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Youth and Public Policy in

Colombia

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List of Acronyms

AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (Spanish Agency for International Cooperation)
ALAMES	Asociación Latinoamericana de Medicina Social (Latin American Social Medicine Association)
CAR	Corporación Autónoma Regional (Autonomous Regional Corporation)
CJMF	Comisión Asesora de Juventud, Mujer y Familia (Presidential Chancellorship for Youth, Women and Family)
CONPES	Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (National Council for Economic and Social Policy)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
D&D	Demokratie & Dialog
DANE	Departamento Nacional de Estadística (National Department of Statistics)
DDP	Departmental Development Plans
DPS	Departamento para la Prosperidad Social (Department for Social Prosperity)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (left wing guerrilla)
EPS	Entidades Promotoras de Salud (Health Insurance Companies)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (left wing guerrilla)
FECODE	Federación Colombiana de Educadores (Colombian Federation of Educators)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Cooperation Agency (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
ICBF	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute of Family Welfare)
ICFES	Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior (Colombian Institute for Educational Evaluation)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IEB	International Editorial Board – YouthPolicy.org
ILO	International Labour Organization

IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MANE	Mesa Amplia Nacional Estudiantil (National Student Broad Council)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEN	Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia (Minister of Education)
NCP	National Council of Planning (Consejo Nacional de Planeación)
ODC	Observatorio Colombiano de Drogas (Colombia Drug Observatory)
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIJ	Organización Iberoamericana de la Juventud (Ibero-American Youth Organization)
PACIPAZ	Participación Ciudadana para la Paz (Citizen Participation for Peace)
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PDSP	Ten-Year Public Health Plan (Plan Decenal de Salud Pública)
PEI	Institutional Educational Projects
PHC	Primary Health Care
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
POS	Plan Obligatorio de Salud (Mandatory Health Plan)
SENA	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (National Service for Training)
SGP	Sistema General de Participaciones (General System of Participation)
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SPADIES	Sistema para la prevención de la deserción en las instituciones de educación superior (Preventing Desertion System on Higher Education)
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SRR	Sexual and Reproductive Rigths
SSAAJ	Servicios de Salud Amigables para Adolecentes y Jovenes (Youth and Teen Public Health Services)
UBN	Unsatisfied Basic Needs
UMIC	Upper-Middle Income Country
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

Youth and
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Introduction
Background to Pilot Review

1

1.1 Introduction

According to The World Population Situation in 2014 young people aged 15-24 represent around one-a sixth of the world's total population – 1.2 billion people. The overall number of adolescents and youth will remain relatively stable over the next 35 years. However, the proportion of the world's adolescents and youth living in Africa is expected to rise from 18 % in 2014 to 30 % in 2050, while the youth population in all other major areas will decline (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2014).

In the entire region, Central America has the highest proportion of young people at 18.6%, followed by South America with 17.7%. Another report (World Bank, 2009) indicates that in 2008, young people from 15-25 years of age represented 38% of people under 25 years in the region. This high proportion of young people could present a significant demographic dividend if the right conditions maximize their talents. The positive dividend must be realized and capitalized to support young people.

Colombia's youth population – those aged 15-24 years – is currently 8.5 million. It is estimated that the country's youth population will peak at 8.8 million in 2030, and that between 2015 and 2035, Colombia will have the largest youth population that it has ever had, and is ever likely to have (UN DESA, 2012).

Yet, since 2000 – when youth constituted 14.56% of the population – there has been a year on year reduction in the percentage of young people in the overall population. This reduction is expected to continue unabated until 2100 (UN DESA, 2012).

These changes in the country's demographics will see the reversal of a 50-year trend, in which the dependency ratio (ratio of those of non-working age to those of working age) reduced year by year. From 2015 onwards, those of working age (15-59 years) will be under increasing pressure to provide for a growing, economically inactive population, facing an increasing competition for opportunities.

Aware of these challenges, governments and international stakeholders in Latin America are focussing their efforts on youth and increasing their budgets to promote development and end poverty (OIJ, 2013). However, the extent to which youth populations are seeing the benefits of these efforts

is questionable. This in part explains why so many youth movements and students are speaking out to claim their rights and to influence the development processes of their countries.

In recent years, students from Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil, took the streets to demand free and quality education, social justice, free information and other rights, with the intention to improve public services and promote effective governance. Student movements like "Los pinguinos" from Chile, the National movement "Yo soy 132" of Mexico and the National Student Wide Table "MANE" from Colombia, reappeared with effective protests during 2011-2013. They are perhaps the most prominent youth movements in the region. But these protest movements have also been accompanied by civic action from indigenous groups (Ecuador, Mexico, Peru), farmers, and youth coming from vulnerable sectors, living or trying to survive in the big cities and participating in urban gangs (Colombia) or 'maras' (Ramsey, 2012), or sexual identity movements (Mexico and Brazil) (Rodríguez E. , 2013). These displays of dissatisfaction from youth were not limited to South and Central America; a global wave of youth discontent has been displayed across Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. At their core, these movements can be seen as an attempt by youth to renegotiate the social contract.

The inability of the current economic model to accommodate young people into the labour market, and the failure of political systems to respond to the demands of young people, presents a significant challenge for many countries. The UN World Youth Report 2013 indicates that: "across regions, young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment and vulnerable employment". Even during periods of economic growth, many economies have been unable to absorb large youth populations into the labour market. The global financial and economic crisis has further hit young people, particularly in the developed world.

Despite young people's efforts to make sure that their views are taken into account in policymaking processes, much remains to be done to ensure that they are able to participate in regional development processes. Too often young people are forgotten in the design of public policy, and, if they are included, their participation is tokenistic – their presence included in order to tick a box on a type of institutional checklist. This type of approach does not promote meaningful and effective participation of young

people, nor does it result in solutions to the problems they face, or their comprehensive development.

For those interested in a more economic perspective, the case for considering youth in public policy is compelling. The World Bank study on youth at risk (2008) estimated that globally youth's ‚risky' behaviour reduces regional economic growth by 2% a year. Furthermore, it has been proven that the age composition of a country and the opportunities and liberties that youth have has a significant relevance for its political stability (The Economist, 2011). With this context in mind, this review aims to analyse youth policies in Colombia, focusing specifically on those related to health, education and participation. These themes reflect the results of the recent My World Survey (2014) – Country Report Colombia, where the main four priorities identified by young people in Colombia (up to 30 years) were: good education, better healthcare, better job opportunities, and an honest and responsible government (UN, 2013).

The review is framed within the notion of 'a decent life' and considers the momentous peace process Colombia is currently undergoing. The research is based on case study methodology focussing on specific scenarios and regions of the country.

In order to reflect the heterogeneity of youth, the research considers a range of crosscutting issues: firstly, the conditions for youth development in the context of an armed conflict and the historical setting of violence in the country; and secondly, a special focus on the living conditions of young people that belong to ethnic minority groups, particularly indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

In order to assess the way in which young people are reflected in public policies, the research team studied policies that, regardless of the instrument in which they are presented (national law, administrative resolutions, municipal decisions, etc.), implicitly or explicitly[1] affect the lives of young

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1. "Explicit (direct) policies refer to the legislation, programmes and guidelines aimed at transforming the situations of young people, to ensure they exercise their rights and to promote their participation. The implicit (indirect) policies are the laws, regulations and other directives that are not actually promulgated in order to directly influence the specific situation of young people but have positive or negative impacts on their status and situation" (Paisa joven − GTZ, 2004).

people on the issues mentioned above. The review primarily focuses on policies arising after the change of the constitution in 1991, but where relevant, also analyses some pre-1991 policies.

The review starts with a broader assessment based on international data and national policies. Subsequently, the analysis will be focussed on case examples in Valle and Cundinamarca that illustrate territorial policies and how young people live and interact within this policy framework.

Ultimately, the research is intended to assess the relationship and identify disparities between the stated intentions of public policy, the realities in which young people live, and the needs and aspirations articulated by young people.

1.2   Outline of the sections of the report

This chapter gives a brief introduction of the research's methodological and conceptual approach.

The first chapter will have a detailed description of the current situation of young people on the focus issues of research in Colombia (education, health and participation), including a political, historical, and administrative context of the country.

In the second chapter, the broader context of public policies for youth is presented, including conceptual approaches, some key definitions to understand the different aspects associated with youth policy, the legal framework within which it develops, and aspects that must be considered in its development regarding youth's needs, rights, and responsibilities.

Included in the third chapter is a comprehensive review of the more important and meaningful national youth policies since 1991 and a selection of national sectorial policies in education, health and participation that have affected the lives of young people.

In the fourth and final chapter, an analysis of the development of territorial youth policy will be presented, based on the study of four cases in which fieldwork was conducted. Likewise, the general conclusions and recommendations of the research are included.

1.3 Rationale for the pilot review

This report evaluating youth policy in Colombia is part of a pilot series of six reports reviewing public policies affecting young people in the following countries: Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Serbia, and Uganda. The pilot project consisted of research teams on the ground to conduct analyses based on a specially developed evaluation matrix, assisted and supported in the research process by international advisors. An International Editorial Board supervised and evaluated the pilot process.

The Open Society Youth Initiative provided funding for the pilot project. The Youth Initiative supports young people in their efforts to be agents of positive change and advocates for the full and effective participation of all young people in the political, social, and cultural life of their communities. The pilot project had the following objectives:

» To review public policies pertaining to youth (including, but not exclusively, specific youth policies) in several countries using the draft evaluation matrix specifically developed for the purpose.

» To make available research that will allow young people to engage in an informed debate on the public policies affecting them and their communities in the countries concerned.

» To build a pool of young researchers capable of evaluating policies pertaining to youth, including specific youth policies.

» To contribute to building the capacity of the youth sector in the countries concerned to research public policy issues.

» To develop the evidence base for pilot advocacy activities in cooperation with the Open Society Youth Initiative and other partners.

» To broaden the scope of the international youth sector to include general policies pertaining to youth that go beyond specific youth policies.

» To develop the capacity of the international youth sector and its partners and networks for evidence-based strategy development for young people and their issues.

1.4 Rationale for the review in Colombia

The aim of this report is to analyse public policies that impact on the lives of youth in Colombia. Young Colombians give high priority to the issues of education, health and participation; therefore, these policy areas will be the study's main focus. The study examines the way in which public policies enable young people to live a decent life – as defined by the Colombian constitution. Considering the disparate outcomes experienced by Afro-Colombian youth, and the significant impact of violence and conflict on the lives of young Colombians, the review gives special attention to these cross-cutting themes – minorities and conflict.

Colombia has been affected by an armed conflict for more than 50 years and in this context, children and young people have been recruited as soldiers, affected by landmines, killed extrajudicially as 'false positives', used as informers and sex workers within the armed groups or urban gangs, and forcefully displaced. Forced displacement is often because of an attempt to find safety or escape recruitment in their local communities (which also occurred within schools), as well as avoiding domestic violence.

The perceptions of young people in Colombia are often seen through a context of risk, security and prevention. The country faces the enormous challenge of promoting a life with opportunities for education, health and participation for all, while in the middle of an armed conflict that is working towards a post-conflict scenario. Consequently, we are in the transition from perceiving youth as a problem, to recognising them as rights-holders and agents of positive change, entitling them with the capacities and opportunities to live a life with dignity, to build peace, and promote development.

Despite these challenges, economic indicators show growth. According to The Economist, in the first quarter of 2014, Colombia had the highest economic growth in the region and the second in the world, only after China. As The Economist has highlighted, this was a welcome exception to a regional trend: Latin America as a whole was predicted to grow less than 2% in 2014, the worst figure since 2009 (The Economist, 2014).

Both groups of policies (explicit and implicit) are well described throughout this review. They have been developed in Latin America throughout the last four decades, presenting different challenges according to the context

of the country during which they had been implemented. However, among these groups of policies, there is a lack of dialogue or strategies to learn from previous experiences. Such dialogue and strategies are needed to create new models that recognise young people as active members of society and rights-holders within the development process.

Methodological summary

The overall objective of the research is to analyse if explicit and implicit, national and territorial, youth policies related to education, health and participation in Colombia, allow young Colombians to have a decent life. This takes into account the documents, actors and relations that emerge in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of youth policies in the country, both in national and territorial scenarios.

This research aims at evaluating if youth policies have been moderately successful in improving the material conditions that create a life with dignity and reduce poverty. However, trying to go beyond the traditional approaches that focus on material conditions, the research team also wants to explore if youth policies have managed (or not) to reduce the inequality gap in the country, allowing (or not) young people to fully dictate their life plan accordingly. This follows the concept of a 'decent life' that the research took as a general articulator.

The research also aims at discovering if youth public policies that arise from subnational units present a better possibility for youth to achieve a decent life, than those that have a national scope, and also dig into the implementation obstacles that those policies could have that hinder the achievement of their particular objectives.

The above is explored taking into account that violence; conflict and social inequality could impede the attainment of a dignified life, especially for vulnerable groups such as Afro-Colombians.

In order to take on this research project, a qualitative **methodology** with four case studies is used to understand the conception of youth and their participation in several different cases.

Beforehand, a comprehensive review of the literature concerning youth, in its conceptual and legal frameworks, and its relation to citizen partic-

ipation, health and education, was carried out in order to develop hypothesis and identify potential cases for the inquiry. For the case studies themselves, in-depth interviews, focus groups, observation and data collection in field, and analysis, were the main techniques used.

In parallel, the research team was supported by a board of experts (see Annex 1) who advised the content

Graph 1
Departments and municipalities prioritised for fieldwork

Cundinamarca

Sibaté

Valle del Cauca

Ginebra

Colombia has 32 departments and over 1000 municipalities

of the review and the main ideas at different opportunities along the process. Firstly, they were invited as part of the kick-off meeting, which was carried out in Bogotá and after that, at different points during the research phase.

Given the size of the country, the complexity of the spatial distribution, and the scare resources available for the research team, it was outside the scope of this research to get a representative sample of all the territorial public youth policies in the country. Therefore, two Departments and two Municipalities were chosen for the field visits.

To facilitate the decision on which areas to prioritize, the research team developed a matrix (see Annexes) with available public information on Colombia's 32 departments, to guide the selection of territorial entities that the team will visit to complement the desk research. The results are included in chapters 0 to 3 of this review.

The matrix uses guiding parameters including: i) youth population percentage, including indigenous and Afro-Colombians population percentages; ii) education and health coverage; iii) existence of explicit youth public policies, and their longevity; iv) existence of youth councils, their longevity and current state; v) feasibility conditions for the field visits, including travelling facilities, accessibility to relevant information and the existence of national partner (Ocasa), and researchers' previous contact networks.

Each parameter was evaluated and rated (see Annexes). At the end, four departments got the highest rate: Antioquia, Valle del Cauca, Cundinamarca and Atlántico. From them, the research team took a closer view of the actual state of the youth policy and the existence of previous similar research. Following this analysis, the team chose Cundinamarca and Valle del Cauca. Then, in a consultation with partners and Colombia Joven's[2] representatives, the team chose to visit the municipalities of Ginebra, Valle del Cauca, and Sibaté, Cundinamarca. Once again, these areas are not statistically representative of the whole country. However, they can be used to gain insights into youth public policy development.

The following table illustrates the work that has been developed within the two departments chosen (Valle del Cauca and Cundinamarca). In the case of Cundinamarca, the Governor's Office is located in Bogotá, the capital city where most of the research team members were located. With regards to Cundinamarca, members of the team have visited Cali, Valle del Cauca´s capital, in order to conduct interviews and focus group discussions with youth leaders, policy makers and civil servants. The following table presents the main field activities carried out according to the areas chosen:

....

2. The Direction of the National System of Youth "Colombia Joven" is within the Administrative Department of the President of the Republic. The main objective of this office is to assist in the coordination of the formulation, implementation and monitoring of youth public policies in Colombia. For further information please go to: http://www.colombia-joven.gov.co/Paginas/default.aspx.

Table 1
Activities carried out in each field visit

Department	Municipality	Activities
Valle del Cauca	Cali (capital)	Focus group with territorial government representatives: 4 people
		Focus group with young leaders of the territorial public policy process: 6 people
		Interview with Colombia Joven's territorial adviser: 1 person
Valle del Cauca	Ginebra	Focus group with local government and civil society representatives: 11 people
		Focus group with youth platform members: 5 people
		Interview with local youth office coordinator: 1 person
Cundinamarca	Bogotá (capital)	Focus group with local young leaders: 12 people
		Interview with territorial youth office coordinator: 1 person
		Interview with local young leader: 1 person
Cundinamarca	Sibaté	Focus group with youth office coordinator and local youth leaders: 4 people
		Interview with local youth office coordinator: 1 person
National level	Bogotá (capital)	Meetings with Colombia Joven's director and territorial advisers: 4 people
		Meetings with national young leaders from different sectors: 3 people
		Interview with United Nations Population Fund territorial representative: 1 person
		Meeting with international cooperation representative: 1 person

In addition, other interviews were held, (for further information see Annexes). For instance, interviews with young leaders that had played a role in the national and departmental youth sphere and interviews with members of our board of experts. This board has supported the review from the beginning and served as a space to give feedback to the content and provide key concepts. In total, more than forty people were contacted.[3]

1.5   Conceptual Considerations

1.5.1 Decent life

The concept of attaining a decent life (vida digna) is the guiding focus of this research. This concept was established by the Colombian Constitutional Court in several rulings (Decision 881/2002 is particularly relevant), which determined that human dignity in the constitution expresses a concrete objective of state protection. The Constitutional Court mentioned three specific areas related to living a life with dignity (Principio de dignidad humana, 2012):

» **Living well**: Human dignity implies the concrete material conditions of existence that allows the individual to follow his/her life plan.

» **Living as desired — individual autonomy**: Human dignity and its relation to an individual's autonomy, including the ability to design, plan and determine a life course, according to his or her aspirations. Human dignity is considered to be the foundation of personal liberty and the ability to choose one's own destiny, so long as that choice does not impact directly on the rights of others.

» **Living without humiliation**: Human dignity and its relation to the inalienability of the body and spirit, taking into account the relationship between dignity, and physical as well as moral integrity, as necessary conditions for the establishment of a life plan.

....

3. See Annexes for the list of stakeholders interviewed for this report.

Furthermore, the Court has also noted that dignity is, at the same time, a constitutional principle, an autonomous right, and a value, meaning that human dignity is a founding principle of the law and, therefore, the state.

Education, health and participation are issues closely related to the attainment of a decent life, and will therefore be the focus of this review. Similarly, the review will take into consideration two crosscutting topics that impact significantly on young people's opportunity to live a decent life, namely those of discrimination towards minorities, and conflict.

1.5.2 Education

Education and training for employment have a significant role to play in reducing the inequality gap that exists in Colombia. Socio-economic indicators will illustrate this in the next chapter.

Colombia, by means of its Constitution, not only guarantees the rights of protection and comprehensive training to adolescents, but also commits, together with the society, to promote "active participation of adolescents in public and private organisations, responsible for the protection, education, and progress of youth" (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991).

> *"Through education, individuals seek access to knowledge, science, technology, and the other benefits and values of culture. The Colombian citizen will be educated in the respect for human rights, peace, and democracy, and in the use of work and recreation for cultural, scientific, and technological improvement and for the protection of the environment" (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991).*

Quality education has been argued to "extend justice to all world citizens, showing theoretically how we might realize a world that is just, in which accidents of birth and national origin do not warp people's life chances pervasively from the start" (Nussbaum, 2006).

According to Nussbaum (2006), the capabilities – which include concepts such as life, physical health, emotions, affiliation, senses, imagination, reflection and expression – acquired from a quality education should aim to achieve "a world where people have all the capabilities to create a world that fulfils minimum conditions for fairness and decency". It is

through these capabilities, that human beings can develop the freedom to live well and live with dignity, to live according to their life plan.

Colombians are entitled to access education between 5 and 15 years of age. Despite this universal access, the question that arises is whether the education model in Colombia develops and strengthens all the capacities of the individual, to guide their future and allow them to live with dignity.

This review will analyse the situation of young Colombians who are part of the education system, especially mid-secondary education, to evaluate whether current public policies in the country guarantee a high level of quality that allows young people to live a decent life.

1.5.3 Health

In the National Survey of Youth 2000 (Colombia Joven, 2000), health and overcoming inequities are the second most relevant issues for young Colombians, following security. The United Nation's Survey (2014), which to date has received 6,862 votes from young people aged 16-30 in Colombia, highlights better healthcare as the second highest priority for young people in the country.

Responding to the global discussions on the definition of health, the research team propose a conceptualization of health that relates to the concept used by the World Health Organization (WHO) and transcends the commonly used biomedical approach. The WHO defines health as: "a state of complete social, physical and mental well-being and not merely the absence of disease or illness" (WJO, 2003). Hence, health can be considered as a prerequisite for social and economic progress and for a decent life. If this holistic conception of health is coherently articulated with the theory of social determination of health, developed by ALAMES and the WHO, we end up widening the scope of the health sector as an actor that can guarantee a decent life for people.

Following this definition, some authors have followed up with this conception of health, making it clear that the Ministry of Health and all the other institutions in Colombia that make up the health sector, should address issues in a transectorial manner (Vergara MC, 2009; Ortega JA, 2008). The primary health care strategy developed in Alma Ata in 1978 (International

Conference on Primary Health Care, 1972) was developed to address this complexity of issues but, according to Ase and Buriovich (2009), neoliberal development models have hindered the implementation of such a strategy.

Colombia has included renewed primary health care (PAHO, 2007) in its legislation, through Law 1438/2011, but inconsistencies in the current health system have resulted in limitations in its implementation. This has been the subject of an on-going debate between civil society organisations (involving health professionals and patients, among others), the government, and private health insurance companies. As a result, a proposal for reform, agreed upon by different stakeholders in the health sector, that responds to the needs of young people, and that is based on the full participation of civil society and youth, although developed, has failed to pass (Hernández, 2012).

In regards to health issues specifically, it is noted that the burden of disease and death that most affect Colombian youth is explained mainly by "risky behaviour". Violence is one of the most frequent causes of death and injuries of young Colombians, but other causes related to sexual and reproductive health are also on the top of the list: sexually transmitted infections and conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth. Moreover, young Colombians, according to the 2008 substance abuse survey, are the ones with the highest prevalence of alcohol and tobacco abuse as well as the highest prevalence of any illicit drug use within the country (Ministerio de Salud y la Protección Social, 2008).

Given the lack of comprehensive health programmes for young people in the country (Alba LH, 2010), two situations occur: On one hand, healthcare professionals and institutions seek to meet targets and goals mainly related to sexual and reproductive health from a population-control perspective (rather than a rights perspective), neglecting other health-related problems that young people face such as suicides, trauma, etc. On the other hand, young people seeking health guidance find services that do not respond to their differential needs and that have persistent problems of quality, equity and opportunity that have been broadly associated with the Colombian health system.

Health coverage should not be measured only by the registration of people in the databases of the health insurance companies, but other in-

dicators that measure effective coverage and care. In addition, the services people have regular access to correspond mainly to the treatment and rehabilitation of health conditions. Meanwhile, strategies and programmes that aim to promote healthy habits and prevent diseases are left underfunded and underestimated.

1.5.4 Participation

One of the best tools that citizens can have to reach a decent life is through the right to participate in and influence political processes. In addition, political participation also serves to strengthen democracy and it is a governance tool that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of public management. Velásquez y González (2003) noted that participation "is capable of building consensus, of gathering wills, and therefore reducing overall obstacles and achieve stakeholder's acceptance (...). Participation improves the ability of government to respond to social needs".

There are multiple definitions for the term participation, the specifics of which depend on context; in particular, the nature of the political regime, for example, whether there is an indirect democracy, participatory democracy or a dictatorship. Similarly, concepts of participation range from the opportunity to vote within an election, through to the right to make decisions and guide public policy. "Citizen participation in the formulation of public policy changes historically as it follows the transformations produced by the relation between state and society" (Correa & Noe, 1998).

Definitions of participation commonly make reference to society – represented in individuals or groups of individuals. These groups typically share particular interests that, being expressed collectively, form collective interests with shared goals and aspirations. Frequently, these groups aim to influence the state and the public sphere in order to achieve the settled goals.

For the purposes of the present investigation, citizen participation shall be understood as: "A process in which different social forces, in function of their respective interests (of class, gender, generation) intervene directly or through their representatives in the progress of collective life in order to maintain, reform or transform existing systems of social and political organisation" (Velásquez & González, 2013).

As it can be seen, the selected definition for participation is broader than the practices attributed to electoral processes typical of a representative democracy. Mauricio Merino (1997) describes two types of citizen participation: one referring to the electoral process, and the other that is concerned with the relationship between society and the government between electoral periods. In several occasions, citizen participation is understood as a complimentary exercise to representative participation in a context of crisis of electoral representation.

Electoral processes alone rarely satisfy young people's desires to bring about change in society. Youth participation – going beyond simply participating in electoral processes – emerges from groups, NGOs, collectives, "ecological, pacifist and other movements" (Merino, 1997) that allow young people to become significant actors within society.

This research will focus specifically on youth participation outside of the formal electoral sphere - activities related with the participation that call for direct changes in communities, non-formal political expressions, and those that seek to influence policy.

1.5.5 Crosscutting Topics

Minorities

With the development of the modern state, and the proclamation of rights, Colombia has created a legal system in which each and every person is considered equal before the law. However, this legal system fails to address existing inequalities and the needs of minority groups.

The importance of diversity-sensitive policy – in which the specific circumstances of minority groups are considered – has been recognised internationally. Following its establishment, the United Nations adopted a 'rights of the individual' approach to promote the protection of people's rights and freedoms. In Colombia, several recurring situations in recent decades have led to the adoption of a contemporary approach that focuses on the protection of minority groups' collective rights (Carrillo, 2010).

Romero (2011) says that no single definition for the term minority exists, however she identifies particular characteristics of minority groups: 1) Number: a minority group should be numerically minor than the rest of the

population, or its groups; 2) Dominant position: the group does not have a dominant position, which is why it should be protected; 3) Identity differences: a minority group should have its own characteristics, which makes them different from other groups (Romero, 2011).

Romero (2011) also includes, in the identification of a minority group, two other characteristics: the fact that these groups have been historically, traditionally and systematically discriminated against, and that they have limited or no access to decision-making or political and social power. In particular, this limited access to decision-making explains why these groups are not represented in public policies or legislative initiatives.

Kylmicka (cited in Carrillo, 2010) classified minorities as geographically concentrated (groups with a collective identity are concentrated in the same territory and "may have aspirations for autonomy and self-government") or dispersed minorities (are scattered and only seek recognition of its existence but unpretentious of self-government).

According to the census of 2005, 86% of the country's total population does not identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic group. From the 14% that does, 11% recognise themselves as Negros or Afro-Colombians, 3% as indigenous, and 1% as other.

Afro-Colombians and indigenous communities face a legacy of slavery, which is reflected in wide disparities in economic and social development and under-representation in positions of power. These communities are also confronted by "violence at the hands of various types of armed actors, on-going struggle for their lands and territories, forced displacement, and the impact of agribusiness, timber and mining interests, and 'mega projects' aimed at economic development and exploitation of human resources" (McDougall, 2010).

The Afro-Colombian settlements in rural areas and slums of cities rival those of the indigenous peoples as the poorest in Colombia, with extreme poverty rates over 60%. In Colombia, there is a correlation between maps of extreme poverty and maps indicating the high density of Afro-Colombians. According to surveys, the basic needs of 80% of Afro-Colombians are not covered (McDougall, 2010). Life expectancy in Afro-Colombian regions is 55 years old, compared to a national average of 74 years. It is estimated that illiteracy rates of Afro-Colombians are twice the national average (McDou-

gall, 2010). Therefore, in Colombia the Afro-descendants have the highest rates of poverty and misery compared to other ethnic groups in the country, as it may be seen in Graph 2.

Graph 2
Vulnerability of afrodescendant groups, poverty and UBN[4]

- Afrodescendant
- Other

Poverty indicators   UBN
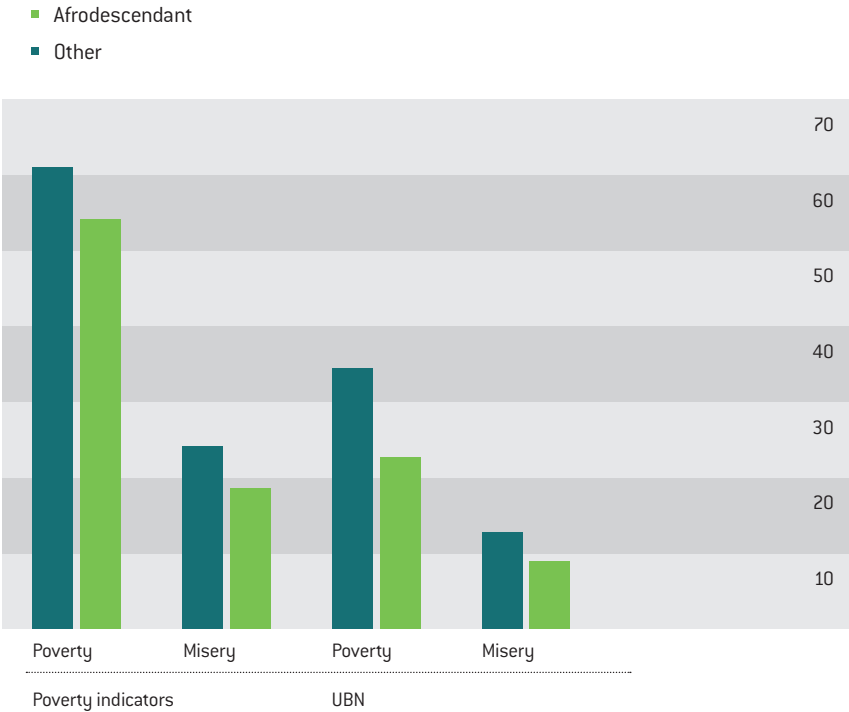
Given the acute disadvantage experienced by these population groups, it was decided to place an analytical emphasis on one of these minority groups: Afro-Colombian youth. Therefore, the review will focus on this population in the overall analysis of the policies.

....

4. Unsatisfied Basic Needs. http://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/quality-of-life/unsatis-fied-basic-needs.

Conflict

In many of the world's conflicts and wars, children and young people are often the most affected, either as victims or perpetrators of violence. Whether they are involved as combatants or suffer the effects of living in war, children frequently become targets and facilitators of violence. As the 1996 Machel study highlighted, "Some children fall victim to a general onslaught against civilians; others die as part of a calculated genocide, (...) still other children suffer the effects of sexual violence or the multiple deprivations of armed conflict that expose them to hunger or disease. Just as shocking, thousands of young people are cynically exploited as combatants" (United Nations Children's Fund, 1996).

When speaking of the consequences of war for children and young people, one can refer to the set of conflict-related violations, identified in 2005 as part of a periodic report on children and armed conflict by the UN Secretary-General. These six "grave violations" are the killing or maiming of children, recruitment or use of child soldiers, attacks against schools or hospitals, rape and other grave sexual violence, abduction of children, and denial of humanitarian access. The 10-year review of the Machel Study found that conflict-affected countries and territories have shown less progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) than many of their more fortunate counterparts (United Nations Children's Fund, 2009).

The conflict affecting Colombia has been on going for more than 50 years. It is fuelled by a long extended conflict caused by the link between inequalities, territorial control, and armed groups (guerrillas, paramilitaries, military forces). The activities of these groups are directly related to illegal activities such as drugs, arms production, and trafficking. The results include massive displacement, formation of criminal gangs, a massive culture of violence, and a general deterioration of real opportunities for children and young people.

Although Colombia is essentially an upper-middle income country, the current security approach within the region, combined with the prolonged conflict in Colombia, has resulted in high public spending on defense and security. These factors have reduced the resources available for social programmes, such as protection, health, education, culture and livelihoods. With regards to education for example, while there is a very high rate of

enrolment in primary education, schools still lack sufficient resources - this leads to school quality suffering as a result. In addition, only minimal opportunities to advance from primary to secondary school exist for many children and young people living in poverty conditions and affected by violence and displacement.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) shows that South American total military expenditures rose from $47.3 billion in 2002 to $67.7 billion in 2012. Colombia increased its combined defense and security budget by 11% in 2012, when the government launched a four-year programme to bolster military and police capabilities (Defencenews, 2014). There is a clear trend in South America to increase and improve security and defense budgets, and Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru, are the top spenders.

The internal conflict in Colombia has led to the displacement of between 4,900,000 and 5,500,000 people, making it the country with the highest levels of internally displaced people in the world (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2013). Within this scenario, the sectors of education, health and participation have suffered in many ways. As an example, between 1991 and 1996, "808 Colombian educators were killed, 2,015 received death threats, 21 were tortured, 59 were 'disappeared', and 1008 were forced to leave their homes and jobs for fear of violence" (Nicolai, 2008).

This complex scenario poses big challenges for young people in search of new opportunities and seeking to live a decent life. Minority populations are disproportionally affected by violence and the armed social conflict that affects both rural and urban areas. However, the current peace negotiations between FARC – left wing armed group – and the Colombian government, present opportunities for youth-led initiatives to contribute to the peace process. In this process, good quality and participatory policies pertaining to young people can open real opportunities for change.

Team reflections on drafting the report

The team was very excited to undertake a project that allowed it to explore deeply the realities of young people in the country and the public policies that affect them from different perspectives. Within the team, the different backgrounds of every member and the variety of professional experiences

and approaches were very interesting. The members of the group who specialised in social sciences learned a lot from the area of health, and vice versa.

The biggest challenges were time and adjusting personal agendas, as well as D&D and IEB timing, for a project that was envisioned for at least nine months, but which turned into an over two-year long project. In Colombia, the review started almost eight months later, affecting personal agendas. All of this has affected the expectations of months of dedication of the entire team and Ocasa, the national partner. This, on top of the many twists and turns in the review of documents and the process of updating the information already gathered, as it was precisely at a time when many things were happening related to youth in the country. In the end, this has been difficult and time consuming for all the members in the team.

The plan of 20 hours of work by every junior researcher was unrealistic; the same applying for the rest of the team roles. Nevertheless, in terms of responsibility of the team, all members and collaborators took the job very seriously. The role of the Research Leader, who guided junior researchers, is highlighted.

There were difficulties with leadership approaches and communication between the team. However, measures to counter these challenges were taken which allowed for a better working environment. Some small conflicts remained but these did not affect the outcome of the review. The Kick-off Meeting was also well supported and facilitated by the International Advisor and the Lead Researcher who contextualized the scope and impact of the project accurately. The International Advisor contributed to the methodology of the entire review, facilitating contacts and information for fieldwork.

The role of Ocasa was fundamental, not only in its role as a mediator, but also as organiser of logistics and administrative issues. This has helped the dynamic of the team to focus on the writing of the review. With regards to positioning the project, all the members have played a key role in finding contacts and allies. Ocasa's support was especially important in conducting visits for the fieldwork.

Despite initial difficulties, the Youth Policy team based in Germany always had an excellent attitude towards achieving the main goal. They facil-

itated Skype calls to clarify content matters and followed up on the writing process. All of this contributed to achieving the final product without focusing too much on the perfection of language.

Close to the end of the process, the lack of clarity in time and work processes in coordination with Berlin (time for revisions, number of revisions, and adjustments to make, etc.) created pressure and altered work expectations for the entire team.

There were many positive results as well. One is the level of capacity that the entire team has acquired with regards to writing skills in English and performing research processes. In turn, a high learning curve was shown during the research process. Secondly, the knowledge acquired by all the members of the team about the current situation that youth face in Colombia, at different levels and from different perspectives. This has been extremely important as we have seen youth in Colombia with different lenses and through them made analyses and hypotheses, which have been proved in the fieldwork. Finally, this review provides an excellent opportunity to showcase Colombia internationally.

Regardless of the time constraint and lack of input from other sectors and institutions, the Colombian review provides an important and innovative document for the analysis of sectorial pubic policies that impact the lives of young people — an analysis based on the concept of a life of dignity, as defined by the Colombian Constitution.

The Colombian Youth Policy team recognises and values the importance of such a document within the current political situation of the country. On one hand, the Colombian government is currently updating the state of youth policies and this review may contribute to this process. On the other hand, Colombia is working towards a post-conflict scenario and this document, together with efforts by young people and previous achievements in terms of public policy, will benefit the social recognition of young people in terms of development.

Finally, we expect this document to serve as a key reference on the topic of youth development in Colombia.

Conclusions

This review aims to analyse public policies that impact on the lives of youth in Colombia. Youth in Colombia has been defined in the public policy using an age approach (the National Statute of Youth Citizenship, 2013, defined youth as those aged 14 to 28), however this approach, as well as the paradigms that underpin youth policies, have varied over the years, as will be explained in the next chapter.

Young Colombians give high priority to the issues of education, health and participation; therefore these policy areas will be the study's main focus. Ultimately, the study examines the way in which public policies enable young people to live a decent life – as defined by the Colombian constitution. Considering the disparate outcomes experienced by indigenous and Afro-Colombian youth, and the significant impact of violence and conflict on the lives of young Colombians, the review gives special attention to these crosscutting themes.

Youth and
Public Policy in

Colombia

The Situation of Young People

2

2.1 Introduction and Context

This chapter aims to provide an overview of Colombia's demographic trends, its territorial organisation, and significant events that impact the development of public policy. This will outline the key insights that can be drawn from national and international data related to the policy areas of education, health, participation, minority groups, conflict and violence.

2.1.1 Colombia overview[5]

In this section, a general overview of Colombia will be conducted, highlighting issues related to demographics, economics, and administrative organisation, including different sources and years of reference, according to the data available.

Graph 3
Colombian youth population (15-29 years old)

- ■ Male
- ■ Female

Source: (DANE, 2005)

Demographics: According to the 2015 census projections based on the 2005 census, over its land area of 1,141,748 km2, Colombia has 48,203,405 inhabitants, of whom more than 70% live in urban areas and 51% are female. 26% of the inhabitants are young between 15 and 29 years old, and of this population group, 51% are male (DANE, 2005).

"The population increased by 39.4% between 1990 and 2010. In 1990, the population structure displayed a pyramidal shape predominantly in groups younger than 25 years. By 2010, the pyramid shifts to

....

5. This section draws heavily on Correa and Steiner.

older ages, with relative similarity among groups younger than 20 years, which reflects a decrease in fertility and mortality and sustained relatively low levels in these two indicators" (Pan American Health Organization, 2012).

According to the National Survey of Health (Profamilia, 2010), 35 out of 100 families are composed of father, mother and children; 12 out of 100 families are incomplete nuclear families (with one missing parent). 14% of households consist of an extended family, and 8% are families consisting of a childless couple. 56% of children in Colombia live with both parents, and a woman heads 34% of households; a trend that has increased by 10 percentage points between 1995 and 2010. On average women have 2.1 children (Londoño, 2010).

Between 1900 and 2010, 11 population censuses were conducted in Colombia. Among them, it is possible to identify at least three different approaches associated with the registration of an ethnic minority population: In the censuses of 1905 and 1928, there were no criteria for identifying ethnic groups; In the censuses of 1912, 1918 and 1938 identification was carried out by the enumerators, according to a set of questions or their own perceptions. Not until the 1985 census was a criteria based on self-recognition applied (DANE, 2007).

Graph 4
Distribution of Colombian population according to ethnic identification, 2005

Rom 0,01   Indigenous 3,43

Afrocolombian 10,62

Without ethnic autoidentification 85,94

As mentioned in the previous chapter, according to the 2005 Census, 86% Colombians do not recognise themselves as a member of an ethnic group. 11% recognise themselves as Afro (including palenqueros and raizales) and 3% as indigenous (DANE, 2007). From both communities, 24% are young.
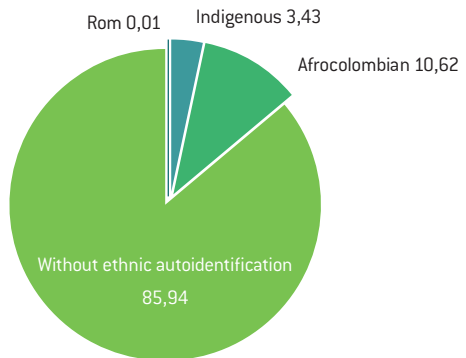
Table 2

Colombian population by ethnicity and age group

Relative weight of young, by ethnic group (2005)			
Ethnic group	Total population	Young population	% young
Total	40.602.551	9.677.855	23,84
Indigenous	1.392.623	337.199	24,21
Afro-colombians	4.311.757	1.081.517	25,08
Majority population	34.898.171	8.259.139	23,67

Source: (Echeverría, 2007).

There are notable differences in the geographic distribution of different minority groups. 85% of the Afro-Colombian population lives in urban areas, while 73% of the indigenous population lives in rural locations, typically in parts of the country defined as 'recognised territories' (resguardos indigenas) (DANE, 2005).

About other minority groups, "Dane projections to 2012 indicate that of the total number of people with disabilities in the country (2,943,971), 52.3% are of working age, but only 15.5% of them are doing some work" (Fundación Saldarriaga Concha, 2011). "Among all disabled persons, the 2005 census showed that 44% had a visual disability and 29% had a motor disability" (Pan American Health Organization, 2012).

Economics: Colombia is an upper-middle income country (UMIC). In 2012, Colombia's Gross Domestic Product was USD 369.8 billion (World Bank). Colombia's economy has been growing since 2012 and it has had an average growth of 4.4% in the last eight years (DANE, 2013).

Although the proportion of people living in poverty has been reduced (as can be seen in Graph 5), in 2012 there were still 13.9 million people living in

Graph 5
Colombian economy growth (percentage)
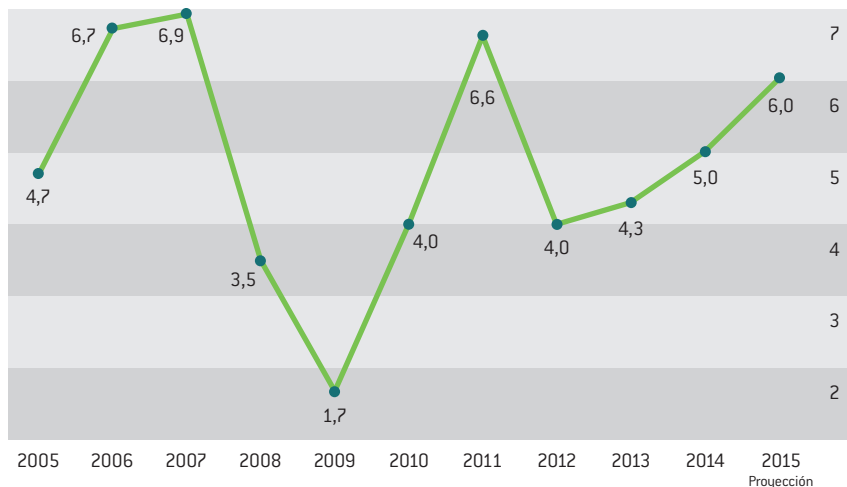
Source: DANE, 2013

poverty[6] (30.6% of the population), of these 4.1 million are in extreme poverty (9.1%).

Although the reduction of poverty is good news, the internal distribution of the poor population is still worrisome as can be seen in graphs 6 and 7. In Colombia, poverty (both monetary and multidimensional) is concentrated in rural areas and amongst the female population.

In relation to inequality, it is widely known that Latin America and the Caribbean is the most unequal region of the world despite its improvements over the last 15 years. The National Bureau of Statistics (DANE) indicates that Colombia is the 7th most unequal country in Latin America and the 19th in a group of 48 countries in the world (DANE 2013). The country has been reported to have some of the highest national disparities in income distribution in the world (Ortiz & Matthew, 2011). This situation does not

6. In this case, the level of income is the measure unit; so, a person is poor if they have less than COP$10,203, US$4 per day; and a person is in extreme poverty if they have less than COP$3,056, US$1.5 per day.

Graph 6

Poverty and extreme poverty in Colombia (rural, urban and national data 2002-2012)

■ Rural ■ National ■ Urban

Extreme poverty

Source: Departamento de la prosperidad social — DPS, 2013
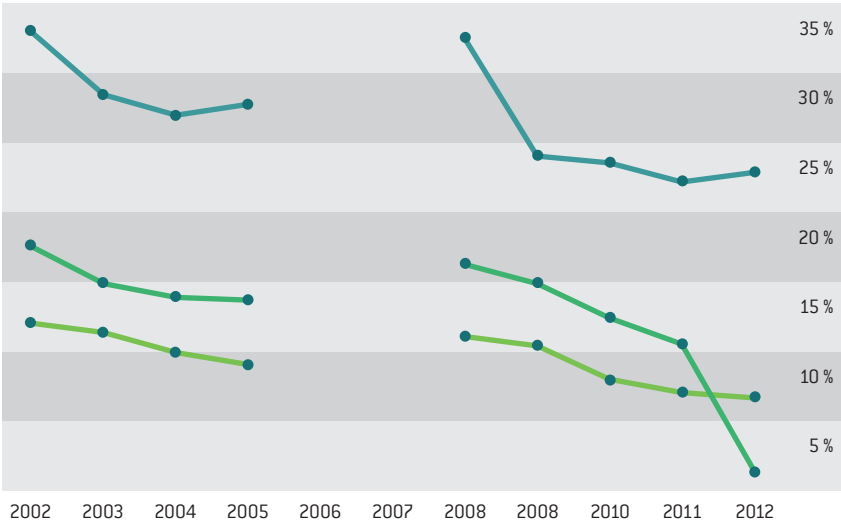
Poverty
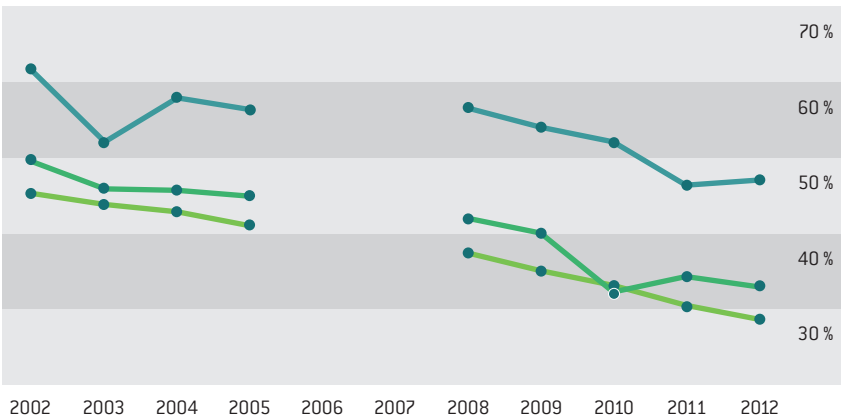
seem to be improving, despite efforts to address the unequal distribution of wealth. 10 out of 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are seeing an increase in inequality (BBC, 22/08/2012).

Political life and administrative organisation

"Colombian democracy is characterised by a struggle between the liberal and conservative parties representing factionalised elite interests" (Colombia Solidarity Campaign, 2006). This situation is further compounded by personality politics, a phenomenon termed 'caudillos' through which individuals create their own parties or coalitions of parties to obtain power.

Since 2006, Colombia has had presidential re-elections due to a change in the constitution, and during the period of 2002-2009, the territorial rightist leader Álvaro Uribe Vélez won the elections. Uribe Vélez based his government on trying to recover peace through security, strength, and fighting the illegal forces that threatened the country for decades. He left the Liberal

Graph 7

Multidimensional poverty, urban and rural areas (2011 - 2012)

- ■ Urban
- ■ Rural

Gap / intensity of poverty, extreme poverty and multidimensional poverty, 2012
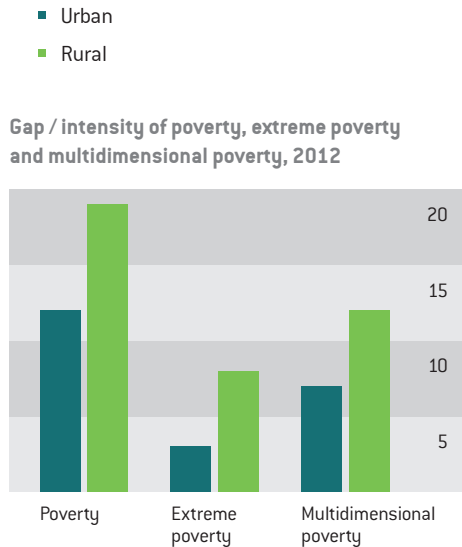
Multidimensional poverty index (2011)
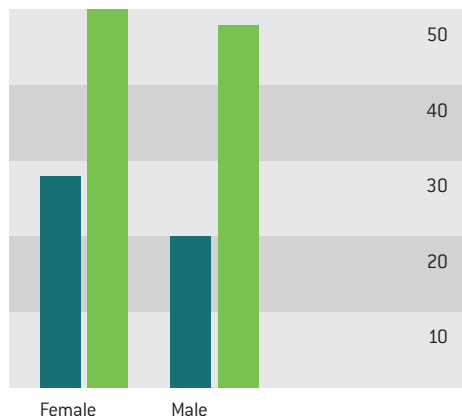
Source: Departamento de la prosperidad social — DPS, 2013

Party and created his own, the Colombia First Movement, with whom he became president in 2002. The Colombia First Movement no longer exists, and in 2006 the 'Partido de la U' (Party of the U – 'U' initially for 'Uribe' and subsequently for 'Union') was created to ensure his re-election.

