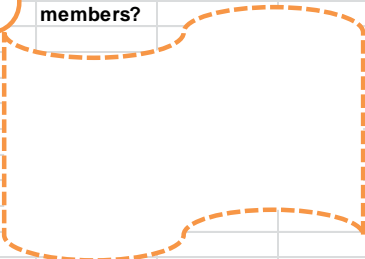
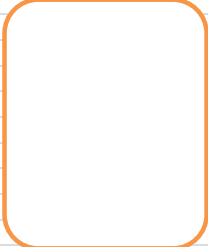
*To what extent does the program promote hope and optimism in the community?*

**9. Is there any collaboration between the program and schools or institutions?**

**10. What are the challenges for the program?**

**11. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

**Instrument for focus group**

<b>My experience in the program</b>													
I started in...												Today	
													
<b>What were my expectations?</b> 			<b>Which activities have been more significant?</b> 			<b>What have I learned?</b> 			<b>How do I feel today by being here?</b> 				
<b>In which activities have I participated?</b> 				<b>How do I relate with the other members?</b> 			<b>How have we influenced the community?</b> 			<b>What would I change or add?</b> 