The former president Uribe, recently elected senator, is currently being investigated for crimes against humanity that occurred during his term, including allegedly "receiving benefits in exchange for favouring the growth of drug traffickers and right wing paramilitary groups, and his direct involvement in the formation of these structures and their crimes" (Corporación Nuevo Arcoiris, 2014). The International Criminal Court is still reviewing the case.

In relation to youth issues, one of the more shocking scandals of his term were the so called 'false positives' which were comprised of the "extrajudicial killing of thousands of civilians by members of the armed forces, who dressed their victims as guerrillas in order to present them as combat casualties" (BBC Mundo, 2009). Most of the victims were poor young men, deceived with offers of false jobs in other cities (O'Hagan E. M., 2013).

During Uribe's term, the constitution of the country was severely altered through the introduction of legislation allowing a president to serve more than one term. This amendment allowed Uribe to serve two terms, but he was unsuccessful in making further changes to the constitution that would have allowed him to serve a third.

After Uribe's mandate, Juan Manuel Santos, Uribe's Minister of Defence, was elected president through the Party of the U, which was deemed by many to be a continuation of Uribe's political legacy. However, Santos turned his back on his predecessor by establishing a coalition government focussed on the search for peace. Santos was re-elected in 2014.

In relation to Colombia's administrative organisation, the Political Constitution states

> *"Colombia is a legal social state organised in the form of a unitary republic, decentralized, with the autonomy of its territorial units, democratic, participatory and pluralistic, based on respect of human dignity, on the work and solidarity of the individuals who belong to it, and the predominance of the common interest"*
>
> (Constitución Política, Article 1)

Therefore, the departments, districts, municipalities, and indigenous territories are territorial entities of the country (Article 286). As such, these entities "have autonomy to manage their interests" and may be governed by their own authorities, exercise the powers allocated to them, levy taxes, manage resources, and participate in generating national income (Article 287).

The basic unit of political-administrative division of the state is the municipality. The primary responsibilities of the municipalities are to provide public services, develop strategies for territorial development, and promote the social and cultural development of its inhabitants (Article 311). There are around 1,090 municipalities, which are organised into 32 departments. The authority to determine the size and scope of budgets, and the responsibility for delivering and supervising services, is divided between the national, departmental and municipal levels of governance (See Table 2).

Table 3
Distribution of functions by level of government

Public Service	Amount	Structure	Execution	Supervision
National defense	N	N	N	N
Natural resources (oil)	N	N	N, D, M	N
Education				
Elementary	N, D, M	N, D	N, D, M	N
High School	N, D	N, D	N, D, M	N
Universities	N	N	N, M	N
Health	N, D, M	D, M	N, D, M	N
Hospitals	N, M	N, D, M	M	M
Housing	N, D, M	N, D, M	N, D	N

Water service and sewerage	M	M	M	N
Public transportation	M	M	M	
Streets	M	M	M	
Waste disposal and cleaning	M	M	M	
Public lighting	N, M	N	N, M	
Highways	N, D	N, D	N, M	
Telecommunications	N, M	N, M	N, M	
Ports	N, M	N, M	N, M	

Source: IDB, 1997 quoted by Echavarría, 2002. N: national, D: departmental, M: municipal. Amount: who decides the amount to be spent? Structure: who decides the expenditure structure? Execution: who executes the expenditure? Supervision: who supervises the function?

Since 1991, the country has been open to the strengthening of the regions and the promotion of territorial decentralization (Procuraduría general de la república, 2011).

> "*Within the Latin American context, Colombia is in a relatively advanced stage in terms of decentralization. According to the IDB (1997), it ranks third in the region after Argentina and Brazil; two countries organised as federal states. While in 1995, average public expenditure allocated by subnational governments amounted to 15 percent of total public expenditure in Latin America and to 35 percent in the OECD countries, it reached 39 percent in the case of Colombia. Economic activity is also very decentralized compared to other Latin American countries*"

> (Echavarría, Rentería, & Steiner, 2002).

Regarding public finances, the main sources of funding for local authorities are their own resources (taxes, fines, fees, rents, etc.), the transfers from the

nation grants to local authorities (called General System of Participation - SGP) and, in some cases, royalties (Procuraduría general de la república, 2011). For both municipalities and departments, the majority of funding comes from the national budget, most of which is allocated to their on-going administration, as can be seen in the following graph:

Graph 8
Departmental and municipal incomes and expenditure, 2010

Departmental and municipal incomes (2010)
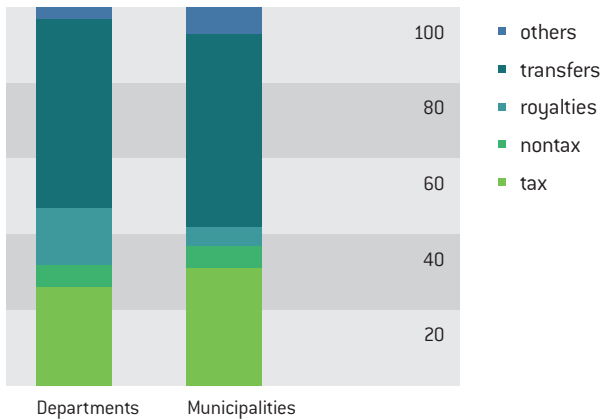
Departmental and municipal expenditures (2010)
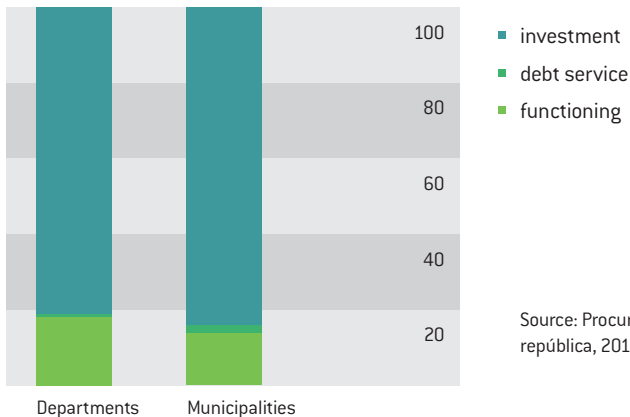
Source: Procuraduría general de la república, 2011

Many departments and municipalities receive a reduced amount of funding from the national transfers and have very few powers to generate their own income.

Law 117 of 2000 included a territorial entities' categorization system based on "the number of inhabitants, and the yearly amount of current revenue for free destination"[7]. According to this system, there are four categories for departments and six for municipalities (See Table 4)[8].

Table 4
Municipalities and departments categories

Category	Number of inhabitants	CRFD (in MLMW)	Category	Number of inhabitants	CRFD (in MLMW)
Special	> 500,001	> 400,000	Special	> 2,000,000	> 600,000
C1	> 100,001 and < 500,000	> 100,000 and < 400,000	C1	> 700,001 and < 2,000,000	> 170,001 and < 600,000
C2	> 50,001 and < 100,000	> 50,000 and < 100,000	C2	> 309,001 and < 700,000	> 122,001 and < 600,000
C3	> 30,001 and < 50,000	> 30,000 and < 50,000	C3	> 100,001 and < 309,000	> 60,001 and < 122,000

7. In public finances, the current revenues are defined as "a funding source for the Capital Budget that is provided for annually within the Operating Budget from general, special, or enterprise revenue. Current revenues that are funding project appropriations not eligible for debt financing or to substitute for debt-eligible costs" In the Colombian case, current revenues for free destination are those „incomes excluding rents from exclusive utilization, meaning those that are intended by the law or administrative action for a particular purpose." Current income may come from taxes and other sources (Law 117/2000, Article 3).

8. Law 117/2000 also establishes that for both municipalities/districts and departments, the income component is more important than the population: districts, municipalities or departments „in accordance with its population should be classified in a category, but the current revenues for free destination that are different from those indicated shall be classified in the category relating to income. Besides that, when a district, municipality or department's operating expenses exceed the statutory percentages, it shall be reclassified to the next lower division".

C4	> 20,001 and < 30,000	> 25,000 and < 30,000		C4	< 100,000	< 60,000
C5	> 10,001 and < 20,000	> 15,000 and < 25,000		CRFD: Current revenue for free destination MLMW: Monthly legal minimum wage		
C6	< 10,000	< 15,000				

Source: Made with information from Law 117/2000[9]

In general, the categorization of Colombian territorial entities is the general indicator of their population size and resources available. In particular, it identifies amounts to be paid in items such as salaries of civil servants (Councellors, Majors, etc), and the period of Council sessions.

Up to 2009, 88,6% of Colombian municipalities is placed in category number 6. For the other 10%, the majority are from categories number 5 and 4, and there are seven districts and municipalities from the Special Category (see Graph 9). This means that most of Colombian municipalities have small populations (less than 10,000 inhabitants) and manage little resources (a yearly budget of around USD 5 million for free destination investments and expenditure).

Graph 9
Percentage of municipalities according to their category (without C6[10]), 2013 ⋯⋮

Middle class
High class
Poor class
Vulnerable
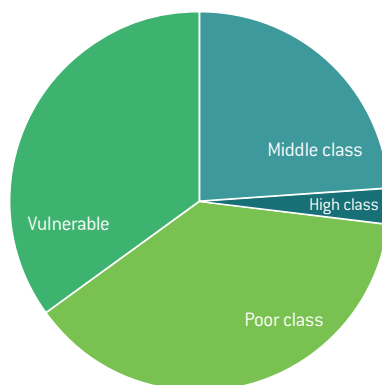
Source: adapted with information from Congreso República de Colombia, 2013

9. The measurement of income is defined in terms of the monthly legal minimum wage, which for 2014 is at 688,000 pesos, which corresponds to about USD 333 (at an exchange rate of 2065.38 pesos per dollar, which is valid for 24-26 October 2014).

10. This is an indicator on population size and resources available. For further information about the categorization of Colombian territorial entities, please see Table No. 4.

The way in which national budget is allocated combined with the influence of corruption[11] and illegal groups, have resulted in widespread disparities in the amount of money available to different departments and municipalities across the country. As it can be seen in Graph 10, there is a large group of departments (23 out of 32) that have high levels of poverty (as a percentage of their total population). For example, Bogotá has a poverty rate of less than 11%, while in departments such as Chocó, the poverty rate reaches 67% (DANE, 2013).

2.1.2 Political And Historical Context[12]

On 30 April 1984, two young men on a motorcycle shot and killed Colombia's Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla. The bodyguards of the minister killed the driver of the motorcycle. The shooter was wounded, arrested, put on trial and convicted of the crime. He was 16.

That day divided the history of the country in two. The Medellin Cartel declared a war against the Colombian government based on the threats that they had made for years to members of the government, who denounced their criminal activities. The drug lords became major criminals for illegal trafficking, willing to make anything and anyone who stood in their way disappear. Within a few years, the confrontation escalated, generating another neologism known as narco terrorism[13], which had never before been experienced in the country. That first stage of confrontation between drug cartels and the government lasted at least nine years while the cartels were operating.

At the same time, these events resulted in another kind of confrontation, which was much longer, more painful, and continues until the present day. The violence, fuelled and operated by mostly poor and vulnerable youth, guided somehow by a culture of easy money established by the nar-

---

11. "According to the Corruption Perceptions Index 2013, Colombia's public sector is still perceived as corrupt by businessmen and international experts. The country maintains the rating of 36 out of 100 (0 being greater perception of corruption and 100 being lower perception of corruption), ranking it 94 among 177 countries" (Transparencia por Colombia, 2014).

12. For this section, please go to annexes: Chronological line.

13. "Terrorism associated with the drug trade", Oxford University.

co groups, to escape from poverty offered by the organised crime, that at the end took youth also as their main victims.

The decade of the 80s would therefore set the beginning of two particular phenomena of Colombia's recent history: for the first time mass media used the word 'sicario' to describe hit men, characterised and even caricatured as young men mounted on motorbikes who shoot their victims while driving by — an issue to which this report will return.

Graph 10
Poverty according to Colombian departments
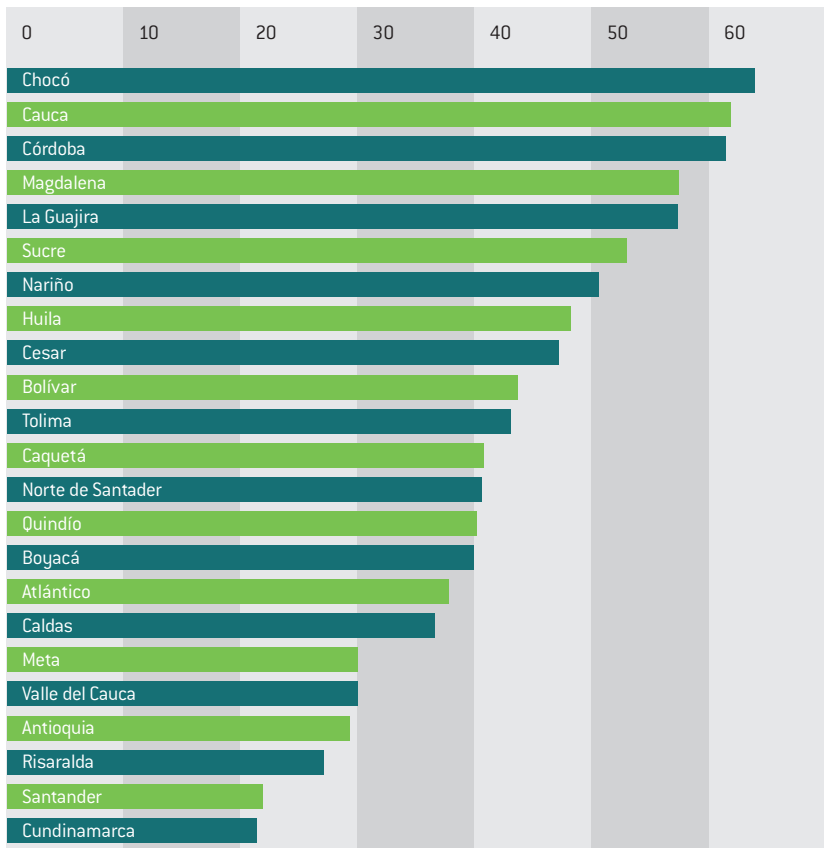
Source: DANE, cálculos con base GEIH

This same day also positioned the term 'youth' as a word with deep meaning and related to a 'new' group of people, social actors, previously unknown, or simply ignored by society. It took an assassination and a declaration of war for young people being taken into account in Colombia.

Since then, young people, regardless of the youth definitions that eventually emerged in the country, have been the focus of public policy and programmes, which were conceived on the principle of youth as a risk for society.

The 80s were tough and ruthless for some of these young people who were involved in the drug war and the internal armed conflict the country has been in for the last 60 years. However, the 80s also saw a peak in young people's political and civic participation: a period that remains a point of reference to this day.

Tired of violence, apathy and impotency, a student movement of youth from different universities, mainly in Bogotá, decided to create a popular consultation in 1989. The students inserted an additional ballot in the national election of local authorities and congress, through which they asked voters whether they wanted to have an opportunity to create a new constitution. This movement, named the Séptima Papeleta (Seventh Ballot), generated a complex process that led to the creation of an Asamblea Constituyente (Constituent Assembly). The process culminated in the creation of a new constitution, which was developed in the context of a peace process and saw some guerrilla groups demobilised and reintegrated into society.

This movement, generated by people under the age of 25 years, might be the most obvious evidence that the actions of a group of young people could be approved by, and be of benefit for, the wider society. Interestingly, the government of César Gaviria (1990-1994) was based on a team of comparatively young ministers, secretaries and advisers (mostly under 40), who earned the nickname "The Kindergarten". This government was often caricatured as "children who knew their stuff" and was known for being able to resolve very complicated situations in an assertive way.

It can be said that with these initiatives and actions, Colombia's political class and wider society turned their eyes towards the young, recognising

them not only as prospective voters, but also as actors and stakeholders willing to take risks to deliver change – stakeholders in their own right.

2.1.3 Governmental institutions related to youth

Before 1990, youth policy was under the purview of 'Coldeportes', the Administrative Department of Sport Recreation, Physical Activity and the Use of Free Time, whose primary policy aims were sports, culture and leisure. After 1991, major developments took place that placed greater emphasis on youth issues at a political level.

The Presidential Council for Youth, Women and the Family was established in 1990 and was mandated to be the governing body of youth policy in the country. A year later, the Special Drug Prevention Programme focussing on youth was created. In 1991, the presidency undertook the first national youth survey and produced what some called the first policy document of the National Council for Economic and Social Policy − CONPES[14], as it will be explained in Chapter 2.

In 1994, the post of Deputy Minister for Youth was created with the aim of raising the profile of youth issues at a governmental level. The following year saw the development of the CONPES document on youth and a series of public consultation events that aimed to gather the information necessary for the formulation of Youth Law Act 375. These actions resulted in the Youth Act of 1997.

In 1999, the Attorney General Office created a Special Delegation for the Rights of Children, Youth, Women and the Elderly, returning once again to the generic concepts of populations. In 2000, the youth councils were created following Act 37. These regulations resulted in the councils becoming partners of the authorities and public bodies. The youth councils acted as forums for issues concerning youth, for public bodies to propose plans and programmes in line with the spirit of the Youth Law, and to perform oversight of the implementation of the initiatives related to youth development plans.

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14. Higher national planning authority that serves as an advisory body of the government in all matters relating to economic and social development.

In the same year, the second National Youth Survey was held and the presidential programme for youth (Colombia Joven) was created as the administrative department of the presidency. Colombia Joven replaced the deputy ministry, removing its budget and responsibility for cross-government policy development.

In the first government of Alvaro Uribe, the "National Youth Policy: Foundations for Youth Ten-Year Plan 2005-2015" was developed, which included a set of principles and objectives for conceiving youth as a social group with specific needs. The objectives of the plan were to promote youth participation in public life, to guarantee youth access to goods and services, and to expand access to economic, social and cultural opportunities.

While this document was the result of a series of participatory talks and agreements involving young members of NGOs, universities and other sectors, within the context of regulating the Youth Act, many of the proposed initiatives remain unimplemented.

In 2006, the Code of Childhood and Adolescence was enacted as a "legal manual that sets standards for the protection of children and adolescents", intending to ensure the full development of children and adolescents and their growth "in the bosom of the family and community in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding". The code also established the system for adolescent criminal responsibility, which is "a set of principles, rules, procedures, specialised judicial and administrative authorities and governing bodies involved in the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed by persons between 14 and 18 years".

Unsurprisingly, given their aims of ensuring the protection of adolescents, the Youth Act and the Code of Childhood and Adolescence compete and result in an overlap of legislation. This duplication of efforts and some of the associated tensions will be highlighted later in the review.

In 2008, the president decided to transfer Colombia Joven from the Presidency to the Vice Presidency, a relocation that was associated with a cut in resources and authority, reducing the priority of the topic and the impact of its work.

In 2013, after national consultations, the National Statute of Youth Citizenship was enacted. The statute replaced the 1997 Youth Act and defined youth as "people between 14 and 28 years of age in the process of consol-

idating intellectual, physical, moral, economic, social and cultural autonomy who are part of a political community and citizenship." Through this statute, Colombia Joven is again attached to the Presidential Office.

2.2   Key Themes and Statistics

Following the components of a decent life that were introduced in previous chapter, this section will present the key statistics of different areas and aspects of youth development. For further analysis, please see Annex 2 for a complete series of data about all the topics explored.

2.2.1 Living well: poverty, inequality, employment and basic health

The first component of a decent life is having the concrete material conditions of existence that allows the individual to follow his/her life plan. As it was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the country has high levels of poverty (especially in rural areas) and inequality.

Graph 11
Distribution of young people
by social class ⸱⸱⸱⸱⸳

Source: Departamento para la
prosperidad social, 2013.

Department of Social prosperity – DPS identified that of the 23.7% of the population aged between 14 and 26 years, 70% can be considered poor[15] (Departamento para la pros-

Middle class

High class

Poor class

Vulnerable

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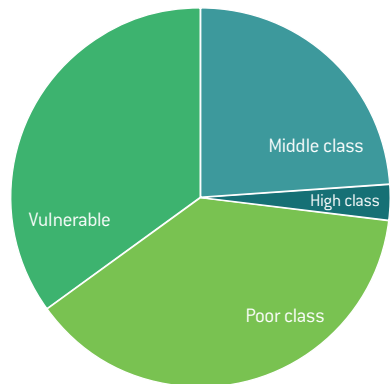
15. Social classes are defined by DPS based on the vulnerability of households (defined as the probability of falling into poverty) using the methodology of López-Calva and Ortiz-Juarez (2011): (i) Poor: households with a per capita daily income below the poverty line (USD 4.06 PPP), (ii) Vulnerable: households with per capita incomes between the poverty line (LP) and USD 10 PPP (households with a high probability of falling into poverty); (iii) Middle class: households with a per capita income of between USD 10 and USD 50 PPP; (iv) Upper class: households with income greater than USD 50 PPP (DPS, 2013).

peridad social, 2013). Codhes (2011) identifies the most vulnerable youth populations as the indigenous and Afro-Colombian women population and displaced youth.

In relation to education, "the percentage of young African-Colombians from 14 to 26 with higher education and graduate level is lower than that of young people who said they did not belong to any ethnic group or majority population. However, this percentage is much higher compared to that of the indigenous and Rom population" (Echeverría, 2007).

2.2.2 Employment

The latest data on employment from the National Administrative Department of Statistics for March-May of 2014 indicated that the general occupancy rate[16] is 58.1%; the occupancy rate for men is 68.8%, for women 47.1%, and for youth aged 14 to 28 years, 48.3%.

The national unemployment rate[17] is 9.0%; the unemployment rate for women (11.8%) is much higher than the rate for men (7.2%), and for youth

Graph 12
Young population by ethnic group and educational level

- None
- Kindergarten
- Primary school
- Junior high
- High school
- Postgraduates
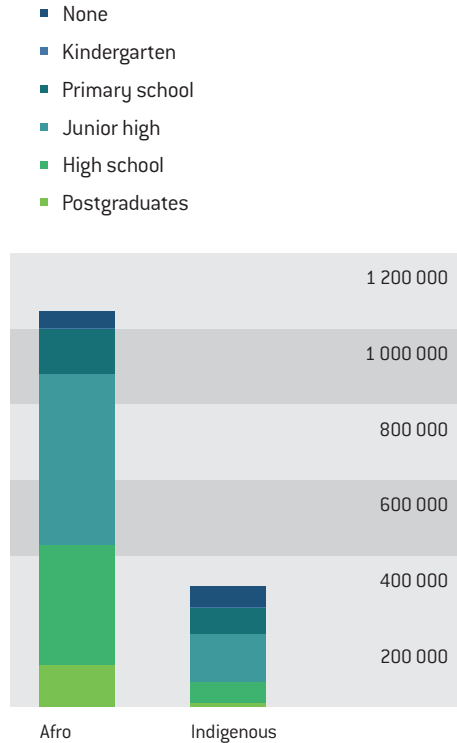
Source: Echeverría, 2007.

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16. It is the percentage ratio between the occupied population and the number of persons in the working age population.

17. It is the percentage ratio between the number of people who are looking for work, and the number of persons in the labour force.

aged 14 to 28 years, the unemployment rate is 15.9%. The unemployment rate of young women specifically is 20.3%, much higher than that of young men, at 12.6%.

Finally, among the employed, the occupational position with the greatest participation was self-employment, at 42.6%, with 43.9% for men, and 40.8% for women. This is followed by trade, hotels and restaurants with 34.1% and 22.9% participation for women and men, respectively.

Historically, young men aged 18 to 25 years are more likely to be employed than young women of the same age (68.7 % vs 42.5 % respectively). This marked difference is even more stark in rural areas, with 81.9 % vs 29.7 % for men and women, respectively (DANE, 2012).

2.2.3 Health

The health system in Colombia has gone through several changes over the last decades, with both positive and negative outcomes. After the government reformed its constitution to "open its doors to globalization" (Cruz, 2010) through market-oriented structural adjustment reforms, the government issued Law 100/1993 that created today's National System of Social Security in Health.

This social security system has been reformed on several occasions to follow the agenda of structural adjustment reforms. Throughout this process, insufficient opportunities were provided for young people to contribute to the development of the final policy. Moreover, although the national health authorities have worked with UNFPA on youth-friendly healthcare services, they have failed to develop a comprehensive strategy that is youth-focussed.

Where youth-friendly healthcare services do exist, they focus on sexual and reproductive health rather than on a comprehensive and integral health approach. Even with a sexual and reproductive health focus, these services have failed to secure universal access to contraceptives and other services for youth. Today, children and youth remain the most neglected group in the Colombian population, in terms of affiliation to the health system and effective access to healthcare services (Profamilia, 2010). Unfortu-

nately, the lack of age-disaggregated information in the Colombian health sector hinders further details around the health situation of young people.

Colombia's health system can be generally characterised as insurance-based with a mix of participation of private and state actors. The health system has increased its coverage of the population during recent years with national population coverage increasing from 63% in 2004 to 91% in 2012 ((Ministerio de salud , 2013). Despite this positive development, it seems that affiliation to health insurance companies has decreased and more work needs to be done to address barriers that hinder effective access to healthcare, especially for the poor (Vargas & Molina, 2009). A study in 2010 showed that 21.3% of people with a health condition did not access healthcare services, 13% of which faced barriers on the supply and 87% on the demand (Rodríguez A. , 2010). Although many of the effects of poor health impact later in life, the most detrimental health-related behaviours are established during youth who, as said earlier, continue being the most neglected group in terms of affiliation to the health system. The considerations of health coverage for young people (including non-working youth) will be explained in detail in Chapter 2.

While overall fertility rates are typically expected to reduce as a country becomes more developed, adolescent fertility rates (15-19 years) in Colombia continue to pose a challenge. Data from the World Bank shows that in 2012, the fertility rate for adolescents was 69 live births per 1000 women, which is a downwards trend compared to data from 2005 (Profamilia, 2010). Total fertility rates from the World Bank are measured with a different methodology than nationally, which impede comparisons, but data from the Colombian Ministry of Health (Ministerio de salud, 2013) states that in 2010-2015, the total fertility rate (women 15-29 years) will be 71.5 births per 1000 women, where regions like Amazonía-Orinoquía, Chocó (in the Pacific), Arauca (in the west) providing the biggest proportion of births. Rates among the 15-19 age group remains on the rise, in regions like Atlántico and Pacífico (which have high poverty and inequality indicators) (Profamilia, 2010). Nationally, about 30% of all births are by women aged between 20 and 24 years of age, while 23% are by women in the 15-19 age group (Profamilia, 2010). Unfortunately, data from national sources is neither unified nor current.

Health problems among young people are especially attributed to sexual and reproductive behaviour, injuries and violence. Women use healthcare services for conditions related to infections, pregnancy and nutrition, while men use healthcare services for situations related to injuries or externalities (Bernal, Forero, Villamil, & Pino, 2012); (Alcaldía de Medellín , 2011). According to the Global Burden of Disease report in 2010 (IHME, 2010), 6.5% of deaths among women aged 20-24 are due to maternal conditions and 8.4% due to HIV/AIDS. For women aged 15-19, maternal disorders account for 5.5% of deaths and HIV/AIDS for 2.6%. Once again, updated and easily accessible data is not readily available and as such, these trends are taken from different documents.

Mortality rates for boys and girls are similar prior to the age of 14. Infant mortality rates in Colombia have reduced significantly from 17 in 2009, to 15 in 2012, per 1000 live births (World Bank, 2012). This trend shows the progress Colombia has made on this topic, with rates similar to other middle-income countries. It is important to note the differences between sources of data: the Ministry of Health shows a total infant mortality rate of 12,76 per 1000 births in 2010, compared to the 16 deaths per 1000 births from the World Bank. Regardless of this, national data from the Ministry of Health shows that the gaps within the country (for example, where the poorest regions like Amazonía-Orinoquía have infant mortality rates of 21 deats per 1000 live births) is explained by barriers to accessing health care, poverty and unsatisfied basic needs.

Although causes of death are similar between adolescent young males and females, mortality rates for young men by far exceed those for young women, where the male risk of dying is around 4 times higher than for females (Ministerio de salud, 2013). The most significant causes of death are interpersonal violence (i.e. homicides), road-traffic incidents, and self-harm. HIV/AIDS also makes the top 4 in youth over 20 years of age. It is worthwhile mentioning that this coincides with regional data from WHO (World Health Organization, 2014). According to intentional homicides indicators from the World Bank, Colombia is the 10th country with most intentional homicides (31 homicides per 1000 people), and six other countries from Latin America and the Caribbean make the top 10 (World Bank, 2013). Around 72% of deaths from external causes in Colombia are people between 15 and 44 years of age (DANE, 2005; Ministerio de Salud, 2013).

Maternal-related conditions comprise the fourth cause of death amongst young women aged 15-19 in Colombia and remains among the top four causes until the age of 35 (IHME, 2010). Around 70% of all maternal deaths are experienced by the poorest segments of society, which face the biggest barriers in accessing healthcare services. Often they are also do not have access to decent education. It is important to note that 40% of all maternal deaths are related to obstetric conditions, which are highly preventable if proper access to quality prenatal care and institutionalised birth (i.e. birth attended in a medical facility with qualified personnel) is guaranteed. Although institutional birth coverage has improved significantly, it still is not accessible for over 20% of women without education (National Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS[18]; Ministry of Health, 2013; 2010).

Regarding contraceptives, which are important tools for youth to achieve a decent, healthy life and to establish an autonomous life plan, a report from Colombia to UNFPA says that knowledge of contraceptive methods in Colombia is "universal" and that 73% of women between 15 and 49 years of age use modern contraceptive methods (UNFPA, 2012). Nonetheless, according to NDHS 2010 (Profamilia), around 50% of women do not know that health insurance companies are supposed to cover modern contraceptive methods. Moreover, the majority of those who stop taking contraceptives do so for two reasons: 1) women state they are not being informed about side effects; 2) around 50% of women get their contraceptive methods in drug stores (self-medication) rather than in official medical facilities. As such, the poorest regions of the country are the ones that have most unsatisfied demand of contraceptives (Profamilia, 2010).

Yet, a study undertaken by a coalition of institutions with the financial support of Bayer Health Care (2012) shows that, in 2011, 38% of young Colombians did not use contraception with a new partner because they did not have a contraceptive method available at the moment, and only 42% of young Colombians feel very well informed about contraceptive methods. NDHS (2010) states that when looking at women who had two or more sexual partners over the last year, 34% used a condom with the last partner. This figure is slightly above what is seen at the global level (in 2012) where

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18. ENDS for its acronym in Spanish.

female use of condoms during the last sexual encounter was 30% (United Nations, 2013).

Furthermore, UNFPA Colombia report states that 48% of Colombian women do not know that health insurance companies (or EPS in Spanish) are obliged to freely provide contraception (from a list included in the plan of benefits[19]) to those who are covered by the health care system, and of reproductive age (for women, ages 14-44, and for men older than 14).

Existing social inequalities are often perpetuated by the health system. Real and effective access to contraceptive methods is dependent on income level, as is access to different health services. While 75% of wealthy women have access, only 67% of the poor women do. Likewise, 7% of women have an unsatisfied demand of contraceptive methods (due to any kind of barrier), which goes up to 13% among uneducated women (UNFPA, 2012).

Substance abuse is also an important health concern amongst youth. Consumption of legal and illegal substances begins at an average age of 12 in the Colombian population. Overall prevalence of substance abuse is 2.7%, with a big gap between men and women (4.5% vs 1.2%, respectively). The prevalence of alcohol use and illegal substance use is higher in the 18-24 years of age group (5.9%) in comparison to other population age groups (Ministerio de la Protección Social, 2009).

Furthermore, even though the overall rates of tobacco use have decreased (from 17.3% in 2008 to 12.9% in 2013), the population groups with the highest rate of tobacco use are 18-24 year olds (16%) and 25-34 year olds (15.9%) (ODC, 2013). A worrying factor is that in 30% of all cases, tobacco becomes the gateway to other substances. As of 2013, the average age of tobacco use starting among young people is 16.8 years of age (16.2 in males and 17.4 in females). However, the age at which youth begin using tobacco has increased over the years: in 2011, 25% of children who smoked began at the age of 11, while in 2013, 25% of children who smoked began at the age of 14. This is thought to be due to restrictive laws on marketing, distribution and the sale of tobacco (Colombian Drug Observatory, 2013).

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19. Up until 2012, the contraceptive methods included in the plan of benefits can be found at: http://www.consultorsalud.com/biblioteca/documentos/2012/Lo_que_Ud_debe_saber_sobre_el_POS_2012.pdf.

Studies have shown that one out of every three Colombians do not eat fruit on a daily basis and 34.2% of young people eat junk food at least once a week. In combination with the fact that only 26% of people between 13 and 17 years undertake the recommended level of physical activity, young people in Colombia are becoming increasingly prone to obesity and non-communicable diseases.

Between 6 and 12% of the Colombian population have some type of disability, with men being more likely to be affected than women, however there is no unanimous agreement on the figure (Ministry of Health, 2013; Cuadros J.M., 2005). Notably, the majority of people that have unsatisfied needs (in terms of devices to support the disability) are young people between 12 and 29 years of age (Ministerio de salud , 2013). In addition, the number of youth with disabilities has increased, as seen in Graph 11. Colombia has passed a Disability Act (Act 1618, 2013) with special provisions for children and youth, which has been of immense importance for the guarantee of rights. However, this has not been adopted by the totality of territorial authorities, municipalities and departments (Universidad de Antioquia, 2013).

Graph 13
Population pyramid of
people with disabilities
in Colombia
(Ministerio de salud, 2013)

■ Women 2005

■ Men 2005

□ Women 2011

□ Men 2011
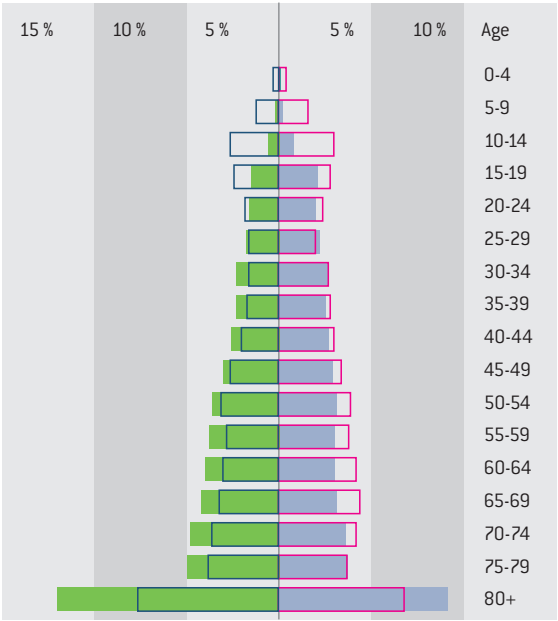
A study by the Commission to Follow on the Constitutional Court T760/2008 Sentence and the Health and Social Security Structural Reform (2011) shows a concerning situation for children and youth with disabilities. The report from February 2011 reported that among Colombians with disabilities, only 72% are covered by the health system (Moreno & Angarita, 2010). This could be correlated to figures from WHO (WHO, 2013) which state that between 76 and 85% of people with serious mental health disorders did not get the indicated treatment.

Moreover, there are 163,619 people under 18 years of age with a registered disability, of which 8.5% belong to an ethnic minority group, 28.1% come from rural areas, and 82.3% live under the poverty line (Comisión de seguimiento a la sentencia T760/2008 y de reforma estructural a la salud y la seguridad social, 2011). According to data from 2013, 70% of people with disabilities are in the lowest socio-economic stratums (Ministerio de salud, 2013). In addition to the precarious conditions these children and adolescents live in, a study conducted in 2011 showed that almost 30% perceive barriers while trying to access healthcare, 26% are not covered by the health system, 28% had not received any healthcare in the previous year of the study, and almost half of them were not aware of the existence of rehabilitation or other specific healthcare services for their disability in their community (Comisión de seguimiento a la sentencia T760/2008 y de reforma estructural a la salud y la seguridad social , 2011).

All these circumstances affect the possibility of young people "living well" as a necessary aspect of having a decent life. While health has been included only in the first component of a decent life, circumstances affecting youth's health status also have an impact on the other components.

2.2.4 Living as desired: Education and participation

The second component of a decent life is individual autonomy, which has been described as the ability to design a life plan, and to choose one's own destiny when that choice does not impact directly on the rights of others. Education, which supports human capacities and abilities for development, as well as enables creativity and the critical sense necessary to dream a plan worth living; and participation which facilitates building social con-

sensus and is a tool for human cooperation in the search for better life conditions, are topics related to the component of individual autonomy.

Education

According to statistics reported to the Ministry of Education, in 2012, 10,674,609 students attended elementary and high school, of which 8,939,203 (83.74%) were in the public sector and 1,735,406 (16.26%) in the non-official sector. The gross enrolment rate in primary and secondary education was 100.76% while the rate of net coverage was 88.31% (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2012).

For 2012, the country had 22,937 educational establishments for primary and secondary education, with the following enrolment levels: preschool 1,028,691; primary: 4,742,456; secondary: 3,568,511; and high school: 1,334951 (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2012).

Once students graduate from high school, they can access tertiary education. In 2012, the gross coverage rate of tertiary education was 42.4%, with the total enrolment in higher education institutions amounting to 1,958,429. At the same time, young people (16-18 or 18+ years) who chose enrolment in college reached 1,218,536 or 62.2%, followed by technological institutions 543,804 (27.8%) and professional technician schools 78,942 (4.0%). Moreover, young Colombians who graduated from college chose a specialisation (81,339/4.2%), completed a master's (32,745/1.7%) or PhD (3,063/0.2%). Additionally, it is estimated that 1,045,980 (53.4%) of the total enrolled in public sector educational institutions while 912,449 (46.6%) are in private sector institutions (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2012).

In 2012, the average number of years of education for those aged 25-34 years across Colombia was 10.2 (2012). Young people aged 25 to 34 who live in urban areas remained in education longer, with an average of 11.0 years in 2011 and 11.1 in 2012. In contrast, young people aged 25-34 years of age from rural areas had on average 6.6 years of education in 2012. There is however a trend for younger people from rural areas to remain in education for longer, with those aged 15-24 having completed on average 7.8 years of education (DANE, 2013).

"Of the 10.9 million young people between 14 and 26 years, 43% are high school graduates (4.7 million). Of these, 21% are poor. On average poor

youth have 3.3 years less schooling than children from middle class families" (Departamento de la prosperidad social -DPS, 2013). As for higher education, 45.3% of young people that start a programme do not complete their studies (DANE, 2013).

A series of trends related to education attrition rates have been identified by SPADIES (2013), who reported that young men are more likely to drop out of their studies than women; that most young people who drop out are pursuing technical and technological programmes (rather that university ones); that there is no substantial difference between the dropout of students in public and private institutions, although the dropout in the first group has been increasing in recent years; that low family income increases the likelihood of young people dropping out; that young people who had a national quality test (SABER test) of low and medium score are more likely to drop out than those who had a high score; that the lower the educational level of the mother the greater the likelihood of dropping out; and that those who work and study at the same time are more likely to drop out than those that are only studying.

According to a survey conducted in 2002, 82.4% of Colombian youth consider that they have received an education of low quality (Revista Semana, 2012). The 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – which is a worldwide study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the school performance of 15 year-olds in maths, science and reading – ranked Colombia in 62nd position out of 65 participating countries – a drop of ten places since the last assessment in 2009.

Based on research by García and Espinoza (2013), one of the main factors that contributed to the drop in performance is the divided nature of the school system in Colombia. To explain this, the authors described that the education system in the country is set in such a way that at the end, it creates a separation of people based on class: rich people study with rich people and in private schools, and the poor with the poor in public schools.

Students are not only separated, they also have unequal access to education "while the average student of stratum 1[20] attending, for example, a public school, gets a score of 43.14 in the state exam, an average student of stratum level 6 attending a private school gets a score of 60.45" (García & Espinoza, 2013). Finally, the income of the family and their ability to pay enrolment fees, which is the determining factor in the quality of the school. On the other side, the report on education and conflict (UNESCO, 2011) indicates that there are twice as many displaced youth[21] aged between 12 and 15 years still in primary school, as non-displaced youth - showing late entry of displaced children and youth to education. Additionally, the same report indicates that displaced youth have higher levels of repetition and dropout rates.

Considering education for ethnic groups, the General Law of Education indicates that they could receive a special education, which is:

> *"...offered to groups or communities that are part of the nationality and which possess a culture, language, traditions and their own native privileges (...) and must be linked to the environment, the productive process to social and cultural process, with the proper respect for their beliefs and traditions."*

[Article 55, Law 115 of 1994].

An important aspect that the law is to guarantee the right of different ethnic groups with linguistic traditions to a bilingual education in their territories,

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20. According to the National Administrative Department of Statistics or DANE, the stratus is understood as a measure of socioeconomic level of homes and properties. Of these, levels 1, 2 and 3 correspond to the lower stratum, as a household with fewer resources with individuals who are are beneficiaries of subsidies in public services; 5 and 6 correspond to higher stratum of households with greater financial resources, which must pay extra costs (tax) on the value of public services. Stratum 4 is neither a subsidy beneficiary nor do the individuals pay extra costs; people of this level pay exactly the value that the company defines as cost of providing the service.

21. "It is described as a person who has been forced to migrate within the national territory, abandoning their place of residence or usual economic activities, since their life, physical integrity, security or personal freedom have been violated or are directly threatened, given the following situations: internal armed conflict, internal strife, widespread violence, massive violations of human rights, violations of international humanitarian law or other circumstances arising from these situations that could alter or alter drastically the peace". Article 1 of Law 387 of 1997.

taking as its foundation the mother tongue of the respective group (Article 57, Law 115 of 1994). The decree 804 of 1995, which regulates education for ethnic groups states that this education is part of the public education service,

> *"...and is based on a commitment of collective development where different members of the community exchange knowledge and experiences in order to maintain, recreate, and develop a comprehensive life plan according to their culture, language, traditions and their own native privileges."*

(Article 1, Decree 804 of 1995).

The decree seeks to ensure the education of ethnic groups, stating that in the territorial entities where there are settlements of indigenous, black and / or islanders, the education provider should be sensitive to the language, history and cultural legacy of those communities.

Participation

Since the late 1980s, Colombia has passed legislation aimed at establishing mechanisms for citizen participation. There are approximately 30 laws related to participation, not only relating to elections but also mechanisms that allow citizens to participate (nationally and locally) in government policy making processes. There also exist almost 30 scenarios of participation, such as councils and committees[22], at each of the territorial levels (González & Velásquez, 1998).

The constitution of 1991 established an institutional openness to the creation of a legal framework for youth participation. For instance, the National Act of Youth in 1997 provided the opportunity for the creation of youth councils in every subnational level of governance across the country (departments, municipalities, districts). However, youth were participating on their own initiative, in activities such as volunteering, advocacy and policy influencing through NGOs, groups and political parties. Only a few youth

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22. The academic discourse around participation in Colombia has traditionally worked in a separate way from the fiscal and administrative spheres where formal and informal participation is held. To find out more, the work of Fabio Velásquez and Esperanza González is very useful.

councils that were created, and less than the 50% of them were implemented (González & Velásquez, 1998).

According to the 2013 National Inquiry of Political Culture, 73% of Colombians are aware of citizen participation, however only 27.7% of the total population older than 18 years have participated in any kind of organisation or group. 77.7% of respondents aged 18 to 25 stated that they have not participated in an organisation and / or group in the past year, and 88.2% had not made complaints or demands on the state to address a problem that has affected their lives. Furthermore, the survey reported that young people have lower levels of participation than other age groups, and that participation levels amongst the Colombian population are low in all age cohorts surveyed (DANE, 2013).

Taken together, it appears that despite the existence of numerous mechanisms and scenarios, citizens either lack interest in formal participation structures or face barriers to access them, such as the armed conflict, inequality, and the lack of opportunities to overcome social exclusion.

According to surveys assessing people's confidence in the institutions of democracy – such as the president, the congress, political parties and NGOs – Colombian youth have higher levels of trust than their Latin American peers. However, this trend is reversed in perceptions of "free and fair elections", where in relation with other Ibero-American youth, the proportion of youth who expressed confidence in elections is 20 percentage points lower. Meanwhile, when asked whether they thought "the country is ruled by the will of the people", 34% of Colombians indicated that they did not - five points lower than the regional average (Consorcio Iberoamericano de investigación de mercados y asesoramientos, 2012).

According to the survey of Colombian Political Culture (DANE, 2014), just 19.4% of youth from 18 to 25 years have been part of organisations and/ or groups in the last year. From them, most had participated in religious activities and arts and sports groups.

Despite the level of mistrust that citizens have in national institutions and participation mechanisms, some people have chosen to become active citizens, developing their own solutions to social issues by creating non-governmental organisations, collectives, groups and/or social innovation initiatives. This activism and volunteering activity could be the reason

Graph 14

Participation of youth (18-25) in groups or organizations,
comparison with total population (percentage)

- Total
- 18-25
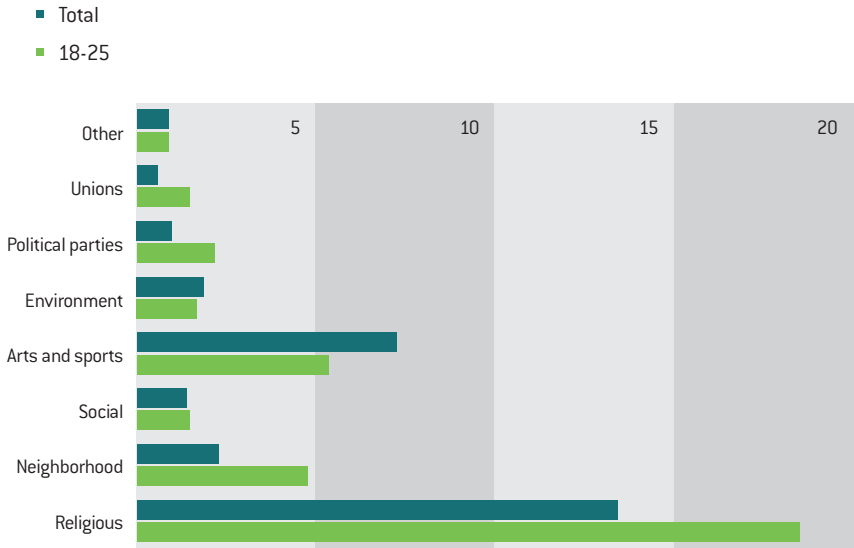
Source: DANE, 2014

why Colombia ranks 1st in the Citizen Participation category of the Global Youth Wellbeing Index, with a score of 0.7 out of 1.

Although exact data related to the number of citizen-led initiatives is difficult to obtain, information from some state institutions provide insight into their significance. In 2011, Colombia Joven launched an award named "Visibilizate" (make yourself visible) with the aim of recognising youth initiatives. 84 youth organisations from across the country applied (Colombia Joven, 2011), however the number of youth organisations is much higher. These organisation and initiatives strive to influence policymakers and other actors of public policies, providing solutions to social problems in specific communities.

According to DANE (2013), 26.3% of 18-25 year olds are unaware of the formal mechanisms that exist for citizen participation in Colombia23. According to the survey, 21.8% of the 26-40 year olds do not know any mechanisms for participation, along with 24.4% of 41-65 years old (DANE, 2013).

In the last four presidential elections, for example, abstention has been on average around 50% of those eligible to vote (Misión de Observación Electoral , 2011). For instance, in 2014 presidential elections, this number was 60%.

Colombia has high rates of abstention in all age groups. In fact, according to the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "regarding the presidential elections held in Latin America between 2004 and 2007, Colombia had the highest rate of abstention. The situation is the same with respect to elections for Congress" (El Espectador, 2011).

Graph 15
Electoral participation in Colombia (voting, percentage)

- Never
- Sometimes
- Always

| | 18 to 25 | 26 to 40 | 41 to 64 | 65 and more |

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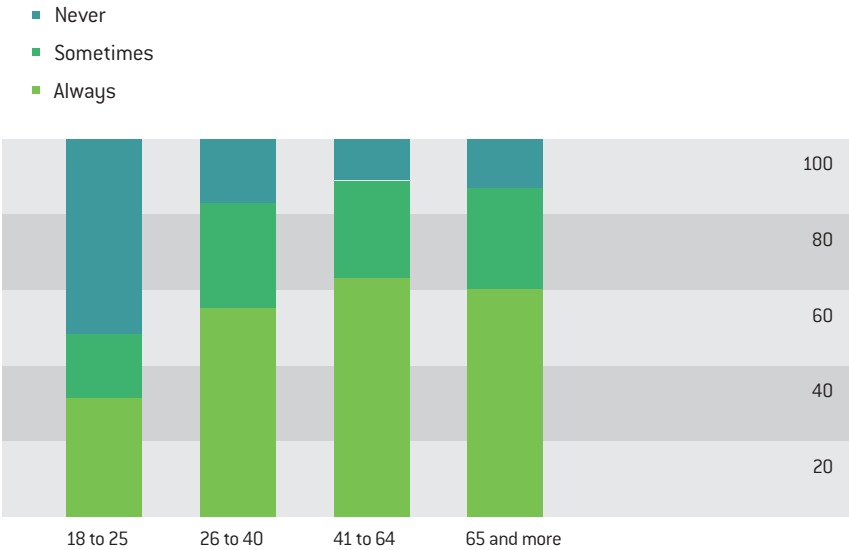
23. Such formal mechanisms include referendum, popular consultation, plebiscite, mandatory revocation, popular legislative initiatives and 'Cabildo Abierto' (an open session of the legislative organs).

In the survey mentioned above, 49.8% of young people indicated that they had not voted in the last election because they were not registered to vote. Older age cohorts are more likely than youth to be on the voter register, however 35.8% of the adult population was still not registered. In regards to other reasons for not voting, young people are less likely than their counterparts to distrust in the promises made by politicians: 28.7% of respondents aged 18 to 25 in comparison to 57.6% of respondents aged 26-40, and 60.6% of responders aged 26-60.

Additionally, the survey shows that after those aged 65 years or older, youth are the group second least likely to consider voting as a mechanism

Graph 16
Reasons for not voting in last elections, 2013

- 18 to 25
- 26 to 40
- 41 to 64
- 65 and more
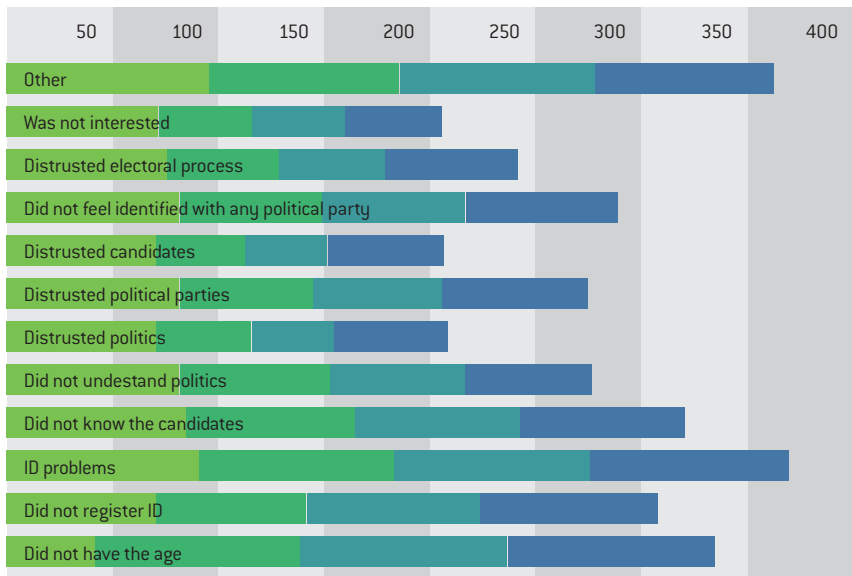
that allows them to "practice law, citizen review and claim" (16.2%), or as a way to "make the country better" (15.4%).

Of the people who usually vote, young people aged 18 to 25 years do not identify with any ideological trend (80%). Only about 4% percent of young people state an ideological tendency to the right, 4% to the centre, 3.0% to the left, 1.5% to the centre-left, 1.1% to the centre-right, and 6,1% unknown. (DANE, 2013).

Regarding perceptions of democracy, only 29.3% of young people believe that Colombia is a democratic country, while 58.4% think it is fairly democratic, and 12.3% think that it is not democratic at all. Similar perceptions are held by the population at large, with values of 39.8%, 51%, and 9.1%, respectively (DANE, 2013).

When looking at the entire region, 2014 was an important year for Latin America in terms of elections. Costa Rica, Bolivia, Panama, El Salvador, Brazil, Uruguay and Colombia held national elections to elect a president and parliament. The general perception of democracy, according to Latinobarómetro, is that ¨76% of young people in Latin America think that even with problems, democracy is the best form of government; 67% said that they would never support a military government" (Juventud con voz, 2013).

Also, youth participation as part of various social movements in the region is seen with great interest, as has emerged in recent years in Chile, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico. In these cases, the importance of issues such as education and democracy on the regional agenda, along with a renewal in political practices and discourses of the new generations, were highlighted (Galarreta, 2013).

In relation to ethnic minority groups, formal and non-formal mechanisms have been established for the participation of indigenous and Afro-Colombian people. In 1991, the National Constitution considered a special circumscription for these groups: for indigenous communities, there are two seats in the Senate and one in the Chamber of Representatives; for Afro-Colombians communities, there are two seats in the Chamber of Representatives24. Additionally, in 1991 Colombia ratified ILO Convention

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24. Law 649 of 2001, whereby the congress regulates the article No. 176 of the National Constitution regarding to special circumscription.

No. 169 – a legally binding international instrument open to ratification – which deals specifically with the rights of indigenous and tribal people that includes the right to prior consultation when national projects or programmes may affect their welfare.

Outside of formal structures for youth participation, youth have demonstrated autonomy in organising and demanding that their perspectives be heard in political processes related to education, employment and health. Most recently, in 2011 and 2012, youth-led rallies were organised by youth movements regarding a proposal by the state to change the General Education Law. While not organised exclusively by youth, they participated in rallies against new proposals of healthcare bills.

2.2.5 Living without humiliation: Violence, crime and conflict

The third component of a decent life is related to the physical and moral integrity necessary for the establishment and fulfilment of a life plan.

It is a reality in Colombia that violence, crime and conflict are interlinked in the lives of youth. The probability of a young Colombian (15-29 years) dying a violent death reached its peak in the first half of the Nineties, but has reduced gradually since then. Amongst the youth population, young men aged 20-29 are most likely to die as a result of violence (DANE, 2007).

Globally, Latin America and Africa have the highest estimated rates of homicide among people aged 10-29 years (WHO, 2000). Colombia has the third highest rate (after Venezuela and El Salvador) of mortality due to external causes among young people aged 15 to 29 years old (WHO, 2000).

However, when the causes of those deaths are disaggregated, it shows that after El Salvador, Colombia has the highest rate of homicide mortality, whereas the rates of suicide and deaths from land transport accidents are much less prominent. This clearly shows the impact of the internal conflict on juvenile mortality. This is aligned with young people's perceptions of the problems they face: when asked in the WHO survey, Colombian youth highlighted the armed conflict and theft as the most serious problems, followed by drug trafficking and organised crime (WHO, 2000).

According to recent data in 2011, Colombia had a national mortality rate for homicide of 35.95 cases per 100.000 inhabitants. "By age groups, homi-

cides were highest for persons aged from 20 to 24 years old (3.189 cases) and from 25 to 29 years old (3.002 cases)" (Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal, 2011). According to El País (2013), the "homicide rate per hundred thousand inhabitants, in the first semester of 2013, was 34.4 ...the number of cases in 2013 is set as the highest of the last three years and breaks the downward trend recorded during the last decade".

In the case of personal injury, of the more than 40,000 cases that may occur annually, 51% of the victims are young and of those, 67% are men" (El Tiempo, 2013). From 2005 to 2009, 160 thousand minors were arrested for illegal activities (El Espectador, 2009).

As mentioned before, displaced youth are among the most vulnerable in terms of the effects of violence. Official records indicate that between 1997 and 2009, at least 853,897 youth (aged 14-26) had been displaced - representing 26% of the total number of people displaced during that period (Colombia Joven, 2010). In the last years, the rate of youth displaced has been high: 374,174 in 2001-2004 and 302,006 in 2005-2008 (Colombia Joven, 2010). By 2011, the 60% of the displaced population was under 20 (Codhes, 2012).

The data indicates that the Pacific (mostly composed by Afro-descendant and indigenous people) and Caribbean regions have the highest rates of youth displacement, and among the departments, few municipalities, mostly rural, have the highest rates. At least the 25% of youth displaced come from rural areas (Colombia Joven, 2010).

The situation of youth that are displaced is highly vulnerable: 21% of the displaced population get education on a level that is lower than expected for their age. 6.2% of displaced young women have been pregnant. Approximately 53% of displaced young people between 12 and 17 have been affected by mental health problems (Colombia Joven, 2010). When considering the general population of young women in Colombia, the situation is equally worrisome in rural areas, since there is 26.7 observed percentage of pregnancy, compared with a percentage of 17.3 of pregnancy among young people in urban areas. That is, the difference between urban and rural areas is approximately 9 percentage points (OAG, 2011).

> *"Of the total number of displaced minors who enrolled for the 2010 school year, 2.4% had dropped out by June of the same year. By age*

groups, the highest rates of school drop out are amongst the 16-17 age group."

<div align="right">(Codhes, 2012)</div>

Undoubtedly, the internal conflict has had a significant impact on youth in Colombia. In over 40 years of fighting between the different factions (guerrilla groups, paramilitary forces, drug cartels, national army, among others), an estimated of 5.5 million Colombians have been victims of torture, sexual violence, murder, forced displacement, landmines or slaughter (Revista Semana, 2013).

Women are victims of multiple forms of violence in situations of armed conflict in Colombia. This violence is added to the violence in peacetime and is exercised against women for gender-discriminatory reasons. The crimes perpetrated against women and girls in the context of armed conflict are: (1) attacks, massacres and murders committed against communities in order to cause their displacement, (2) killings, torture, and threats against women by maintaining close relationships with supporters or fighters or be involved directly or through their relatives in political activities, (3) searches and kidnappings for information, terrorizing, punishing, intimidating or coercing women. Both men and women are victims of crimes perpetrated by all armed actors, but in the case of women, acts of physical and psychological violence, assaults and sexual offenses are added (UniAndes, 2011).

According to Semana (2013), Colombia is the only country in the Western Hemisphere where armed groups recruit children and adolescents. Several studies have estimated that between 14,000 and 18,000 children have been victims. The only certain figure is the 5,105 who have gone through the ICBF[25], where, despite the difficulties in their recovery, many manage to rebuild their lives (Semana, 2013). Data on recruited minors varies from one institution to another. Some, such as Human Rights Watch's report Learn Not to Cry (2002) made a calculation - conservative, according to them — of

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25. Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar - Colombian Institute of Family Welfare. ICBF is an entity of the Colombian state, working for the prevention and comprehensive protection of infancy, childhood, adolescence and welfare of families in Colombia.

11,000 children. But other researches[26] said that most realistic estimations point to 17,000 child combatants. "Many of these children have been involved as combatants, many as informants, and all have had their rights denied" (Semana, 2013).

Adriana Gonzalez, director of the ICBF Programme of special care to children dissociating from armed groups, reported that about 5170 children have passed through the programme since its creation in 1999. Of these, most were aged between 16 and 17 years, although there have been cases of children as young as 9 and some as young as 7 years. According to ICBF's official statistics, of this group of children, 3,060 were recruits of FARC; 1,054 of AUC and 766 of ELN[27]. In many of the cases, they are people from departments of Antioquia, Putumayo and Arauca.

One case that has impacted society in general and youth in particular in relation to the internal conflict is that of the so-called 'false positives'. In 2008, 23 young people were presented by the army as insurgents killed in combat in an area to the northeast of the country (North Santander), when in fact they were young, poor, unemployed or working in precarious jobs in the construction sector, who were deceived with false promises of employment and murdered by the army. Although the national government presented the incident as an isolated case, NGOs and civil society have demonstrated that these murders were the result of a "systematic and widespread policy of the army, which was the result of an internal directive of incentives and awards given to soldiers for combat casualties" (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). According to the following graph, there are 1.741 victims of extrajudicial executions in Colombia, distributed over 26 years:

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26. According with Reinel Garcia, director of the Growing Together Foundation, member of COALICO (Coalition against the involvement of children and youth to the armed conflict in Colombia).

27. FARC: Revolutionary Armed Colombian Forces (left guerrilla), ELN: army of national liberation (left guerrilla), AUC: Colombian united autodefenses (right paramilitary forces).

Table 5

Extrajudicial executions "false positives" in Colombia: 1984 -2011

Year	# Victims	Year	# Victims
1984	1	1999	19
1985	12	2000	12
1988	65	2001	9
1989	21	2002	39
1990	50	2003	52
1991	49	2004	122
1992	49	2005	131
1993	111	2006	244
1994	29	2007	388
1995	9	2008	213
1996	23	2009	10
1997	39	2010	12
1998	15	2011	17

Source: Deuda con la Humanidad II, 23 años de Falsos positivos 1988-2011, CINEP/PPP, 2011.

2.3 Youth In Media

It is useful to understand how the media portrays youth, as it has a great influence on the construction of youth identity and on the views that shape youth public policies and its characteristics.

Furthermore, media forms the image that society has in relation to youth, an image that, in the case of Colombia, is highly stigmatised and stereotyped, as was seen in Chapter 1. "Stereotyping a group can affect the way society perceives and changes patterns of knowledge that it has. Eventually

the public ends up considering the stereotype as a reality and not just as a representation of reality" (García A., 2003).

According to García:

> "... [the media] may be particularly dangerous in the creation and dissemination of stereotypes. The present widespread impression that violence and juvenile crime are on the rise, or at least out of control, is a good example of this (...) If the attitudes and lifestyles that appear in the media as well as the way they inform and conceive youth are examined, a culture of death could be detected."

(García A., 2003)

In a study looking at 250 newspaper articles published in the online edition of major newspapers from Latin American countries from January 2011 to May 2013 that mentioned young and teenagers who neither work nor study D 'Alessandre (2013) identified that "the corpus of letters broke 'the youth' into 14 subgroups by age between 12 and 34 years. At the same time, the specificity of adolescence is often diluted, considering both the amplitude of the age range, as in the recurrence using the term 'youth' to classify the entire age group" (D'Alessandre, 2013).

This happens because in the media, images about young people show them as if they were one unit, without 'differentiating shades' in a "globalized image (...) built around the elements that make up the cast of the most negative representations (...) in function on their media weight: representations based on the risks associated with the consumption of drugs and alcohol, problems with studies and entrance in the labour market" (FAD – INJUVE, 2007). To these issues,

> "...we will have to add a number of elements that come into play in the socialization contexts of young people, usually around leisure (...) and elements that tend to be addressed from the perspective of the embodiment of specific risks and characteristics of the youth: sexual practices, road accidents, and violence. But always from the perspective of some interest to emphasize the negative, and in general, stigmatizing the whole group, from a confused idea of it."

(FAD-INJUVE, 2007)

It is also necessary to understand that the media is moved for various reasons when broadcasting information on youth: "commercial, political and editorial reasons, which are addressed to both young (as part of a market that can buy) and to their parents or adults in general (also for consumption, but with a special highlight of the politics aspects involved in the broadcast)" (FAD, INJUVE, 2007).

In the case of Colombia, young people typically appear in headlines as being involved in various acts of violence and crime, and most commonly in the role of perpetrator rather than the role of victim. According to Latinobarómetro (2008, p. 56), this perception prevails in the minds of adults:

> *"It is a fact that youth are generally seen as more violent than each of the societies in which they live, but the distance from the youth to society is much less than what appears in the media. The news agenda is falsely branded against violence from youngsters. But the data belies this information since the main problem is the violence of societies as a whole, rather than stigmatized youth violence".*

(Latinobarómetro, 2008)

To verify the relevance in the Colombian context of some of the findings of the investigations mentioned, a review of 38 copies of newspaper El Tiempo (www.eltiempo.com) and El Espectador (www.elespectador.com) was performed for approximately three months. Also, 32 weekly editions of Revista semana (www.semana.com) were also reviewed. In addition, night programmes with higher ratings (from 9 to 12 pm in the months of October and November 2013) on Colombia's private channels were reviewed were reviewed (RCN and Caracol).

As for the printed media mentioned, we recorded the explicit mentions about youth in different categories (art and culture, violence, education, economics, health and participation), as well as the format (regular news, interview, chronic, short note, editorial note), the image or stereotype of youth (violent, apathetic, participatory, victim, poor, highlighted), and the space that was offered to the topic in the body of the newspaper (number of pages or space on the page).

The outcome of this review is not far from the conclusions of the researches mentioned above. It was found that the 50% are internal writings that relate news events without much analysis, 7%mention general themes

about youth, and 10% associated with youth leaders in their academic or professional fields, including highlighted athletes. Most mentions of youth (51%) speak of violent incidents in which young people participate as victims (88%) or perpetrators (27%).

On the other hand,

> *"...the media will broadcast an image of young people not only through the things they say directly about them (from news, features and special programmes), but also from the different programmes where they appear (as characters from self-produced series, as members of gatherings and debates, or as show creators and presenters)".*

<div align="right">(FAD-INJUVE, 2007)</div>

Additionally, soap operas and serials from the highest rated channels that are broadcasted on primetime were analyzed: Caracol (www.caracol.cowww.caracoltv.com) and RCN (www.canalrcnmsn.com). In the range from 7:00 to 11:59 pm, both channels were broadcasting two news programmes, a reality TV show, and two series during weekdays; RCN had another series and Caracol, one soap opera.

An analysis of the general history and content of programmes with no news content highlights the portrayal of youth that has been described above:

» The series that adapt Colombian contemporary history associated with drug trafficking, especially the series 'Escobar' (Caracol) and 'The Mexican' (RCN), which include images of ambitious youth, some with financial problems, entering the world of drug cartels for power, easy money and recognition through violence.

» RCN currently has a series called 'Mamá También' ('Also mother') which tells stories about teen pregnancy, an issue that is also recurrent in the news media that report about young Colombians. It also includes issues of bullying and domestic violence.

This view is not new. The two TV series with the highest popularity ratings in Colombian's TV history, "Francisco el matemático" (1999 – 2004) and "Padres e Hijos" (1993 - 2009), are conspicuous examples of this. They usually touch topics such as drug addiction, violence, gangs, sexuality and reproduction, showing youth "risky behavior" and its potential consequences.

Nevertheless, other issues that were important for youth started becoming more visible, such as social participation, military service, among others.

It is important to note that there exists a vicious cycle in which the portrayal of youth feeds into adult perceptions of youth, however, while often stereotypical, this portrayal is to some extent grounded in reality. The media shows stories of young people in violence and drug trafficking because those topics (including the participation of young people in them) are part of the daily life of the country. The problems of substance abuse, early pregnancy and other types of violence are also part of the reality of young people.

However, as was seen in the results of the press review, the media very rarely broadcasts good news about young people and the few articles that do portray young people positively are typically associated with young people with exceptional talents, not the general situation, circumstances and realities of young people in Colombia.

Besides what the media broadcast about youth, the social representation of youth is also formed by images that young people themselves construct and communicate through social media.

Since their appearance, social networks have changed the way mankind communicates, especially young people:

> *"Schwarz (2011) suggests that young people are moving away from the primacy of the phone or face-to-face interaction, with text-based communication, especially messaging, and instant communication as the preferred methods of interaction. Social networks enable a new way to communicate, interact and create communities."*

> (Martínez Alma, Fonseca Óscar y Esparcia Antonio, 2013)

The digital consumer survey in 2012 (Ipsos media ITC) indicates that of respondents between 15 and 24, 91.2% visit social networks daily.

Following the pattern of the evolution in social movements in the world, Colombian youth had also used social networks to mobilise around multiple causes, especially those associated with the armed conflict.

One of the most successful calls made by young people using social networks is called "One Million Voices Against FARC", held in February 2008. This movement, which was able to mobilise "more than 14 million

people in over 193 cities of the World" (Terra, 2011) was led by a youth group called 'Colombia soy yo' (I am Colombia). A month later, another mobilisation against paramilitary violence was held, organised again online and by youth. Despite lower support from the media, it mobilised around a million people in the major cities of the country (Terra, 2011).

After this, many mobilisations were led by youth. One of the more recent and more successful examples took place in November 2011, where hundreds of young people across the country marched to reject the amendment to Law 30, calling for an open dialogue on education. The mobilisation, in which social networks played an important role, was successful: the reform to higher education was stopped.

2.4   Conclusions

Colombia is a very complex and diverse country, in which wealth and poverty coexist with one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. Despite Colombia's recent history of an improvement in material conditions, crime, violence and conflict persist.

Youth experiences the worst of this turbulent reality. In particular, when it comes to indigenous, Afro-Colombians and young farmers. The situation is even worst for girls and young women living in rural areas. Men are also at high risk, experiencing early violent death when living in rural and red zones. In addition, the young Colombian experience is one with a high maternity rate, low access to health services and use of contraceptives, low quality of education and very few opportunities to access tertiary education.

In next chapters, the review will analyse in detail the development of youth policy which has tried to address this situation, as well as the actors and institutions that have played an important role in this objective, including the main successes and obstacles that they had faced throughout the process.

Youth and
Public Policy in

Colombia

The Policy Context

3

3.1 Introduction and context

In this section, the broader context of public policies for youth will be explained, including conceptual approaches, some key definitions to understand the different aspects associated with youth policy, the legal framework within which it develops, and aspects that must be considered in its development such as youth's needs, rights and responsibilities.

3.2 The broader policy context

When analysing the relation between public policy and the perception and approach towards young people in Colombia, there are at least two issues to take into account: (i) the conceptualisation of youth in policy and how it has changed over the last decades, which are related to youth policy paradigms at international level, (ii) the political and economic history and the role of the Catholic church.

3.2.1 Paradigms and analytical models of youth in policy

Traditionally in Colombia, public policies have been built under a sectorial approach, focussing on distinct and discrete policy domains such as education, health, security, rather than adopting a population or cross-sectorial approach. Referring to international trends, Krauskopf (2005) argues that "population policies arose when pressure from the women's movement, discovered that sectorial policies ignored a number of subjects that were excluded and diminished in power relations".

Colombia was not isolated from these international influences. During the 1960s, social movements started fighting for women's autonomy as well as sexual and reproductive freedom. In Colombia, these social movements caught the attention of policymakers due to their potential to change the way that society was structured and organised. Many of the demands made by these movements contrasted sharply with the traditional values and expectations of the Catholic Church. International movements such as the social revolution that started in May 1968 in France, served as inspiration for Colombian groups to position youth and women as political actors (Morales, 2010).

Although changes have occurred in the way in which young people in Colombia are perceived and the level of attention that they receive, this evolution has occurred slowly. Reporting on this, Krauskopf (2003 and 2005) outlined four paradigms of juvenile stages through which the lives of young people can be viewed. These paradigms can be associated with three generalised approaches to policies and programmes related to youth. According to these approaches, there are different types of policy strategy, programmes and attention paid to youth issues, as seen in Table 6.

Table 6
Paradigms of youth and public policy approach and strategy

Paradigm of juvenile phase		Approach to public policy	Policy strategy	Programs
View of youth role	Stage of youth			
Transition to adulthood	Preparation	Traditional	Sectoral, universal, extension of educational coverage, healthy recreation and leisure time with low coverage, military service	Homogeneous, isolated, inequitable
Risk and transgression	Problem for society	Reductionist	Countervailing, sectoral (mainly health and justice), targeted	Care for children in neglect or delinquency, relevance for urban — popular youth, dispresión
Citizen youth	Growth and social development	Advanced	Prioritize inclusion of youth as explicit subjects of political, civil, cultural, social and economic	Comprehensive, participatory, extended partnerships, gender equality, empowerment

Strategic actor for development	Training, productive and cultural contribution	Advanced	Intersectoral, incorporating youth as human capital, social capital development and cultural producer	Transversality, empowerment, expression cultiral, youth contribution to economic, social and cultural development

Source: Krauskopf 2003 and 2005

These paradigms range from traditional approaches – those that perceive the stage of youth solely as a period of transition and focus their interventions on preparing young people for adulthood – to more reconstructed approaches in which youth are viewed as strategic actors for development and that focus their intervention on social development. Youth-related public policies in Colombia have adopted all of these approaches. In the range of explicit and implicit youth policies, we can find all the various policy approaches and paradigms of juvenile phases to which Krauskopf (2005) refers.

Highlighting the changing levels of commitment to youth policy during the 1990s, Sarmiento (Política Pública de Juventud en Colombia: Logros, Dificultades y Perspectivas, 2004) has argued that "in Colombia, actions aimed at improving the quality of life and promoting the participation of youth during the 1990's occurred in a cycle with three distinct phases: promotion in 1990-1993, boom in 1994-1998, and in 1999-2003, a decline".

At the beginning of the 1990s, the new constitution of 1991 drove a process of decentralisation of public administration in the country. This decentralisation process had a significant impact on education policy.

In this context, the education law and other set of rules aimed to reinforce the process of decentralisation. However, there were significant differences between the national legislation and its implementation:

> "In terms of legislation, Duarte (2003) notes that the process of decentralisation of education was characterised by disorder and incoherence as some rules contradicted or duplicated existing ones or sought to achieve many objectives through the same instrument. Meanwhile,

Vergara and Simpson (2001) show how the decentralisation process at the end of the century had difficulties to promote efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery or to promote equity in the allocation of resources"

(Ramírez & Téllez, 2006)

The level of public spending on education – as a percentage of GDP – increased up until 1998, decreased between 1999 and 2000, and then began to increase again in the early years of the century. The fall in education spending during the late 1990s was in line with reductions in all areas of government, which arose from fiscal restraint that the country experienced after the deep recession that affected the Colombian economy during this period (Ramírez & Téllez, 2006).

Since the changes in the 1991 Constitution, Colombia's public policy on youth has aimed to achieve five interconnected and complementary purposes:

1. The institutionalisation and regulation of youth because of their ability to challenge and question authority and the socio-political, cultural and economic system, and similarly, for their role in the phenomena of violence and social conflict in the country in the previous decades.

2. The reduction of vulnerability, risk and exclusion faced by poor and vulnerable youth.

3. The integration of youth into the market economy and development processes.

4. The participation of youth in institutional spaces within political structures.

5. The recognition of the young as a subject of rights and duties (Sarmiento, 2004).

This chapter will seek to illustrate and analyse how, following the phases and objectives described above, Colombia's explicit youth policy has evolved in response to youth perspectives and wider paradigms of youth and policy. However, these developments have been restrained by rather traditional and reductionist approaches in which institutions function in isolation to each other.

3.2.2 Political and economic history and the role of the Catholic Church

The first decades of Colombian history were characterised by civil disputes amongst partisan, political, liberal, and conservative groups that sought to divide power without giving consideration to the general welfare of citizens, in particular that of minority groups.

For instance, as a response to the long years of violence between liberal and conservative parties, in 1958 they made an agreement called National Front to alternate the presidential power between them. They agreed to alternate which party was in power every four years, and the elections were made just to choose one candidate of the party that corresponded in that period. There were no multiparty elections. This lasted until 1974 and excluded any opportunity for other political parties to gain power, especially leftist parties. As a result, some of these organisations formed guerrilla movements, which have lasted until today.

The divisions that these conflicts established, and its consequences, contributed to the creation of a society that is characterised by a highly unequal distribution of power and money. According to Ponsford:

> Colombia "(...) is a fragmented, uneven, fractured (...) country that has extraordinary intellectuals who are part of a tiny cult world that is curiously of the extreme right (...) Culture in Colombia reflects a general dichotomy: above, a supremely conservative elite, and below, a people with talent and a strong desire to push for change (...) In general there is too much reverence in Colombia for power. It's a country where the official truth has a great ubiquity, where the marginal voice, both politically and culturally is not heard (...) Colombia is a country with a feudal structure."

<div align="right">(Revista Semana, 2014)</div>

This means that Colombia has a political history where the traditional parties have held the leading roles, representing the interests of traditional families (those that hold traditional values in regards to family, economics and politics), and usually excluding people with less resources (Universidad Militar Nueva Granada, 2011). These are the groups that debated and perpetuated the status quo of the youth situation through sectorial, implicit

youth policies, which in most cases lacked openness for youth participation in the formulation and evaluation processes.

Examples of how traditional views have taken precedence over more progressive reforms include the multiple bills on sexual and reproductive health, especially those targeting women and young people, that have not passed due to lack of political will (Bill 218/1993, 043/1995, 179/1997, 58/2002) and blockage by conservative parties. Another example is the cancellation of the "Book of Sexuality," which was promoted and then cancelled by the Ministry of National Education (El Tiempo, 1995), in response to lobbying by conservative groups.

The historical influence of conservative groups is also linked to the fact that Colombian society has been strongly influenced by the Catholic Church (or "the Church" as it is often referred to in the Spanish language) for most of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As a result, many members of Colombian society hold conservative positions on important and contentious issues, such as the role of youth and women in society, sexuality and reproduction (which for the Church should be always linked to each other: sexuality for reproduction), and abortion, among others (Morales, 2010).

Despite the constitution of 1991 Colombia recognising religious freedom in the country, it can be argued that historically, Colombia is and has been a Catholic state, with most of its inhabitants practicing Christian religion[28].

It is therefore not surprising that the policies formulated and implemented have had these traditional religious principles at their core. This is evident in the past and current debates around sexuality, reproduction, and marriage. For example, it was not until after a series of Tutelas[29] in 2007

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[28]. According to the Global Religion Landscape Report of 2012 from the Pew Research Centre, 92.5% of the Colombian population is Christian.

[29]. Tutelas is a mechanism for the protection of fundamental constitutional rights of the people of Colombia. The Constitution in Article 86 states that every person can complain through a Tutela action with a judge at any time and place, through a preferential and summary procedure that they themselves or anyone acting on their behalf can initiate. It is for the immediate protection of their fundamental constitutional rights, in instances where they are violated or threatened by the action or omission of any public authority or individual in the cases provided by law, only and when there is no other court defence mechanism in process. http://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/secretaria/otros/Preguntas.php

that same sex couples could have tax and health benefits (See Sentencia C-811, C-075 2007). Another example is the Education Law (1994), which included religious and moral education as part of the curricula for secondary education.

During the last six years, the Attorney General Alejandro Ordóñez, a very religious man, has been one of the strongest opponents of the proposed progressive reforms. For example, in May 2014 his office published a document related to sexual and reproductive health education, which illustrated his political position on issues such as the family, marriage of same-sex couples, sexual relationships and morality:

> *"If the young person has a family structure formed by mom and dad, gives importance to religion in their life, and if their parents supervise their activities, then the chance of the young person having sex decrease (...) Young people who have parental supervision, with a functional family, and who give importance to religion in their lives tend to have low consumption of toxic substances."*
>
> (Procuraduría General de la Nación, 2014)

These and other similar messages have been rejected in Colombia and by the international community, due to the harm that they are causing in the realm of public policies. For instance, in 2012 the Constitutional Court ordered Ordóñez to make an amendment to his statements about issues such as abortion and the use of contraceptive methods. However, in the end, although the amendment was not entirely satisfactory to those who had been insulted by his public statements, he not only continued in office, but was also re-elected.

In 2013, the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations was,

> *"...holding to account the government representatives for the actions of the Attorney General against abortion rights of women in Colombia [as well as] seeking an explanation for the actions of Attorney Ordóñez regarding the Clinic for Women in Medellin, which was told not to issue*

legal abortion services, despite being allowed by the Constitutional Court."[30]

(Mesa por la vida y salud de las mujeres, y otros, 2013)

Catholic-like customs and beliefs in Colombia have, until now, influenced the way people act and interact with each other, and this permeates the local, regional and national politics. Throughout history, Catholicism has vigorously defended values and principles that are considered traditional and sacred, some of these being "family" and "morality" (Morales, 2010). This could be related to the understanding of the young person as the individual that is responsible for protecting family and moral values, and also the one who is not yet independent. This conceptualisation of youth has characterised many of the policies and programmes directed at youth from several sectors, especially health and education. For example, comprehensive sex education within the context of sexual and reproductive rights has not been fully implemented, and youth-friendly healthcare services only focus on the prevention of diseases and pregnancy. However, in 2010, the National Intersectoral Commission for the Promotion and Guarantee of Sexual and Reproductive Rights has started to tackle these issues.

The poor and uneducated, a group in which minorities are over-represented (i.e. Afro-Colombians, indigenous population and LGBTQI community, etc.) are the most neglected according to indicators (DANE, 2013; Banco de la República, 2012; Colombia Diversa, 2010). This exclusion is reflected in the public policies that directly or indirectly affect youth, such as sexual health policy. Sexuality being directly related to reproduction was always seen as a potential risk for young people if not intervened in time, as it has important consequences for population and development. As such, has been made a priority for public policy.

Sex education was often addressed through the education sector partly because of the sector's capacity to reach the whole youth population and the possibility of education modifying life habits. As a result, all the projects and programmes to address sexuality (in the sense of how a person

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30. Abortion in Colombia is illegal except in case of a threat to life or health of the woman, or if the pregnancy is the result of rape, or when the fetus is expected to die after birth because of severe fetal abnormalities. It was completely illegal until 2006 (McDermott, 2006).

behaves according to their sexual rights), reproduction (PNES, 1993, Ministerio de Educación Nacional-UNFPA, 2001) and youth (Ley de Juventud, 1997) were attached to the Ministry of Education and the Vice Ministry of Youth (today *Colombia Joven*).

Several bill proposals presented by the liberal party, and others with liberal conceptions of youth, were rejected in the congress. Some of these bills, which had more progressive views on sexuality and relationships, and the role of the government in this sphere, were not even debated (Romo, 1987; Pechthalt, 1993; Córdoba, 1995). The role of the Vice Ministry of Youth can be reviewed in Chapter 1.

For example, the Colombian health system was subject to important structural adjustment reforms that reflected a conception of young people as clients of a healthcare services market rather than as rights holders. The health programmes specific for youth, which aim to detect their "development alterations" rather than promote a self-determined healthy lifestyle, showcase the impact of these reforms. These principles are present in Samper's Development Plan, which was named "El salto social¨ (The Social Jump), as well as in the way public policies for sexual and reproductive health and youth were being constructed (Estrada y Motta, 1996; Morales, 2010).

From this, the guarantee of fundamental rights, such as health, education and participation, were crudely translated to the delivery of services measured by econometric and efficiency output indicators. These evaluations often ignored qualitative assessments of the effective guarantee of rights, as they function under a framework that focuses on satisfying basic needs for economic progress rather than a promotion of human rights.

In the case of health, we can see how youth are not explicitly mentioned in the laws that define and regulate the Colombian health system. In relation to the national policy on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) (2002-2006), which is still a national reference point, actions towards youth are limited to the simple delivery of health care services. Limited reference is made to the topics of sexual and domestic violence. On the other hand, the National Inter-sectoral Commission for the Promotion and Guarantee of Sexual and Reproductive Rights does mention youth as an important population group, but does not mention explicitly their needs, priorities

and rights to participate in the decision-making processes around health policies and programmes. Additionally, the Commission does not recognise or challenge the system which reproduces socioeconomic and health inequities, and limits the provision of quality education services for reasons of fiscal sustainability, undermining the value and priority of young people's rights to access high quality education.

It is important to clarify that despite the struggle of women, sexual minorities and youth over the guarantee of their rights regarding sexual and reproductive health, the Colombian government has not made any progressive legislation and has rejected several bills that have this aim. These struggles have been backed by international treaties and conferences of which Colombia is a signatory, including the Cairo Conference, the Beijing Conference on Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, economic, social and cultural rights and the civil and political rights pact.

Since then, the debates around the focus on sexual and reproductive health (which were topics often promulgated and demanded by young people and women) took two opposite sides: the preventive or "traditional moralistic" side, and the "humanist libertarian" side (Morales, 2010). In the same way, these two foci also marked the discussions over youth and its relation to social participation and substance abuse, among other important topics. If we analyse the 412 Resolution by the Ministry of Health (in 2000), especially its guide for early detection of youth development alterations (10-29 years of age) and the policy on sexual and reproductive health (Ministerio de Salud, 2000; Ministerio de Salud, 2003), it is evident how these two different approaches and tensions become visible.

Similarly, the critical topic of abortion was not addressed in spite of its importance for public health. The document mentions the word "abortion" only three times, and it does so by referring to it as a potential consequence of non-desired pregnancies. The policy thus fails to give a broad conceptual explanation of the topic and does not make reference to a woman's "right to decide, freely and responsibly, about sexuality and reproduction, in an environment free of coercion, discrimination and violence" (pp. 13 of the policy document).

3.3 Key definition of youth across policy domains

Many definitions, classifications and age groups in the country come from the Civil Code from 1887 (Act 57), and they have been evolving ever since.

Article 34 of the Civil Code states that anyone younger than seven years is considered an infant or child, males between seven and 14, and females between seven and 12, are called pre-pubescent; anyone beyond the age of pre-pubescence is called an adult. The Civil Code also established 21 years as the age at when adulthood is reached. It can be noted that categories like "youth" or "adolescent" were not considered then, but emerged later in recent policy development.

Law 27 of 1977 changed the age at which young people reach adulthood to 18, which was defined as the age at which young people attain "legal competence in certain legal acts, or as the state at which they can exercise capacity of civil rights" (Article 2). It took nearly 30 years for the Constitutional Court, by means of Sentence C-534 of 2005, to note that there was no need to make distinctions between women´s and men's development. The Court ended up unifying the pre-pubertal age for both sexes at the age of 14. This shows how slowly and how recently gender equality has evolved in Colombia.

In the same Sentence (C-534, 2005), the Court defined that children are subjects of rights, "in this sense their capacity is full and becomes their condition, without any limiting requirements". This decision generated a wider discussion on the ownership of rights by minors because previous rules (including the Civil Code) saw them as incapable of obtaining and managing real property, among other issues. In the legal field, capacity is defined as the "ability of any person who has the power to acquire rights and obligations" (C-983, 2002).

However, the Court clarified the distinction between the legal capacity to the "right of enjoyment" (general rights ownership) and the legal capacity to 'exercise' a right by which people can "be legally bound by a legal act" (C-534, 2005). As many adult actions and situations may be harmful to minors, a sort of protection that creates an inability to execute certain actions might be necessary. This was not created with the intention to discriminate

but to protect the rights holder, particularly in civil and commercial issues (C-534, 2005).

According to Civil and Commercial procedure codes, minors can act without any kind of representation only in the administration of the resources made from their own work, and in the instance when they have a legal permit to work. For the remaining activities, minors must have permission and assistance from their parents or guardians.

It is important to mention the tension that exists among the terms and concepts that come from the legal sphere (mentioned above) and those that come from other areas of knowledge:

> *"These concepts have acquired new denotations and delimitations due to the historical and social processes throughout the eras ...The age gap between childhood and adulthood is what is usually thought of as the field of study and conceptualisation of adolescence and youth, with constraints on both not entirely clear, which overlap in many ways, depending on the approaches used for this purpose."*

(Dávila, 2004)

Therefore, while the social sciences make a difference between youth and adolescence, psychology (and in general medical sciences) takes them as synonyms (Dávila, 2004). These different conceptualisations emerge depending on the different perspectives an observer takes while analysing a population. For example, the phenomena can be looked at from a biological or a social perspective, among others. This is the reason it has been said, "adolescence begins with biology and ends with culture" (Adrián & Rangel, 2007).

The concept gained special impetus in Ibero-America, when the International Year of Youth was proclaimed in 1985. The impact of this event is evident in the existence of official youth institutions in almost all Latin American countries and the interest of incorporating an international mandate on youth issues within constitutional frameworks[31]. Subsequently,

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31. This idea is mainly developed on the basis of results of the National Survey on Youth Programmes, implemented by ECLAC in 16 Latin American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

in Colombia, the "youth" category was mentioned for the first time in the 1990s, a time that also coincided with the birth of the new Political Constitution in 1991, as was outlined in the previous chapter.

Within both the international community and national public policies, the definition of youth has taken an "age functionalist" approach. Nevertheless, there has been no consensus on what people, and policies, call "youth". In fact, the international community has been unable to agree on the identification of a shared related age range, which can be partially explained by the different conceptions on youth depending on social, political and economic contexts of different regions.

> *"The World Bank speaks of people between 12 and 24 years to define young people; both the ILO and the United Nations Population Fund identifies youth as the population between 15 and 24 years, but some public calls are addressed to youth between 15 and 32 years; the youth network of the Inter-American Development Bank address young people of 15-30 years, the European Union identifies youth as the population between 15 to 29, an age range which is also taken by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and, the Ibero-American Youth Organization (OIJ). And taking into account the individual characterisations of each state makes the identification even harder."*

> (Romero G., 2011)

In Colombia, as in other countries in the world, "there is a gap between children and youth policies. Normally children are defined legally and politically as minors, while youth are defined as adolescents and young adults" (UNICEF, 2004). Of course, the narrow[32] definition adopted in Colombia has an impact on how public policy addresses youth issues:

> *"In countries where young people are perceived as minors (not as legal minors but social minors) and therefore more as children than as adults, it will be more likely to find the tendency to consider young people as a potential problem, as a group at risk, as people who should*

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32. Youth defined as a whole, long group can be consider as a wide concept, while youth divided as adolescents can be consider as a narrow concept (Stafseng, 2000, quoted by UNICEF, 2004).

be protected against the threat to their development. In contrast, in countries where youth policies are based on a concept of youth raised from a more adult view, you can see the tendency to perceive young people as a resource rather than a problem."

(Strafseng, 2000; quoted by UNICEF, 2004, 38)

For instance, the Childhood and Adolescence Act states that "in doubt of the age of the child or adolescent, under age shall be presumed", which generates an overlap between the reductionist view and the advanced view of the juvenile phase that is present in 1997's Youth Act and 2013's Statute of Youth Citizenship, respectively.

From 1997 to 2013, Colombia defined a young person, according to Law 375 of 1997, as anyone between 14 and 26 years of age. In 2013, after national consultations, the Youth Citizenship Statute was issued and replaced the 1997 youth law. This statute indicates that a young person is "a person between 14 and 28 years of age in the process of consolidating its intellectual, physical, moral, economic, social and cultural autonomy that is part of a political community and its citizenship" (Art 5).

From the social care policy, the country presents an overlap between policies that concern adolescents (conceived in Colombia's Childhood and Adolescence Act as persons between 14 and 17 years) and youth (identified as above). Neither the 1997 Youth Act nor the 2013 statute could solve the tension and states that the age definition of youth "does not replace the age limits set in other laws for teens and young criminals in which guaranteed protection systems, civil responsibilities and citizen rights are established" (Art 3, 375/1997 and Article 5 –paragraph 1, 1622/2013).

Colombian Civil Code says that a child is a person between 0 and 12 years old, and an adolescent is a person between 12 and 18 years old. Much legislation and other policy tools include a mix of adolescent and youth categories, even with different age ranges, depending on the policy domain. For example, while the Youth Citizenship Statute established youth between 14 and 28 years, the Resolution 412 (2000) of the Ministry of Health talks about the range of 10 to 29 years, and a document of the Office of the Inspector General, between10 to 24 (Procuraduría General de la Nación y UNFPA, 2006).

It is important to mention that these overlaps between adolescents and youth issues and policies have had an important impact regarding the institutions in charge of these topics: while the ICBF (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar - Colombian Institute of Family Welfare) is one of the most important and powerful agencies in the country's social sector, with guaranteed resources, Colombia Joven, in contrast, has had a weak presence, with little resources and political support.

Graph 17
Colombian explicit youth policy documents

1991: constitutional reform

2001: Towards a youth policy in Colombia

2013: Statute of Youth citizenship (1622/2013)

1995: Second youth CONPES

1997: Youth Act (375/1997)

2006: Decree 1984

2010: youth CONPES*

1990   1995   2000   2005   2010   2015

1992: First youth CONPES

1992: Decree 1978

2000: Decree 089 and 822

2006: Childhood and adolescence Act (1098/2006)

2013: Decree 1919

2014: third youth CONPES

1994: Decree 1954

2004: Fundations for Youth-year plan 2005-2015

2005: Guide for Youth plan development

- Legislation (laws)
- Technical documents
- Other documents
- National decrees that modify youth institutionality

There are many different documents related to youth policy (see graph 17) — further information on these policies will be provided in this and the next chapters. One of them has the working title 'Towards a youth policy in Colombia: Tools for construction and institutionalisation' (Colombia Joven, 2001). This document does not mention adolescents as subjects of the youth public policy because it assumes that all people who are in the age range 14-26 are youth, regardless of if they are minors.

In contrast, another document, the 'National Youth Policy: for Youth Ten-year Plan 2005-2015' (Colombia Joven, 2004) regularly defines youth as teenagers, stating that,

> *"... young people between 12 and 17 years (adolescents) are minors and because of this situation, they enjoy preferential treatment in accordance with the constitution, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the domestic laws of Colombia. People from an older age group (over 18 years) are also young, but by acquiring the rights and obligations of full citizenship, have a different treatment than teenagers and children which is closer to the treatment given to adults, although the cultural, social, psychological and biological transition between the two phases is not yet complete".*

In relation to other explicit instruments of public policy, it is necessary to mention CONPES documents[33]. In the entire history of the Council CONPES, four documents associated with youth policy have been prepared, of which three were formalised (see Annexes). The first two (1992 and 1995) have randomly mentioned the ranges of youth to consider: 14 to 24 years and 15 to 25, respectively. The next two are aligned with youth laws that were in effect at the time: 14 to 26 years in 2010, and 14 to 28 in 2014. As will be illustrated in next chapter, the process of age range definition, youth definition, youth policies and the development of institutions working on youth issues has been chaotic and fragmented, making it difficult to effectively evaluate.

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33. CONPES (National Council for Economic and Social Policy) is "the highest national planning authority and serves as an advisory body to the government on all matters relating to economic and social development. To achieve this, it coordinates and directs the agencies responsible for economic and social direction in the government, through the study and approval of documents on the development of general policies" (DNP Website)

In terms of implicit youth public policies, according to the General Law of Education (1994) in Colombia, education (as a service with a social function) is directed at children and young people of school age, adults, peasants, ethnic groups, people with physical, sensory and mental disabilities, with exceptional abilities, and people requiring social rehabilitation. Children and young people are the first beneficiaries of the public policy on education, through the formal education system, which is comprised of preschool, elementary and secondary. But the law does not make any differentiation in terms of age or population ranges. Rather, it refers to these beneficiaries only as students and considers them key actors of the education process in order for them to participate in their own comprehensive formation and development.

In Colombia, students begin their formal education in preschool up to the age of 5, and then continue in elementary basic education (grades 1-5) from 6 to 10 years, followed by basic secondary education (grades 6-9) from 11 to 14 years, and secondary education (grades 10-11) from 15 to 16 years. The country has both public and private schools, with an estimated 85% of students attending public schools and 15% attending private schools. Since 2012, the Ministry of Education decided to implement free education for all students of public schools registered between preschool and eleventh grade, and state educational institutions shall not charge for tuition fees or services (OEDC, 2012).

The General Law of Education sets no criteria that takes into account over-age students (those who started school late, or who have missed years of schooling), however, the National Ministry of Education defines this concept as the "gap between age and grade, which is characterised by a child or young person being two or three years older than the average age expected to take a certain grade" (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014). Moreover, the Law states that adult education is "the one that is offered to people relatively older than the regularly accepted in education levels and degrees of public education services and who wish to complete their training or validate their studies" (Article 50, Law 115 of 1994). However, this does not specify any age range of the beneficiary population for this type of education.

Law 1429 of 2010, referred to as the Law of Formalization and Employment Generation, aims to generate employment opportunities within the

formal sector by offering incentives to new companies, and reducing the cost of formal employment (Article 1. Law 1429 / 2010).

On the issue of employment generation for youth, this law is particularly important because it incorporates a series of benefits for companies that formally hire young people younger than 28 years of age. These benefits aim to deduct certain payroll payments related to new jobs from the tax income. Moreover, the law includes benefits for young people under 28 who create new companies, especially in matters of flexibility on taxation.

Youth Citizenship

The main goal of the Youth Citizenship Statute (2013) is the legal recognition of youth citizenship, which is a new approach in the area of youth in Colombia, and is the main and current legal mandate focussed solely on young people.

Citizenship may be a commonly known word when talking about participation, however when it is tied to youth, it has a special meaning. According to Reguillo (2003), citizenship is "a key category that rises precisely as mediation. On one hand, it defines subjects to the nation state and on the other hand, protects the subjects against the power of the state" (p. 3). In order to realise this mediation role, throughout the years research have used three types of citizenship: civic, social and political (Herrera & Muñoz, 2008).

» **Civic Citizenship**: refers to the characteristics and protection given – in terms of rights – to a person once they are identified as a national of a certain nation state.

» **Political Citizenship**: refers to the political, social and educational conditions that allow individuals to become citizens and participate as both voters and representatives in political scenarios.

» **Social Citizenship**: refers to citizenship as permitting access to social benefits such as education, health and employment.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the implementation of these three ways of conceiving citizenship is key to the concept of a decent life for youth. Social citizenship offers access to the primary conditions that a human being needs for living decently. Civic citizenship recognises, in a democratic re-

gime, the rights of the population, making them citizens with the autonomy to choose their future, and political citizenship gives citizens the opportunity to demand their rights and the social benefits in case they are violated or not guaranteed.

The last is of course a desirable scenario. The idea of just recognising citizenship is a first step, but it does not necessarily lead to the guarantee of a decent life. Beyond legal recognition, implementation is the most important component to ensure the existence of a decent life for youth in Colombia.

However, some academics have found these three types of citizenship exclusive in some cases. One example is when an individual does not accomplish the requirements of being a national, has not been educated, or is underage, and is therefore not allowed to even participate or to vote. They may have civic citizenship when they turn 18, but they may not support or believe in political parties and actively choose not to engage (Herrera & Gaviria, 2008). Limits of recognition and protection by the state can result in poor implementation of policies addressed for young people.

Due to this situation, some international academics have proposed another conception – cultural citizenship – which recognises citizenship as being based on the group of individuals that belong to it, in other words, it wants to "use the culture as a platform to achieve citizenship" (Reguillo, 2003).

These definitions of citizenship help to understand what youth means, and highlight ways in which policies could address young people's needs. It is the opportunity for young people to be identified as such, and should be associated with the opportunity to propose different spaces beyond the electoral sphere that allow them to participate, defend their needs, and propose ideas.

The road to the recognition of youth as citizens started since the Act of 1997, which legally framed youth participation. Initially, they were allowed to vote in internal consultations of some political parties[34] and also to be

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34. To date, there have been 22 consultations since 2000 (Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2011).

elected as youth councillors, or create or be part of an NGO, or any kind of organisation that could help them influence public policy.

Recently, a National Statute of Youth Citizenship (2013) was already approved by the congress, signed by the president, and reviewed by the Constitutional Court. It is intended to create a new atmosphere that conceptualises youth in a different way, as a population group that may or may not influence public policy. This new definition of youth provides an opportunity to strengthen the recognition of youth citizenship by strengthening the obligation of the state to consult youth in every policy or law that may affect their interests.

This institutional recognition of youth citizenship may help efforts to support youth to live a decent life, particularly if it facilitates the creation of policies, laws, programmes, and projects to reach the three basic situations of decent life: 1) individual autonomy, 2) the material conditions that allow youth to follow their own individual life plans, 3) living without humiliation.

As illustrated earlier, the development of youth definitions and its impact on the policies in different contexts and policy domains have been very slow in Colombia. Thanks to the development of explicit youth policies (such as Act 375 of 1997 and the Youth Citizenship Statute of 2013), the approach of defining youth as minors has been challenged, however it has not completely changed.

3.4 Legal frameworks underpinning youth policies

By 1991, all countries from Latin America and the Caribbean had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and almost the entire region had adopted different legislations and legal procedures to adapt their systems in compliance with the convention. However, some Latin American countries have experienced civil wars (El Salvador, Guatemala) or dictatorships (Chile, Argentina, Panamá, Nicaragua, Venezuela) and as a result, many of the emerging democracies in the region still carry the effects of that period in their social and political spheres. The difficulties of perceiving children and adolescents as rights-holders and active agents of social

change, with the possibility to vote and participate at different levels of society, is one example of this.

In this respect, some countries such as Mexico, El Salvador, Peru, Guatemala, are only beginning to establish the right institutions and procedures to work under the mandate of the CRC, while other countries are moving their structures and culture into a more integrated approach based on human rights and human development (Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Argentina, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia). Of course, this process has not been easy for the region, as it has demanded vast cultural and institutional change. In practice, there is a big gap between the rhetoric and the reality that children and adolescents face when accessing their rights.

Even though the CRC is the binding international agreement that establishes the key elements required to reach international standards, such as within juvenile justice systems, there is much to improve and change concerning cultural attitudes and institutional infrastructure in order to protect children and adolescents. A 2011 report from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported that "with few exceptions of good practices on the continent, juvenile justice systems are characterised by discrimination, violence, lack of specialised professionals and institutions, and abuse in the measures of deprivation of liberty". The Commission also draws attention to the way in which children and adolescents under 14 years old are mistreated by government officials and police officers in the framework of "protection" systems. This applies to the Colombian case with respect to child soldiers, vulnerable children, and youth from minority groups (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, 2011).

The CRC aims to facilitate the re-education and social re-integration of adolescents that violate criminal laws. Democratic systems across Latin America place the minimum age for criminal responsibility between 13 and 17 years old, an age band that corresponds to the adolescence period. An approach based on security and risk has, over time, changed its focus to protection for children and adolescents.

Although Latin America and the Caribbean have a Youth Rights Ibero-American Convention, signed by the Ibero-American Youth Organisa-

tion[35] and ratified by some countries in 2008, much remains to be done towards incorporating its rationale into legal, political and cultural practice in the region. Currently, because of the existing tension between children, adolescents and youth rights, this convention is still not a binding international agreement. Effective institutions and real cultural change which influences the way that young people live in Colombia, are areas that remain to be improved.

As previously mentioned, Colombia's youth definition and the prevalent perception of young people are narrow, and young people are perceived as social minors, as a source of problems, and as a population at high risk that should be protected. While this view has been present in most policies in the last two decades, there is no consistency between the different policies and legal contexts on youth issues.

The Childhood and Adolescence Act establishes a system for adolescent criminal responsibility, which is the "set of principles, rules, procedures, specialised judicial and administrative authorities or governing bodies involved in the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed by persons between fourteen (14) and eighteen (18) years at the time of committing the offense" (Article 139). According to the Article 142, "people under 14 will not be judged or held liable criminally, nor will be deprived of liberty under complaint or syndication of having committed a criminal offense".

"For purposes of criminal liability for young people, deprivation of liberty only applies to those who, at the time of committing the crime, are older than 14 and under 18 years" (Article 161). The act considers that deprivation of liberty (which must take place in a specialised care centre) is a pedagogical tool and the hardest sanction that a person younger than 18 can receive (Article 177). In fact, Article 179 (second paragraph) indicates that detention can be determined by the judge if the penalty established in the past was violated. In addition,

> *"... the deprivation of liberty in a specialised care centre will be determined for adolescents aged 16 and under 18 who are held responsible for committing crimes in which the minimum penalty in the penal code is or exceeds six years in prison. In these cases, imprisonment in*

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35. www.laconvencion.org.

> *skilled care will last for one (1) to five (5) years. Where a young person over 14 and under 18 is found responsible for homicide, kidnapping and extortion, in all its forms, deprivation of liberty in specialised care centres will last for two (2) to eight (8) years (Article 187).*

> *"If the penalty of imprisonment is still in force when the adolescents turns 18, this penalty can continue until the age of 21 (...) Specialty care centres should have a differential approaches to adolescents under the age of 18, and those who have reached their majority and must continue. This care should include physical separation within the centre" (Article 181, paragraph).*

Besides the criminal responsibility, the Childhood and Adolescence Act states that,

> *"... the minimum age for admission to employment is 15 years[36]. To work, teenagers between 15 and 17 require a permit issued by a labour inspector or the local authority (...) Exceptionally, children under 15 years may be authorised (...) to perform gainful artistic, cultural, recreational and sportive activities (...) The permit cannot exceed fourteen hours weekly" (Article 35).*

As we can see, there is not only a difference between people in the youth definition (14 to 18 years as adolescents, and 18 to 28 as young adults), but also between teenagers (14 that cannot work and from 15 that can work), which is not clearly related to the youth age group. Besides this, among the youth that can work, the Childhood and Adolescence Act establishes a difference between those who are 15 to 17 years and those who are 17 and over: "Teenagers over 15 and under 17 years old are only allowed to work day shifts with a maximum of six hours a day and thirty hours a week. They are only allowed to work until 6:00 pm. Adolescents over seventeen (17) years old may only work a maximum of eight hours a day and 40 hours a week. They are only allowed to work until 8:00 pm" (Article 114).

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36. According to the ILO Convention concerning minimum age for admission to employment (1973, No. 138), the general minimum age for admission to employment or work is 15 years (13 for light work) and the minimum age for hazardous work is 18 (16 under certain strict conditions). It also provides for the possibility of initially setting the general minimum age at 14 (12 for light work) where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. http://ow.ly/BKaPj

On other issues pertaining to youth, some legislation establishes age groups and limits for certain activities. For example:

» The minimum age for adopting is 25 years[37], but the child or adolescent adopted must be at least 15 years younger than the person who wants to adopt (Childhood and Adolescence Act).

» Minimum age for marriage[38] is 14 years with the express written permission of their parents (Article 117 of the Civil Code). From 2000 to 2010, nearly 1,300 marriages of minors have been registered in the country (Desde el año 2000, "1.287 matrimonios de menores se han dado en Colombia", 2012).

However, parental permission is not required to nullify a marriage between minors, although is a cause for disinheritance under the code. Nevertheless, the Constitutional Court has said that each case must be examined independently (Judgment C-344 of 1993).

Law 1429 of 2010 aims to achieve "the formalisation and generation of employment, in order to create incentives for formalisation in the early stages of the creation of companies, in a way that increases benefits and reduces the costs of being formalised" (Article 1. Law 1429 of 2010).

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[37]. Most countries and programmes have their own policies regarding the age, marital status and background of adoptive applicants. In some countries, requirements may be more flexible for children with known medical and developmental needs and for older children. For further information please see the international adoption programme chart at: http://ow.ly/BKaT9

[38]. The practice of marrying children, especially girls, before the age of 18 is a practice that curtails children's right to education, puts their health at risk, and hampers national development efforts. As a harmful traditional practice, child marriage is prohibited by several international and regional conventions. The minimum age for marriage is 18. However, according to UNESCO, ¨38 countries of the world have not yet set a minimum age for marriage: 15 are located in sub-Saharan Africa, seven in Asia and the Pacific, six in Latin America and the Caribbean, four in South and West Asoa, four in the Arab states and two in North America and Western Europe. In another 44 countries, it is authorised that girls marry at a younger age than men. Moreover, in many parts of the world, it is considered that younger girls reach a mature age once they get married, which deprives them from the protection offered by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child" http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=19982&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

On the issue of employment generation for youth, this law is particularly important because it incorporates a series of benefits for companies that formally hire young people under 28 years old for their economic activities.

With respect to education, Act 30 of 1992 states that higher education is an on-going process that enables the development of human potential in a comprehensive manner. It takes place after middle or high school and aims at the full development of students and their academic or professional training, but nowhere in the text is reference made to youth or a specific beneficiary group of the policy.

Education in the seventies was focussed on the universalisation of primary education, the creation of pre-schools and the increase in secondary coverage as mechanisms to develop the intellectual potential of children. In the 1980s, the emphasis was to provide greater equity of access to education, continue the advancement of nationwide coverage, and improve the quality of schools.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Colombia began to consider education as something essential for development and human wellbeing. It was recognised as a factor of human capital accumulation and social mobility, one of the key elements of the process of growth and economic development – both priority issues for the Colombian political system at the time. This situation was strengthened by the process of decentralisation derived from the constitution of 1991 through the gradual increase in the resources allocated to education and health (Iregui, Melo, & Ramos, 2006).

With this constitutional development, besides being a fundamental right, education is a public service that should be fully guaranteed by the state in order to respond to its social function. The constitution also states that the state, society, and the family are responsible for education, which will be mandatory between the ages of five and fifteen years old and which will minimally include one year of preschool instruction and nine years of basic instruction. Recently in 2011, the ordinance 4807 has established education as free of charge for Colombian students in preschool, elementary and secondary in all the institutions of the state. Free education is understood as the exemption from payment of academic fees and complementary services.

When it comes to health services, it is important to note that up until 2014, young people could only be covered by/affiliated with the health system under their parents contributions until they are 18 years old, or until 25 if they are pursuing education, or if they are themselves contributing to the health insurance system when they start working. This situation changed in 2014 when a Presidential Decree made new provisions that allowed young people under 25 to still receive coverage under their parents' contributions to the health system. However, taking into account that young people have the highest unemployment and informal employment rates, they are obliged to either stay in the subsidised regime (which means less quality and quantity of services) or end up with no coverage whatsoever. Young people often get affiliated to the health system when they are employed (as all working citizens are), however their rates of work instability are higher. When their contract concludes and they are waiting for the next one, they will remain uncovered: 13% of the people under 20 years of age are not covered by the health care system (Profamilia, 2010)[39].

On the other hand, Resolution 412 of 2000 issued, among others, the Guideline for Early Detection of Growth and Development Problems for Youth Aged 10-29. This guideline allows for exploration into the conception of youth in the health sector and the way their needs are addressed.

As a starting point, the title itself indicates a biomedical perspective in addressing youth health that prioritises patient-centred disease detection and care, and pulls away from a positive approach to health promotion and community health (WHO, 1986). In contrast, in the introduction and justification sections of the resolution document, the Ministry of Health takes an integrated perspective of youth that considers not only the issues they may face in terms of physical health, but also social, cultural, psychological and biological issues. For example, the document reaffirms and builds from the understanding of health in relation to wellbeing and acknowledges that health promotion is the best strategy to reach the state of wellbeing

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39. It is worthwhile mentioning that for a person (including youth) to be a beneficiary of the subsidized regime, he or she has to be certified as a person (or household) by means of the classifying system called SISBEN, or Identification System for Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programmes. It is the information system that the national government utilizes to identify families with potential to benefit from social programmes. More on https://www.sisben.gov.co

for young people. However, the proposed actions presented in the development of the document are centred on the detection of physical health alterations and the provision of health care services that may be considered as operating in distinct silos.

No minimum age for participation in grassroots organisations or community groups exists. Nevertheless, when the interest of citizens is to participate through institutional mechanisms and spaces, there is a legal framework to follow.

Since the Act 720 of 2001, there is a National System of Volunteering in Colombia that has been slowly implemented. This system contains information about organisations that promote volunteering, and mandates the two ways in which an organisation can be established. The first way is to contact the National System of Volunteering and seek approval to establish a community group with no legal representation. The second approach is to establish a legally constituted NGO, corporation or foundation, where the board members are 18 years of age or older. Currently, there are approximately 1,193 NGOs[40].

Of all organisations, just 18% are legally constituted. Community, grassroots organisations, and other groups of people constitute the other 82%[41]. The legal constitution of an organisation can sometimes be necessary in order to obtain financing and to be recognised as credible by possible partners. However, sustaining organisations of this nature is associated with difficulties, which is why there is such a low percentage of them in the National System.

The current National Statute of Youth Citizenship recognises youth participation in volunteering, advocacy or influencing public policy, whether it comes from an NGO, community-based organisation, or groups of young people that want to work in a common interest.

For participation in institutional spaces created by the law, such as political parties and youth councils, there are special requirements for youth. Participation in political parties is welcomed regardless of the age, but when the political party is intending to do consultations with its members,

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40. Act 720 of 2001.

41. Ibidem.

Act 1475 of 2011 only allows youth to vote as long as they are 18 years or older. In youth councils, the voting age is lower. To elect and be elected in municipal youth councils, a person must be between 14 and 26 years old (Decreto 89 de, 2000). In the new Youth Citizen Statute however, you are considered a young person up to the age of 28, but only if you have the maximum age at the time of election.

3.5   Needs, rights and responsibilities of young people

The youth policy has to address youth rights, as well as the responsibilities that youth have in their own development. It is also vital to take into account the specific needs that youth have in their daily lives. This section will explore these three aspects: needs, rights, and responsibilities of young people.

The Political Constitution (1991) establishes a set of fundamental rights that must be recognised and respected for every person in the country. In this list of rights, there is a specific article (Article 45) that discusses adolescents and youth – using these terms synonymously. This is the only explicit reference to youth in the entire document:

> *"Article 45. Adolescents have the right to protection and comprehensive training. The state and society ensures the active participation of young people in public and private organisations that are responsible for the protection, education and advancement of youth."*

This article is part of the section where the constitution sets social, economic and cultural rights (Chapter 2), and comes just after a longer list of child rights[42], where the constitution explicitly states that a child "will also enjoy

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42. Article 44: "The fundamental rights of children includes life, physical integrity, health and social security, a balanced diet, a name and nationality, to have a family and not be separated from it, care and love, education and culture, recreation and free expression of opinion. They shall be protected against all forms of neglect, physical or moral violence, abduction, sale, sexual abuse, labour exploitation and hazardous work. They will also enjoy the other rights enshrined in the constitution, laws and international treaties ratified by Colombia. The family, society and the state have an obligation to assist and protect children to ensure their full and harmonious development and the full exercise of their rights. Any person may request the competent authority to enforce and punish violators. The rights of children take precedence over the rights of others".

the other rights enshrined in the constitution, laws and international treaties ratified by Colombia [and] the rights of children take precedence over the rights of others" (Article 44).

It is important to note that in Colombia's legal framework, there is a difference between the rights of adolescents and the rights of youth. In this subject, the document entitled 'National Youth Policy: Foundations for Youth – Ten-Year Plan 2005-2015' (Colombia Joven, 2004) states that "it is not appropriate to refer indiscriminately to the rights of young people without making different considerations for young adults and for teens under 18. Our legal stipulations state this as mandatory".

The constitution does not mention this in respect to youth (minors, adolescents and young adults). Nevertheless, this does not mean that youth rights are not mentioned clearly, nor that these rights should not be recognised or protected. Youth are also members of our society, and their fundamental rights should be recognised as such.

Something similar happens if we look at responsibilities. Chapter 5 of the constitution establishes a list of 'duties and obligations' for all Colombians in return for the rights established: "The exercise of the rights and freedoms recognised in the constitution implies responsibilities" such as those listed in Article 95: respect and dignify the honour of being Colombian; respect and obey the constitution and the laws; respect others' rights and not abuse one's own rights; participate in the country's political, civic, and community life; among others. However, the constitution does not refer to any particular population related to specific rights.

It seems as if the constitution created an unbalanced situation between rights (three full chapters with seventy-one articles) and responsibilities (one chapter with one article), which is also the case with other legal provisions.

For example, with its long list of rights (as will be mentioned in following paragraphs), the Child and Adolescent Act includes responsibilities for family, society, the state, the educational and health systems, and even the media, but not for youth themselves. Only in the second book of the act are their responsibilities mentioned in an implicit manner, in the section covering the system of criminal liability for teens, and special procedures for when children and adolescents are victims of crime.

On the other hand, the Child and Adolescent Act reinforces the ownership of rights of all persons under 18, and states a list of rights that is aligned with the international frameworks such as the child rights convention. It also indicates that,

> *"…children and adolescents enjoy the freedoms enshrined in the constitution and in international human rights treaties. These freedoms are part of the free development of the personality and personal autonomy, freedom of conscience and beliefs, freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of movement, and the freedom to choose a profession or office" (Article 37).*

Meanwhile, the Statute of Youth Citizenship, in its objective (Article 1) indicates that it establishes the "institutional framework to ensure that all young people enjoy the full benefits of youth citizenship [and] the rights recognised in domestic law and international ratified treaties". Unlike the Child and Adolescent Act, it does not establish a list of rights.

Nevertheless, it reinforces the existence of a wide bill of rights in Article 6, which states:

> *"Young people are entitled to the rights recognised in the constitution, the international treaties approved by Colombia, and the agreements that support their development. This statute seeks to reaffirm the full exercise of their civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental factors, both individually and as a collective of young people, through measures to promote, protect, prevent and guarantee rights for this population. The state shall give special attention to young people using a differential approach under conditions of vulnerability, discrimination, sexual orientation, ethnic, cultural, gender and geographical diversity".*

It also outlines criteria to "ensure the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of young people": prevention, protection, promotion, sanction, access, availability, retention, quality, sustainability and participation (Article 7).

This statute makes effort to outline and identify responsibilities of young people in Colombia, stating at they,

> *"...have a duty to abide by the constitution and laws, to respect the rights of others, act according to criteria of solidarity and responsibility, respect authority legitimately constituted, participate in the social, civic, political, economic and other communities of the country, monitor and control the management and allocation of public resources, collaborate with the administration of justice, to protect natural and cultural resources and contribute to the construction of social and institutional capital" (Article 10).*

The statute also imposes the duty of the state "to provide the conditions that allow young people to fulfil their duties in a skilled and qualified manner" (Article 10).

It is important to mention that the minimal mention of responsibilities for youth established in the Colombian legal framework could be based on a broader view of rights that states that when a right is present, it will always be related to an obligation (Consejo nacional de política económica y social, 2002).

In general, it seems that at least the legislation referred to above has a long and wide coverage on youth rights. One notable exception is the right to conscientious objection to compulsory military service, which is included in the Ibero-American Convention on the Rights of Youth. It is because of this specific right that Colombia has not signed and ratified the convention.

This had opened a big debate in the country until 2009, when the constitutional court pronounced the sentence C-728, in which it was agreed to recognise the right to conscientious objection to military service. It said the "right existed in the Colombian legal system as a direct derivation from the conscientious liberty stipulated in the Article 18 of the national constitution" (Maldonado, 2009). Additionally, the Constitutional Court exhorted the regulation of this right to the Colombian congress, of which there have been three attempts, the latest attempt in 2011.[43]

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43. Para ampliar la información sobre estos proyectos de ley se puede consultar la página objetoresporbogota.org.

3.5.1 Youth rights monitoring and protection

As mentioned, there is a difference between the protection of adolescents and youth rights. Taking into account that the family, state and society have an important role in the care of children's rights, while for young people,

> *"...the focus is to advance the protection of their rights (first and second generation rights), and the consideration of specific situations by virtue of their status as young people, and to guide actions towards the consolidation and respect for the rights of those young people in some circumstances, by the mere fact of their age, with more severe violations or denials of their rights."*

> (Colombia Joven, 2001)

This means that while special priority is afforded to the protection of adolescent rights, the protection of youth rights becomes a priority only when there are special circumstances of a severe violation or denial; this issue will be addressed shortly.

It is important to note that, both in the provisions for youth and adolescents, there is no specific differentiation between territorial entities in the role that they should play in protecting rights. However, as will be mentioned in next chapter, there is a clear differentiation between the responsibilities of each territorial entity with respect to service provisions and youth policies (Colombia Joven, 2004). Besides, other national authorities have established guidelines for youth rights protection.

For example, recognising youth rights (including adolescents), the Child and Adolescent Act states:

> *"The president, governors and mayors are responsible for the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies for children and adolescents at the national, departmental, district and municipal levels. Failure to comply with this will be subject to disciplinary sanctions as a ground for misconduct."*

> (UNICEF, 2007)

In the same document, requests are made to different territorial authorities in the country to "allocate and appropriate resources for the implementation of public policies to benefit [children and adolescents] under constitu-

tional roles and responsibilities legally established". Additionally, requests are made to "the governors and mayors to include in their development plan everything for the effective promotion, protection and defence of fundamental human rights and human rights of young people" (UNICEF, 2007).

The Inspector-General's office establishes that, for the inclusion of youth and adolescent programmes, projects and resources in development plans, an analysis should be conducted to "set the priority issues that should be addressed in the development plan and identify strategies in the short-, medium- and long-term that will be implemented" (Procuraduría General 2006). Additionally, the Inspector-General´s office orders accountability for meeting the goals included in the plans, as well as for the resources allocation and their implementation.

In relation to minority vulnerable groups of youth, there are special provisions on their rights and protections.

For example, the Child and Adolescent Act states that "children, girls and adolescents of indigenous and other ethnic groups enjoy the rights enshrined in the constitution, international human rights instruments and the Act itself, without prejudice to the principles governing their cultures and social organisation" (Article 13). In reference to the protection of their rights, the Child and Adolescent Act indicates that "on indigenous and other ethnic groups, family obligations shall be established in accordance with their traditions and cultures, provided they are not contrary to the constitution, the law and the international human rights instruments" (Article 39).

In 2008, the Constitutional Court (Auto 251) did recognise "the need to establish the protection of fundamental rights of children and adolescents displaced by violence (…) in the context of overcoming unconstitutional state of things stated in the judgment T-025 of 2004". Due to this mandate, Colombia Joven and the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) created guidelines for the 'comprehensive and differential' care of displaced children, adolescent and youth. That differential approach is also mentioned in the Statute of Youth Citizenship.

3.5.2 Rights and responsibilities in education, health and participation

Education in the country is first understood as a fundamental right, and so is enshrined in the constitution. The constitution not only guarantees its youth the right of protection and comprehensive training, but also that the state and the society are committed to provide together an "active participation of adolescents in public and private organisations that are responsible for the protection, education, and progress of youth" (Article 45).

Colombia considers education first, as one of the fundamental pillars in achieving economic and social development in the country and second, as the main factor in building competitiveness. (Web site, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014).

Moreover, education is offered,

> *"…in order to complement, update, supplement knowledge and train students in academic or occupational aspects that leads to them obtaining certificates of occupational aptitude. It is comprised of permanent training (…) that an institution organises in an educational project and is structured in a flexible curriculum without being subject to the system of levels and grades of formal education."*

(Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2010)

The National Service for Training (SENA) is responsible for leading the establishment of the National Training for Work System "that articulates the complete range of public and private technical secondary education, technical professional, technological, and non-formal education in the country, which was named: Education for Work and Human Development). This system contributes to the improvement of the level of qualification of human talent" (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2010).

Finally, the Ministry of Education declares that this system aims to ensure that Colombians have access to a more productive and competitive work through training, evaluation and certification of people´s labour competencies.

The right to participate is one of the rights that has been addressed by explicit youth public policies at the territorial level (youth policies in municipalities and departments) and with national policies (such as the

National Statute of Youth Citizenship). However, this does not necessarily mean that this right has been successfully obtained or that the mechanism to support it has been successfully implemented. That was the case of the first law approved in 1997 (Youth Act) that created a National System of Youth, which is its basic unit. Youth councils were meant to exist in every single municipality of the country – almost a thousand – but just 19 were created in departments[44].

Even though the mentioned law was composed of "good intentions, it had difficulties in its implementation because it restricted the participation only to the youth that were part of the councils".[45] Besides councils and the right to vote in elections it did not recognise other ways of citizen participation, only the formal ones that "were not attractive to youth".[46]

At that point, youth organisations realised they were given the right to participate, but there was a weak implementation of the Youth Law. In response, a group of youth organisations initiated a proposal that resulted in the approval in 2013 of the Youth Citizenship Statute. This new law recognises new types of youth organisations and participation, defines a new structure for the National System of Youth, recognises youth citizenship, seeks to protect the rights that are associated with youth citizenship, and allows for civil, social and political citizenship. Additionally, this law gives guidelines and a specific timeline for the participation of youth when new public policies that address youth are created.

In short, the current context of youth recognises the right to participate in whichever form that it takes. The law obliges the state to recognise formal and non-formal organisations and to consult them when a policy is pro-

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44. Colombia Joven "los consejos de juventud en Colombia", recuperado de: http://ow.ly/BK7WJ

45. Interview with Dionisio Lizarazo, member of JuventudES Colombia. JuventudEs Colombia is a NGO that in their webpage defines itself as "A Space for Coordination Initiatives for the Youth National Platform in Colombia - ECIPNJ, is a scene of dialogue, and dialogue of a transitional character - diverse, democratic, plural and inclusive of the youth society towards the construction of the National Youth Platform in Colombia" (http://www.juventudescolombia.org/). JuventudEs Colombia was of great importance in the process of adopting the statute of youth citizenship because served as the setting for discussion and consultation with young people across the country.

46. Ibid.

posed that may affect them. The challenge is now to see how this law will be implemented in the field.

3.5.3 Needs of young people

One step of the policy cycle is planning. In this step, it is important to identify the context, which means also the analysis of data and information[47]. Although there have been two systems of information on youth (SIJU, 2003; JUACO, 2012) and three national surveys of youth, the data available cannot be compared and it does not really allows the realities of the youth population to be understood. Therefore, one integrated and effective national information system is needed, where young people and all stakeholders contributing in the youth sector can find information.

Civil society and the National System of Youth have a fundamental role to play in resolving issues around the production, custody and dissemination of information about youth, however their representativeness and scope are limited.

Due to the situation described above, it is argued that the needs of youth are not completely considered in the policymaking cycle, especially in relation to national policies that involve youth from vulnerable populations.

Production, custody and dissemination of information about youth

The National Information System on the Situation and Perspectives of Children and Young People in Colombia (SIJU) was the first platform of information on youth issues. It was established in 2003 and included "information on indicators of childhood and youth, state of the art research on youth and portfolios relating to youth public and private institutions and government at the national, departmental and municipal levels" (Portal Avanza, 2007).

Although SIJU was led by the combined efforts of national (ICBF, Young Colombia) and international (UNICEF, UNFPA, GTZ) entities, the platform was not strong enough to become a leader in youth information. The data was not updated systematically, and the communication about its importance was not successful. This is why the draft of a CONPES document −

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47. Youth Policy (2013), Research Handbook. Germany.

discussed (although not approved) in 2010 – notes the need to promote a more robust information system about youth.

In order to address this identified need, the National System of Youth and Adolescence in Colombia (JUACO) was created in 2013, following a mandate by the National Statute of Youth Citizenship. JUACO aims to "provide statistics, technical tools, operational and methodological issues associated with youth". According to its website[48], today JUACO has more than 580 documents related to youth issues, nearly 50 laws and other instruments of public policy, and 24 reports on different policy domains.

However if one takes a closer look at the information on JUACO's website, it is possible to discover that much of it is very out-dated information. Furthermore, JUACO's format, like SIJU's, is of limited use because it does not offer a wide range of documents or information and is not presented in a format that can easily be used for analytical purposes.

In terms of health, for example, there is disaggregated information mainly concerning health system coverage and some information regarding trauma/accidents, deaths, domestic and interpersonal violence, and injuries, among others. However, information about the main problems young Colombians face in regards to health is not available, nor is it possible to make associations between two or more variables. Up until now, JUACO only shows isolated figures at national level, preventing an understanding of the real state of the health of youth at local level.

In terms of employment, JUACO displays information about the youth labour market, with employment and unemployment rates as well as young working-age population, with data provided by DANE and updated for 2014. However, information in not disaggregated, for example by gender or urban/rural dwelling. Regarding education, the information focuses on higher education, including coverage rates in higher education with data until 2013, enrolment in higher education by gender with data until 2013, and finally, data of graduates from higher education until 2011. The system, however, does not contain information about the education received by young Colombians from preschool to eleventh grade.

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48. http://obs.colombiajoven.gov.co/Default.aspx

In addition to the shortcomings of platforms that present youth data, there is a lack of data collection and information creation. Since 1991, as a responsibility of the institution related to youth, there have been two national surveys: the first one in 1991, conducted by Counselling for Youth, Children and Families; and the second, in 2000, conducted by the Vice-Ministry of Youth. A new survey is still in progress since December 2012 – the results of which have not yet been presented. Colombia Joven currently estimates that the final results of this survey will be presented in 2016 – four years after the survey was initiated.

Furthermore, most of the data from the survey made in 1991 is not available, and, as the questions used in each survey were different, it has made cross-comparison to assess the impact of youth policies over time impossible. According to private communication with a person who worked on the design of the 2013 survey, these results will not be comparable either.

There is no useful information in the field of participation. When a request for information about how many young people had participated as candidates in the elections of 2011, Registraduría Nacional said that the physical production of the information requested would cost about $40,000. Barriers such as this make it impossible to accurately understand the situation of youth political participation and seriously impede the development of youth policy (See annexes).

In addition, no accurate information exists about how many young people are involved in organisations, and there is no accurate understanding of the number of NGOs in the country. This makes it hard to analyse the impact of public policies regarding youth citizen participation or the development of Colombia's civil society youth sector.

Regarding health, the issues on information have been recurring. First, it appears that information needs and aims differ between the local, territorial and national levels. Second, even though there have been some advances in health information since the issue of law 100/1993, a unified, effective and user-friendly information system for health that allows for deep analysis and/or decision-making at any level or sector, is not yet available (Contraloría de Bogotá, 2007).

In terms of public policy on education, in 2002 the Ministry of Education began the task of improving and strengthening information systems within

the education sector at all levels in order to have clear, reliable and timely statistics that reveal the state of education and facilitate decision-making. As a result, the ministry now has different systems available on elementary, basic secondary, and secondary education. It also has information on higher education and education for work. It is important to highlight that these systems have a lot of updated information on the subject.

In an analysis of the first ten years of the Youth Law 1997, Dina Krauskopf recommended that "in the next statistics that try to characterise young people, they should not just emphasise the shortcomings of young people and their problems, but also look for their contributions to community". We will have to wait until the 2012 survey's results are published to see if this important recommendation was considered.

Participation as a partial solution to the lack of information

Taking this into account, participation becomes even more important, as a way to influence the formulation of policies, as it serves as an input of youth perspectives that are not covered in surveys. That is why both youth laws in the country had relied on such rich participatory processes.

"The Youth Act (1997) was formulated through a social decision-making process that included institutions and individuals interested in youth development, allowing for both a comprehensive and pluralistic dialogue" (Russell & Solórzano, 2001). The discussion process and preparation for the adoption of the law lasted almost six years.

Regarding the Youth Citizenship Statute, the process started before 2010 with the joint work of political parties (Mira and Liberal Party, mostly of which had their own bills to modify 1997's Youth Act), its youth groups, and a series of youth activists and organisations that debated amongst themselves to create one only bill proposal (Juventudes Colombia, 2013). The process involved the participation of more than 2,000 young people from about 28 departments (Juventudes Colombia, 2013). In addition to the final adoption of the statute, a group of public institutions, activists, NGO and youth groups have been working on the documents that will regulate the main actions that are established.

It is necessary to briefly mention the relationship between youth policy paradigms that were described at the beginning of the chapter, and the

perception and analysis of the needs of young people. When public policy is based on a concept of youth as a transition period, the young become invisible, so the policy itself prevents them from developing the capacities to fully understand their problems, leaving them with little ability to make correct diagnoses on their own needs. "Even young people themselves are convinced that their problems are those allocated to them [...] Youth had heard repeatedly that their main problem is the drug consumption, so now they think their main problem is drugs". This is a similar case to promiscuity (Krauskopf, Gobernación de Antioquia, 2007).

The role of civil society

To solve problems in the production, custody and dissemination of information about youth, civil society and the National System of Youth play a fundamental role. Traditionally, in Colombia both youth and non-governmental organisations have played a major role in the design of the two

Graph 18
Number of social actors influencing the policy making, by country and category

- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Nicaragua
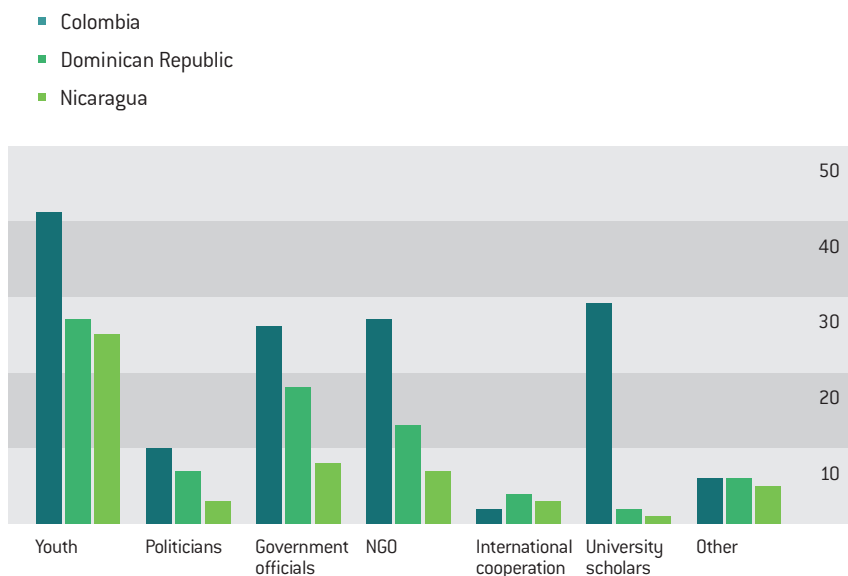
Source: "own illustration" based on information from Solorzano y Russell, 2001

youth laws in the country. As Graph 18 shows, in a comparative study (2001) of the construction of youth public policy in Colombia, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic, the participation of civil society in Colombia is the highest in quantity, and is even higher than government officials.

This is not surprising in a country with a wide and rich civil society that,

> *"...is a relatively young social sector, which required the opening of certain associational rights guaranteed to a greater extent with the constitution of 1991, which reacted to the installation of a new neo-liberal model with a very absent state, which promotes public responsibilities in the private sector, and requires citizens organised to promote the effective implementation of the rights of the people."*

<div align="right">(ONG por la transparencia, 2012)</div>

The impact of non-governmental organisations in the country is immeasurable. As there is no certainty about the total number of NGOs, it is very difficult to identify the impact of their work. However, it is possible to see an overview in the analysis of the information submitted by 305 organisations working nationally and in the department of Antioquia, in 2010 and 2011, shown in the next chapter.

Table 7
CSO organisations that participated in the accountability project led by NGOs for accountability, data for years 2009 and 2010

Number	305
Founded by youth	5
Serving young	229
People served	4.418.000
Annual income (billions of dollars)	428
Jobs created	23.489
Young employees (> 30)	7.085

Source: Construcción propia con datos de ONG por la Transparencia 2010 y 2011

Unfortunately, there is no clear information about non-official youth NGOs and youth collectives. Nevertheless, as it was mentioned before, their influence in policymaking in the country has been large. Not surprisingly, Libardo Sarmiento (2000) states that "[t]he continuity of youth programmes, although weak (...) is mainly explained by the proactive action of civil society, international cooperation, youth groups, the 'militancy' of some public officials, and the permanence of any structure within the state organisation".

However, we must recognise that organisations associated with the policies that affect young people have the same traditional problems as Colombian civil society, including issues with their legitimacy, representativeness, impact, and accountability.

3.6 Conclusions

Different tensions have characterised the development of youth policy in Colombia: sectorial vs. population policies, age-focussed approach vs. more complex youth definitions, traditional and conservative views vs. more progressive and liberal approaches, and child and adolescent protection vs. youth development.

Regardless of the historical pressure, the public policy tradition in Colombia gives more importance to sectorial rather than population or cross-sectorial approaches. As will be seen in next chapters, to take full account of policies that affect youth, it is important to consider sectorial policies, especially because these policies have higher resource allocations and institutional support.

This, plus the slow evolution of the view that society and policymakers have had in relation to youth issues, have created a coexistence of policies with different approaches, ranging from traditional to advanced, with institutions that work in isolation, and which even employ different definitions of youth.

Colombian history is moreover plagued with actions from the traditional economic and political elite (including and supported by the Catholic Church), which have sought to maintain the status quo, significantly impacting youth policy and sectorial policies related with youth.

Also, the overlap between policies that concern adolescents and those that are related with youth have created a tension that crosses from legal developments to institutional agreements, and affects all aspects of policy-making, including the resource allocation and monitoring of youth policies.

In addition to these tensions, an additional obstacle is the lack of updated and disaggregated information on youth issues, generating policies that do not have an adequate diagnosis on the current situation of youth, and that are not based on youth needs. This occurs due to an incomplete system of youth information, regardless of the efforts that civil society, including the academia, have made.

In next chapters, the current youth policies will be described and analysed, taking into account these tensions and obstacles.

Youth and
Public Policy in

Colombia

Policy Realities

4

4.1   Introduction and Context

This chapter will explore the most important policy documents of national scope. Additionally, key initiatives, programmes and action plans that have been embedded into governmental plans and their impact on young people´s lives. By doing so, this section will also present the most important institutions involved in policy implementation and how their role has changed specific scenarios and processes within the sphere of youth in Colombia.

4.1.1 An overview of existing policies

As mentioned in previous chapters, a policy is one of the main tools a state has to transform the lives of its citizens. Public policies can be either explicit or implicit:

> *"Explicit policies refer to the legislation, programmes and guidelines aimed at transforming the situation of young people, to ensure that they exercise their rights and to promote their participation. Implicit policies are the laws, regulations and other directives that are not actually promulgated in order to directly influence the specific situation of young people, but have positive or negative impacts on their status and situation".*

(Paisa joven — GTZ, 2004)

At the outset of this chapter, it is important to note that the youth policy documents that will be investigated in this chapter were conceived in relation to the Development Plans of the different governments (at national, departmental and municipal levels) in whose periods the documents were prepared.

Development Plans are documents "that underlie and provide the strategic guidelines of public policy", and are "formal and legal instruments through which the objectives of the government are plotted, allowing for the subsequent evaluation of their management" (DNP, 2014).

Outlining the role of the different territorial regions in Colombia, the Political Constitution (1991) states in Article 339:

> *"The territorial entities will elaborate and adopt, in a coordinated manner, development plans with the national government with the purpose of securing the efficient use of their resources and the adequate execution of the functions assigned to them by the constitution and the law. The plans of the territorial entities will consist of a strategic plan and an intermediate- and short-term plan of investment."*

The most important policy documents that will be addressed in this chapter are listed in the table below.

Table 8
Policy documents including type, author and year

Policy document	Type of document	Author	Year of issue
Social policy for youth and women	Guide for public policy	Conpes	1992
Creation of a social security system. Act 100/1993	Law	Congress	1993
General Education Act	Law	Congress	1994
Conpes of Youth	Guide for public policy	Conpes	1995
Youth Act. Act 375/1997	Law	Congress	1997
Towards a Youth Policy in Colombia: Tools for construction and institutionalization	Memories of different consultations	Colombia Joven	2001
National Policy on Youth, foundations for the ten-year education plan 2005-2015	Guide for public policy	Colombia Joven	2004
10 year education plan	Planning	Education Ministry	2005
Childhood and Adolescence Act. Act 1098/2006	Law	Congress	2006
National Youth Policy	Guide for public policy	Conpes	2010

Reform to the General Health Social Security System. Act 1438/2011	Law	Congress	2011
Youth Citizenship Statute. Act 1622/2013	Law	Congress	2013
Guidelines for the creation of opportunities for youth people	Guide for public policy	Conpes	2014*

4.1.2 Explicit youth policies

The first part of the chapter will address the developments seen in four documents produced by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy – CONPES between 1992 and 2014, then will focus on the ten year youth plan 2005-2015, and lastly, will describe and compare the country's two youth laws, the National Youth Act 1997, and the Youth Citizen Statute 2013.

CONPES documents

In order to organise the state programme aimed at young people, CONPES has prepared four documents (Sarmiento, 2004). CONPES is the "highest national planning authority and serves as an advisory body to the government on all matters related to economic and social development" (DNP Web page). According to its website, CONPES coordinates and directs the agencies responsible for the economic and social direction of the government, through the study and approval of documents related to the development of general policies that are presented in each CONPES session.

CONPES provides macro guidance for public policy. It was originally conceived in the 1950s as a guide for economic policy (3806 documents to May 2014), but in 1992 (Decree 2132) it was complemented by a social component (172 documents to March 2014), which elaborated the youth policy documents that will be explained below.

CONPES Social is chaired by the President of the Republic and is composed of the Ministers of Finance, Health, Education, Agriculture, Trans-

portation, Labour and Social Security, and the Director of the National Planning Department.

With regard to youth public policy, as it was mentioned in previous chapters, four CONPES documents - that have been recognised as National Youth Policies (Colombia Joven, 2004) − have been prepared, however only three of these have been officially published[49]. As can be seen in Annexes, all four documents share similar characteristics, but their differences show the state of the youth policy at the moment they were developed.

The differentiating feature of the four documents is that they were written by different entities, that is, the institution of youth prevailing at the time of their development. Namely, the Presidential Programme for Youth, Women and Family (1992, Deputy Minister of Youth (1995), Colombia Joven, 2014 (Table 9).

Table 9
Information on CONPES documents

CONPES Year	Author	Age range
1992	Presidential Program for Youth, Women and Family	12 to 24
1995	Deputy Ministry of Youth	15 to 25
2010	No information available	14 to 26
2014	Colombia Joven	14 to 28

The main differences between these documents are summarised in Annexes, but a brief introduction to each will be provided here.

Sarmiento (2002) considers the 1992 CONPES as the first explicit youth policy in the country. This document had, as its basic criteria, the creation and strengthening of different spaces for participation, giving special attention to developing the institutional capacity of the municipalities, and also the need to promote gender equality (Sarmiento, 2002). The policy objec-

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49. Although 2010 CONPES was not published, it is included in the analysis because contains useful information for the research.

tives sought by the 1992 CONPES were to ensure full participation of youth, and to improve their living conditions. The strategies set to achieve this objective were related to: human development, insertion into economic life, participation, and organisation.

The second CONPES of 1995 had two basic criteria regarding young people: i) the recognition of the young as a subject of rights and duties; ii) the participation of young people and the constant expansion of development opportunities (Sarmiento, 2002). In order to address these objectives, the action plan sought to support young people's personal development, comprehensive training, participation, citizenship (focussed on local policy), integration into working life, and the strengthening of institutions working with young people.

In 2010, a CONPES document was prepared but not published. Its objective was to "strengthen action of state and society to foster youth's human rights, enable the development of their capabilities, and leverage their full potential, so that they can live responsibly and autonomously for their own benefit and that of society". The strategic objectives of this policy were: i) to strengthen the National System of Youth, ii) to strengthen coordination of the state at its national and territorial levels, and with civil society, iii) to support and promote mechanisms that encourage youth participation, iv) to ensure the availability of resources.

The 2014 CONPES focusses specifically on education and employment. As stated in the document, its objective is to "implement strategies to ensure the transition of young people into the labour market in terms of quality, stability, and special protection". For this purpose, the document establishes four strategic objectives: i) to generate social capital and trust, ii) to enhance capacity and skills, iii) to improve the transition to employment in dignity and decency, iv) to strengthen institutional coordination.

A keyword analysis of each of CONPES documents (see Annexes) allows for the identification and comparison of the documents' features. The most common word in the 1995 CONPES is education, while in the 2013 CONPES it is work, indicating a clear difference in orientation between the two documents. Meanwhile, in the CONPES 2010 the word most often repeated is national, indicating that a territorial scope of was adopted.

Turning to the instruments that each document most commonly refer to, the second most repeated word in the 1995 CONPES is programme, while in the other two, the word policy is more frequently used. Only in 2010 CONPES is the word rights highly prevalent. The word development is visible in all of the CONPES analysed using this technique, but most prevalent in the unpublished 2010 document.

The unpublished CONPES document is arguably the one that adopted the most complex and complete approach as it has a rights perspective and recognises the importance of institutional coordination. It may have influenced the construction of the Youth Citizenship Statute adopted in 2014.

Foundations for the Year Plan for Youth

In 2001, Colombia Joven published the document Towards a Youth Policy in Colombia: Tools for construction and institutionalisation. This document sought to systematise a group of activities held by Colombia Joven and other national and international institutions in 18 months, to promote the creation of programmes, projects and actions in favour of Colombian young people.

The document aimed to become a tool for a National Dialogue ('Youth past and present') that in turn, aimed to create the main guidelines for the development of youth policy in the country. It includes the construction of a baseline of the situation of youth in general, and the dynamics of organisation and youth participation in the country, as well as some general and methodological guidelines for a public youth policy.

Seeking to develop the 2001 document, in 2004, Colombia Joven published the National Policy on Youth: Foundations for the Ten-Year Education Plan 2005-1015, which brings a general framework to the National Policy on Youth of Colombia following the 2003 National Development Plan. This framework recognises youth as "subjects of rights and holders of specific values and capacities that make them key actors for the construction of a more equitable and democratic, peaceful and socially just society" (Colombia Joven, 2004).

According to Colombia Joven (2004), this document was:

> *"...built with the participation of Colombian youth and with institutions and organisations that work with this population group. The doc-*

> ument was based on the results of the dialogue named *"Youth Past and Present"* made in 2002 in which more than 8,000 young people and 1,600 adults participated. *The process also included a set of studies, research and documents, and the consensus that has resulted in other scenarios for debate and discussion."*

(Colombia Joven, 2004)

In its presentation, the document makes clear that the national youth policy "is not the set of activities developed by the presidential programme Colombia Joven, but all efforts and actions developed from the different sectorial institutions of the public administration, that directly or indirectly address young people" (Colombia Joven, 2004). This indicates the clear recognition of the existence of 'youth policies' and 'sectorial policies' that affect/impact on young people, or what we call here in this document, explicit and implicit youth policies, respectively.

In fact, the document is a direct invitation to the youth sector to work in a coordinated manner to find solutions to the problems identified, and to ensure the implementation of its contents. The document claims to have adopted a population perspective that aims to "strengthen the relationship and improve the coherence of sectorial youth policies at the national level" (Colombia Joven, 2004).

"The document represented a fundamental step in the regulation of Law 375 of 1997 often refered to as the Youth Act" (Plan Decenal para la juventud no parece ser una prioridad del Gobierno, 2010). It focussed on the development of guidelines that could be used in the "design of tools, models, evaluation of projects, the development of new initiatives and the transfer of methodologies in order that the policy can be translated into regional youth policies, in particular for municipalities" (Colombia Joven, 2014). This means that the document was initially thought to be a guide for municipal authorities in charge of the development of youth policies.

The main focus of the document is to expand the capabilities of young people and give them "choice under the generated capacity, so that they are able to participate in the different stages of democratic, social and economic life and cultural development" (Colombia Joven, 2004). This means that, in line with the policy clasification made at the beginning of the previous chapter, the document can be considered to have an advanced approach:

seeing young people as strategic actors for development rather than as in a transition to adulthood or as a risk for society, as traditional and reductionist approaches did (this can be widely seen in Chapter 2).

Among the nine criteria on which the document framed youth policy, four are particularly relevant to this review:

1. Expansion of institutional capacities of regional authorities (especially specialised agencies or state officials in charge of youth issues) and other institutions such as as social and community organisations (especially youth-led or focussed).

2. The adoption of a population perspective, to influence the sectorial division, indicating the transversal and comprehensiveness of youth policy, and stating that the youth policy does not supersede any sectorial or population policy of national order.

3. Reference to budgetary allocations from sectors, considering that "in terms of public investment, the most significant portion of policies related to youth come from sectorial investment", indicating the necessity of transversalisation and integration of not only programatic activity but also budgetary.

4. Relationship with development plans, noting that "youth policy planning will be fruitless if it is done outside the processes of national and territorial planning.

According to the document, the National Policy of Youth – Foundations is "the strategic framework to guide actions and encourage cooperation between state bodies, civil society and the private sector for the development of youth capacities to enable them to take the life of a responsible and autonomous citizen, for their own benefit and society's" (Colombia Joven, 2004).

The document sets out three strategic areas: a) participation in public life and in the consolidation of a culture of solidarity and coexistence, b) access to public goods and services, c) extension of social, economic and cultural opportunities.

The National Policy of Youth – Foundations establishes eight tools that needed to be developed:

1. Clarity of competences and cooperation of territorial entities (national, departmental and municipal or district)
2. National Information System Status and Perspectives of Children and Youth
3. Technical assistance to regional authorities (the only tool that includes a list of accomplishments, which could be used to make an assessment of its progress)
4. Development of methodologies to adress youth issues
5. A ten year plan for youth
6. Creation of intersectorial committees for the development of the strategic priorities
7. Regulatory Initiatives
8. Evaluation of results and impact

With the exception of point three, the document does not mention or elaborate a plan for how these tools should be realised.

Youth Act and Youth Citizenship Statute

To date, Colombia has adopted two laws that deal with youth issues explicitly: the Youth Act (Act 375/1997), and the Youth Citizenship Statute (Act 1622/2013). This chapter will initially outline and compare these laws before analysing their scope and implementation.

Youth Act

The Youth Act, or Act 375, was adopted in 1997 and was the first law that addressed youth issues explicitly, in order to implement Article 45 of the constitution (Colombia Joven, 2004). It states that "the adolescent has the right to protection and comprehensive training. The state and society ensure the active participation of young people in public and private agencies that are responsible for their protection, their education, and the advancement of youth".

The main objective of the Youth Act is "to establish the institutional framework and guiding plan of action and programme for young people" (Article 1). The law recognises the need for the comprehensive development

Graph 19
National system of youth

STATE ENTITIES

National
Departmental
Municipal

Mix entities

SOCIAL ENTITIES

"Set of institu-
tions and individ-
uals (entities)
who work with
youth and for
youth"

NGO

Youth and youth groups

Collegiate bodies of representation

Municipal youth
councils

Departmental
youth councils

National youth
councils

of young people, the importance of their participation beyond citizenship, and the rights of young people themselves.

The most important aspect of this law is that it creates the foundation of the National System of Youth, which according to the document is comprised of a "set of institutions and individual (entities) who work with youth and for youth". These institutions and individuals include social, state, or a mix of the two, as shown in Graph 19.

One of the newest developments of the 1997 Youth Act was the creation of collegiate bodies of youth representation: youth councils. They are associated with the three different territorial levels of the Colombian state: municipal or district, provincial and national. The intention was to develop these councils on a gradual basis, as seen in Figure 19.

Graph 20

Youth councils — collegiate and autonomous bodies of representation

Disctrict and municipal youth councils

60% of members elected by vote of youth and **40%** of youth's organizations representatives

Departmental youth councils

Composed of representatives of each municipal youth council

National youth councils

» One delegate from each of the departmental and district youth councils

» One representative of indigenous communities

» One representative of the Afro-Colombian communities

» One representative of the native islanders of San Andres and Providencia

» One representative of rural youths

» One representative elected by organizations and youth movements running programs for national coverage

A bottom-up approach was adopted in the selection of the youth councillors. The first level was at municipalities and/or districts. The local administrations were in charge of organising the elections which chose the councillors. The act established that there had to be an odd number of five or more councillors, who would be elected for a period of three years. Once the municipalities' councils were chosen, they selected one or two delegates from each council to be part of the Departmental Council.

According to Decree 89 of 2000, at the departmental level, the council must have an odd number of youth councillors similar to the municipal level, but if the department had more than 15 municipalities, the governor must select an appropriate methodology to elect them, which in some instances meant that the election process was delegated to municipal entities or to the National Civil Registry. Finally, there was the third level, national. The Youth Act states that for the National Youth Council to be constituted,

all departmental youth councils should be established. The National Youth Council was not constituted as too few departmental councils were elected. The National Youth Council was supposed to be elected for three years and be composed of a wide number of delegates, including representatives from minority groups or communities at risk of exclusion, as is shown in Graphic 20.

According to the Youth Act, the functions of the councils – for all levels – are: 1) to be an interlocutor between the public administration and youth, and within this function, there is a special mandate to create channels to ensure youth participation in the making of the Development Plans[50], 2) to propose plans and programmes aligned to the Youth Act objectives, 3) to be accountable for the Developing Plans regarding youth issues.

Although the youth councils are presented as representational bodies, in general the act considers the right and necessity of young people to act as councillors. The act recognises the citizenship of youth that have not reached the age of 18 (14 to 17) by allowing them to directly choose their representatives in youth councils.

Going beyond the spaces of formal political participation, the law recognises the importance of informal participation, which is described as an "essential condition for young people to be agents of their development process, to exercise coexistence, dialogue and solidarity so they, acting as a social body and as partners of the state, can project their innovative capacity in culture and in the development of the country" (Article 14).

It is important to mention that according to the act, municipalities and districts are the main executors of youth policy at the local level (Article 27) to which they can allocate resources through plans and programmes. The departments are assigned the responsibility of being advisers to municipalities, and to enable different municipalities within a department to coordinate joint action, for which they were also allowed to allocate resources.

When the act was created, at the national level the ministry responsible for youth policy in the country was the Vice-Ministry of Youth, which sat under the Ministry of Education. Therefore, the act gave the Vice-Minis-

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50. Development Plans are the main planning instrument for municipalities, departments, and the national government.

try of Youth the responsibility for creating and guiding the national youth policy, establishing inter-sectorial coordination and consultation, and formulating plans and programmes. Also, it clearly indicates that "the proper functioning of the National System of Youth, will be the responsibility of the Nation" (Article 27).

Once the Vice-Ministry of youth ceased to exist, its responsibilities were transferred to the governing body of youth: Colombia Joven.

In regard to the allocation of resources, the act states that its development can be financed by "national and territorial resources, resources from the private sector and international cooperation, and also resources managed by the young people themselves" (Article 45). It also indicates that "within the departmental, municipal and district budgetary category of mandatory investment in culture, recreation and sport – which are transferred to them from the national budget – one part will be assigned for youth programmes" (Article 46).

The act also makes specific reference to the topics addressed in this review. In terms of education, the act states in Article 10 that "education, non-formal, formal and informal, is a right and a duty for all young people and also an essential part of their development". In addition, this particular law provided an opportunity for the state, civil society and young people to coordinate politics and plans in order to contribute to the social promotion of youth through different strategies.

The act seeks to complement and influence access to formal educational processes, to improve personal development opportunities, and to ensure the provision of comprehensive training in the methods of extra curricula education, formal, non-formal education, and informal education. It also highlights the promotion of rehabilitation and re-socialisation programmes for youth affected by drugs, alcoholism, prostitution, crime, conflict, and poverty as priority objectives.

The act indicates that Colombian youth receive a comprehensive education in accordance with the General Law of Education. This education is to be augmented with non-formal education, which is intended to update and supplement knowledge and training in academic areas without the student being subject to a system of levels and degrees. This means that informal education was understood as all free knowledge, spontaneously acquired

from individuals, institutions, mass media, print media, traditions, customs and social behavior (Article 37).

Extra-curricular education is seen as another way to achieve the integral education of young Colombians:

> *"It is believed this type of education is the pedagogical action performed on basis of no obligation, free membership and free time which seeks the integral training of youth and the transformation youth into an educated force for the development of the country" (Article 38).*

The Youth Act only makes one reference to health, stating that the state will guarantee youth, in a progressive manner, access to integral health services. This means that the health authorities will provide health coverage to youth according to the availability of funds. Considering, as has been evident, that the health insurance companies operate on a for-profit model, and that the state prioritises youth in terms of their potential for prosperity, the Youth Act did not make any progress in the guarantee of the right to health or healthcare.

Youth Citizenship Statute

After several attempts to amend the Youth Act[51], congress issued the Youth Citizenship Statute in 2013 (Act 1622). In comparison to the previous act, the methodology adopted a more progressive human rights approach, with provisions for sexual rights. The new conception of the young person is a notable change in this law, mainly because it recognises youth as a dynamic state of age that expresses itself in many ways. The statute named this as "Juventudes", a plural version of the word youth. It also goes beyond the

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51. Through Bill No. 210 of 2005, the national government centralised and established the necessary paths to just and equitable access to programmes about entrepreneurship and employment. The bill seeks to regulate the election, formation and functioning of the youth councils, and also aims to complement the Youth Act of 1997. It strives to regulate the participation of youth in public institutions created by the government.

ICPD Programme of Action[52]. Among the ambitious and inspiring principles that this act adopted, we can find:

» **Dignity**: "Every person has the right to a decent and secure life; youth are the fundamental focus of actions by the welfare state, through the elimination of any form of infringement of human rights"

» **Diversity**: "Youth must be recognised in their diversity with a focus that recognises the country's diversity, related to social, physical, psychological, vulnerability, discrimination, ethnic, sexual identity and orientation, cultural territory and gender, in order to guarantee equal opportunities for young people"

» **Equality of opportunities**: Affirms that the state should reduce inequalities at the starting point of the life project formulation process for every youth.

» **Youth as a crosscutting theme**: This is a remarkable distinction - from now on public policies in Colombia should include reference to youth, as the statute says: "Their implementation will be around the incorporation of youth issues in each action and in other public policy domains".

» **Gender**: States that the concept is socially constructed, leaving behind the conception of gender as merely biologically determined.

The statute indicates that a public policy on youth:

> *"...should be understood as the permanent process of articulation and development of principles, actions and strategies that guide the activities of the state and society for the promotion, protection, and realisation of the rights of young people, as well as to generate the necessary conditions for exercising their citizenship through the realisation of individual life projects and collective projects."*

<div align="right">(Article 11, Youth Citizenship Statute)</div>

....

52. "The ICPD Programme of Action, sometimes referred to as the Cairo Consensus, was remarkable in its recognition that reproductive health and rights, as well as women's empowerment and gender equality, are cornerstones of population and development programmes. The consensus is rooted in principles of human rights and respect for national sovereignty and various religious and cultural backgrounds". (UNFPA, 1995)

An important development of the statute is that it highlights that youth policies will be crosscutting to the administrative and programmatic structure of territorial entities and the nation. In addition, it established that youth policies do not replace other sectorial or population policies, but rather they support and enhance them in order to achieve the goal of youth development (Article 12 Youth Citizenship Statute). This framework is the basis for the president, governors and mayors to assume the responsibility of including in their development plans both the resources and mechanisms that allow for the full development of public policy on youth that guarantees the rights of this population.

As indicated in the Youth Act, the statute also establishes a clear pathway and a pre-determined timetable with deadlines in which different spatial levels are required to adopt or update a youth public policy, taking into account the territorial level:

1. **Municipalities**: six months from the election of the municipal youth councils.

2. **Departments**: nine months from the election of the municipal youth councils. Should provide technical assistance to municipalities.

3. **Districts**: at the same time that they are arranged by departments, addressing the diversity of their localities.

4. **Nation**: one year from the election of the municipal youth councils. It is required to provide technical assistance to departments.

This established structure has both advantages and disadvantages. The guidance is meant to offer a pathway to ensure participation of youth at the outset of the development of public policy. However when it comes to implementation - and taking into account the experience of the Youth Act - the creation of the councils may take longer than the timetable allows, which not only threatens the adoption of public policies and the intention of making the youth issues a crosscutting theme in other policies, but also frustrates all the youth that were involved in the construction of the statute who called or a strengthening of opportunities for political participation.

The statute includes profound changes to the National System of Youth, making it more complex than the one that was created in the Youth Act. It

includes technical scenarios to strengthen youth policies and monitoring mechanisms (such as the National Council of Youth Public Policy), as well as outlining the stages of consultation and coordination between the official and unofficial levels of participation of youth organisations (see Graph 21).

Graph 21
National system of youth

"Set of actors, processes, guides, legal tools, agendas, plans, programs, and projects that operationalized the policies related to youth"

Institutional subsystem of youths

Composed by:

1. National Council of Youth Public Policy (CONPES)
2. Units responsible for youth issues in territorial entities

Subsystem of youth participation

Composed by:

1. Organizational processes and practices of young people
2. Scenarios of youth participation
3. Youth councils (all territorial entities)
4. Youth platforms and assemblies

Consultation and decision commissions

Consultation and decision territorial bodies (one for every territorial entity).

Will assume functions of planning, consultation of public agendas, and generation mechanisms for implementing those agendas in each territory

The National System is now composed of three bodies called subsystems:

» **Institutional subsystem of youth** is mainly in charge of the formulation of policies about youth, and is also the body that defines the guidelines for the functioning of the whole National System of Youth. It also gives support to the public and private entities that work towards youth issues, establishes methodologies for monitoring, coordinates actions with other public institutions, and promotes the creation of the youth councils.

» **Subsystem of youth participation** is the body that recognises the different manifestations of youth participation. those that just seek direct changes in communities and those that are interested in influencing policy. The statute focuses on the non-formal and formal youth organisations that can offer inputs to public policy in different scenarios: 1) the youth councils (the same from the Youth Act), 2) the Youth Platforms constitut-

Graph 22
Youth Councils, Youth Citizenship Statute

Municipal

Independent youth, youth from formal organizational processes and practices, and youth of political parties

7-17 members direct vote

District and local

Each district will create local councils (direct vote) and 30 days after, a district council (one delegate of each local council)

Departmental

Composed of delegates of each municipal and district youth council

5-15 members

60 days after the creation of all municipal and district councils

National

» One delegate from each departmental and district youth council

» One representative of the organizational processes and practices of youth farmers

» One representative of each ethnic community: indigenous, Afro-Colombian, rom, raizales communities of San Andrés and Providencia

150 days after the election of the Departmental Youth Councils

"Mechanisms of participation, coordination, monitoring and control of public management and dialogue to public institutions of each local authority in relation to territorial youth agendas."

ing all kinds of organisations with the aim of giving advice to the youth councils, 3) the Youth Assemblies, where all kinds of organisations are welcome to provide advice, but more importantly to hold youth councils to account.

» **Consultation and decision commissions** are decision-making bodies where the territorial government (municipality, district or department) gather

with delegates from the youth councils to plan and arrange the public agendas on youth issues.

In relation to youth councils, the statute clarifies some of their characteristics and, most importantly, set times for their creation (see Graph 22). The statute establishes a set of actions that seek to get the necessary support for the youth council's operation. The statute mentions the responsibility of every level of government to organise and promote the participation of youth in the municipal, departmental, and national councils of youth, and the National Council of Youth Public Policy.

The purpose of the youth councils is the same as that which was outlined in the Youth Act from 1997, however the statute makes some important differences. Firstly, the duration of operation was increased from three years to four years. Secondly, their composition changed – while still remaining an odd number, the number of councillors increased from 5 to 15 for each departmental council, and from 7 to 17 for each municipal/district council. Thirdly, greater attention was given to the inclusion of minority groups (specifically indigenous, Afro-Colombians, Rom, and youth from San Andres and Providencia).

In the Youth Act, there was a commitment from the state, and the intention was to "give special treatment to the vulnerable youth (…) with the purpose that the government will develop programmes for Afro-Colombians, indigenous, youth with disabilities, and those from San Andres and Providencia". It also gave one spot in the National Youth Council to members of those communities, however it did not explain their election process. In contrast, the statute gave one spot for each minority group (indigenous, Rom, Afro-Colombians and from San Andres and Providencia), and it mentions they will be elected by a process that the community chooses. Finally, the statute does not mention special rights for them, but rather just regulates their participation.

Regarding education, the statute establishes measures that seek to promote the rights of young people, specifically to:

» Ensure quality education, creating the necessary conditions for education to be accessible to young people, within the framework of the laws.

» Generate incentives to ensure the permanence of young people in basic secondary, technical, and university tertiary education.

» Guarantee quality education of the highest level for all young people in equal conditions.

» Ensure the implementation of strategies for rural education, adjusted to the territorial and social context, under a differential approach to ensure the access and retention of rural youth with equal opportunities.

In terms of minorities, the statute indicates that the government will define the mechanisms and procedures for identification and assistance of youth with disabilities, ethnic communities, and youth from rural origins who intend to develop higher education studies.

With regard to health, the statute states that strategies for the promotion of contraceptive methods for males and females should be developed, and this is complemented by the last reforms of the health package of benefits, which include some of these methods. But still, there is no mention of comprehensive sexuality education. Apart from that, the few times the statute mentions health is in relation to traditional healthcare services, leaving out of consideration areas like mental health, substance use and abuse, depression, or suicide, where major challenges are being faced by youth.

Moreover, different studies show contradictory information regarding coverage of contraceptive methods. Some studies in 2012 show more than 90% of contraceptive coverage while others speak of 73% (DNP, 2013; ONU Colombia, 2012). These figures suggest that sections of the youth population continue to face barriers to accessing youth-friendly healthcare services.

Even though the statute does not make any specific statements on the challenges youth face in terms of coverage in the health system and the inequalities that it is reproducing, it does make provisions for the participation of young people in national spaces for health decision-making. Some of these spaces, which exist in the local level, rather than at the national, are the patient associations (attached to the health insurance companies), the community participation committee, and the local social security in health councils. Still, young people that participate in health processes do so on an individual basis and this has failed to translate into coordinated youth participation in the development of health policy.

Moreover, the statute also makes remarks on the relevance of addressing youth from all public policies in a trans-sectorial fashion. With regard to participation, as explained above, the law provides for formal participation

structures as a requirement for the formulation of public policies of youth. This statute is the first one that recognises all forms of youth participation. In contrast, the earlier Youth Act considered participation in terms of the existence of youth councils, neglecting the existence and significance of the wide range of youth expressions and actions calling for representation and inclusion. The statute identifies other types of youth organisation (including those that look for direct changes in communities and those that want to influence policies and politics) and gives them an important role in the platforms and in the youth assemblies.

Another important aspect about participation is Article 15, which states that youth must be included in the formulation of every single policy of youth, and also in those that affect them implicitly.

Comparison between the Youth Act and the Statute

It is important to note that both the Youth Act and Youth Citizenship Statute define youth by age, but both complement this approach by referring to youth as a social body and as citizens (see Table 9). Taking into account the paradigms and analytical models of youth in policy that were explored in the previous chapter, it is possible to say that both documents have an advanced approach to pubic policy since both see the role of youth as citizens and strategic actors for development. However, this view is stronger in the statute.

Both documents go beyond the traditional perception of youth as minors (emphasising their status as young adults rather than children), which directly contrasts with the definition and perception in some of the implicit youth policies referred to in the previous chapter. Further, both have participation of youth in the nation's development as one of their main purposes.

If a visualisation technique of the most repeated words of both laws is used (See Annexes), it is possible to see the key differences in the approach adopted in the document, and these will be seen more clearly in Table 9. The most commonly used words in the Youth Act are: national, training, programme and law; while the most used words in the statute are council, policy and right.

This shows that while the Youth Act was considered more a legal instrument (law) than an integrated policy, with the clear indication of the use

of programmes for its development, the statute was conceived as a youth policy itself, with a prominent vision for rights and a detailed explanation of the council's related issues.

The extensive use of the word national and infrequent use of the word local (or even territorial) is demonstrative of the centralised approach adopted within the Youth Act and its provisions. While in the statute, although the word national is repeated, the word local is also mentioned, which suggest that the statute adopted a less centralised approach.

Table 9
Comparison between Youth Act and Youth Citizenship Statute (key components)

Component	Youth Act	Youth Citizenship Statute
Focus	Associated with youth policies, plans and programmes' general guide, including their institutional framework.	Associated with institutional framework but more specific to youth citizenship, youth rights and youth public policies necessary for their welfare.
Young person	Identification related with age in the range of **14 and 26** years old.	Identification also related with age (14 and 28 years old) but taking into account the process of consolidating autonomy, and as part of a political community (citizenship).
Youth	**Social body** with a considerable influence on the present and the future of society. Juventudes: there is not a definition or recognition of this concept	**Population segment** that is socio-culturally constructed and referred to in regards to practices, relations, etc. Also a **vital time** where physical, moral and intellectual capacities are consolidating. **Juventudes** ('youths' in English): recognition of this term is very important for youth movements. It refers to the different ways youth live, depending on the behaviours or habits of the each population group.

Principles and approaches	Excludes approaches and principles for interpreting and applying the provisions set.	Sets four approaches (human rights, differential, human development and human security) and 18 principles (Article 3 and 4).
Organisational practices of youth	Gives importance to youth organisations as entities that have responsibility in youth policy, but does not define or characterise them.	Defines and describes three types: i) formally constituted, ii) not formally constituted (non-legal status but has legal recognition), iii) informal.
Youth citizenship	Recognises the need to ensure training and information to guarantee the exercise of youth citizenship but does not define or characterise this citizenship.	Defines it as the "condition of younger members of a democratic political community; involves the exercise of their rights and responsibilities. It has three dimensions: civil, social and public"
Youth rights	It mentions rights to leisure, education, culture, and development of their personality.	Indicates that young people are entitled to the rights recognised in the constitution, and international treaties.
Participation	Identifies participation as essential for young people to become agents of their development. Does not recognise scenarios outside the National Youth System.	Designated both as a principle for the implementation of law and policy for youth in general, and as a criterion for the exercise of the rights of young people. Recognises opportunities for participation outside officially institutionalised scenarios.
Youth policy	Does not define or characterise what should be a youth policy.	Defines then establishes principles and territorial jurisdictions for their adoption, as well as times and methods for their formulation.
National youth system	It consists of institutions, organisations, entities and individuals that do work with the youth and for youth.	In addition to institutions and individuals, is also is formed by processes, legal instruments, plans, programmes and projects that operationalise policies related to youth.

Youth councils	Collegiate bodies representing young people, which is the central part of the National System of Youth.	Mechanisms of participation, coordination, monitoring, and control of public management and dialogue to public institutions of each local authority in relation to territorial youth agendas.
Relation with decent life	Establishes a priority in reaching a dignified life by young people in condition of high vulnerability.	Dignity defined as "the right to a decent and secure life", indicates that "youth constitute the fundamental aim of actions by the state of well-being, through the elimination of any form of infringement of human rights"
Autonomy	Is recognised as part of the features of the comprehensive training that must be guaranteed. "Empowerment of youth to contribute to the creation of a pluralistic democratic society"	Established as the principle and purpose of the law, and defining component of youth. Understood as the ability to "develop, review, modify, and implement plans for life through independence in decision-making, self-determination in the forms of organisation, and the ability to express according to one's own needs and perspectives"

Regarding autonomy, the current Director of Colombia Joven recognises a contradiction between the recognition of this principle (in its purpose and composition in the statute), and the apparent dependence of international cooperation agencies that the youth movement has had (as it will be seen in next chapter) and could have in the future (Reyes, 2015).

Additionally, other apparent contradictions with the autonomy principle can be found in relation with the capacity of the youth councillors, who, as a result of the statute's provisions, are the only valid interlocutors of youth issues, reducing the possibility that other young leaders may interact directly with the government.

4.1.3 Implicit youth policies (sectorial policies that affect / impact on young people)

As explained in previous chapters, public policies in Colombia have had a tradition of being specifically related to discrete sectors (e.g. education, health, employment), rather than with the population group they are targeted towards. This is why it is important to analyse public policy instruments of different sectors that influence the development of Colombian youth.

Below are listed the most important youth focussed policies that were selected for the analysis. First, the Childhood and Adolescence Act will be covered, as it is a public policy instrument for youth that are legal minors. Then, other policies will be examined according to its sectorial area of origin, taking into account the central themes of this research.

4.1.4 Childhood and Adolescence Act

As mentioned in previous chapters, in Colombia's policies there is an overlap between policies that are aimed at adolescents and those that are aimed at youth. The most common example of this overlap is the Childhood and Adolescence Act that was established by law 1098 of 2006, after more than 15 years of failed attempts to modify the Minors Code from 1989.

The document adopts a rights-base approach. According to UNICEF (2007), "the mandatory approach to childhood and adolescence comes from human rights, from constitutional law, from social and fiscal policies, and no longer from its needs or irregular situations", on the basis of comprehensive protection according to the convention of children's rights. This represented a change in the view of adolescents as minors, as was mentioned in Chapter 2, to recognise them as equal human rights holders.

The Minors Code (1989) states that in regard to the protection of children and adolescents, responsibility is shared between the state (at all territorial levels), family and society. In its objective, it is stated that,

> "...this code establishes substantive and procedural rules for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, to guarantee the exercise of their rights and freedoms enshrined in international human

rights instruments in the constitution and the laws. Such security and protection shall be the duty of the family, society and the state."

(Congreso de la República, 2006)

The Code outlined the need for comprehensive protection for children and adolescents, and the importance of defending their rights, an "imperative that compels all people to ensure comprehensive and simultaneous satisfaction of all their human rights, which are universal, prevalent and interdependent".

It also indicates the necessary actions and measures required for the restoration of the rights of children and adolescents when they are violated, and outlines the authorities charged with the responsibility to address rights violations. These national authorities include national police, police for childhood and adolescence, family commissariats and family advocates (attached to CIFW[53]).

The Code is divided into two parts. The first includes the main provisions for comprehensive protection of children and adolescents. The second part establishes criminal liability for adolescents and special procedures for when children or adolescents are victims of crime.

The latter is key for Colombian legislation on adolescents. In fact, "the debate on juvenile criminal responsibility was the one that, for ten years, prevented Colombia from adequately complying with international human rights standards in childhood and adolescence"[54] (UNICEF, 2007). The act also establishes some guidelines for adolescents that are used or recruited by armed groups outside the law.

The Code makes no specific reference to specific minority groups; rather it refers to "indigenous" and "other ethnic groups". The Code starts by recognising minorities as a subject of rights, and states that the children and adolescents of those communities are protected by the national and inter-

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53. Colombian Institute of Family Welfare.

54. "Two classic postures polarized this debate: one that promoted trial teenagers over 15 as adults considering that juvenile crime is extremely serious, and a second that promoted that adolescents should not be considered criminally responsible for committing crimes because the state has not guaranteed them their rights" (UNICEF, 2007)

national system of rights. However, it clarifies that those rights are framed by their own internal regulation system.

Similarly, the Code states that the adolescents from any ethnic group will be judged by the rules and norms set by their communities as it is stated in the Article 246 from the Colombian constitution and international treaties, so long as the decision is not against their dignity. When the adolescent is outside of the community, the judging process will come from the adolescent system of penal responsibility.

4.1.5 Youth Policies in Education: Education Act

In the case of education, the national policies are based on the 1991 constitution and the General Education Act 115 of 1994, which have established the educational policy based on the ideal of the citizen and citizenship that those same norms project through the rights and duties attributed to them (MEN, p.3, 2001). In this case, the constitution states that education is a right of the individual and also a public service. However, Colombia's highest law of education does not explicitly mention youth in its provisions. It only indicates that education is compulsory between five and nine years, showing that Colombian law establishes the right to education and assumes the responsibility of ensuring the quality of service and its delivery to all Colombians without distinction.

In this context, the Colombian Federation of Educators - FECODE "promoted the development of a draft education law as a counterweight to the open educational plan developed by the national government, which was characteristic of the neoliberal ideology of that time, in that it focussed in the privatisation of education" (Garcés and Jaramillo, 2008, p. 176). This proposal was welcomed by the government and after many debates in the country became the education law.

One of the most important aspects introduced by the law is autonomy. In this sense, it seeks to achieve higher quality through the autonomy of educational institutions. Such autonomy is materialised in the trust placed in the educational communities to build their own Institutional Educational Projects (PEI) according to the needs of students, the community and the country. Furthermore, the construction of the PEI arise from debate,

research and participatory and cooperative planning in the communities (Garcés and Jaramillo, 2008).

Each primary and secondary educational establishment in Colombia is required to develop and implement an institutional educational project that determines the way it has decided to achieve the purposes of education as defined by law. This reveals that although there are clear lines of public policy on education from a national law, educational institutions have the power to determine what curriculum content to follow in order to achieve the holistic development of students.

The General Education Act, Article 1:

> *"The general rules governing the Public Service of Education serving a social function according to the needs and interests of individuals, family and society. It is based on the principles of the constitution of the right to education of all individuals, in the freedoms of teaching, learning, research and professorship, and in its character of public service."*

<div align="right">(Article 1, General Education Act)</div>

On the issue of participation, the General Education Act in Article 72 states that the Ministry of Education in coordination with local authorities should prepare the National Education Development Plan every ten years in order to: i) include the appropriate course of action to comply with the constitutional and legal mandates, ii) to guarantee the delivery of the of the education service. Through a participatory exercise and citizen mobilisation, where young Colombians, education actors, and other sectors of the country validated and prioritised issues to be discussed, the plan was consolidated. It is called the Decennial National Education Plan 2006-2016, and contains the general lines that guide the subject of education in the country.

According to the plan, the student is understood as a "citizen in full development of personality, respectful of the duties, rights, and cultural, ethnic and environmental diversity, who lives in peace and harmony with their fellow men and nature, capable of accessing scientific, technical, cultural, and artistic knowledge, and competent in his personal social and labour performance" (PNDE, p.20, 2007).

While the student is defined as a citizen, there is no mention made on the subject of age or a specific segment of the population. According to this line of argument, the only reference made on the issue of youth is presented in the section on challenges of education in Colombia, particularly in the area of goals and quality of education in the twenty-first century. As a macro objective, the plan aims "to achieve an articulated, coherent, and contextualised educational system at different levels of education and in the regions, allowing mobility and comprehensive formation of Colombian children and the Colombian youth in a democratic, peaceful, and globalised environment" (PNDE, p. 21, 2007).

The plan is defined as a social pact for the right to education. It contains a holistic view to develop education in the country as a mandatory activity for planning for all governments and educational institutions, and an instrument of social and political mobilisation around the defense of education as a fundamental right and a public good that serves a social function. Among its main purposes, the plan also aims to: strengthen education for peace, coexistence and citizenship; pedagogical renewal and the use of information and communication technologies; promote a culture based on research and knowledge; more and better investment in education to strengthen decentralisation; ensure equity, access, retention and quality; professional development, dignity and the formation of teachers and principals; and finally, transparency and accountability of the education system.

Public policies on education do not distinguish between population groups but it is understood that these are clearly focussed on young Colombians. While these are not explicit youth policies, in the case of Colombia it can be said that the legislative framework is quite extensive and it is a guarantor as to the right of education in the country.

From the constitution itself and the General Education Act, it is understood that the person or citizen who receives this public service is part of an education process that seeks to fulfil a social function to contribute to national development. For that reason, the Colombian youth – as the main beneficiary of these policies – are recognised as human and social capital with a fundamental role in the process of county-building.

4.1.6 Youth issues within health policy

Special mentions or provisions for youth in health policies are often lacking. For example, the policies that regulate the Colombian health system (Law 100/1993, Law 1122/2007, Law 1438/2011), up until now, did not make provisions for youth health, other than determining that young people aged over 18 years would not be covered under their parents' contributions unless they pursue higher education. Nonetheless, in June 2014, the re-elected President Santos signed a decree with Minister of Health to allow all young people up to the age of 25 to be covered under their parents' insurance plan, or other from other relative when parents are not present or do not have insurance. So, even though some important policies like sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and PDSP (from the Spanish acronym Ten-Year Public Health Plan) and others are still lacking special provisions for youth, the recently issued decree could be the grounds for moving forward.

A strength of the SRH policy is that it adopts a youth rights approach, however, it emphasises the importance of individual behaviour and improved health care provision, and underestimates the roles of family, school, and society in relation to the respect of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Without considering all the other actors involved in the sexual and reproductive lives of young people, the policy falls short in provisions to respect and protect their sexual and reproductive rights. It is important to note that the WHO and the Government of Colombia consider SRR as human rights and different youth organisations at the regional and international level have taken a leading role in advocating for those (ex. International Federation for Medical Students' Associations, Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, RedLac). The National Inter-sectorial Commission on SRR does make specific mention of these rights but fails to make clear linkages specifically to youth.

Ultimately, the policy talks about empowering youth in two ways: i) establishing more equitable relations between genders in order to promote autonomous and responsible decision-making by empowering women, ii) improvement of young peoples' knowledge of health risks, rights and responsibilities (as the 'user' of the healthcare services) when demanding healthcare.

There are a large number of health-related policies in Colombia, but the ones concerning the health system are of special consideration as they are the best documented and determine several aspects of youth health. The health system organises people by regimes, ranging from contributive, subsidized, and non-covered. The quality of the health care that an individual receives is dependent on the regime they belong to, which in turn depends on the financial status of the person or family. When analysing, in a superficial way, the health policies, we can see for instance that Law 1438 of 2011 (part of the structural adjustment reform series for the health system) does not once make explicit mention to youth. However, the health system states some inspiring principles that are important for analysing its orientation:

» **Equity**: it says that every person will have access to a package of services that are covered by the insurance. It does not clarify about the quality and quantity of those services that change according to the person's or family's income. Given the high rates of unemployment and informal employment amongst youth, they are disproportionally affected by the discrepancies in care that rich and poor have access to (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2011).

» **Equality**: it says that there should be equal access to the social security system, but the insurance system implicates that different regimes (social classes) have different health care access in terms of quality, quantity and even in time.

It is important to note that Law 1438 established that healthcare services had to be framed in the Primary Health Care (PHC) strategy in order to address the social determinants of health and achieve health equity. However, the law only created that mandate without making any other profound reforms to the health system structure and administration that would allow for a correct implementation of the policy. One of the many articles Vega, with other authors, have published regarding the attempts of implementation of healthcare services under the PHC strategy framework, show the big challenges in doing so with the current unreformed, market-based health system. It does not provide available and stable financial resources and hiders the consistent inclusion of well-trained and motivated human resources for health (Vega R., Hernández J &Mosquera P.A., 2012).

After Law 1438, the congress issued a statutory law that has made progress in the protection of health. This law, which is not yet enforced, establishes for the first time since the constitution of 1991, that health is a fundamental right. This statutory law makes great progress in the way that people can hold the government and healthcare providers accountable for their actions and omissions. Yet, after the progress made by the issue of the statutory law, the government has been leading another attempt to reform the health system which follows the line of the structural adjustment reforms. This attempt has been blocked (temporarily) by civil society where healthcare professionals, students and academia played a key role. As it is, Law 1438 is still current and so, PHC-based healthcare services remain applicable to the Colombian context and even though the strategy does not mention youth specifically, it constitutes a great strategy for bridging the community (youth included as a key group) to the health system in a transparent, inclusive and participatory way.

Furthermore, the health system has had significant flaws in regards to ensuring access to healthcare services, as well as in the institutional bodies that monitor the actions of the health system actors. As it is insurance-based, the health system has a Mandatory Health Plan (in Spanish: Plan Obligatorio de Salud – POS), which is a 'plan of benefits' equal to the subsidised and contributive regimes. The Mandatory Health Plan includes some healthcare services (i.e. medications, procedures, medical appointments) for affiliated individuals. There have been thousands of legal complaints, some of them affecting adolescents, arguing denial of both covered and non-covered healthcare services that ultimately threaten the lives of Colombians (Defensoría del pueblo, 2012). Despite a continuous increase in the number of legal complaints, the health system continues to operate under the same principles and to deny access to healthcare. Although the negative impact for young people, derived from the limited coverage, can be predicted, there are no documents measuring this impact that could be found.

Primary Health Care, as conceived in 1978, makes reference to a political strategy that aims to strengthen health systems and make them accessible for all so they can achieve the best possible health status. Even though the Law 1438 addresses some social determinants of health, like education and labour, and leads to the creation of an inter-sectorial commission for public

health (officially established in May 2014 by means of presidential decree), it does not challenge the health system model for the rightful implementation of the strategy, which could counters the existing social and health inequities. It is important then, in order to implement Primary Health Care, that health is conceived as a human fundamental right and that regulations of market in the health system are put into force.

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge the potential economic benefits from investing in adolescent health that result from better life habits, less money spent on curing medical conditions that can be prevented, and reduction in non-communicable diseases and premature deaths. Let alone the argument that investing in youth and adolescent health also responds to public health and human rights issues (WHO, 2009), given that the country, and the world, currently has the largest proportion of adolescents and youth that it has ever had in the past. Furthermore, a new reform for the health system that follows the same line of the current model and aims to fix the financial crisis, was presented last year and failed to pass in the congress due to enormous discontent from the civil society. Mainly healthcare students, academic groups and healthcare professionals, "white coats" blocked the approval of this bill. Nevertheless, a civil society-inspired bill for a health system model reform, on the basis of universality and equity, and supported by some congress persons, was also blocked in congress.

A positive aspect of the progress made by the last two cited policies is that the PDSP addresses youth for different public health challenges and agendas. The mechanisms of design and formulation of this plan were innovative in the sense that it used telecommunication tools to promote participation at all levels of society. Youth is mentioned in the specific plans and goals of mental health and non-communicable diseases, as well as in the need for inter-sectorial action to health.

Besides, the PDSD makes great progress in its priority component of sexuality and rights where it provides guidelines for actions in and between sectors that aim to promote and protect the SRR. It is interesting that the plan clearly states the need for collaboration between the health and education sector (inserted in the sections "youth-friendly healthcare services" and "education programme for sexuality and construction of citizenship"), in order to make sexual education a priority for all sectors of society, specifying the secular approach of this education strategy. It is also important

to note that the strategies mention specifically youth, the LGBT community, and those that have been victims of the armed conflict.

In regards to the specifics for children, adolescence and youth, the plan makes progress especially in how it understands the concept of health and rights and the need for inter-sectorial actions and policies. Something that still requires further attention is the fact that the components and strategies are built from the need to address "vulnerability in childhood and adolescence" (section 9.13 of the plan). Finally, although the aims and strategies are ambitious, the goals that are proposed continue to be timid in terms that it does not aim for universality.

Recognising the progress of this PDSP, and the expected impact on young people, it is also worthwhile to mention that the plan has some flaws that will hinder its successful implementation and sustainability, according to what Dr. Juan Carlos Eslava has said during an interview (Rodríguez, 2013).

First, the plan was preceded by a National Public Health Plan 2007-2010, but the previous one was not appropriately evaluated, and did not include appropriate participation from society, so the PDSP will be carried out without consideration of the previous challenges, lessons and opportunities. Second, it does not contain any clear or strong guidelines for the improvement of the information system for health, which needs to be re-organised and unified. Third, the plan does not seem to be framed thoroughly in the context of the health system reform, which is a barrier for implementation. Fourth, it lacks articulation concept-wise between components and goals, which makes operationalisation more difficult. Lastly, there is a lack of attention in the training of human resources for health.

Still, despite all the provisions in the plan for both SRR and the SRH services, the goals that it sets for 2022 do not aim for universality. A note of interest is that the same situation has been evident at the international level in regards to the sub-goals proposed by the WHO for universal health coverage, in the framework of the Post-2015 process.

4.1.7 Youth policies in participation

As mentioned before, the current explicit policy about youth participation is the National Statute of Youth Citizenship. However, there are other laws and mechanisms that have implicitly addressed the question of participation of different population groups, with objectives such as accountability, policy influence, or consultation.

Historically, the first example goes back to Belisario Betancourt's government and his constitutional reform in 1986. As a result of this reform, the right to vote was extended. Initially citizens older than 18 years could vote for presidential elections only, and as a result of these reforms, citizens could also elect their municipal mayors.

In the same year, congress passed Bill Number 11 of 1986, which regulated the municipal and departmental government. This significant development sought to promote community participation in three ways: 1) through the elections of Juntas de Acción Local (the local council of each locality that emerged after the municipalities territorial division), 2) by providing opportunity for citizens to participate in the public management of contracts or business agreements, 3) by creating popular consultations.

In 1991, the new constitution brought new mechanisms of participation to Colombia such as the plebiscite, referendum, popular consultation (extended to the national scope), cabildo abierto, (an open assembly of citizens with political rights that substitutes the representative assemblies)[55], legislative initiative, and revocation of mandate. All of these mechanisms were applied for citizens 18 years or older and were regulated with the Law of Participation in 1994. Since then, other laws have been issued. There are "about 30 laws that have created mechanisms of participation" (Velázquez, 2003) at the national and territorial level, creating councils, committees, advisory boards, and others.

In line with trends across Latin America, and as a result of a meeting of political parties and movements that was held in 2010 in Ecuador, multi-party youth groups were established in 2014. Through these multi-party youth groups, youth groups of political parties committed to developing

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55. Gómez, F (2004), Constitución Política de Colombia Anotada. Leyer, Bogotá.

"a young, transformative political culture" (Colombia Joven, 2014). These youth groups aim to "plan, implement, and evaluate actions and/or strategies that promote and strengthen youth structures within political parties and movements, as well as providing training, to influence the decision-making of the nation when it is related to youth".

In October 2014, there were five multi-party groups: one national that works in Bogotá, and five departmental, that work in Santarder, Tolima, Magdalena, Valle del Cauca and Cauca (Colombia Joven, 2014).

The most recent development in relation to youth participation is the creation of a National Congress Temporal Commission for Youth in the national congress, which was created in August 2014 as part of the Youth Day celebration. This initiative originated from the multi-party youth group, with the support of Colombia Joven and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and also involved 22 congress persons: 18 younger than 35 years[56] and 5 who were older than 35 but interested in youth issues[57]. 13 political parties participate in the group, including two from indigenous communities and one from an Afro-descendant community (Colombia Joven, 2014).

4.2 Policy implementation

According to Russell and Solórzano (2001), there are different elements and actors that countries should consider when developing and implementing a youth policy:

» **Government documents**: "principal policies and/or laws established to meet comprehensive youth development objectives".

» **The agency/agencies formulating and/or implementing the policy**: sector or inter-sectorial groups, noting that, "the implementing entity is not necessarily the one that formulated the policy".

....

56. The original idea was to have young congress persons, but since there are not many in the age range of the statute (14-28 years), it was decided to target those who are 35 or less, „considering that to run for the House of Representatives, it is required to have completed 25 years of age and for the Senate, 30 years of age" (Colombia Joven, 2004).

57. This information was provided to the research team by Dionisio Lizarazo, Secretary of the National Congress Temporal Commission for Youth, in an informal talk.

» **The intended youth development objective (target):** "addresses a set of comprehensive objectives and may involve sectors that are concerned with the development of policies in different sectors".

Moreover, a government's commitment to youth policy can fall into four categories:

1. Non-existent explicit youth policy nor explicit sectorial policies for youth. There is neither a Ministry of Youth nor a formal inter-sectorial entity, but there are implicit laws, regulations and policies that pertain to youth in different sectors. The relation between the entities and the target is implicit, indirect, in both youth policy and sectorial policies.

2. Non-existent explicit youth policy nor explicit sectorial policies for youth, but there is a Ministry of Youth. The relation between the entities and the target is explicit for youth policy and implicit for sectorial policies.

3. There is an explicit youth policy as well as explicit and implicit sectorial policies for youth, and there also exists an inter-sectorial entity.

4. There are explicit sectorial policies for youth, developed by the sectorial Ministry, but there is no explicit youth policy or Ministry of Youth.

4.2.1 Explicit youth policies

This part of the chapter will include a short analysis of the first two variables of the youth policy implementation models mentioned above – government documents and participating agencies. The subsequent section will discuss the intended target of public polices affecting youth.

Government documents

As could be seen in the first part of the chapter, there are several policy documents on youth, both explicit and implicit. Explicit policies have been historically prioritised and have provided more relevance to laws for technical

policy instruments, following the country's legalistic tradition[58] according to which legal and judicial language has had an important weight in social interactions.

The real impact of the CONPES documents is not easy to measure due to a lack of associated indicators that would allow for monitoring and evaluation. "Thousands of CONPES documents were issued, however, most of these went unheeded, were associated with a poor level of implementation, and where the objectives that were achieved faced significant delays. In many cases [these documents] have become a kind of symbolic exercise of power without any of the recommendations being realised" (Un CONPES no se le niega a nadie, 2014). The popular joke, "A CONPES is not denied to anyone" captures the seeming insignificance of these documents.

The CONPES documents related to youth are no exception to this trend. They do not have an impact on government budgets, and have been described as "presenting a universe of expectations rather than a course of concrete action" (Un CONPES no se le niega a nadie, 2014). This is evident in the lack of indicators and the reliance on non-mandatory recommendations. Cecilia López, a former Director of the National Department of Planning (the institution in charge of CONPES' development), has said that these documents now are a 'death letter' to any policy proposal (Planeación Nacional dejó de planear por repartir las regalías, 2013).

Nevertheless, these documents "represented a breakthrough in efforts to establish youth as a subject of social policy and highlight its importance" (Colombia Joven, 2004). This appears to be their main impact and should not be underestimated. According to Colombia Joven (2004), these docu-

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58. "It is understood that, in a legalist tradition, the weight that historically legal legalities and judicial language have had in social interactions, whether violent or not, between inhabitants of the country. This tradition paradoxically combines respect for the legal formalities with social practices that repeatedly breached rules on a large scale, often involving the manipulation of institutions and the judicial language with no legal purposes. Legalism has sometimes served as a form of ideological concealment of intolerable exclusions and impunity, effective in diverting social demands and struggles of their truly transformative potentials. However despite these tensions, the legalistic tradition is also an active member of the Colombian democracy, and in contrast to other Latin American countries, has prevented warlords and authoritarianism" (Centro de memoria histórica memoriahistórica, 2013).

ments were "focussed on the wording of the programmes each administration had included in their development plans".

In terms of other documents, prior to 2000, Colombia did not have a national youth policy framework, but rather, "the Youth Act was developed in lieu of a national policy for youth development. Commonly, a law is viewed as an instrument to support a policy, and in the absence of a policy framework, implementation becomes difficult" (Russell and Solorzáno, 2001).

However, from 2000, a set of technical documents were published in order to give a more detailed framework for youth policies, especially to guide the territories (municipalities, districts and departments) in the development of their own policies. In order to regulate the establishment and operation of youth councils across the country, in 2000, National Decree 089 was enacted. The Youth Citizenship Statute took many of these indicators, which were developed in the context of the changes it made to the Youth Act.

As its name suggests, the document National Youth Policy: Foundations for Youth Ten-Year Plan 2005-2015 focussed on the foundations of a plan. The document indicates that "the translation of the strategic priorities into specific objectives, courses of action, activities, measurement indicators, and resources required corresponds to a Youth Ten-Year Plan (2005-2015). For now, a brief justification is made and some guidelines for each strategic area are proposed" (Colombia Joven, 2004).

The three strategic lines that the document established were general announcements with vague proposals, which according to Hernández (2006) indicates a "lack of government commitment to ensure young people rights". Although the Foundations document was useful, nearly 10 years later, the process has failed to result in the development of a ten-year plan for youth.

The Youth Act failed to mention important topics for youth such as interpersonal violence, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health. This absence is particularly notable given that the highest causes of mortality in Colombian adolescents are interpersonal violence, road-traffic incidents and suicides (WHO, 2014). It is also important to consider that on average, people in Colombia begin drug use at the age of 13 (Observatorio de Drogas de Colombia, 2011). Although the time gap between the Youth Act and the

WHO report is large, there is evidence that the scenario for youth mortality was not significantly different by the end of the last century (Franco, 2003).

Although the act, as a statutory law, is not supposed to address specific issues, it fails to acknowledge some key factors that affect outcomes for young people, such as promotion of peaceful co-existence, comprehensive sexuality education, or the promotion of mental health. Furthermore, it should have given provisions for sectors to address youth issues in a coordinated trans-sectorial fashion, but it failed to do so. The act only mentions that inter-sectorial action will be promoted, and was only addressed three years later with the creation of the Presidential Programme "Colombia Joven", which itself has failed to set a technical and political agenda to address youth with a crosscutting approach. It was not until late 2013 that a youth inter-sectorial committee met for the first time.

On the other hand, in terms of youth social participation, the focus of the Youth Act was limited to the exercise of living peacefully in groups, dialogue and solidarity as the way of projecting a renewed capacity for culture and the country's development.

Similarly, the law states the creation of an institution called "defensoría" for youth, which aims to defend youth rights. But the law was not accompanied with strategies to effectively promote the guarantee of their rights. Additionally, it is important to emphasise that issues such as mental health, non-communicable diseases, abortion, among others, are not even mentioned in the law.

According to Lizarazo (2014), the act was a law "of good intentions that had difficulties in its implementation"[59]. The Youth Act stated responsibilities for the territorial levels towards the creation of public policies of youth, and the authority that was supposed to support this processes was Colombia Joven. However, as has been stated earlier, Colombia Joven had neither the appropriate technical nor budgetary resources.

Furthermore, the Youth Act seemed to understand youth issues solely in terms of participation. The text mainly talks about participation, leaving few articles to regulate healthcare, education, recreation and other topics

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[59]. Interview with Dionisio Lizarazo from JuventudES Colombia.

like security or employment. There was not a clear line of action to establish holistic public policies for youth[60].

It is surprising that even the base document for the year plan, enacted in 2004, states that given the difficulty of its regulation and progress in its implementation, the Youth Act should be reformed. Reform was completed in 2013, more than 10 years later, however according to Colombia Joven (2004):

> *"The law has been regulated in terms of the youth councils, the Ombudsman, the Youth Card and the agricultural credits. However, much of its content is irrelevant for reasons such as the disappearance of the national co-financing and incongruity with territorial jurisdiction and budget availability, which make it impossible to extend the programme nationwide."*

(Colombia Joven, 2004)

In addition to the above, the constitutional court in 2008 reviewed the Youth Act and found that the law had been improperly approved. As it was about fundamental rights, the bill should have gone to the congress as a National Statute[61], rather than as an ordinary law. This, plus all of the weaknesses of Youth Act's implementation, motivated the youth movement towards the proclamation of a new bill.

It is too early to draw any conclusions about the implementation of the Youth Citizenship Statute. Nevertheless, two important issues related with the process of adoption the statute must be mentioned. First, the statute places responsibility for the development of youth policies at a territorial level, yet many of the municipalities and departments are ill prepared for this role.

Second, the process of its adoption was too long, and from the beginning the statute has presented inconsistencies that have created implementation problems in all the country. Article 52 states: "the election of the

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60. Gobernación de Antioquia (2007), Juventud Colombiana: con ley o sin ley. Medellín.

61. The national constitution mentions in its Article No. 152 to types of law: Ordinary and National Statute. A national statute comes with a due diligence that has to be accomplished when the law is about some topics, in this case three, fundamental rights and duties, the organisation and political parties regimes, the electoral function, and the institutions and citizen participation.

youth councils in all municipalities, districts and localities of the country, will take place the last Friday of October 2012 and will take office on 1 January 2013, and thereafter such election held every four years, and in the same fashion, previously established dates will be made". However, only on the 29th October 2012 did the constitutional court declare the statute constitutional, which was a necessary requirement for the statute to take effect.

Taking into account that for the "last Friday of October 2012", the country did not have a clear path for the municipal council elections, the Comptroller General of the Republic issued a warning, requesting that governors and mayors refrain from proceeding with the youth council elections. Until now, the municipal, district and local youth councils have not been elected.

This situation alters the implementation of many of the provisions contained in the statute as it ties the election of departmental and the national youth councils, as well as the enactment of public policies, to the creation of municipal youth councils. These issues will be explored further in next chapter.

Agencies

According to CEPAL and OIJ (2004), in Ibero-American countries there are various types of bodies responsible for youth affairs: ministries, vice-ministries, departments or commissions at a ministerial level, institutes, departments, boards, committees or presidential programmes (the last, only in the case of Colombia). "These institutions can perform at national, provincial or local (municipal or departmental), according to their jurisdiction" (CEPAL y OIJ, 2004).

The bodies that are responsible for youth in the region are part of different entities, which may indicate the general view of youth development in each country. Thus, they can be part of ministries such as education, development, culture, planning, social welfare, work or sports (CEPAL y OIJ, 2004).

Additionally, the roles played by government agencies of youth can be of four types (CEPAL y OIJ, 2004): rectory (development of state plans), execution (capacity and possession of resources to engage directly in programme implementation), coordination (for youth policies implemented out of other administrative bodies) and evaluation.

Table 10

Youth agencies in Colombia 1990-2013

Year	Name	Dependency	Document associated	Institutional role
1990	Presdential Chancellorship for Youth, Women, and Family	Presidency	Decree number 1878	**
1994	Vice-Ministry of Youth	Ministry of Education	Decree number 1953	Design and coordination
2000	Presidential Programme for the National System of Youth 'Colombia Joven'	Administrative Department of Presidency	Decree number 822	Design and coordination
2006	Presidential Programme for the National System of Youth 'Colombia Joven'	Vice-Presidency office	Decree number 1984*	Design and coordination
2013	Presidential Programme for the National System of Youth 'Colombia Joven'	Administrative Department of the Presidency	Decree number 1919	Design and coordination

* This decree only changes the entity to which *Colombia Joven* subscribes, from the Presidency to the Vice-Presidency. ** It was not possible to consult the contents of the decree.

Although different types of organisations – with different capacities and institutional statuses – have existed, in reality Colombia has had two governmental agencies that have been exclusively in responsible for youth policy: the Vice-Ministery of Youth and the Presidential Programme for the National System of Youth 'Colombia Joven', whose main institutional role had been national youth policy design and coordination, as can be seen in Table 10.

During last ten years, the positioning of governmental institutions responsible for youth, within the wider system of government, shifted from a vice-ministry to a presidential programme and then back to a vice-presidential programme.

With the Youth Citizenship Statute, Colombia Joven goes back to being a programme of the presidency. It is important to note that the statute does

not mention the existence of Colombia Joven or other specific institutions related with yout; it just says that the government must have an entity to serve as rector of the national system of youth.

Taking into account the weaknesses of Colombia Joven when implementing the Youth Act of 1997 and the numerous attempts to establish a national public policy, youth organisations identified the necessity of having more autonomous bodies in charge of youth issues. Until now, Colombia Joven has been the only national programme dedicated to youth, and it has neither budgetary nor administrative autonomy.

In the first draft of the National Statute of Youth Citizenship, Chapter Five included provisions for the creation of a National Administrative Unit of Youth and Administrative Units in each of the territories. According to the rule of law in Colombia, the denomination of "Administrative Unit" means a public entity with its own annual budget and autonomy. This development could have alleviated some of the problems that have faced Colombia Joven for a number of years. However, while the bill was being discussed, the constitutional court declared Chapter Five as unconstitutional and blocked the proposals. Hence, today Colombia Joven remains the only public entity specifically in charge of youth issues.

Andres Santiago from JuventudEs Colombia confirmed that "during the congress' discussions, the government committed to establishing a different institution specifically for youth policy". This commitment was not reflected within the statute and as a result, the institutions have not been created.

According to recent report, Colombia Joven has accompanied 15 territorial entities in conducting social policy councils. They have also has provided technical assistance to 11 departments that needed to develop organisational youth structures (as mandated the statute) and 105 in the formulation of its public policy. It has also provided technical assistance to 14 youth departmental councils to "strengthen their skills and facilitate their integration into the political process" (Colombia Joven, 2014). In the next chapter, we will analyse how this processes have been seen in the municipalities and departments.

Finally in 2013, 59% of the departments have an office responsible for the issue of youth, improving the condition of 2008 where the percentage

barely reached 40% (Colombia Joven, 2013). It is noteworthy that in 2013, these offices mostly depended on the social sector, showing a change in relationship compared to 2008, when they were associated mainly with the heads of education and general government (Colombia Joven, 2013). The services provided by the departmental youth offices are information services, technical assistance, and support the design of policies, plans and municipal projects (Colombia Joven, 2013).

4.2.2 Implicit youth policies

> *"Generally, they are policies related to specific programmes that restrict the youth to a particular category as a student, associated of specific practices (ex. drugs) or a prevalent subject of morbidity (...) Transversal youth policies developed mainly by sectorial public agencies (...) whose actions are far reaching, as education policies, health and employment. However, if they include actions aimed at young people, they include a bias; they are designed from the sector and not from the subject of the policies."*

> (Bernales Ballesteros, 2001. Quoted by CEPAL y OIJ, 2004)

In addition to this sector-bias, another problem that arises is that youth programmes originating from sectors are often focussed on adolescents and children as a homogenous group and fail to "meet the heterogeneous needs of youth population" (CEPAL y OIJ, 2004).

In regards to Colombia's implicit youth policies, CEPAL and OIJ (2004) indicate that not only do a wide variety of youth-orientated programmes and projects exist, but that in comparison with the rest of the region, "Colombia seems to be the country with the highest number of integrated policies for special populations and minorities" (CEPAL y OIJ, 2004).

It is necessary to mention that although we have recognised the importance of each government's Development Plans, reviewing each national development plan is beyond the remit of this research. Nevertheless, we

reviewed the concept notes that the National Council of Planning (NCP)[62] produced in relation to the 2006-2009 plans and the 2010-2014 plans[63].

In relation with the National Development Plan of Alvaro Uribe's second mandate (2006-2010), the concept note created by the NCP indicated that the plan did not have a comprehensive approach to the issue of childhood and adolescence and that "although the Development Plan addresses transversely the population approach, a rights perspective is not visible, and it does not have clear goals to reach" (Consejo Nacional de Planeación, 2007).

Additionally, the NCP stated that "the disconnection between youth, childhood, and adolescent policies creates confusion for building indicators for municipal planning instruments", and argues that "it is required to advance an institutional strategy for the visibility of youth as a strategic sector for the country's development" (Consejo Nacional de Planeación, 2007).

In relation to the "transversal action" for youth issues, the NCP stated that "the chapter of the transversal dimensions limits its intention just to mention the purposes of Colombia Joven in strengthening the National System of Youth and the implementation of the National Information System" (Consejo Nacional de Planeación, 2007).

In the general, recommendations of the council included, inter alia, the need to institutionally strengthen youth councils, create regional youth programmes, and improve the relevance of secondary education and access to higher education (Consejo Nacional de Planeación, 2007).

In regards to the National Development Plan of Juan Manuel Santos' first mandate (2010-2014), the NCP did not conduct a deep analysis on youth issues, nor is youth policy mentioned, or an analysis of its crosscutting dimension. The NCP made reference to young people in relation to access to

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62. The National Council of Planning (NCP) was created by 1991 constitution as a "space for participation of civil society to contribute to the construction of public policy, and the development, monitoring and evaluation of the development plans" (Article 340). The NCP is composed of representatives of local authorities and the economic, social, environmental, community and cultural sectors. It has a consultative status.

63. It was not possible to obtain the concepts made for previous plans.

work and education, and celebrated the focus that the plan placed around youth with disabilities.

The NCP mentioned its concern regarding the "silence on the financial crisis in public higher education" and believes that the "plan does not deal in the relevant form of media education" (Consejo Nacional de Planeación, 2010). The NCP indicated and recommended that the government involve "networks of women, ethnic groups, youth groups and children who have worked in an articulated manner on local or regional initiatives to actively participate in the achievement of the plan's objectives" (Consejo Nacional de Planeación, 2010).

Education

The country has made significant progress in education, especially in the rate of student enrolment that has grown over the territory, as shown by the 2012 results of the indicators of the Ten-Year National Education Plan:

Table 11

General education data, Colombia. 2008-2012

| Indicator | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Progress expected for 2012 |
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	
Indicator 1 Percentage of children aged 0 to 5 years with access and retention in early childhood education programmes (100% of early childhood)	N/A	N/A	35.8	42.4	58.2	56

Indicator 2	64.1	64.3	84.7	82.5	100	83
Percentage of students in preschool, elementary and high school of the official sector with access and remain in education tuition-free (100% of tuition)						
Indicator 3	11.7	11.6	11.5	10.6	18.8	56
Percentage of elementary and secondary students with full-time enrolment						

Source: PNDE, informe 2013 de la medición de los indicadores del PNDE 2006-2016.

One of the main reasons for the growth in coverage is that education is provided for free to all students enrolled in the state educational institutions between kindergarten and grade eleven. This universal access was mandated by Decree 4807 of 2011 from the Ministry of National Education. However despite this success, Colombia's public schools have been unable to provide full-time enrolment for the vast majority of young people; in 2012, only 18.8% of elementary and secondary school-aged students were enrolled full-time, despite a national target of 56%.

In order to meet the high levels of demand for education, schools in the public sector usually have two or three sessions over a 24-hour period (one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and one in the night for adult learners). Different students and teachers attend each session, meaning that the student only attends for part of the day. In comparison to students from private schools – who usually study all morning and part of the afternoon – those who attend to the public sector schools are significantly disadvantaged by the reduced number of teaching hours they receive.

Therefore, despite the advances that have been made in terms of coverage and attendance, the quality of education and the quantity of contact hours students have with teachers, remain major challenges for the Colombia. The performance of Colombian students, both in national and international assessments, has shown that Colombia has the task of improving the

quality of education. The need to promote policies that keep young people in the educational system to a secondary level (as a requirement for graduation) persists. If achieved, youth would have better opportunities to access higher education in the country.

The Colombian government has recognised and prioritised the importance of quality education in order for young people to be highly competent in their life and of benefit to the country. As a result, it has adopted four strategies at the centre of the education policy: "(i) strengthen the quality assurance system of education at all levels, (ii) provide professional development for teachers and principals, (iii) implement programmes to develop the skills of students, (iv) promote policy evaluation" (World Bank Colombia, p. 17, 2008).

Colombia has participated three times in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests led internationally by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The test focuses on comparisons regarding the performance of 15 year old students in three specific areas: reading, mathematics, and science.

The results of the tests performed in 2012 reflect the poor performance of Latin American students in all the areas tested. The scores for countries in the region are below the OECD average.

Table 12
PISA results, 2012

	Mathematics	Reading	Science
OECD Average	494	496	501
Chile	423	441	445
Mexico	413	424	415
Uruguay	409	411	416
Costa Rica	407	441	429
Brazil	391	410	405
Argentina	388	396	406

Colombia	376	403	399
Peru	368	384	373

Source: Pisa 2012

Within Latin America, the best performing countries are Chile (ranked 51st), Mexico (53rd), Uruguay (55th) and Argentina (59th) out of 65 participating countries. Colombia is ranked 62nd, and Peru is the only Latin American country ranked lower:

> *"In math, the score of Colombia (376) is lower than those obtained by 61 countries and is not statistically different from those observed in countries that scored the three lowest scores: Qatar, Indonesia and Peru. In science, the score of Colombia (399) is higher than these three countries, but lower than those observed in 57 countries and without statistical differences with those of Argentina, Brazil, Tunisia and Albania. In reading, the score of Colombia (403) is lower than those of 53 countries, similar to the scores of seven countries (Uruguay, Brazil, Tunisia, Jordan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Argentina) and higher than those of Albania, Kazakhstan, Qatar and Peru."*

<div align="right">(ICFES, Colombia en PISA 2012, pp.7-8, 2013)</div>

The same executive summary prepared by ICFES (Colombian Institute for Educational Evaluation) on the results PISA in 2012 highlighted that for mathematics, 74% of Colombian students are below level 2 and 18% at level 2. This means that only "two out of ten students can have an integral comprehension of the results of mathematical problems or can employ basic algorithms, formulas, procedures, or conventions to solve problems with whole numbers, and interpret and recognise situations in contexts which require a direct inference" (p.8). Moreover, only three out of a thousand managed to reach levels 5 and 6, the level at which a student is considered to have advanced mathematical thinking and reasoning. (ICFES, 2013)

In terms of reading, only three in a thousand students have reached levels 5 and 6 — levels that are associated with a high and detailed understanding of texts and an ability to undertake a critical evaluation of a text. Finally, in the area of science, the percentage of students below level 2 was

over 50% in Colombia. In addition, 31% have obtained level 2 but no higher, showing skills that enable them to participate in situations related to life and technology. Only one out of a thousand students obtained levels 5 or 6 (ICFES, 2013).

As general conclusion on the PISA results, it is possible to observe that the "performance of the Colombian students is insufficient to meet the challenges posed by modern societies, particularly those associated with the resolution of unexpected problems, and non-routine and unfamiliar contexts" (ICFES, 2013, p.18). Despite the advances in universal education provision in Colombia, in order to achieve quality and equity in the education system, and to develop all the skills and competences of Colombian youth, a long-term vision on public policy is necessary. This needs to be related to improving teaching practices, the condition of schools, and also extending school hours for the students.

According to Quality of Basic and Secondary Education in Colombia: Analysis and Proposals (Barrera et al., 2012, p.3), there are four conclusions of vital importance when it comes to describing the status of coverage and quality of primary and secondary education in Colombia:

» Coverage has increased significantly in the country, however further progress is needed to address this concern.
» Learning indicators show that internationally Colombian students have, on average, lower levels of learning compared with other countries.
» Quality indicators from a national level suggest the existence of significant differences in the quality of education within the country.
» It is evident that there is high inequality in the hours of education received by Colombian students – a factor that can be correlated to the quality of education they are receiving and their level of learning.

The possibility of achieving a decent life for young people tends to decrease with low quality of primary and secondary education. Vocational education in the country remains an important option for many young people in the country. The SENA (National Training Service) and the education institutions for work and human development promote productive activities that contribute to the social, technological and economic development of the country. This type of education is led by SENA, which "provides a wide

range of training programmes fee-free to learners, and enrols millions of people every year, though the vast majority are not in tertiary degree programmes" (OECD, 2012, p.33). The value of this institution for the country is significant because it is the major provider of training services responsible for 55% the students enrolled in technological and technical studies (OECD, 2012).

In terms of coverage, education for work and human development results in some 1,200,000 students being trained annually. This education is seeking to address the high need for human capital in the productive sector. The Ministry of Education developed the system of quality control for this training through the creation and implementation of norms and programmes in order to regulate these institutions in the country (Observatorio de la Universidad Colombiana, 2013).

In 2012, 310,229 titles of higher education were awarded at all formation levels and 60,424 certificates of education for work and human development were also awarded. These numbers represent a total of 370,653 degrees in tertiary education in Colombia (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2013). According to the Ministry of Education, of the 310,229 higher education graduates, 49% obtained their degree in a public institution of higher education, while 51% did so in a private institution. Also in the period 2010 - 2012, the number of master's graduates increased by 49%, from 5,932 to 8,822. A similar situation was observed in doctorates, which increased in 47% from 211 to 310 (Observatorio Laboral para la Educación, 2013).

According to the same observatory, in 2012, "78.7% of higher education graduates were working in the formal sector, making contributions to the social security system, and 3.1% continues to study a programme in higher education (...) Meanwhile, 29% of new certificates of education for work and human development were linked formally to a sector of the economy, and 8.4% of students continue their transition to a programme of higher education" (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2013, p. 14-15).

The Ministry of Education considers these statistics to provide clear evidence that its policies are successful at ensuring access to education, and the transition of young people from the education system to the labour market. However, as is well known in Colombia, graduation is no longer synonymous with gaining employment. The report, Labour Insertion of Young

Professionals (EL País, 14/04/2013), shows that it takes over a year for at least 30% of recent graduates to enter the labour market as a professional, and graduates from social and human sciences are the most affected.

The situation is concerning, given that the parents of young people or young people themselves often take on huge debts in order to finish college. This challenge is further compounded by the fact that, if a young person is able to access formal employment, he or she must typically accept lower payment because of their lack of experience, and are subject to insecure employment practices such as fixed-term or temporary contracts. The marked difference between investment in higher education and the rate of return in the labour market has led many young people to question whether worth pursuing a career in higher education (Osorio, Sánchez, 2013, 14th April).

Health

Following Colombia's adoption of the policies imposed through the Washington Consensus, the Colombian health system was subject to important structural adjustment reforms – similar to those applied to the education system (Williamson, 2004). These reforms were characterised by a conception of a young person not as a political subject, but as a key actor for economic development of the country that was now open to the globalised market, giving them extra responsibilities in the political agenda. These principles were clearly present in Samper's Development Plan 1994-1998, as well as in the way public policies for sexual and reproductive health and youth were being constructed (Estrada y Motta, 1996; Morales, 2010). In this plan, the responsibility of youth fell to the Vice-Ministry of Youth (under the Ministry of Education), which focuses mainly on education and labour.

From this, the guarantee of fundamental rights, such as health, education and participation, were crudely interpreted as relating to the delivery of services – measured by econometric and efficiency indicators. These evaluations often ignored complementary, qualitative assessments of the effective guarantee of rights, as well of an appropriate response to people's needs.

Youth and sexuality were addressed by Gaviria's administration (1990-1994) when he opened the Presidential Chancellorship for Youth, Women and Family (CJMF in Spanish). CJMF, which was established by the presi-

dent and dependent on the Presidency, led and initiated efforts for the first project of sexual and reproductive health (PNES, 1993). The emphasis of the chancellorship was to fund and execute projects with a focus on vulnerable and poor youth groups and families in order to help them rise out of poverty and be inserted in to the labour market (Morales, 2010).

One of the great difficulties encountered by the chancellorship was that they ignored studies carried out by Profamilia (a private institution in charge of managing sexual and reproductive issues with the population that receives funding from the government), regarding increasing numbers of youth pregnancies and of maternal mortality related to clandestine abortions, This critical topic was not touched by the chancellorship.

The Youth Act states several times that young people have a right to be recognised in their individuality and that the government's role is to guarantee their rights. This provides a legal basis (statutory level) for young people to challenge contentious policies in order to uphold their rights.

Moreover, Primary Health Care (PHC) is mentioned a few times in health policies. The first time in the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) policies (as was described with more detail in Chapter 2) and the second time in Law 1438 that reformed the health system (although this was not the last reform). The as was discussed earlier in this chapter, mentioned the importance of cross-sectorial work in tackling public health challenges. Nevertheless, the plan had little effect.

Maternal mortality (both early and late) is significantly higher in territories with lower health coverage rates and where the proportion of people in the subsidised health regime is also higher. The Amazonía-Orinoquía region had 138.16 maternal deaths for every 100,000 new borns in 2010, while the Bogotá-Cundinamarca region (where the capital is located) had 13.38 maternal deaths for every 100,000 new borns over the same period. If we note that adolescents and young women below the age of 25 are leading the fertility rates in Colombia, and that they continuously face challenges in terms of access to education, decent work and friendly healthcare services, we can see why maternal mortality is the fourth cause of deaths among Colombian adolescents. Also, 74% of the Amazonía-Orinoquía region belongs to the subsidised regime while only 21.5% of the Bogotá-Cundinamarca region is part of the same regime (Ministerio de Salud, 2013).

Finally, there exist wide ranging inequalities in the quality of healthcare that people receive according to their age, where they live and their level of income, especially from ethnic minority groups.

Participation

Implicit policies of youth regarding participation are numerous, not only at the national level but also in the territories where local agreements or acts can be created to regulate and promote participation. At this point, it is important to understand that even though the National Statute of Youth Citizenship organises participation through the National System of Youth, this structure is not the only one through which youth can participate. Participation may be different depending on the sector, such as education, health, security, sexual and reproductive health. Each sector has created specific rules for allowing participation that have, in an implicit way, affected youth participation.

Some examples are the local or municipals councils created by the local authorities to advise on different fields such as culture and environment, and some of these councils, depending on their regulation, have representatives from youth. Another example is the student government structures in every school and university. This participation system allows young people to influence in the quality of their education. In Colombia, student government bodies became very influential in 2011 during the protest against an education bill that was seeking to reform the educational system, where the student protests successfully led to the withdrawal of the bill from congress.

In 2014, Colombia Joven made calls to highlight the work of young volunteers across the country. The idea was to reward the best initiatives in seven categories: education, welfare and public security, democracy and human rights, culture and art, habitat and environment, and the collective effort to build peace. 148 applications were received and evaluated by assessing their level of innovation, impact, scope, outreach, teamwork, and the contribution they made to peace-building. After the initial review, 99 initiatives – from 18 departments – were selected (Colombia Joven, 2014).

Most of the selected initiatives were from the democracy and human rights category (25%), followed by education (20%), welfare and public

safety (18%), habitat and environment (18%) and arts and culture (8%) (Colombia Joven, 2014).

Another example of participation are young people who participate in grass-root organisations in the sustainable development field, especially around mining activity. In 2014, in San Bernand[64] (a municipality of the department of Cundinamarca), youth organisations advocated and mobilised in order to suspend seismic exploration near to the Páramo ecosystem. They successfully achieved their objective and are now are collecting signatures to influence the authority through popular action[65] that blocks upcoming mining activities in the municipality.

4.3   Recognition and involvement of youth in policies

As was mentioned in the introductory chapter of this research, participation improves the efficiency and effectiveness of public management as it is capable of gathering wills for the building of consensus, therefore reducing overall obstacles and achieving stakeholder's acceptance, improving the public delivery to respond to social needs.

The explicit youth public policies themselves mention the need for young people, and other stakeholders, to ensure the participation of youth throughout the whole policy cycle, not only in the creation and development of a policy, but also in its implementation, monitoring of results, and evaluation of impacts. For example, the Youth Act provides in Article 26 different strategies:

> *"The state, youth organisations, organisations, and movements of civil society working towards youth policy will coordinate and agree to youth plans that contribute to the social, economic, cultural and political life of youth. This will be done at the national, departmental, municipal and district levels".*

Meanwhile, the youth citizenship statute establishes youth involvement "in decisions that affect the social, economic, political, cultural and environ-

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64. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlTxsC_F-Ns

65. 'Popular action' is a mechanism to protect the collective interests and rights.

mental areas of the nation" (Article 2) as a principle of the statute and its implementation.

Besides what these documents establish, in Colombia,

> "...young people themselves have been key actors influencing youth policy. Student movements and youth advocates have developed a forum for discussing youth policy. Also, the support of congress and municipal leaders who have helped to ensure that advocacy efforts result in legislation for youth and the inclusion of youth objectives in the national development plan, has been important".

<div align="right">(Russell and Solórzano, 2001)</div>

As it was mentioned before, during the development of the National Youth Policy: Foundations for Youth Ten-Year Plan 2005-2015, nearly 10,000 people were involved, of whom 80% were youth (Russell and Solórzano, 2001). In addition, the processes by which the Youth Act and the youth citizenship statute were developed and adopted, are clear examples of attempts to involve young people in the development of policy. With regard to the Youth Act, a process that included institutions and individuals interested in youth development was carried out, through local and regional forums. This process allowed stakeholders to discuss, comment, and complement the draft proposal of the bill (Russell and Solórzano, 2001). The inputs for its formulation were the result of a wide dialogue called 'Youth past and present' that was held in 2002 with the participation of around 10,000 people, including 8,000 youth (DNP, 2007).

The process of the statute was similar. There were three big organisations of youth in the national level by 2010: JuventudES Colombia, the Youth National Assembly for Peace, and the National Table of Youth.[66]

The first initiatives for the construction of a new youth law converged conflicts in the regions with respect to the guarantee of the rights of the young people, especially related with youth participation (Arévalo, 2014). Having identified some of the youth's participation needs in the territories,

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66. Interview with Dionisio Lizarazo from JuventudES Colombia. By that time, JuventudES Colombia gathered those organisations and others from the political parties, the scouts, the young communists, the young democrats, the young ambientalists and others like the Association of Young Christians.

particular interests arose among the youth groups. Some of them belonged to organisations of a political nature who sought to position a new law in youth's agenda, while social organisations sought recognition of their regional agendas on a national stage (Arévalo, 2014).

For organisations of a political nature, there was a variety of positions on the process of guaranteeing the rights of young people, following right, left and centre political visions, and since each had a different formula for advocacy on this common issue, they did not want to work together (Arévalo, 2014).

This was also the case with social organisations. Particularly divided were the organisations that wanted a direct impact without having to partner with governments in power, versus the organisations that instead saw government entities as an ally in the development of the public agenda (Arévalo, 2014). Adding to this, some organisations were only seeking a direct benefit in relation to their specific work (ex. environmental, cultural, religious). During the process, many of them deserted, saying that the space did not represent their narrow interests, but still continued to participate on an intermittent basis (Arévalo, 2014).

One of the first steps taken at a national level to promote youth participation in policy development was the National Festival of Youth, that took place in August 2010 with the participation of 300 delegates from 25 departments in the country. The youth organisations agreed that it was necessary to replace the Youth Act of 1997, and developed a proposal for the National Statute of Youth Citizenship entitled 'Our Agenda Towards the Year of Youth'.

The participating organisations decided to establish a technical committee, which was charged with the responsibility for producing the first draft of new bill. The committee included representatives from a range of sectors interested in youth, such as: Colombia Joven, the Javerian Observatory of Youth (academia), the congress with a senator from the liberal party and the one from the Mira party, international cooperation actors with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation – AECID, youth organisations with JuventudES Colombia, civil society organisations with the Fundación Social and the government with the Defensoria del Pueblo (JuventudEs Colombia, 2010).

The committee created the first draft of the bill, taking into account the inputs from the regional and national forums of youth. The bill was presented in August 2010, after which proceeded discussions with the congress. The bill was initially rejected, however a second draft was presented in September 2011. This time, after six months, the bill was passed by congress and became the National Statute of Youth Citizenship.

It is important to say that, months before being signed, the statute's regulations and implementation had already been in discussion. This generated strife between Colombia Joven and some youth organisations (Arévalo, 2014). At the same time, there was discontent from several sectors of the youth population that did not feel represented by the proposals, as their voices were not taken into account in the statute's formation. They alleged, "the different interests of both the state and each of the political groups were, at the end, what shaped the decisions about the future and present of Colombian young people" (Arévalo, 2014).

In conclusion, the political changes with regard to youth in Colombia have been proposed by the same youth. However, the efforts have been towards the recognition of their participation. According to the interview of Fernando Quintero, youth need to better organise themselves and understand that youth issues are not just participation, but also other sectorial policies where they must advocate to achieve youth well-being and interests, for instance, to influence the implicit policies about education or health that may affect youth.

This is especially important, taking into account that the sectorial policies are the ones that are being implemented and have invested more budgetary resources, are more related with the state structures, and in the end, have a greater impact on youth life, as it has been seen in this review.

Unfortunately, the relationships between young people themselves, in the defense of youth issues, has been characterised by tension, disagreement, and conflict. One recent example of this was the election of the executive team (president, vice-president and secretary) of the National Congress Temporal Commission for Youth. At the beginning, the procedure was established in the agreement of the multi-parties youth group in a joint proposal that had to be presented to the congress. However, the multi-parties youth group could not reach an agreement, and at the end, each party

proposed a candidate and the executive team was elected from these candidates[67].

Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that the creation of a specialised committee to follow up on the national agreements in regards to youth, mainly associated with the statute mandate, was requested by the youth at the 2010 Congress Audiences for the Statute's Adoption (Senado de la República, 2010). This demonstrates the important advocacy work that youth organisations and activists have done with regards to youth policies.

4.4 Policy alignment with international frameworks

One of the areas highlighted in the International Cooperation Strategy of Colombia 2012-2014 is "children, adolescents and young people". This strategy highlights the following topics concerning youth policy as key: 1) strengthening public institutions to develop actions for young people at the national, departmental and municipal levels, 2) technical support to the territorial and sectorial entities on the implementation of public policy, plans, programmes and projects on behalf of youth development.

International cooperation, together with national NGOs, have played a significant role in the process of developing structures to give a framework to the development of youth policy in Colombia. It is actually the support of international agencies, specifically the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ – previously called the German Agency for Technical Cooperation – GTZ), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ibero-American Youth Organisation (OIJ), Save the Children International, USAID, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Swedish Cooperation (CIVIS); that youth topics are on the agenda of governmental institutions and key politicians. For many years, the government has not been aware of the importance of youth in the context of war in the country. Children, adolescents, and youth were not seen as rights holders or agents of transformation. Today, this is changing. Through international coopera-

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67. This information was provided to the research team by Dionisio Lizarazo, Secretary of the National Congress Temporal Commission for youth, in an informal talk.

tion, Colombia leads public policies pertaining to young people in the region.

In relation to the latest developments, some members of the international community are giving technical advice to the multi-party youth group that was created in 2014, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter. The agencies involved from the beginning in the multi-party youth group meetings are: UNDP and its Democracy Strengthening Project, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), International Institute for Democracy Electoral (IDEA), and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) (Colombia Joven, 2014).

Two international benchmarks, namely the International Year of Youth proclaimed in 1985 by the United Nations, and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified by the Colombian government in 1990, alongside the urgent need to address the increase of violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, were key factors driving the development of national structures for youth within the country.

These factors, together with the imperative to change caused by deepening of the socio-political and economic crisis, have influenced the national environment concerning youth and policy in Colombia. According to UNICEF, "two new types of violence are emerging in Latin America and the Caribbean - gang and drug-related violence and school-based violence. Gang and drug-related violence is on the increase, with young people as the most visible culprits but are far more often the victims. There are approximately 25,000 to 125,000 active gang members in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras" (UNICEF, Fast Facts 2014).

Valle del Cauca, one of Colombia´s departments/districts, is a good example that shows the effectiveness of the support of international cooperation in the effort of national sectors committed to youth public policy. OIJ has selected this case as one of the 20 best practices in youth public policy in Latin America and the Caribbean. As explained by the Valle del Cauca´s youth government´s official:

> *"It is the only youth policy in the country that has been audited by the Comptroller with the participation of young people. Its implementation has the technical and financial support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation AECID (...) it has been se-*

lected as a best practice for being an experience that encourages the participation of different actors, especially young people and youth organisations. Different institutions have maintained the purpose of positioning a working approach from the potentials and capabilities of young people, surpassing the look of risk and focusing the planning and execution of actions from a human development perspective and despite changes of government. It has also been seen as an state policy rather than a policy shift, which has maintained its fundamentals since its construction in 2000 to date.[68]"

4.5 Conclusions

As it has been presented in this chapter, explicit youth public policies themselves mention the need for young people, and other stakeholders, to ensure the participation of youth throughout the whole policy cycle, not only in the creation and development of a policy, but also in its implementation, monitoring of results, and evaluation of impacts. This participation should be meaningful, effective, and create a clear impact in the lives of young people, especially the most vulnerable groups (Afro Colombians and indigenous).

The support of international cooperation has played a very important role within the youth policy field in Colombia. International agencies and organisations have promoted different initiatives to mainstream youth rights across the public sector, increase the general investment towards the welfare of young individuals and raise awareness about the importance of working not only with children but adolescents and other youth people as a whole. Nonetheless, when international cooperation intervenes without country specific agendas and articulation with the state, key stakeholders, and youth organisations, it creates high expectations among young individuals that are not met. Examples to illustrate this have been presented in this chapter.

Finally, the adoption of the Statute shows the importance of the advocacy work that youth organisations and youth activists have done in order to achieve a common goal. The vision of youth participation in the country

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68. AECID y Corpovalle, 2009.

needs to promote a life with dignity and social inclusion, especially in the frame of a peace building process in which young people should have a voice in order to promote change. This process has also shown the perception that Colombian youth have about participation, which is more importantly as a means to achieve youth rights and commit to a youth agenda at an international level.

Youth and
Public Policy in

Colombia

Impact of Policies

5

5.1   Introduction and Context

In previous chapters, a detailed description of the reality of national youth policies was provided. This analysis indicated that territorial realities, especially those from the municipal sphere, can differ significantly from the national average, which is illustrative of the uneven development and inequality in the country.

In order to provide a more detailed perspective of the regional and local contexts, this chapter presents a description and analysis of the existing policy documents, as well as an overview of the institutions responsible for youth at the territorial entities chosen.

5.1.1 An overview of Colombian territorial division

As discussed in Chapter 1, the departments, districts, municipalities and indigenous territories are territorial entities of the country that have autonomy to manage their own development, with the government of their own authorities. Colombia has 32 departments that "exercise administrative functions, which complement the work of municipalities. The departments act as intermediaries between the national government and municipalities in the provision of services determined by the constitution and laws" (DANE, 2003).

Colombia has over 1,100 municipalities. Their "objectives are the efficient delivery of public services determined by the constitution and laws, the design and implementation of projects required to drive local development, the management of the territory, the promotion of community participation and, the social and cultural improvement of its inhabitants" (DANE, 2003).

Both governors and mayors have the power to issue decrees, which guide social development within their territories. Although not in all cases, these decrees can be issued by governors and mayors without consultation and dialogue with the social, economic and political actors.

As will be discussed throughout this chapter, youth public policy documents in municipalities and departments may have different origins and may be enacted in different ways. For example, in circumstances where

mayors or governors fail to reach an agreement with councils and assemblies, they issue decrees to make firm decisions that failed to be taken by consensus and political agreement.

5.1.2 The territorial entities chosen

For the purpose of this study, two departments (Valle del Cauca and Cundinamarca) and two municipalities from the same departments (Ginebra in Valle, and Sibaté in Cundinamarca) were selected for the field visits.

The Departments: Valle del Cauca and Cundinamarca

Table 13
General facts comparison: Valle and Cundinamarca

	Valle	Cundinamarca
Number of inhabitants	4,052,535	2,228,682
Percentage of inhabitants in rural area	13%	35%
Percentage of young people	18%	26.8%
Young people living in rural areas	12%	34%
Human Development Index	0.837	0.861
GDP (in USD millions)	29	16
GDP participation percentage	14.1%	15,4%
Health coverage	88.7%	86,41%
Education coverage	81.5%	70,9%
Unemployment rate	13.4	9.04

Source: Dane, 2005; Dane, 2013; ASIS, 2013

Valle del Cauca, a first category department[69], is located in Colombia's southwest Pacific area. It is divided into five regions and composed of 42 municipalities. Its capital is Santiago de Cali. Valle's economy is greatly supported by the service sector (commerce, transport, banking, and telecommunications), followed by industry and agriculture (mainly sugar cane).

At 12.9%, Valle del Cauca's levels of unemployment are higher than the national average (which stands at less than 10%). However, the poverty severity index is 1.3% lower than the national level.

Valle del Cauca is ethnically diverse. The Afro-descendant population represents 27% of the total population, and in absolute terms, Valle del Cauca is the department with the largest African population in Colombia. The percentage of Afro-Colombians in the total provincial population in Valle del Cauca is between 21% and 74%. Over 95% of this population lives in urban areas. 1,090,997 African descendants live in the department, of whom 52% are women and 48% are men (DANE, 2005). According to the 2005 DANE census, 29.4% of the population aged 0-26 years are Afro-descendants, corresponding to 594,796 people.

Valle's indigenous population stands at 29,430, corresponding to 0.3% of the population. The indigenous population is comprised of five ethnic groups: Embera Chami, Nasa, Nonam Eperara Siapidara, and an Inga community from the Putumayo based in rural Buenaventura. These indigenous groups are located in rural areas in 20 of the 42 municipalities of the department (Gobernación del Valle del Cauca, 2012).

Valle del Cauca has been infamous for its poor governance. Although this state owns a port in the Pacific region and enjoys numerous natural resources, corruption and violence – among other factors – has mitigated its development.

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69. Law 117 of 2000 included a categorization system for territorial entities that considers „the number of inhabitants, and the yearly amount of current revenue for free destination". According to this system, there are four categories for departments and six for municipalities that provide a general indication of their population size and resources available. It ranks from one (more population and revenue) to six in municipalities and four in departments (less population and revenue).

In 2014, the governor, Ubeímar Delgado, said that "Valle is a rich and a poor department, both at the same time; criminal gangs, guerrillas and micro-trafficking have caused great damage, especially on our Pacific coast" (Paz, 2009). In the department, "political practices have always prevented the free vote, and elections are not reliable and transparent (...) Policy in the department aims to reproduce the privileges and defend the interests of those with a seat in congress" (Correa, 2014).

After an economic crisis that lasted about eight years, and due to a very high level of debt and long list of pending foreclosures, Valle declared itself bankrupt in 2012. As a result, most of the departmental government budget is used to pay its creditors.

In regards to education, following the issuance of Legislative Act 01 and Law 715 of 2001, the municipalities of Cali, Tulúa, Palmira, Cartago, Buga, Buenaventura and Jamundi started managing the provision of educational services in primary and secondary education autonomously. In the other 35 remaining municipalities in the department, including Ginebra, primary and secondary education services are administered by the Departmental Secretary of Education (Gobernación del Valle del Cauca, 2012).

Graph 23
Net enrolment rate. 2010-2012

- Valle del Cauca
- Cundinamarca
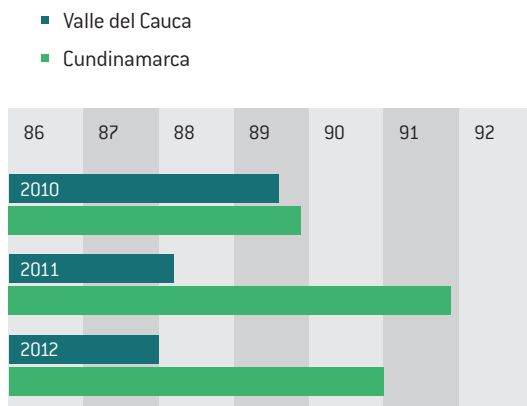
Source: Construcción propia con información de Caballero, 2014; MEN, 2014.

Valle's gross school enrolment rates in 2012 demonstrate that the highest rates of enrolment are in primary education, followed by secondary, and with a decrease in relation to middle education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014). In terms of school enrolment rates among Valle's Afro-Colombian population, the situation is critical because of the very low rate of enrolment related with a high Afro population:

> *"For the 2011 school year, 16,849 children, adolescents and young Afro-Colombians were attending educational institutions, representing 8.2% of total enrolment in the municipalities that depend on the Departmental Secretary of Education".*

<div align="right">(Gobernación del Valle del Cauca, 2012)</div>

"In terms of the indigenous population, 2,898 students were enrolled in the official sector, and ten in the non-official sector, 1,4% of the total enrollment rate that year. Of these, 1.298 indigenous (45%) belong to the ethnic group Embera Chami" (Gobernación del Valle del Cauca, 2012).

A comparison of educational attainment, as measured by the results of test SABER 11 for 2013, highlights that both Valle and Cundinamarca have scores above the national average in all the areas of knowledge. However, Valle has a better performance than Cundinamarca in most of the subjects with the exception of physics and social studies.

Graph 24
Results Examen Saber, 2013

- Valle del Cauca
- Cundinamarca
- National
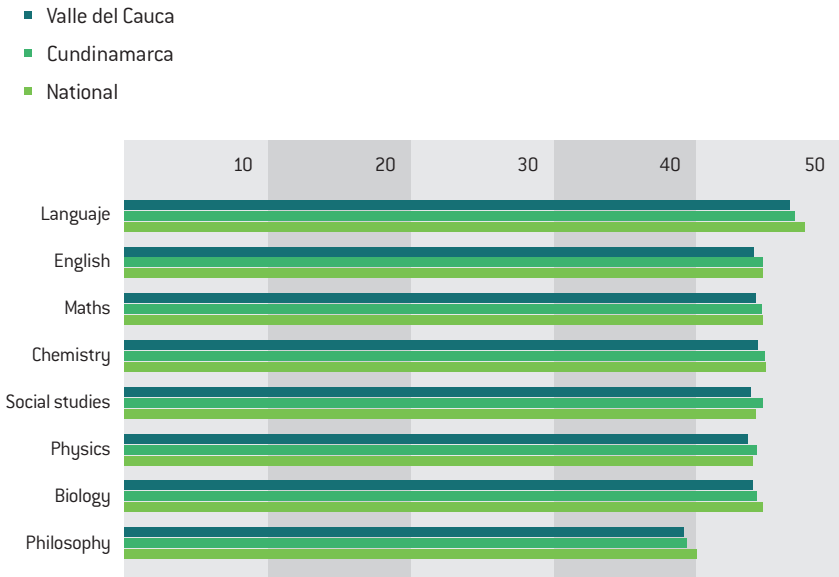
Source: Construcción propia con información de Cámara de Comercio de Cali (2014) y MEN (2014)

The Ministry of Education monitors the degree to which Departmental Development Plans (DPP) are harmonised with Colombia's Ten-Year Education Plan. In the case of Valle, the total level of articulation to Valle's criteria of attention in the educational system of vulnerable population (Sisbén, displaced, indigenous, disabled) is 70%, of which 40% indicate that there is coherence between lines of policy of the Departmental development plan in front of national policy lines of the Ten-Year Plan. Meanwhile, the other 30% indicate that in the development plan, there are strategic lines that have measurable goals and allocation of resources for implementation.

Given the cultural diversity of Valle and the reported levels of violence within the department, this level of articulation between the departmental and the national Development plans demonstrates that there is a vulnerable population outside the coverage of public education policy.

In terms of the promotion of educational services for ethnic minorities, bilingual education, and culturally relevant education, the plan reaches a total harmonisation of only 40%. This demonstrates that despite being a department with a large presence of ethnic minorities, especially Afro-descendants, public education policy is not working positively within these population groups.

The development plan of Valle del Cauca shows a percentage that indicates 0% harmony between the Departmental and the National Development plan in two criteria: (i) the establishment of a cost-free extended day of education in public education for pre-school, primary and secondary levels, (ii) the provision of support and subsidies for school supplies, food and transportation.

The population of 17-21 year olds in the department of Valle del Cauca in 2012 was 404,945. Of this total, 57.7% were outside the education system (Ministerio de Educación, 2013). From the 42.3% of Valle's young people between 17-21 who were attending a higher education institution, 60% were attending a university, 34.3% were attending a technical institution, and 5.5% were enrolled in a graduate programme. In addition, the dropout rate was 13.1%, two points higher than the national rate of 11.2% in 2012 (Ministerio de Educación, 2013).

In 2011, the youth unemployment rate was 23.3% (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2014), which is very high in comparison to the national rate (13.1%).

In relation to health, homicides and suicides are among the primary external causes of death for young people in Valle del Cauca. Valle del Cauca is among the five departments in the country where young men have the highest risk of being murdered, with a rate of 339.7 per 100.000 inhabitants (Doris Cardona y otros, 2013). A concerning fact is that Afro-Colombians and non-insured youth have greater chances of being murdered than youth from other ethnic groups or those insured (Ministerio de Salud, 2011).

Graph 25
Homicides in Cali by age, 1996-2010

- 10-19 years   ■ 20-29 years   ■ 30-39 years
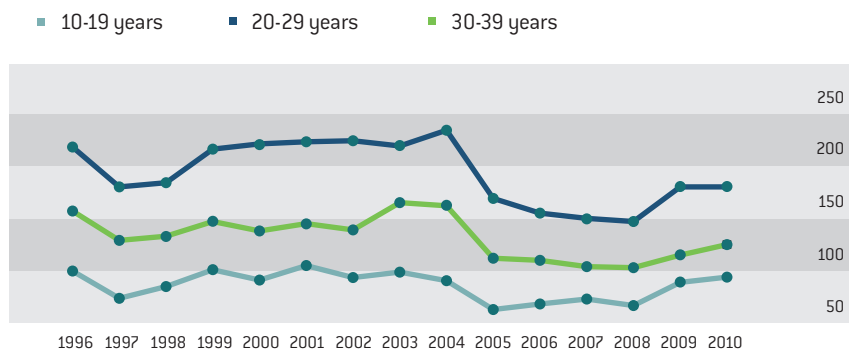
Much of this homicide is connected with Valle del Cauca's armed conflict, which is associated with organised crime, mafia, guerrillas, paramilitaries and delinquency. Compared to Cundinamarca, Valle del Cauca's violence has been more intense and prominent in the majority of its 42 municipalities. "Guerrilla's presence, different violent actions, the consolidation of a departmental mafia, and the public force's criminal activities and complicit behaviour created an explosive cocktail, unfolding various violent acts that have negatively affected Valle from the 1980s onwards" (MOE, 2012).

Furthermore, in comparison to other departments, Valle del Cauca has one of the highest rates for registered suicides, with its capital, Cali, among

the five regional capitals in the country with the highest number of registered suicides.

In regards to other health issues affecting youth, HIV/AIDS is of particular concern to the department. The HIV prevalence rate in Colombia was approximately 0.49% in 2013 (Ministerio de salud y protección social, 2014). However, there is significant variation among population groups. In seven cities of Colombia, the HIV prevalence rate among men who have sex with men (MSM) is over 5% (Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social y Fondo de Poblacón de las Naciones Unidas, 2011). One of these cities is Cali (including the metropolitan area: Cali, Jamundí, Yumbo, Candelaria and Palmira), which in 2011 had the highest HIV prevalence rate among MSM of any city in Colombia at 24.1%[70].

In regards to pregnancies and maternity, Valle del Cauca has a teenage pregnancy rate of 15.3%, which is below the national average of 15.8%, and the fertility rate for adolescents 10-14 is 2.77 per 1000 women. No data can be found for young women (14-28 years of age). Keeping in mind that fertility rates are higher in young women, it is concerning that only 50% of pregnancies and births in the last five years in the department have been planned (Profamilia, 2010).

Furthermore, considering the figures shared previously in relation to HIV, it is important to highlight that according to ENDS 2010, only 6% of partnered women in Colombia use condoms, which means that 94% of women in relationships do not take any precaution for HIV prevention (ASIS Valle del Cauca, 2010). If we combine this with the fact that only 56% of the surveyed women of fertile age know that HIV can be transmitted during breastfeeding, and that 44% between 15 and 49 years of age have been tested for HIV (and received the result), it is possible to understand the important role of comprehensive sexuality education. Although 84% of women under 25 report having received some sort of sexual education, this was provided by healthcare professionals and anatomy professors, in the absence of a clear pedagogical guideline that is rights-based and comprehensive (ASIS Valle del Cauca, 2010).

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70. Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social y Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas, 2011.

The department of Cundinamarca is located in Colombia's central zone, in the Andes region. It is divided into 15 provinces and 116 municipalities. Cundinamarca's main economic activity is agriculture, followed by industries, services and commerce. Moreover, it holds various important natural resources such as coal, gold, silver, and salt.

Cundinamarca's main indicators illustrate that it performs better than the majority of Colombia's departments. For instance, the poverty severity index is 2.9 percentage points below the national level and unemployment is lower than the national average.

Cundinamarca's ethnographic characteristics are very diverse. According to projections from the last census, the population for 2012 in Cundinamarca was estimated at 2,557,623 inhabitants, and the ethnic composition of the department is mostly mestizos with 96.3%, followed by Afro-Colombian at 3.4% and indigenous at 0.3% (Gobernación de Cundinamarca, 2012).

In 2012, the highest gross enrolment rates in Cundinamarca were in primary school, followed by secondary school, and a sharp drop in middle school (Caballero, 2014).

Regarding the process of articulation between the Ten-Year Plan for Education and the Departmental Development Plan (DPP), the tool indicates 100% degree of harmonisation in relation to: i) attention in the educational system of the population in school age belonging to vulnerable groups (Sisbén, displaced, indigenous, disabled), ii) impulse to providing education for ethnic minorities and bilingual education according to their culture.

On the other hand, Cundinamarca's Development Plan has zero percentage harmonisation with the following criteria: Gratuity complete of preschool, primary and secondary (supports and subsidies for school supplies, food and transportation).

In terms of higher education, in 2013, the department of Cundinamarca reported a population of 243,345 17-21 year olds. 26.46% (64,395) of this population are enrolled in undergraduate courses, 73% of which are enrolled in public institutions. In addition, 73.54% young people aged 17-21 are not enrolled in any educational institution (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014).

According to the Ministry of Education, in May 2014, 1,216 young people from Cundinamarca were enrolled in professional or technical courses;

30,208 in technological courses and 32,971 in college courses (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014).

In the department, youth are covered and addressed by two separate programmes. The first is called "Adolescents Live and Grow"; the second is aimed at youth (18 to 28 years old), called "Youth Peace-builders". It is important to note that the department's approach to youth is one of early intervention, and it has stated that "investing in youth means savings in the future". (Secretaría de Salud de Cundinamarca, 2013). This statement could be interpreted to mean that the only reason for investing in youth is for optimisation of resources.

Although homicide rates have dropped from 28 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2005, to 26 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2008, homicides are still one of the main causes of death in young men in the department. Young men between 20-24 years old are most at risk of homicides, with rates of 4-5 deaths per 100,000 men (Secretaría de Salud de Cundinamarca, 2013). Road traffic incidents are the second cause of death, in terms of external causes, and disproportionately affect men between 20 and 39 years of age.

Unfortunately, the lack of information disaggregated by age prevents the identification of the exact number of deaths of young people. It is also unfortunate that there is no age disaggregated data on women's mortality, so conclusions can only be drawn for women in general and not for young women (Secretaría de Salud de Cundinamarca, 2013). This absence of data significantly impacts the ability of policymakers to make informed choices and develop evidence-based policies.

The Youth Peace Builders programme aims to build young people's capacities to develop and execute their life plans based on responsibility, autonomy, healthy life habits, participation, peaceful coexistence, and academic competencies in order to be prepared for adulthood. The results from the programme (presented in a progress report by the governor of Cundinamarca, using data from the public authority in forensics) report a 51.5% decrease in the homicide rate among young people from 2012 to 2013, and a reduction of 8.6% in the number of young people killed in road traffic incidents between 2012 and 2013. According to the Health Secretary of Cundinamarca (2012), these results suggest that when approached properly, and

specifically from an inter-sectorial manner, improvement in young people's lives can be achieved (Secretaría de Salud de Cundinamarca, 2012).

Suicide is also a significant problem for Cundinamarca (Cifuentes, 2013). Although there are no figures of suicide among young people in the department, Cundinamarca has the fourth highest number of suicides of all of Colombia's departments after Valle del Cauca. Given that Colombia's youth population has a higher rate of suicide than other age groups, it can be assumed that suicide is an important youth health issue for the department. In response, the department has developed prevention strategies for parents and schoolteachers.

In Cundinamarca, 24% of adolescents are already mothers or are expecting their firstborn, which indicates a 6% increase in adolescent pregnancy from 2005. 45% of the pregnancies and births from the past 5 years in the department were planned. Despite this, the main reasons behind young people's demand for health services in 2012 (the year when young people in Cundinamarca required health services the most) were related to non-communicable diseases (in 49% of cases). In contrast, the least popular reason was related to maternal conditions (3.6% of cases)[71].

Although this might seem like a positive trend (i.e. young women are not suffering from maternal-related conditions), the fact that this data is not disaggregated by age and gender makes analysis particularly difficult. For example, mortality rates in the department are approximately 68 per 1000 live births, but we do not know how many of these deaths are from young or adolescent women. Youth-friendly health services have played an important role in Cudinamarca: about 15,000 youth and adolescents between 12 and 27 years of age have accessed youth-friendly healthcare services (SSAAJ for its acronym in Spanish, 2012). These services are present in 90 of the department's 116 municipalities. In addition, prevention and support services have been established for adolescents and youth with mental health problems in all of the municipalities of the department.

Another result of the programme aimed at youth is that 7,124 young people from 104 municipalities have been reinforcing healthy lifestyle habits through physical activity and play on a weekly basis. Also, 3,835 young

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71. Secretaría de Salud de Cundinamarca, 2012.

people living with disabilities from 94 municipalities have participated in vocational courses to develop skills for their professional lives and in sports initiatives[72].

The municipalities, Ginebra (Valle del Cauca), Sibaté (Cundinamarca)

Ginebra is located in the north of the city of Cali, the capital of the department Valle del Cauca. In 2011, the population of Ginebra was 20,479, 50.4% of whom are men, and 54% of whom live in rural areas. 23% of Ginebra's population are between 15 and 29 years old, and of these youth, 51% are women (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013).

The principal economic activities of Ginebra are gastronomy and tourism due to its proximity to Cali, the department's capital, and the annual Music Festival of Mono Núñez that was declared part of the nation´s cultural heritage in 2003. Also important for Ginebra's economy are ranching and agriculture, including the production of grapes, sugar cane, coffee, rice, beans, and soybeans (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013)

The urban area has 100% coverage of sewerage, water supply, power and telephone, and 80% of households have access to domestic gas. In contrast, rural areas have half the coverage of water and minimal coverage of sewerage (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013).

Ginebra has four schools with 28 educational sites, 1 hospital, and 5 rural health offices. 82.3% of the population between 11 and 17 years old attend school, but beyond the age of 18, the rate drops to 21.5%. In 2013, 52% of young people completed high school, 10% were enrolled in technical or technological education, and 6% were studying at university or have already obtained their degree (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013). With the exception of English, in 2013, students in Ginebra obtained above average scores in mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, philosophy, language and social science in SABER 11 tests (Camara de Comercio de Cali, 2014).

According to a survey conducted in 2013, 88% of Ginebra's youth have a life plan. Without considering alcohol, 29% of youth have consumed drugs. 61% of the youth in the municipality are single, and 20% live with a partner (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013).

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72. Ibídem.

Additionally, "30% of youth are studying, 22% are working, and 39% are working and studying at the same time, most of whom work part-time in family-owned restaurants" (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013). Although a high percentage of working minors could be problematic, youth policies has determined that this does not stop the individual development of the life plan, and it contributes to economic and social development of families and the municipality (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013).

The municipality of Sibaté in Cundinamarca is located 27 kilometres south of Bogotá. Its population of 28,000 inhabitants is distributed in 14 rural settlements and 14 neighbourhoods. Sibaté's economy is predominantly based on agriculture and livestock farming, including export-orientated floriculture and meat and milk production. Historically, this municipality has been stigmatised due to the presence of psychiatric centres for youth and adults, which "generated a collective idea that only 'madmen' lived in Sibaté" (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006). In addition, for many years Sibaté had a serious problem with pollution, which made it unattractive for tourism (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

In 2001, for the first time, many young people supported a youth candidate in Sibaté's municipal council elections. This development created the possibility of positioning youth issues on the municipality's public agenda, and allowed the formation and consolidation of youth leaders into decision-making positions. It also allowed for the creation of a training project for youth in public policy, which was implemented from 2001 to 2003 (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006). The framework of this project resulted in the establishment and election of the municipal youth council and the official opening of the Youth House[73] (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

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73. In many municipalities and departments, there exist a physical space for youth called a 'Youth House'. These places are built to facilitate youth processes about participation and other activities for youth development and recreation. One of the advantages of these houses is that they depend on the municipal or departmental budget, and thus it guarantees, besides the house, a team dedicated to manage the houses and public services by the city that addresses youth needs. Youth-led actions and projects are also developed here.

5.2   The policy reality in chosen territorial entities

As of June 2014, 15 Colombian departments (46.9%) had no youth policy; of these, four are in the process of formulating one. Of the 17 departments (53.1%) that do have a youth policy, four have already been updated in response to the National Statute of Youth Citizenship, and 11 are in the process of being updated (Colombia Joven, 2014). Colombia Joven indicates that in 2014, the country had 371 youth platforms (Colombia Joven, 2014), many of which existed before the adoption of the statute.

Graph 26
Youth policies in Colombia

A departmental overview

Public policy, youth concils and youth offices

- Departments that have a youth policy but not updated

- Departments that have an updated youth policy (according with Law 1622/2013)

- Departments in process of youth policy update

- Departments that do not have a youth policy

- Departments in process of youth policy formulation

- Departments that have a youth council

  All departments have a youth office.
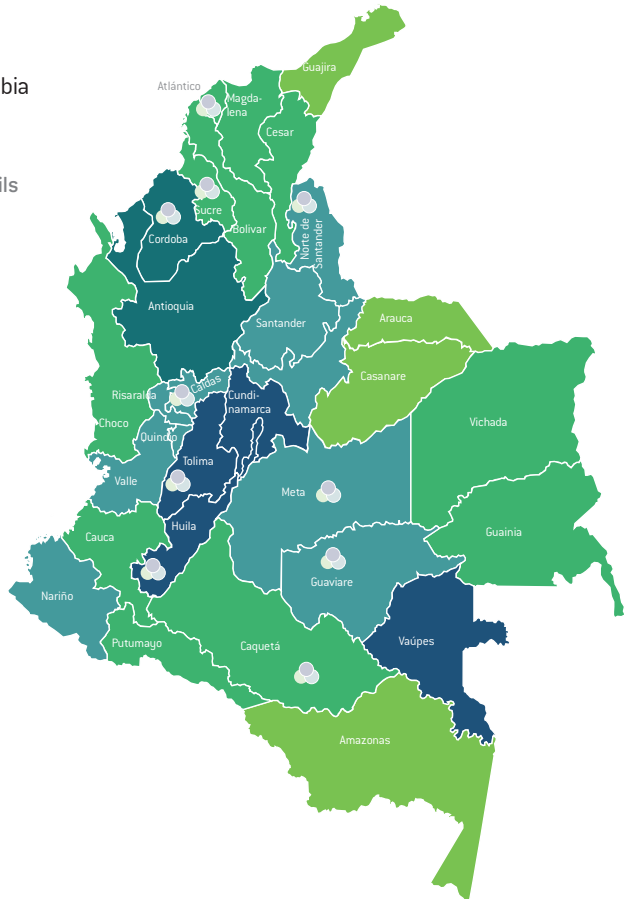
All of the "32 departments report having a person or an institutional structure responsible for youth issues" (Colombia Joven, 2014). However, "it is common for the youth offices of local authorities to have a low political profile, and for the officials who are responsible for youth issues to be responsible for additional activities" (Colombia Joven, 2014). There are currently 10 departmental youth councils (Colombia Joven , 2014).

In this section, the situation of youth policy documents and youth agencies in the chosen territorial entities will be discussed.

5.2.1 Policy documents

For territorial youth policy development, it is important to analyse both departmental and municipal level development plans, as well as departmental and municipal youth policies. In this section, the most important documents of youth policy will be described, using a structure similar to the one that was used in previous chapters to describe national policy documents.

It is important to note that before the National Statute of Youth Citizenship was enacted, no detailed process for creating a youth policy – that could be followed by the territorial entities – existed. As a result, each department that developed a youth policy did so in a localised and independent fashion, without the support of Colombia Joven. The decision to develop a youth policy, and its subsequent focus, was determined by different factors such as political will, the existence of youth-led organisations, or the presence of international cooperation organisations in the territory.

In an interview, one of Colombia Joven's officials indicated that as a result of the low capacity and technical knowledge of many of the mayors appointed for youth issues, the majority of policy documents and consultation processes, with some exceptions, were developed or led by external advisors or local civil society organisations (Matta, 2014).

Since 2012, when Colombia Joven strengthened its support to the sector (as will be described later on), it had undertaken an assessment of departmental and municipal level youth policies, or has supported the adjustment of existing youth policies to ensure that they align with the statute, as was indicated to the team report in an interview (Matta, 2014). In undertaking a detailed revision of existing departmental and municipal youth policies,

a number of issues were identified that the Colombia Joven is seeking to resolve (Matta, 2014):

1. A number of the policy documents developed by some external advisors were merely direct copies of policies developed in other territorial entities. This resulted in generalised policies that were not specific to the municipal or departmental reality.

2. Many of the policy documents developed did not have monitoring mechanisms or impact indicators, making it impossible to evaluate their impact and implementation.

3. The policy documents were developed without technical input from representatives of sectors related with youth, such as health, education, recreation, and others. Two youth officials interviewed confirmed that, as a result, there was neither a distinct budget nor a clear path for sectorial coordination. In some cases, the secretaries of the sectors were unaware that a youth policy existed, and sectorial offices in the territorial entities had no clear responsibilities to deliver against the policy proposals (Matta, 2014, Matías, 2014).

Departmental youth policy documents

In Cundinamarca, from 1991 to 1998, Departmental Development Plans (DDP) proposed youth-oriented programmes and strategies along three lines of action: "legal protection, linking young people into the economic life, and youth participation and organisation" (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005).

Before 1998, when an administrative reform was carried out in the Governor's Office, the attention given to the youth population was limited to strategies to boost youth councils, support for youth clubs and youth organisations, and creation of incentives for education (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005). Evaluations of the departmental youth programmes in Cundinamarca prior to 1998 reported that the programmes were "almost non-existent" and stated that the few that did exist were characterised by their "deficiency, low coverage, welfare approach, and a focus on at-risk youth in high poverty conditions" (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005).

For the construction of 1998-2000 departmental development plan provincial meetings[74] were held in which youth from the department presented an input document called 'Cundinamarca, Look Towards the Future of their Young'. The document included proposals that were heard by then Governor Andres Gonzalez, and which were subsequently included in the DDP (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005).

That DDP was also developed through a process of citizen participation, in which the Youth Network of Peace Builders[75] (Red de Jóvenes constructores de Paz) actively participated. Their involvement helped in the design of a sub-programme of the same name and in the definition of the DPP's goals and strategies (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005). During this period, the Departmental Plan for the Development of Youth (DPDY) was developed. This plan is the antecedent of the Departmental Youth Policy, and its goal was to "empower youth from the department by developing productive activities that allow them to lead their own destiny and manage profound changes in their socioeconomic environment" (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005).

The DDP for 2001-2004 identified the need to establish a youth policy, based on the experience of the DPDY (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005). In a focus group, Erick Bravo (2014)[76] said that the political will of the governor of that period – Alvaro Cruz – was demonstrated through the "injection of resources and the institutionalisation of the Youth Network of Peace Builders as a programme". During this time, the department also allowed international cooperation work that aimed to strengthen municipal youth organisations. This cooperation provided the foundations for the formulation of the youth policy.

Once Alvaro Cruz finished his term as governor, the Youth Network of Peace Builders ceased to exist and a new governor, Pablo Ardila (2004-

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74. Cundinamarca is divided in 15 provinces that hold its 116 municipalities.

75. Youth Network of Peace Builders is one of the most important youth movements in Cundinamarca. According to the interviews done during the research, the network started from 1997 while the country was passing through the peace dialogues in the Caguan territory. This movement was in support of the dialogues, but it also helped to promote youth participation in Cundinamarca.

76. Youth activist from the municipality of Sibate and current member of the NGO Geapaz.

2007)[77], was elected. Ardila did not consider youth a priority group in his DDP (2004-2008) and he "weakened the influence of the Secretary for Social Development, which was responsible for operationalising (…) policies, plans and programmes for different population groups" (Sarmiento, 2007) by changing its role from a decision-making body to a consulting office" (interview with Arevalo, 2014). In addition, Ardila's DDP lacked coherence and integration; "youth appears as a beneficiary group of the programme under the social and economic development dimension" (Sarmiento, 2007). Its policy actions focussed on education, health, recreation and promotion of culture, without articulating the connection between them (Sarmiento, 2007). In this time, nine youth municipal councils were elected.

Despite Ardila´s evident lack of interest in youth issues, it is important to note that there were individuals within his administration who sought to advance the agenda. As Arevalo (2014) noted in an interview, Leila Osorio has particularly contributed in 2002 by being responsible for youth issues in the department. She looked for partners who could help with the formulation of youth-sensitive public policy and this has resulted in support from the private (Colsubsidio) and public sectors (CAR) in a process started through provincial meetings.

In these provincial meetings, two processes working to advance youth issues began to collaborate: the Autonomous Youth Board (Mesa Autonóma de Juventud), supported by GTZ, and the Departmental Youth Board (Mesa Departmental de Juventud), promoted by Osorio's office. During 2006, this collaboration sought to undertake a diagnosis of the situation of youth in Cundinamarca. In 2007, there were nine departmental meetings to discuss the strategic lines of the public policy, with the technical support of a national youth expert, Libardo Sarmiento. As a result, in 2007 the Departmental Youth Policy was enacted as a departmental agreement (Arevalo, 2014).

During Andrés González's administration (2008 to 2011), the DDP was intended to "end poverty, and to modernise and consolidate the social development of Cundinamarca. Youth were explicitly recognised through actions focussed on employment and entrepreneurship, education, pro-

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77. In December 2007, Pablo Ardila was suspended from office on charges of corruption. He was imprisoned three years for embezzlement and illicit enrichment. He was released from prison in September 2010 expiration of terms.

motion of participation in environmental projects in schools, and projects that encouraged them to achieve a life of dignity in relation to education, health, culture, sports and recreation (Sarmiento, 2007, p. 12).

One of the most significant achievements of the departmental youth movement in this period was to make the governor understand the importance of the Departmental Youth Policy. However, although he recognised the existence of the policy, he elected to focus on only three of its objectives: the creation of the Youth Directive, the Index of youth development (Índice de Florecimiento Juvenil Cundinamarca 2010) and the Strategic Plan for Youth.

In 2011, Álvaro Cruz was re-elected (2012-2016). His DDP sought the "integral development of the human being," and to "guarantee health, education, social development, sustainability, competitiveness, communitarian action, sports, culture and others" in every phase of the lifecycle, including youth (Gobernación de Cundinamarca, 2012, p. 8).

While Cruz revived the Youth Network of Peace Builders programme, he failed to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Departmental Youth Policy and the Strategic Plan for Youth were included in 2012-2015 DDP, as was told to the research team in an interview with Andrea Matias, Cundinamarca's Sub-Director for Youth. This revelation is significant because if the plan and policy are not harmonised with the DDP, the financing of its aims and goals is in danger since the DDP contains the budget allocation.

According to Matias, there is a current process of trying to harmonise and integrate both instruments, and that that it was found to be quite easy to link the impact of the instruments in the policy lines that the departmental government had implemented (Matías, 2014). Nonetheless, the process must have been the other way around: to create a plan for addressing youth issues, and then harmonise it with the action of all the sectorial offices.

After the formulation of the policy and strategic plan, the momentum of the youth movement decreased as GTZ finished its work in Cundinamarca, and financial resources were reduced. As it was told to the research team in an interview, "some of the young people from both youth processes decided to cooperate and maintain the Departmental Board (Mesa Departmental). However, they recognised that they were not representative of the munic-

ipalities of Cundinamarca and focussed their efforts on advocating for a youth perspective to be incorporated in constitution" (Arevalo, 2014).

In terms of public administration, Cundinamarca is in the process of updating the Departmental Youth Policy of 2007 to incorporate the aims of the National Statute of Youth Citizenship from 2012.

Valle del Cauca's DDP from 1995 to 2000 made reference to the youth population, but was based on a traditional and reductionist view of youth, highlighting vulnerability and focussing specific attention on the most vulnerable youth groups. The social expenditure related to youth was primarily associated with job training. However, through the components of education, culture, and security and justice, the plan opened its vision of youth and explicitly sought to establish peaceful coexistence, using training projects focussed on young people (AECID, 2012). The plan also included proposals related to strengthening youth organisations and announced support for the provision and operation of programmes at Youth Houses, productive projects, and youth-led radio projects (AECID, 2012).

In 2000, the department followed the national trend led by National Decree 089, which provided instructions on a youth council's first elections. The decree led to discussions between youth and social organisations in the different municipalities, which caught the attention of institutional actors. The Secretary of Social Development found in the department's municipalities "a marked lack of youth participation in public issues, negative images of political participation, public bodies and local politicians, and a division between youth spaces and public institutions" (AECID, 2012).

Young people did not disagree with this assessment, but highlighted that this situation was the result of adults stigmatising youth, the perception of youth as a source of problems, and a weak institutional focus that concentrated solely on the prevention of pregnancy and drug consumption among young people (AECID, 2012).

The DDP 2001-2003 maintained the same focus on work training that was evident in previous plans, and did not make specific mention to projects and investments in youth. However, during this period, and in relation to the election of youth councils, young people continued to meet and receive training, mostly from organisations focussed on international cooper-

ation. By 2002, youth achieved increased access to negotiation spaces and had a greater influence in decision-making processes (AECID, 2012).

The 2004-2007 DDP "established a strong social discourse that tended to establish dialogue, peace-building, inclusion and visibility of minority social groups, the promotion of human development, the defence of pluralism and democracy-building processes" (AECID, 2012). It was the first development plan that adopted a population perspective. For the youth population, the objective was,

> *"... to develop a youth public policy to strengthen the culture of participation among young people, to promote processes that integrate organisations and municipal youth councils in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of plans, programmes and projects related with participation, education, training, employment, health, sexuality, substance abuse prevention, education for peace, rural and ethnic youth, among others."*

<div align="right">AECID, 2012</div>

In addition, during this period a series of department-level processes, led by civil society and international cooperation organisations, sought to "strengthen democratic processes" and "ensure greater effectiveness of institutional actions and participation of citizens in governmental decisions" (AECID, 2012). These processes increased the visibility of a number of social groups, including youth, within the policymaking process.

The experience of the Youth Constituent Assembly was frequently cited during consultations about youth participation in the design of Valle del Cauca´s public policy. This assembly was established in 2004 by Governor Angelino Garzón, as a Social Constituent Assembly with the representation of diverse social sectors including youth. The assembly was intended to provide a forum where different actors could gather around social initiatives and cooperate on important interests, such as the definition of budgets related to these interests. However, according to the interviews held, the assembly was monopolised by the most powerful sectors.

As a consequence, a number of actors decided not to participate in the Social Constituent Assembly. The youth sector then created the Youth Constituent Assembly in 2005. The new assembly aimed to: i) function as an institutional intermediate between government and youth, ii) promote a po-

litical and citizenship culture based on the interaction between the youth sector and the state, iii) open a youth participation platform that would enhance public management and monitoring of the situation of youth, iv) legitimise youth assembly to enforce the social, political and cultural aspects within the youth population from Valle del Cauca (Pulido, 2008).

The Youth Constituent Assembly managed to work in collaboration with the departmental government. This was in part due to the governor's political commitment to working on youth issues and acknowledging and ensuring sectorial areas responded to youth demands, as was told by youth leaders in a focus group (Bejarano y otros, 2014). The Youth Constituent Assembly was able to exercise significant influence over the departmental government and was able to influence a decision for a member of staff being fired for failing to attend to the governor's instructions in youth issues (Bejarano y otros, 2014).

With the support of the governor and international organisations, the assembly worked with thousands of young people from all over the department to organise annual regional meetings in the Valle del Cauca territory. According to youth who participated in a focus group and interviews (Bejarano y otros, 2014; Matta, 2014), the assembly provided a space for youth to gather, discuss, take decisions and resolve conflicts. The meetings provided an opportunity to organise and engage youth activists, which resulted in a strengthened youth movement that was subsequently able to contribute to the development of the departmental public policy.

Many youth policy experts indicate that this period was crucial for the participation and visibility of youth in the department. From the DDP and the attitude of the departmental government towards the youth, the view and conceptualisation of youth changed: from traditionalist to more advanced perceptions and paradigms. Youth were now recognised as actors with great "potential to transform the conditions of their communities" so long as "spaces of participation were made open for them and their creativity and productivity recognised" (AECID, 2012).

In 2005, according to the agreement between the departmental government and a selection of youth organisations, Valle's university facilitated an exercise to formulate a youth policy addressing three themes (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013). The first theme sought to follow and apply

the regulations on youth, the second to understand the municipal and departmental youth councils as representatives of the youth interests, and the third to design strategies to increase youth participation, including the formulation of the departmental youth public policy (Gobernación del valle del cauca, 2007).

A policy development programme took place from August to December of 2005, and included: i) the identification of actors and key stakeholders, ii) consultation on the objective of the youth policy through five meetings involving the participation of 550 young people from 40 municipalities, iii) discussion and dialogue which led to the formulation of the Youth Policy and Departmental Strategic Plan of Youth from 2005 to 2015 (Gobernación del Valle del Cauca, 2007).

At the end of the process, the youth policy was approved by Departmental Decree No. 270 of 2007. Despite these advances, however, the change in government that took place in 2008 resulted in a loss of momentum to advance youth issues, according to youth leaders who participated in a focus group (Bejarano y otros, 2014). In response, the youth movement lobbied the Departmental Comptroller, who led an audit of the policy implementation. Thanks to the action of a young deputy, who led the process of discussion; Departmental Ordenance (Ordenanza Departamental) No. 286 of 2009 was adopted, which tried to reinforce the importance of the youth policy in the department (Bejarano y otros, 2014).

The youth policy was born with the general objective of "consolidating youth from Valle del Cauca as capable actors, able to negotiate their representation in the different cultural, political, social and economic situations, to create the appropriate conditions to assure the equity and inclusion of youth". This policy also established a youth participation system composed of a Youth Departmental Technical Committee, public and private universities, think-tanks, public entities, the Departmental Government of Valle del Cauca, and the municipal mayoralty.

According to Article 11 of the policy, the policy aims to ensure the "recognition of youth as a wide sector, with potential and multiple capabilities that must be strengthened and included in plans, projects and public agendas of social organisations and institutions".

The policy's principles and lines of action are below in Table 14:

Table 14

Valle del Cauca policy's principles and lines of action

Principles	Lines of Action
» Collective work » Social responsibility » Regional and local approach » Gender enquality » Inclusion » Participation » Integration between the policy instruments	» To recognize youth as subjects of rights and duties » To integrate youth into regional economic development » To strenthen processes, mechanisms and opportunities for participation » To promote youth organization and youth activities towards social coexistence » To enforce youth cultural identities » To activate the regional, intersectorial and inter-institutional mechanisms of youth

It is important to note that Valle's youth policy includes within its text, a mandate to formulate a Departmental Youth Developing Plan, just as the Act 375 of 1997 ordered. This initiative was selected as an example of practice to be highlighted in the study ''20 years of good practice in public youth policies in Ibero-America'' (OIJ, 2012).

However, despite the participative methodology used to formulate the policy, neither the public policy nor the Departmental Youth Developing Plan had effective mechanisms to monitor and evaluate results. The only monitoring requirement was for the Secretary for Social Development to elaborate a report directed to the governor and to the departmental assembly. No mention is made about including young people in an evaluation or monitoring process.

In terms of budget allocation, the policy establishes different sources from the municipality, the department, and from the national government, from international cooperation and from the private sector.

According to the participants in Valle's focus group, after Governor Angelino Garzón (2004-2008) ensured a budget of 3,000 million pesos annually for youth issues, the department spent less than 200 million each year. However, according to an audit undertaken by the controller's office, "dur-

ing 2008 and 2009, the budget was reduced by 92% and a 100%, respectively" (Contraloria Departamental del Valle del, 2011).

"Therefore, youth policy has no teeth, no clear funding sources, its financing depends on the governors in office, and as we are now bankrupt, everything is about austerity and nothing goes to youth" (Bejarano y otros, 2014).

As it will be explained later, this represents one of the most significant challenges affecting the implementation of public policies.

Municipal youth policy documents

The Sibaté youth policy was enacted in 2006 by Municipal Agreement No. 16 and it is nationally recognised as an example of youth participation in public policy formulation. The process started when the technical cooperation between Cundinamarca and Germany (GTZ) was in crisis. According to Bravo (2014), then Governor Ardila said there was no conflict in the department, and came close to cancelling the international cooperation (Bravo, 2014). In that context, the GTZ decided to enforce their activities before leaving, and after identifying youth organisations from the department, decided to focus their work on some municipalities, including Sibaté. Through this work, GTZ aimed to support the formulation process that was established for the development of the departmental youth policy (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

Historically, Sibaté has had youth organisations that promoted cultural, artistic and sport activities. While the Youth Peace Builders network was taking place in the department, those activities built a youth movement that influenced the municipal council and municipal town hall elections in 2000. Youth successfully established a partnership between their young candidate for the municipal council, and the candidate for the town hall, Jairo Linares. Linares was elected as mayor, but the young candidate was not elected. However, Linares respected the partnership and created the municipal programme for youth Sibate in the move (Sibaté en el cuento).

The main objective of the programme was to elect the municipal youth council and to build a Youth House. However, it was necessary to increase the youth population's awareness of the importance of youth participation before the election (Organización Panamericana de la Salud y GTZ, 2007, p.

28). The programme started with 44 young people who were meant to participate in the training process and go on to become candidates for the municipal council. However, when the election procedure was about to start in 2002, the participants of the programme were informed that they had to resign from the programme in order to be eligible for candidacy. None of them did, so none participated in the election" (Organización Panamericana de la Salud y GTZ, 2007, p. 30).

The youth council was elected and the Youth House inaugurated in 2003. However, "the councillors were unable to fulfil their mandate and realise the initiatives they promised to the youth community that had elected them. This resulted in disinterest among the wider youth population for participating in or supporting the municipal council´s objective of creating a youth development plan." After a year and a half, the council ceased to meet (Organización Panamericana de la Salud y GTZ, 2007).

It was within this context that GTZ decided to support youth processes in Sibaté by establishing partnerships with a selection of youth organisations that were already constituted. The main objective of GTZ's intervention was to strengthen the municipal youth council. However, GTZ recognised that doubts about the legitimacy of the council were in part the result of a lack of youth participation in the municipality more broadly. In an effort to improve this situation and promote communitarian and political participation of youth across the municipality, GTZ supported a project named "Towards a Representative and Inclusive Youth Council". This project subsequently resulted in the creation of a youth working group (Bravo, 2014).

This working group was composed of young leaders, students and volunteers, who initially were divided into three working groups (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006). Later, institutional representatives from the mayor's office and Colombia Joven joined the group. This group has produced the first analysis and reflection on youth policy in the municipality, building on the advances of two years of collaborative work with the local authority and the actions of the Youth House (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

The working group reorganised their action dividing the work into two areas: the construction of a "municipal diagnosis," and the "construction of a process of dialogue and consultation with young people organised and

unorganised, both from urban and rural areas" (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

As a result of this work, previous efforts and the support of stakeholders, Colombia Joven recognised Sibaté as a pilot municipality for the formulation and implementation of public policy for youth in Colombia (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

Table 15

Sibate's working structure for policy's formulation

Main team		
» Advisors	Diagnosis group	Planning board
» Search for information	Consultation group	
» Data analysis		
» Representatives form Mayor's offices	» Coordination and logistics	
» Colombia Joven's representatives	» Technical support	
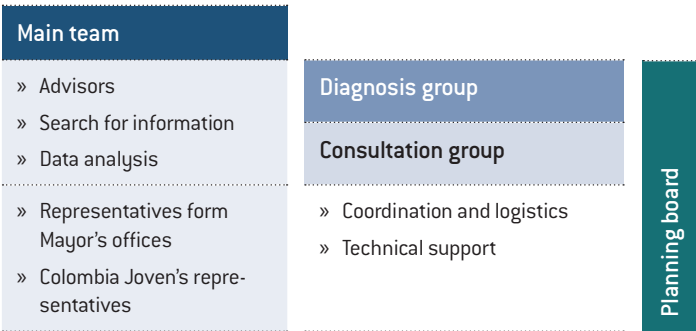
In formulating the policy, the group decided to abandon the traditional approach of conducting consultations with youth in order to determine their needs and interests. The group sought not to start from 'zero', but rather to identify and recognise the initiatives that already existed and could be strengthened by the policy (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

The research took several approaches and used very different tools including: (i) a participatory rapid diagnosis[78] in rural areas, (ii) four focus groups in urban areas, (iii) dialogues in schools, (iv) three municipal meetings, (v) surveys, (vi) interviews (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006). Although it is not known how many young people participated in the research, the team established contact with 18 youth organisations, held

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78. The participatory rapid diagnosis is a methodology developed in Germany in the 1970's and was exported to the developing world through German technical cooperation. It aims to help social groups to identify their interest, strengthen their capacity for decision-making and finding solutions for their own needs (Paisa Joven, 2014).

more than 20 meetings with diverse young people, and 20 additional meetings with institutional actors from the municipality, department and nation (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

The objective of Sibaté's youth policy was to,

> *"... generate alternatives to support the comprehensive development of youth, taking into account their territorial and socio-cultural conditions; their skills and their abilities, that will be reflected in their own initiatives, which will be undertaken with the support of state institutions, local authorities, the private sector, civil society organisations and technical cooperation of the German government."*
>
> Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006

When the final document was ready to be presented in the municipal council for its approval, GTZ left the process and youth organisations took the lead in advocating to get the policy approved. They succeeded and secured an annual budget of approximately USD 35,000 for its implementation.

Despite this, the implementation was, and remains, difficult. After the process, the strength of the youth movement reduced and the youth population was stigmatised by the accusation of drug-consumption in the Youth House. As a result, and following discussions between youth and the local administration about the way the policy should be implemented, then Mayor Leonor Gantivar (2004-2007) decided not to support the policy implementation (Bravo, 2014).

In response, a number of youth initiatives organised a forum on youth issues with the candidates for the 2008-2011 elections. Although the youth movement lobbied the candidates to engage with the implementation of the policy, upon his election, Mayor Jose Uriel González did not deliver on their aspirations. More recently, the newly elected Mayor Ramiro Orlando Ramirez was initially receptive to the demands of the youth movement, agreeing to implement a youth system in the municipality to facilitate the implementation of the policy with a sectorial view, however this has not yet been realised (Bravo, 2014).

Ginebra's youth policy was adopted in November 2013 and was developed following the publication of a document produced by The Visionary Youth Foundation (Fundación Juventud Visionaria) – an organisation

hired by the mayor – with a technical support of the Public Administration School (Escuela de Administración Pública) in Cali (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013).

In developing a proposal for the youth policy, a survey of 1,200 young people was conducted in all schools and various sectors of the municipality (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013). Although the number of youth that took part in the survey (25% of youth population) may seem representative, the focus on school-aged students resulted in a disproportional representation of the perspectives of young people aged 17 years or younger. This is particularly problematic given that 63% of Ginebra's young people are aged 18 years or older.

The goal of Ginebra's youth public policy is to,

> *"...ensure and recognise the rights and responsibilities of young people as key actors in Ginebra's economic, social and political activities, so the actions of the state, youth and community are aimed at improving their quality of life, and allowing young people to achieve their life projects and contribute to the development of the municipality, through the use of different daily activities."*

<div align="right">Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013</div>

The main focus of the policy is to recognise youth as subjects of rights and duties, as well as strategic actors. This conceptualisation of youth can be considered an advanced approach to youth public policies, as defined in previous chapters. The document also indicates that the main reference points for the municipal policy for youth are the National Statute of Youth Citizenship and the Departmental Youth Policy.

As a result, the document is aligned with the National Statute of Youth Citizenship,. In fact, it lists youth's rights and responsibilities, definitions of public youth policy, and youth policy principles that are mentioned in the statute (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013).

The policy is based on analysis that included investigation into the effects of the municipality not having a youth policy. According to this analysis, by not having a youth policy, the needs of youth are non-satisfied, and there is no guidance for youth development, resulting in poor development outcomes for youth. The policy has twelve policy lines or strategies, but

does not have resources allocated to their fulfilment. Although this policy was only recently developed, a process of reviewing and updating it commenced in December 2014 (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013).

5.2.2 Youth agencies

This section will describe the youth agencies that have been responsible for or connected to the development of youth policy in the entities selected. It will start with the youth offices in charge of youth issues in each entity, and will then elaborate on youth councils and social organisations that were vital to the adoption of these policies.

Between 1992 and 1994, the departmental government of Valle del Cauca started talking about population groups and established the Office of Social Development as the body responsible for the social issues in the department. The focus of the Office of Social Development was children, youth, women and seniors (AECID y Corpovalle , 2009). In this period, the focus of the specific investment in youth was associated with job training.

During the years prior to the formulation of the youth policy, the Office of Social Development "gained ground, expertise, and site of action in the institutional context, which enabled it to maintain communication with youth and other public and private institutions" (AECID, 2012).

In 1994, the Governor's Office of Cundinamarca created the Office for Youth, Women and Family. This body subsequently became the Social Development Office in 1995, and then the Office of Social and Community Development in 1996, before being transformed to the Office of Social Development in 1998. It has existed under this name until present day (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005). This office is responsible for "formulating, directing and coordinating policies, plans and programmes for population groups, and thus drove the design and implementation of youth policy for the department" (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005).

In 1999, the Departmental Technical Committee on Youth was created. This committee led the process of formulating the youth policy, and had the participation of organisations and leaders from the public sector, private sector and civil society. The committee was responsible for identifying and

coordinating the supply of a diverse range of institutional services for youth (Departamento de Cundinamarca, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2005).

In terms of youth councils, it is important to reiterate that at the time the National Statute of Youth Citizenship came into operation (November 2013), one of its instructions was already obsolete. The election of youth councils across the country was supposed to take place in October 2012. Furthermore, the statute did not outline the process that had to be followed for the election of youth councils. As a result, many municipalities and departments that were responsible for organising elections in 2013 had no instruction as to how to do so.

Colombia Joven was not aware of how to manage the situation, and recommended that the departments carry on with the election of councils in order to uphold the acquired right of youth to have a youth council. Colombia Joven recommended that the elections could be held following the same process that was used for previous elections, while clarity was sought on how to carry out the new elections and build the new process (interview with Matta, 2014).

In an unusual communication, the General Comptroller issued a restriction to the election without having a result of the final approval of the statute. The communication requested governors and mayors to refrain from calling elections for the youth councils around the country until the constitutional court gave its approval (Congreso visible, 2012).

Taking into account this communication, and a recommendation issued by AECID, Valle's governor's office recommended that all mayors wait until the statute ended its adoption process to coordinate the election of new youth councils (interview with Matta, 2014). In line with these instructions, Ginebra did not hold youth council elections in 2013, so its municipal councils of youth existed for seven non-consecutive years: 2000-2004 and 2009-2012 (Alcaldía Municipal de Ginebra, 2013).

This situation weakened the process that the departments and its municipalities were developing (interview with Matta, 2014). Since 2000 – when municipal youth councils were elected for the first time – the youth councillors were elected the same day in all Valle municipalities (Gobernación del Valle del Cauca, 2012). The election process created an incentive for youth leaders and organisations to collaborate and develop visions for youth, and

resulted in an environment of debate and discussion around youth issues (interview with Matta, 2014).

Although the youth councils were not perfect, the failure to hold elections in 2013 resulted in a loss of the important advocacy work for youth issues that they undertake. In a limited number of territories, this advocacy work is now undertaken by youth platforms, but where these do not exist, youth issues are neglected.

A similar situation occurred in Cundinamarca where municipal youth council elections were not held in 2013. As a result, none of the municipalities have youth councils as of 2014 (interview with Matías, 2014). Furthermore, there has never been a departmental youth council in Cundinamarca, due to there being only 18 municipal councils, rather than the 50 required for the election of a departmental council (interview with Matías, 2014).

5.3 Public policy analysis in chosen territorial entities

This final part of the research aims to make an aggregate analysis of national, departmental and municipal experience in developing youth policies. The analysis focuses on key themes or conditions that appear to affect the development, quality, and impact of the different policies identified in this review. The key themes that are presented are illustrated with specific examples drawn from the policies outlined in previous chapters.

5.3.1 Political will for policy adoption, implementation and monitoring

It is clear to see that in the case of Valle's policy, it was the existence of a high level of political will that led to the creation of meeting spaces for young people across the department, such as the Social Constituen Assembly and the Youth Constituent Assembly. The direct leadership of Valle's governor ensured that the departmental administration worked as an 'umbrella' for youth policy development, having a strong impact, high credibility among all stakeholders, and an ability to convene and mobilise young people.

Therefore, although political will is crucial to the development of youth policy, it must go beyond rhetoric and translate into concrete actions including its own sustainability. Ultimately, political will is expressed in gov-

ernment budgets, and specific funding for youth issues is of central importance to any policy initiative.

In the case of Cundinamarca and Sibaté, political will was a facilitator and supporter of the youth movement that was already taking place in the department. At the departmental level, Governor Alvaro Cruz gave support to the Youth Network of Peace Builders, which was a seed movement that grew into a politically conscious generation that promoted youth participation in their territories, and formulated the departmental youth public policy. In Sibaté, Mayor Linares worked in the same way, in that he respected the commitment made with youth during the election.

However, it is necessary to establish a collective vision of youth development and what characterises a decent life, rather than relying on the personal interest of those serving a time-limited term. Both in Cundinamarca and Valle (in inverviews with Matta and Matías, 2014), the change of governor resulted in a failure of the policies to be implemented, despite a very rich and participative process of policy formulation. A reliance on the interests of particular governors not only results in youth policy being developed in an erratic and haphazard fashion, but also results in a high level of frustration among youth that could damage their future participation in society.

This is why the longer-term agreements and commitments that youth organisations and youth leaders can secure from candidates during the electoral candidacy processes are so important.

It should also be mentioned that political will is not associated only with the executive branch of the local authorities or just the governors. The role of congress, the departmental assemblies, the municipal councils and the public servants that develop the projects and programmes are also crucial.

As described in previous chapters, the current initiative of the congress on youth issues is extremely relevant. Likewise, as was seen in Valle's experience, the assembly's action was crucial for youth policy's institutionalisation. This is also visible in other territorial entities such as Antioquia, where the policy update that is currently in process stems from an initiative of the deputies (Buitrago, 2014). In Cundinamarca, the will of public servants who promoted the efforts towards a youth public policy are especially relevant,

particularly when one takes into account that it was not an important issue to the governor.

5.3.2 Institutional role: Colombia Joven as a key actor

According to one of Colombia Joven's territorial advisors, after several years of learning, it is in the process of achieving a greater presence at the territorial level and providing technical support, which is resulting in significant changes. This learning process is, among other elements, helping to clarify the role of Colombia Joven within the territories, as well as the role of those appointed to work on youth issues within each territorial entity (interview with Matta, 2014). Furthermore, it is improving its understanding of how to achieve the inter-sectorial and inter-agency coordination required to improve outcomes for youth.

Still, the evolution of Colombia Joven's institutional strength has been slow. As mentioned in Chapter 1, during Uribe's eight years of government (2002-2010), Colombia Joven was weak and non-effective, although the foundations for the ten-year plan for youth were established. During that period, Colombia Joven had six directors, and two of them were involved in serious accusations that damaged the reputation of the Colombia Joven

Hitler Russeau Caverra (Colombia Joven's director in 2005) was accused of having links with paramilitaries as well as knowledge about electoral fraud on the Caribbean coast that favoured Uribe's election in 2002 (Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, 2008). Similarly, Luz Piedad Herrera (Colombia Joven's director between October 2007 and October 2010) was accused of embezzling resources of the British cooperation that Colombia Joven was managing.

The most damaging episode of Colombia Joven's history was in 2008, when the president proposed to cut the organisation's funding and close it down:

> *"I spoke with Mr. Vice-President this morning and told him that one of the programmes that we should now suspend from the presidency is Colombia Joven, so that we can continue on the path to save and save (...) The cut cannot affect democratic security, or infrastructure, production, or social policy."*

> Uribe proposes closing Colombia Joven, 2008

This lack of political commitment undermined confidence in Colombia Joven, particularly among young people across the country, other governmental entities with which the programme should coordinate cross-sectorial actions, other national entities such as the private sector, and organisations focussed on international cooperation (interviews with Matta and Mendoza, 2014). This situation added more pressure to the imbalance in strength of children, adolescents and youth institutionally (ICBF vs Colombia Joven), as it was mentioned in previous chapters.

Moreover, Colombia Joven did not have a clear institutional mandate, and it had only a very short presence within the territories (Mendoza F., Colombia Joven's annual report, September 2010 – September 2011, 2011).

Within the territories, young people frequently had a very negative view of Colombia Joven. According to Valle's leaders who participated in a focus group (Bejarano y otros, 2014), "the relationship with Colombia Joven was very tense. Very often they did not recognise our delegates from the territories and wanted to impose their own delegates, hindering the processes the [it] was trying to develop".

The change of president in 2010 resulted in a new period for Colomba Joven, in which its role and influence grew. As mentioned earlier, this process was largely the work of Vice-President Angelino Garzón, who led all of the youth empowerment processes in Valle. In 2011, Felipe Mendoza was appointed as its director. Recognising the Colomba Joven's crisis, he established a strategy that sought to regain the trust of key stakeholders. Ultimately, this process strengthened its structure and clarified its institutional mandate (Mendoza F. , Colombia Joven's annual report, September 2010 – September 2011, 2011).

In 2012, after guaranteeing an increase in the Colomba Joven's budget, territorial advisors were hired to work directly in the departments and municipalities. These advisors are now recognised as key partners, who are increasingly trusted by youth and local governments (interviews with Matta and Saavedra, 2014). Currently, many territorial entities report that Colombia Joven plays a very important role in the actualisation of municipal youth policies, particularly through the guides that it has provided in the last year (Buitrago, 2014).

In fact, in a recent survey held by Colombia Joven, it can be seen how in 2008, just 45% of the deparments felt supported by its programming, while in 2013, this percentage increased to 100% (Colombia Joven, 2013). This was a result of the action of the two more recent directors of Colombia Joven: Gabriel Jaime Gómez (2012 to 2014) and Juan Carlos Reyes (the current director).

Today, one of the biggest challenges that Colombia Joven is facing, now as a director of the National System of Youth, is stregthening a rather new office in charge of sectorial action, which, as might be seen, could make big changes in setting youth priorities for the main governmental sectors.

Nevertheless, there is still much to do to strengthen the Colombia Joven and its outreach. The role and influence of Colombia Joven should be stronger in: i) ensuring that the aspirations of the National Statute of Youth Citizenship in regards to elected youth councils is fulfilled, ii) advising the municipalities in the implementation of national policy[79], iii) providing examples of effective practice in developing cross-sectorial efforts for youth at the national level.

In addition, the technical support that Colombia Joven brings to the departments must match their needs. In 2013, the departments indicated that the three main issues of assistance received were related to legislation, citizen participation and public policy, but they reported that their main needs were related to the training of youth and civil servants on youth issues, activating institutions created by the statute (especially the youth platforms), and designing of a strategic plan (Colombia Joven, 2013).

With regards to the limited support for youth-friendly healthcare services (SSAAJ), Colombia Joven's contribution to strengthening sectorial entities responsible for youth issues has been weak. For example, there is minimal evidence of Colombia Joven ensuring that the health sector develops youth sensitive policies that are universal. Similarly, despite efforts to develop an information system on youth that could be accessed by services from a range of policy areas, there is still much work to do, and the current

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79. The youth coordinator of Sibaté reported in an interview (2014) that Colombia Joven ignored a request for assistance in understanding the details of the National Statute of Youth Citizenship and the process of harmonisation that it required.

sources of information do not yet collect data in a disaggregated manner with clear procedures that guarantee the quality of the information.

5.3.3 The role of external actors: international cooperation

In both departmental cases analysed, it became apparent that international cooperation can be both advantageous and detrimental to the advancement of youth policy and programmes.

The Citizen Participation Programme for Peace - PACIPAZ / GTZ started in 2004, within the framework of bilateral technical cooperation between the governments of Colombia and Germany. This programme was aimed at "improving the skills of dialogue, promoting coexistence and addressing conflict constructively, in important state institutions and civil society". The programme focussed on two departments, Cundinamarca and Quindío, and worked with two vulnerable groups: women and youth (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006). It was reported that this process "strengthened ties and communication channels between the municipality authorities and youth organisations (...) in different municipalities of the department of Cundinamarca" (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

The programme has built the capacity of youth organisations in "management and political awareness (...) to clearly define their interests, both individual and collective" and even created networks between youth organisations and established points of dialogue with municipal, departmental and national authorities" (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

Although this programme was very positive, at some point there was a division between the youth that were following these processes and those who were following departmental processes. The GTZ programme was not institutionalised, and was occurring at the same time that the department was promoting the departmental working group programme. In some cases, this resulted in young people involved in the GTZ programme to be more critical about the institution (which was not open to a high degree of criticism), therefore hindering the development of collective solutions. This tension is still active and is an obstacle to promoting consensus and agreements.

In regards to Valle's experience, the role of international cooperation also led to mixed results. On one hand, the resources that the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) made available to strengthen the implementation process of the youth policy were crucial, especially for mobilising youth from all the department's municipalities and to involve them in capacity-building processes (focus group with Bejarano and others, 2014). On the other, AECID supported just one group of young people to participate in the national process of developing the statute, which, as explained in Chapter 3, did not meet the expectations of having regional perspectives or the results of previous processes (focus group with Bejarano y otros, interview with Matta, 2014).

As a result, Valle's youth began to question AECID's objectivity, and started to distrust their ability to convey the perspectives of the various youth groups that were to be included in the policy's implementation and monitoring (interview with Matta, 2014). "When AECID left with their chequebook, resources for youth in the department began to seriously decrease, affecting the implementation of the policy" (focus group Bejarano and others, 2014). This shows that although the youth movement and leaders always call for autonomy, in regards of international cooperation, there is a significant dependence (Reyes, 2015).

In the case of Sibaté, although GTZ was very supportive of the process, young people felt abandoned when they ceased to deliver their programmes at exactly the moment when the youth movement started to seek buy-in for the public policy project from the municipal council. Nevertheless, it is recognised in Sibaté and Cundinamarca that the withdrawal of international cooperation from the territories resulted in a reduction in strength and influence of the youth movements, and that there was neither the institutional capacity nor the will to maintain such a process in their absence.

International cooperation agencies promoted participation as an end itself, rather than as a means or vehicle to achieve other things. As a result, in many of the territories it is possible to find very empowered youth, but very little impact in the results of this participation and mobilisation. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many young people did not want to cooperate with the government institutions.

5.3.4 Necessity of consistent technical support to territorial entities, youth leaders, and youth organisations

Technical support has always been an important tool in developing and implementing public policies that improve outcomes for youth, but the need for effective support is even greater given the difficulties that different stakeholders have had in understanding and implementing the youth statute. Even Colombia Joven recognises its complexity and the difficulties in understanding its core components (interview with Matta, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, when the territorial youth policy documents and operational plans of Valle and Cundinamarca were examined, it was evident that they lacked situational analysis, did not identify accountable actors charged with the responsibility for their implementation, and had no associated budget for their delivery. As will be seen later on, this situation can in some ways be redressed by greater cross-sectorial coordination.

However, there remains a deficiency in most policy documents: the lack of impact indicators (interview with Matta, 2014). To remedy this situation, Colombia Joven has developed a series of national indicators, supporting local authorities to identify indicators to monitor and periodically evaluate the policy, and facilitating citizen oversight (Matta, 2014). However, in order to make this a reality, territorial entities need to develop a range of skills and capacities among their staff.

In particular, local authorities need to develop knowledge and capacities to ensure that staff understand the policies that affect the lives of young people, are aware of the important role of youth in territorial development, are comfortable with advocacy and lobbying to ensure that youth issues are visible in electoral discussions, and are able to create alignment between youth policies and development plans.

Besides, when there are indicators, there are many cases where the activities covered by the operating plans are completely finished and its resources are expended, yet the indicators intended to affect will not vary (Matta, 2014), which makes the impact of policies very limited.

An additional issue related to this concern, recognised by Colombia Joven (Matta, 2014), is the proliferation of individuals and organisations that offer their services as 'developers' or 'updaters' of public youth poli-

cies, without having sufficient contextual and technical knowledge. This has resulted in plagiarised policy documents (for example, the youth policy of Geneva is very similar to that of Bogotá despite being completely different territorial entities) (Matta, 2014), and policies that are incongruent with local realities.

5.3.5 Qualification and empowerment of youth leaders and their organisations

In regards to youth policy formulation, it must be taken into account that in most of the cases, participatory processes had taken place, and better results were achieved if their actors were well prepared. It is a common characteristic in all the cases studied that the youth who participated had a high level of empowerment and abilities acquired in training processes, led by international cooperation agencies, local authorities and non-governmental organisations.

These processes "allowed young people to work together towards their common interests, to identify common ground to act, to not put the differences between them to the fore, and to reduce conflicts" (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

At the beginning of the processes, youth leaders and organisations wanted to address youth issues in their territories on their own, without the involvement of governmental institutions. For example, during the development of Sibaté's youth policy, the lead group did not want to involve representatives from the local, departmental and national government, but later recognised their importance.

Another example of youth's resistance to engaging with public authorities can be seen through the way in which Valle's leaders interacted with Colombia Joven in the formulation process of the departmental public policy. One youth leader commented: "They had not done anything in the department at that time, and we did not need them. Many times we gave them lectures about how they should work. They came, took pictures, signed attendance sheets and then left, frightened by the installed capacity we had" (Bejarano y otros, 2014).

Fortunately, the views of these young people in regards to the adoption, implementation and monitoring of youth policy has evolved. Now, many youth understand that they can also generate changes while working with local governments, believing that "it is important to work also from the inside, not only from the outside" (Bejarano y otros, 2014; Matta, 2014). "We realised that we need friends to advise us and need people to join us in the process" (Alcaldía de Sibaté, Colombia Joven, GTZ, 2006).

Although some regional reports consider that there is a risk for governmental offices to hire youth leaders "more concerned about their own trajectories than about the youth policy" (Cepal, OIJ e Imjuve, 2014), the training processes that many young leaders undertake allow them to be real interlocutors and adequate policy developers.

There is great value in the participation of youth-led organisations in policy development and in their ability to fulfil a watchdog role in processes concerning youth development. Furthermore, it is very important that youth leaders and organisations use the same energy and interest to participate in advocacy and lobbying efforts related to legislative changes and with sectorial policies that affect them, as they do with other processes (Cepal, OIJ e Injuve, 2014).

According to the participants in Valle's focus group, generational renewal is one of the most important and challenging issues to take into account when addressing youth action. It is very important to engage new young people and youth-led organisations, which come with new ideas and add freshness and sustainability to the efforts, rather than simply include the same young people who are long established within youth arenas (Bejarano y otros, 2014).

Although it seems that both in Valle and Cundinamarca this change had been possible, the most obvious avenue through which youth can push for change in Valle – youth councils and the assemblies – are closed, they have not been elected anymore, which affects the process (Bejarano y otros, 2014; Matta, 2014).

Finally, an issue that greatly affected the action of youth movements was the constant conflict and confrontation between different groups of young people. For example, in the discussion of the statute, there was a

clear division between those youth that were related with political parties and those who came from social and civic organisations.

5.3.6 Inter-sectorial coordination

Although the youth policy is meant to be transversal, in regards to budget, implementation, and strategic planning, youth issues are managed by the different sectors, and the disconnection between them is large in most territories. In Cundinamarca and Ginebra, the research team was told that many civil servants responsible for youth were not even aware that there was a youth policy at the territorial level (Interviews with Matias and Saavedra, 2014).

This disconnect and lack of knowledge highlights the importance of improving inter-sectorial coordination, in a way that allows each sector to keep in mind policy goals and commitments. Such an approach has been very successful in gender policies, but has advanced very slowly in youth policies (Cepal, OIJ e Imjuve, 2014).

In part, this failure is influenced by the use of sectorial indicators and performance measures, which result in public servants being overly focussed on the activities related with their own sector, while forgetting a comprehensive vision of the policy and youth (interview with Matías, 2014).

There is currently greater awareness of the importance of inter-sectorial coordination in the development and delivery of policy, and of the fundamental role that Colombia Joven plays as a technical and political advisor, and as an appointed focal point for youth issues in each territorial entity. Although Colombia Joven's office of sectorial action is being strenghtened (Reyes, 2015), Colombia Joven recognises that there is still much to do to improve coordination across different sectors (interview with Matta, 2014), especially in sectors that are not usually associated with youth, such as housing (Reyes, 2015).

In regards to the national policy, Colombia Joven recognises that the youth statute has a sectorial approach that could help the inter-sectorial action.

A good example of a very advanced process of inter-sectorial coordination for youth issues was led by a municipal youth platform in Buga, a mu-

nicipality in Valle del Cauca. The platform elected 13 representatives to sit on the Board of Directors of the most important government offices in the municipality. The representatives are responsible for gathering information on the plans and actions of each sector in relation to youth. They then present this information to the platform and lead discussions to establish the platform's positions, recommendations, and requests to each sectorial office (interview with Matta, 2014).

Inter-agency coordination is also associated with the dissemination of information about opportunities for youth. Different sectors frequently plan actions that are of direct benefit to young people, but sometimes do not implement them due to a lack of awareness about these opportunities among young people. Colombia Joven has found that this is not the result of apathy among youth and their organisations, but largely because the information is not properly disseminated (Reyes, 2014). Colombia Joven has some responsibility to strengthen the quality of the youth sector network to help prevent wasted efforts.

Even "successful" cases of inter-sectorial cooperation have been associated with corruption and malpractice. One example is Valle del Cauca's actions on sexual and reproductive health for young people. This initiative has been widely recognised at the local, national and international level, and in fact, had also played a pivotal role in galvanising other sectors' actions to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights SRHR of young people. The SSAAJ programmes have been established in all of the departments' municipalities.

SSAAJ is a model developed by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection with technical and financial support from UNFPA. This programme aims to generate spaces and methodologies inside health institutions that allow for comprehensive and differential care for people aged 10-29. This model allows institutions to adapt in order to respond adequately to the needs and expectations of young people. Currently, this programme is active in several territories of the country including Valle del Cauca.

However, as people from the secretariat expressed during an interview (Castaño M. 2014), difficulties arise when budget allocations do not rise in line with inflation, resulting from the fact that approximately 30% of the resources directed at youth health programmes and initiatives get stuck in

intermediaries' hands. The failure of money to reach frontline services is related to party actors that serve as intermediaries between the administration and youth, and who demand a proportion of the funds for the execution of programme. Despite these limitations, a combination of political will and pressure from active youth has enabled this programme to continue and to achieve positive results that will be outlined below.

One of the strongest examples of inter-sectorial coordination identified through the research team's field visits was the Friendly Health Services for Adolescents and Youth Programme (SSAAJ for its acronym in Spanish) in Valle del Cauca[80].

The SSAAJ programme in Valle, characterised by active participation from local youth since its inception, was supported by strategies aiming to promote sexual education and citizenship construction, which were supported by other secretariats from the governor's office (i.e. education, social development). These programmes and initiatives have continuously involved youth participation, particularly in the implementation (e.g. planning of programmes and services), use, and evaluation of service delivery. The active participation of young people has been supported and encouraged through formal and informal trainings in SRH, SRHR, political activism, participation, and peer education.

Currently, the SSAJJ programme in Valle is working in all of the department's municipalities where the main themes continue to be SRH services, youth participation and sexual education. The programme have extended, with the support of several municipalities and healthcare centres, to differential care[81] for Afro-Colombians, people living with disabilities, and the LGBTI community. All these programmes have been considered a success by the Health Secretariat, for the exception of the differential programmes for indigenous populations, which have failed to succeed mainly because of cultural differences and adaptation.

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80. The following text was built from an interview with Castaño, the person in charge of SRH at the Departmental Health Secretariat (DHS).

81. Differential care in this case relates: 1. To the visualization of discriminatory treatment and behavior for minority groups; 2. To the provision of healthcare, taking into account the previous analysis, to satisfy the health needs of the particular group.

The administrator for SRH at the Departmental Health Secretariat (DHS) reported that the processes have been so effective that those who were first involved in the design and implementation of SSAAJ, are now consultants at the local, regional and national levels. She also reported that youth organisations in the municipalities and localities work to guarantee that the programme continues to provide youth-friendly services and to ensure that young people are included in the decision-making processes.

However, it must be noted that young people are not always included in decision-making processes, as was the case in the municipality of Dagua: At one point, it reached the target of zero pregnancies in women under 14 years of age was reached. However, after changes in the leadership and administration of the local hospital and the municipality, the SSAAJ programme has become weaker and an increase in under-14 pregnancies has been recorded (Londoño, Castaño, & Solarte, 2014).

> *"There needs to be social mobilisation for the demand of rights but this demand must always be received by institutions and they must respond accordingly."*
>
> Castaño, 2014

Inter-sectorial cooperation at the departmental level has not always been easy, as the health sector plans and executes activities related to sexual education without active involvement of the education sector. However, health officers report that this is not the case in the municipalities where there are focal points, who act as facilitators.

The fact that the SSAAJ programme is mainly present in public hospitals and small public healthcare centres puts the youth-friendly services out of the reach of young people from the contributions-based regime. Nevertheless, some health insurers of the contributions-based regime have begun to implement SSAAJ in their own clinics with the support of DHS, making these services accessible for that group of young people..

Moreover, the high turnover of contractors inside public institutions has become a phenomenon that hinders quality and sustainability of programmes that is present not only in Valle, but also throughout the country (Corte Constitucional, 2009). This relates to problems that Colombian youth (and adults) face frequently, and has consequences for their wellbeing, including informal work that negatively affects public health officials, health

care professionals and the people who require the services (i.e. regarding the barriers to healthcare posed by not having a formal and stable job).

In regards to the expansion of SSAAJ from the SRH services to other youth-relevant health services, the public health officers from Valle say it has not been an easy task, although some municipalities have made incredible progress.

In terms of expanding the offer of youth-friendly health services, one of the difficulties identified is that sometimes, directives from the national level do not correspond to realities at either the national or territorial levels. There are times that the national government gives new mandates on services to local health sectors without noting that some are already implementing them, or at other times, the national government gives mandates without assuring financial, legal means, and/or institutional capacity for their fulfilment, as was the case with mental health.

> *"The Ministry of Health, at one point, started to say that we needed to include mental health services in the SSAAJ programme, but there were no available resources according to the current package of benefits at that time. Mental health services were only available in the package of benefits at the departmental level where more complex services were delivered."*

> Castaño 2014

But despite these difficulties, the SSAAJ programme has shown important progress. The fertility rate for women over 19 was 77.3 per thousand in 2008 and came down to 53.7 per thousand in 2013. In the case of pregnancies under the age of 14, the rate reduced from 4.1 in 2008 to 2.7 per one thousand in 2013. Interestingly Bolivar, another municipality of Valle, has successfully implemented health services specifically for young people outside the scope of SRH, including dentistry, dermatology, nutrition, and mental health. Although progress has been evident, rural territories remain neglected, under-registered and unattended with figures and indicators often below those in the urban settings.

Lastly, it was noted during the interviews with public health officers that in order to successfully include services for young people, it is important that the different areas of public health develop clear methodologies and tools for implementation at the local level.

5.4 Main conclusions and recommendations

The large number of youth policies that exist in Colombia at local, territorial and national levels can be considered a significant strength in the country's efforts to ensure that young people are considered a distinct population group.

In relation to Valle's public policy, Colombia Joven's territorial advisor, Diego Matta, reports that it is not possible to determine whether it has been successfully implemented. However, he does note that the important symbolic value of having a policy, the role that it has played in generating an environment of discussion and collaboration among different stakeholders active in the field of youth, and the way in which its development empowered youth in the department.

Therefore, despite the issues associated with implementation, the action of announcing and creating a youth policy results in significant attention from different actors, which in turn, creates a critical mass of discussion on youth issues that not only allows young people to organise themselves and make demands on their interests, but also pushes the territorial administrations to listen to youth and to try to address those demands.

Furthermore, based on the experiences of Valle and Cundinamarca, there are several examples of good practice that can be highlighted. Firstly, both processes established spaces for active youth movements that promoted citizen participation, political education, and discussions about the future for youth in their territories. These arenas facilitated the development of youth policy and helped youth and policymakers to identify common interests and views that needed to be incorporated into the policy.

Despite the divisions within youth movements that have been mentioned, it is important to highlight the advancement of young leaders who were committed to the development of youth in their territories. Participation in these processes enabled young people to develop skills and competencies and to contribute to Colombia's social development.

However, it is apparent that there is a need for further resources (not only monetary) to be allocated to youth development. There is a clearly visible imbalance between the level of investment directed to children, versus that which is directed to youth. While there has been "considerable effort

to amend the lack of coverage of primary education, to try to enroll all children in primary school, and to respond to the lack of social protection for the elderly, [this] has left adolescents and youth 'in the background'", according to a recent report by the Ibero-American Youth Organisation (lainformacion.com, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, in Colombia, "resource allocation usually occurs in a context of competition between the different needs of the country. This tension is expressed between government projects and programmes; between strategies for supply or service delivery, and between budget sectors" (Guerrero & Valdés, 2001; quoted by Cepal, OIJ e Imjuve, 2014).

Graph 27
Direct and indirect social investment in youth, 2012. Percentage of GDP
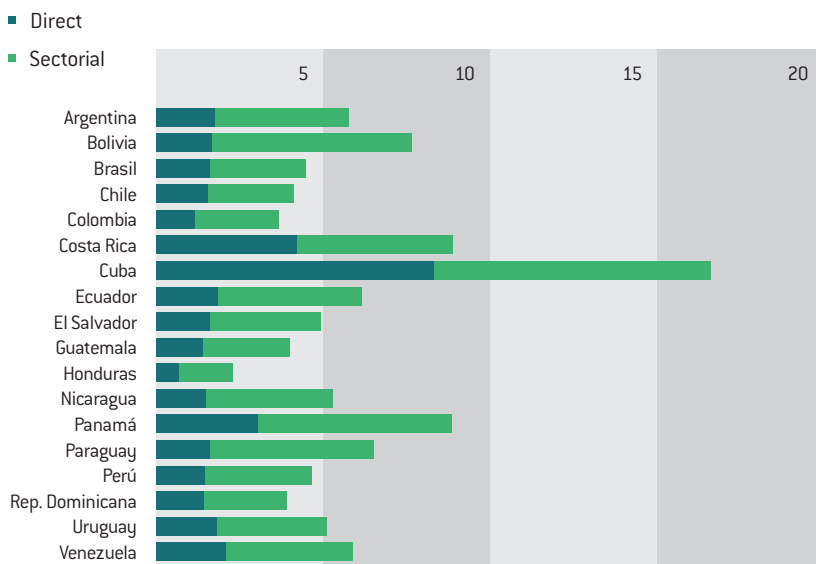
Graph 28

Investment in youth as a percentage of social expending. 2012
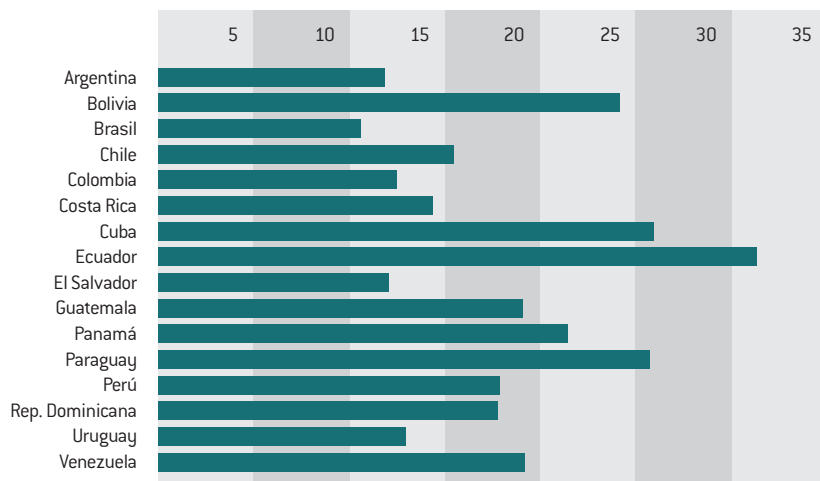
Source: Built with information from Cepal, OIJ and Imjuve, 2014

Although most of the indirect investment in youth has been traditionally invisible[82], the resources related to youth issues must be increased. Cuba, Costa Rica, Panama and Bolivia are the Latin countries that allocate most money on youth issues as a percentage of GDP (Cepal, OIJ e Imjuve, 2014). But in regards to allocation as percentage of social spending, Ecuador, Cuba, Paraguay and Bolivia are the countries with the highest investment in youth issues (Cepal, OIJ e Imjuve, 2014).

Colombia does not stand among the highest youth investment as a percentage of GDP, nor as a percentage of social spending. 13.581 millions of

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82. According to Cepal, OIJ and Imjuve (2014) there are four types of social investment in youth: „i) The social investment that is reflected in policies and programmes whose target population is young and they are the direct beneficiaries (...), ii) social investment made through programmes that are not designed specifically to youth but to a wider population which are part and are therefore beneficiaries with other groups of the population (...), iii) public expenditure that benefits young indirectly and only because they are part of homes receiving the resources allocated by the programmes, iv) investment related with programmes whose results are not directed specifically to them or the homes to which they belong, but to their territories or places".

dollars were allocated in 2012, from which the 68% was allocated through different sectors, as seen in graphs 26 and 27[83].

Furthermore, youth development in the country follows the same patterns of inequality that exist between the youth population as a whole and between the municipalities. National policies should address the disparities of the outcomes experienced by young people in the municipalities. It is in need of a more equitable distribution of resources to support the development of young people in particularly disadvantaged municipalities and territories.

The implementation of different youth policies is also affected by weak decentralization. In terms of administration, finance and reporting, the relationship between different levels of governance lacks coherence. For example, the youth citizenship statute demands that local governments undertake numerous responsibilities for which their budgets are insufficient. "It is a shame to recognise that the fiscal decentralisation has been limited (...). With limited progress in strengthening the territorial budgets (...), the municipalities still depend on the national transfers" (Saldias, 2013).

Some experts argue that for many smaller municipalities, it may not be as important to develop a full youth policy, but rather they should focus on establishing guidelines and action plans: "It is im-

Graph 29
Colombian youth investment by sector. National, 2012

Dwelling and others 9 %
Social assistance 4 %
Health 43 %
Education 44 %
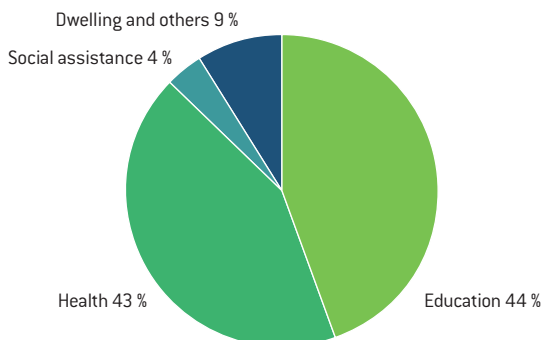
Source: Built with information from Cepal, OIJ and Imjuve, 2014

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83. It is important to note that the information of the report mentioned includes just national aggregates, and that taking into account the regional data, the investment would be higher. For example, Bogotá in 2012 invested 2,8 billions of pesos/1.700 millions of dollars in education alone.

portant to not make heavier the burden of responsibilities that small and resource-poor municipalities have to carry. In its complexity, the youth statute does not recognise the realities of different types of municipalities, and expects the same from smaller municipalities as it does for large cities (Matta, 2014). On the other hand, the absence of youth councils in the country has closed opportunities for youth to associate, debate, and campaign for youth issues. In November 2014, Colombia Joven's new director reiterated that youth councils cannot be elected until there is clarity on the way lists are compiled and seats are distributed. He also said that opportunities for scrutinising the electoral process for Municipal Youth Councils (MYC) were not clear (Reyes, 2014). The Constitutional Court has indicated that clarification of these issues should be done via congress, through an amendment to the law (Reyes, 2014).

In the absence of youth councils, there is a need to increase and strengthen mechanisms to promote youth participation in policymaking, however there is no agreement on how this should be achieved. With the exception of Valle, many youth leaders and organisations consider the opportunities for youth participation to be limited, especially in initiatives at the departmental and national levels (Buitrago, 2014).

Given the uneven balance of power between governments, citizens and civil society, it is unsurprising that there will be some degree of dissatisfaction about the openness and inputs considered in all decision-making processes. However incomplete the methodologies have been, the efforts made to include young people have helped to ensure that youth policies are, in one way or another, aligned with their needs and visions.

Fabio Velasquez and Esperanza González have studied the limitations and weaknesses of participations processes in Colombia[84]. One of the flaws

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84. Velásquez, F., & González, E. (2003). Qué ha pasado con la participación ciudadana en Colombia. Bogotá; Velásquez, F., & González, E. (2008). Institucionalidad participativa en Colombia. Balance y retos. Bogotá; Velásquez, F., & González, E. (2010). Conclusiones del tercer encuentro de Planeación Local y presupuesto participativo. Tercer encuentro de Planeación Local y presupuesto participativo. Medellín: Foro Nacional por Colombia; Velásquez, F., & González, E. (2010). La planeación participativa, el sistema nacional de planeación y los presupuestos participativos en Colombia. Medellín: Foro Nacional por Colombia. Also, can be studied: Foro Nacional por Colombia; Ministerio del Interior y de la Justicia. (2011). Trayectorias de la participación ciudadana en Colombia. Documento para la discusión. Bogotá.

they highlight is that there is often a group of people that co-opt the scenarios, and restrict the opportunities for the participation of new groups and leaders (Bejarano y otros, 2014). Furthermore, in general, the youth that participate in political processes are frequently those who are organised and who are still in the educational system (Buitrago, 2014). Young people who are not part of social and civic organisations, or who have not completed their studies, are too infrequently involved in decision-making processes, even though their opinions and needs are just as important.

Furthermore, young people who attend focus groups said that there is a great need for national processes to guarantee opportunities for participation at the territorial level, to encourage the participation of a more diverse group of young people, and for the process to overcome the dissatisfaction that some young groups from outside Bogotá view as a Bogotá-centric process (Bejarano y otros, 2014):

> *"The process of construction of the statute was centralised. Although it was developed by young people, behind them are "adulto-cratic" interests. It is a statute that was relevant for urban youth in large cities. It is not intended for small areas, for the rural youth and for urban youth that live in small cities or towns."*

Buitrago, 2014

One of the key challenges most frequently cited by the people interviewed was the monitoring and evaluation of youth policies. As discussed earlier, the absence of clear indicators and performance measures in current policies makes it very difficult to assess and evaluate the impact and results of the different policies. Furthermore, challenges remain in understanding public policy as a research process that is linked with, and supported by, the academic community. One of the conclusions drawn from the Biennale on Childhood and Youth[85] held in 2014 was that public policies on the continent are formulated without the academic rigor they should have (interview with Matías, 2014).

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85. Between 17 to 21 November was held in Manizales, Colombia, the Latin American Biennial of Children and Youth, which was attended by over 800 young people from countries like Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay Democracies, Human Rights and Citizenship.

Youth policy and the attainment of a decent life

Young people in Colombia do not live a decent life, in particular, Afro-Colombians, indigenous, young people living in rural and armed conflict areas. Moreover, these groups are especially affected by poverty and exclusion. In the words of Gustavo Petro, the mayor of Bogotá, "the main challenge in Colombia to finally reaching peace, is to overcome youth exclusion" (Gustavo Petro, 2014).

With regards to the **material conditions of existence that allow the individuals to follow a life plan**, it has been seen that there is still much to do in regards with the coverage of youth basic needs, especially in small municipalities and rural areas. The situation of ethnic minorities has been proven to be extremely worse.

For example, Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca), being one of the cases studies chosen within this report, is one of the municipalities with the highest population of African descents in the country, reaching an 88.5% of the population of the country. Despite hosting Colombia´s largest port in the Pacific, the city is facing a severe situation of violence affecting young people in the territory, who are being recruited for illicit activities by criminal organisations.

The ombudsman, Armando Otálora, has expressed his concerns about the social crisis in the port that puts young people at risk. The official said: "School desertion reaches 40%, health care coverage reaches only 45%, the housing deficit reaches 42,000 units in urban areas and water supply barely reaches 55% of households"[86]. These young Colombians, who are in the midst of violence and lack resources from public policies, end up being recruited as informants, killers, vendors and retailers of illicit drugs, and even serving as members of the criminal gangs present in Buenaventura.

In addition, public services are not sufficiently helping young people overcome the disadvantages they continue to face. This is evident in many ways. A striking proportion of youth come from vulnerable and poor households. These young people have experienced poor educational opportuni-

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86. [En línea], Toro Yesid, "Reclutamiento de menores en el Puerto, La generación perdida", disponible en: http://www.laotraorilla.co/index.php/investigaciones/item/la-generacion-perdida-de-buenaventura.

ties and are inadequately covered by the health systems. Of those who are covered by the health and education systems, some still face barriers and low-quality services. Youth as a whole are disproportionally affected by unemployment and informal employment, diminishing chances to follow their life plans.

As a result, health issues present huge challenges. For instance, young people from the subsidised regime face barriers in accessing youth-friendly services and receive poor quality services. Contraceptives and risk reduction services are less frequently available for young people, especially youth from minority backgrounds including indigenous, Afro-Colombians, the LGBTI community, and young people with disabilities.

With regards to **the ability to design, plan, and determine a life course according to youth aspirations**, the lack of opportunities, in particular in relation to quality of education and employment, makes it difficult to follow life plans. This situation results in frustration among particular segments of young people in Colombia.

Across Colombia, age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education has not been incorporated within policies and school curricula. As long as young people continue to be discriminated against schools, hospitals, and workplaces, they will not be able to live a decent life. This is also the case for youth-friendly healthcare services, which are supposed to be rights-based and provide young people with the necessary information to make informed decisions.

The main causes of death among young people in Colombia are homicide, road-traffic incidents, and suicides. In many communities, young people fear for their lives. These fears and difficulties affect mental health and hinder the possibility to reach a decent life.

Finally, regarding the **physical and moral integrity that are necessary conditions for the establishment of a life plan;** the internal conflict and other violence actions in the country continue to affect young people. Although there is a window of opportunity in the peace process that is currently in place, there is not youth participation within this process. Meanwhile, homicide is the first cause of death for young people in Colombia, and suicide comes second. The health sector has limited capacities to counter these problems.

Therefore, cooperation and networking with different institutions from the private and public sector is highly needed.

Hope and fears

According to Colombia Joven's director, Juan Carlos Reyes, the institution played an important role in trying to ensure that a youth perspective was incorporated into the new National Development Plan, "especially in the strategies of social mobility and strengthening the rule of law" (Reyes, 2014):

> *"33 consultations were led by the ICBF and Colombia Joven, where 1575 people participated, including officials, academics and young people and their organisations (600-700 youth) (...) In addition, there was a consultation at the national level with 75 young representatives from all territories and social groups; indigenous, Afro, LGBTI, young environmentalists, political parties, youth religious communities, young people living with HIV."*

<div align="right">Reyes, 2014</div>

This action, coordinated with the sector in charge of child and adolescence policies, is very important because it has the potential to reduce the tension that exists between these two sectors. To guarantee this, Reyes (2014) also affirms that it is necessary " [to] understand that the National Youth System cannot be oblivious to the National Family Welfare System [and to] establish a dialogue between the Code of Childhood and Adolescence and youth citizenship statute". As research shows, if youth movements, leaders and organisations fail to monitor and evaluate youth actions and policies, they will remain only on paper. Taking into account that 2015 is an electoral year, where new mayors and governors will be elected, there should be a strategic effort from the youth sector to ensure that youth issues are visible, to create agreements with candidates, and to follow up with the candidates who are elected.

The ultimate hope that many Colombians had in 2014 was the promise of peace. At the end of 2012, a peace process between the national government and the guerrillas of FARC was officially announced. In two years, four areas (rural development, political participation, narco-traffic and victims) were covered, and agreements from both sides were established.

From the outset of negotiations, and in response to the claim of civil society, the president announced that the National Peace Council (created in 1998) would grant seats to representatives from different social sectors for discussing different issues, although they will not have a seat in the negotiation rounds. The council was reopened in October 2014, and was called to be part of it the seventeen sectors included in the Law of Victims (1448/2011), plus "new sectors such as victims, youth, LGBTI, artists, and socio-political movements that were recently created" (Redepaz, 2014).

Although Colombia Joven called on around fifteen youth organisations with national scope (Colombia Joven, 2014), some of the representatives of these organisations had told the research team that they have not been called again, although the commitment was to have meetings at least every two months.

As such, unfortunately, there has been very little representation of youth in the peace process. As a result, a number of different initiatives tried to gather youth proposals to put them into consideration in the process. For example, in May 2014, in an initiative led by different sectors, the forum 'Retrieving the Voice of Young People in Post-Conflict Colombia' was held, in which more than 700 young victims from across the country submitted their proposals for a post-conflict situation (El Tiempo, 2014).

In September 2014, a group of young leaders started a process of collecting signatures to ask the government to create a youth audience in La Habana (Caracol Radio, 2014). These youngsters were mostly worried about the future and the options that thousands of young members of the guerrilla will have once they demobilise. However, this initiative did not have a visible impact, because at the end of the process, the audience was not granted and the president did not start a dialogue with them. In turn this group of young leaders is now calling to other youth to reject the peace process (El Espectador, 2014), which is the worst scenario for building a path for reconciliation.

Young people should be given the opportunity to choose to receive an education over joining the army. Colombia's army ignores not only the judgments of the Constitutional Court, the recommendations of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the United Nations, and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the UN, but also the dignity of the rural and

urban youth and their potential in supporting national peace-building. Illegal recruitment should be part of the peace process agenda, and one of the possible entrance points for youth to participate in this process (Las Dos Orillas, 2015).

Recommendations

Participation

1. The focus groups of this research shared a common opinion about the weakening of the youth movements in the recent years. It is important that youth organisations continue to replenish their members with youth from the upcoming generation. This initiative will take advantage of the institutional and non-institutional scenarios recognised by the National Statute of Youth Citizenship. Without this commitment, those scenarios will remain on paper.

2. With regards to the upcoming elections for mayors and governors, the election is an opportunity for youth organisations, groups and movements to actively advocate in favor of youth development. Following the example of Sibate´s youth movement, it is important to design clear pathways after these elections in order to avoid false commitments by the incoming administration. One of the experiences that could be followed is the participative budgets for youth in Bogotá, implemented in 2012.

3. The National Statute of Youth Citizenship was adopted in 2012, but it has not been widely implemented. Since the statute is about fundamental rights, accountability authorities (i.e. the General Inspector's Office, the Auditor General and the Ombudsman office) should be involved with the purpose of ensuring adequate implementation. Likewise, the civil society sector (including youth) and academia should enforce social accountability as a way of actively demanding the statute´s implementation.

4. As previously stated, the National Statute of Youth Citizenship is not completely regulated, the youth council election issues have not yet been solved, and another law has to be approved to ensure fundamental rights. In the meantime, municipalities should follow the example of

departments like Cundinamarca, and start their implementation with the creation of the platforms that the statute mentions until youth councils are elected. This will allow youth movements to remain active, and properly create the channel to link between platforms and councils, when they are formed.

5. One of the main recommendations is to increase the territorial budget towards decentralisation. This financial support could alleviate some of the difficulties the territorial level has faced in fully implementing the implicit public policies (ex. health, education, employment). In the case of explicit public policies, an increased budget does not necessarily guarantee a similar investment for youth. For this reason, Colombia Joven should prioritise international cooperation, as well as public and private partnerships for youth deliverables in the territories.

6. For successful and effective implementation of youth public policy, young people should have real participation and decision-making power in areas of incidence, such as political parties, youth councils, national and local government agencies and civil society organisations. Resources should be allocated specifically to promote diverse and meaningful youth participation.

7. Colombia is involved in a peace process that will hopefully result in a post-conflict agreement. For the sustainability of a possible peace agreement, the government needs to guarantee participation, given that it is a non-violent conflict resolution mechanism.

8. On the national and territorial levels, Colombia Joven needs to actively work on the creation of spaces and mechanisms for meaningful youth engagement with an allocated budget inside the different sectors. This budget should include resources not only to execute projects and activities, but also support the creation of youth networks that are highly participative, democratic, inclusive, and sustainable.

9. Working alongside youth, civil society organisations in Colombia, as well as organisations from the public and private sector, should allocate the budget to create mechanisms that meaningfully engage young people in a non-tokenistic way, which will allow them to influence decision-making processes and define their own governance.

10. To organise and galvanise meaningful youth participation, the youth movement should actively engage different movements that also affect youth, including climate change and environment, sustainable development, employment, education, health, human rights and feminism.

Education

1. For 2012, the public spending on education as a percentage of GDP was 4.90% (3.80% for basic and secondary; 1% for higher education and 0.10% for public spending not classifiable).[87] Therefore, the share of investment in education in relation to GDP should be increased to 6% or 7% with sustained progression over time, considering that this is the amount that the country´s educational leaders invest in this area.

» The annual expenditure per student in 2011 for basic education was USD 2,041 and for secondary was USD 2,207. This is a low expense when compared to other countries in the region such as Chile (USD 4,551 and USD 4,495), Mexico (USD 2,622 and USD 2,943) and Brazil (USD 2,673 and USD 2,662), for basic and secondary education, respectively.[88]

» Currently, the budget for education is the second-highest investment of Colombia's national budget, with 27.276 billion pesos (USD dedicated to national defense and 27.744 billion pesos to police. It is important to emphasise that the budget for education has been growing in the country and this should continue to be a priority for the state in a possible post-conflict scenario.[89]

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87. [En línea], Ministerio de Educación, "Gasto público en educación como porcentaje del PIB", disponible en: http://menweb.mineducacion.gov.co/seguimiento/estadisticas/principal_ind.php?consulta=gasto_publico_nivel&nivel=21, consultado: 14 de febrero de 2015.

88. [En línea], "Para OCDE, Colombia es el que menos gasta en educación básica en América latina", disponible en: http://www.larepublica.co/para-ocde-colombia-es-el-que-menos-gasta-en-educaci%C3%B3n-b%C3%A1sica-en-am%C3%A9rica-latina_165641, consultado: 14 de febrero de 2015.

89. [En línea], "Este es el presupuesto de la nación para 2014", disponible en: http://www.urnadecristal.gov.co/gestion-gobierno/presupuesto-colombia-2014-sena-agro, consultado: 14 de febrero de 2015.

2. A special effort must be made to reduce the gaps between the public and private institutions in relation to quality and quantity of the education services. To achieve this, the government should continue promoting strategies, such as the Single Education Day, nationwide. Increasing the national budget for education should then meet the needs of new teachers, student nutrition, transportation, and infrastructure.

   In this sense, the initiative of Single Education Day that the Ministry of Education is implementing at the moment is very timely. However, the pilot takes place only in 202 educational institutions in 26 territorial entities, benefiting only 133,481 students in 2015 (1.4% of all students in the country), which implies very slow progress compared to the country's needs[90].

3. In order to ensure the right of education for all young Colombians, the government should continue to strengthen information systems to identify and characterise out-of-school youth in order to take preventive measures and actions that attend to this population. This strategy should be further accompanied by three other measures, including: 1) Implementing, at a national level, more out-of-school training programmes such as those being developed with the National Training Service (SENA for its initials in Spanish). These programmes train young people outside the education system in the areas required to work in the places where they live; 2) Expanding the reach of courses and virtual learning environments so that youth can access information and communication technologies (ICT); 3) Finding and identifying the children and youth who are not studying in order to enroll them in the education system.

4. While the government has increased coverage in education, the creation of enrolment quotas must be accompanied with incentives on quality, relevance, and usefulness of curricula, so that students and their families can become aware of the importance of staying in the education system as a strategy of social mobility for the future.

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90. [En línea], Ministerio de Educación. Jornada única en Colombia. 2014. Disponible en; n: http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/cvn/1665/articles-348418_archivo_pdf.pdf.

In Latin America, Chile (as an OECD member country) was the highest scoring Latin American country in the 2012 PISA assessment and serves as a reference for comparison to Colombia when analysing why the country needs to address policies to improve the quality of education in the country. In Chile, 51.5% of students did not reach the basic level in math (level 2 or minimum required to perform in contemporary society), but in Colombia, the percentage was 74%, and the OECD average was 23%. Moreover, in Chile, 1.6% of students reached the highest levels (levels 5 and 6), but in Colombia, this percentage was only of 0.3% and the OECD average was 12.6%. In the area of science, 34.5% of Chileans students were below the minimum level, while ten in a thousand achieved the highest levels.[91] In comparison, 56.2% of Colombian students did not reach the minimum level, and only one in a thousand reached the highest levels.

5. To improve the performance of Colombia in PISA, it is necessary that the government:

» Continues to strengthen policies to address early childhood education in the country.

» Reduces the still-existing gaps in time and quality of education between rural areas and large cities.

» Leads educational reforms aimed at young people to develop thinking ability, critical reading, creativity, problem-solving and how concepts are used in everyday life.

» Take action to decrease the percentage of students that fail to meet the basic level in each area assessed, while increasing the percentage of those located in the upper levels.

» Has a clear goal of improvement for each level of each area assessed in order to monitor the progress of the students.

6. To achieve the required improvements in education quality, commitment and joint work is needed among all those responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating education policies, starting with the

91. ICFES, "Colombia en PISA 2012, informe nacional de resultados, Resumen ejecutivo", Bogotá, 2013.

Ministry of Education, down through to the Secretaries of Education, the territorial entities and finally, the education institutions themselves. Given the chain of command, it is vital that educational institutions implement their school autonomy and that through the participation of principals, teachers, students and parents, they discuss and choose an institutional education project. This project must be focussed on meeting the academic and quality needs of the community in order to have a clear pedagogical and methodological plan that guides the content of teaching in daily practice.

7. The government of Colombia should work on improving communication between secondary and higher education, especially for students from lower socioeconomic levels who attend public schools. Strategies should be generated for students who complete their formation in public schools in order to prepare them to pass the admission exams for public universities, and/or search for mechanisms for them to access private universities.

   Currently, the coverage of higher education barely reaches 45%. In order to have more and better-educated young professionals, additional resources should be allocated to higher education, approximately 1.2% of GDP. With the implementation of the programme Being Smart Pays (Ser Pilo Paga), for example, Colombia has taken a step forward in providing opportunities for the best and poorest students in the country to access higher education. Regardless, the Colombian government should increase the investment in tertiary education to meet the shortfall in coverage by allocating resources for the expansion and strengthening of public universities.

8. Regarding tertiary education in Colombia and taking into account the labour market conditions in the country, the Colombian government should promote education to prepare young people to seek alternative and independent forms of work, reorient their knowledge and skills with ease from one job to another, and finally, to form businesses, companies, and be entrepreneurs that take into account the current dynamics of the economy.

9. Under the peace process that is taking place in Colombia, the national government should promote education for peace in country's educational institutions with actions that involve the entire educational community and areas of knowledge, including civic education, participation, democracy, environmental sustainability, and healthy living habits (i.e. healthy nutrition, responsible, consensual and fulfilling sexual and reproductive life, prevention of psychoactive products consumption and promotion of harm reduction, physical activity, and active ageing), and peace. This process should be further strengthened at all levels, but especially in schools with the discussion and adoption of curriculum proposals that articulate traditional academic knowledge, while developing the capacities of each student in areas such as arts, sports and citizenship. Such programmes will help students learn how to live in a community and in harmony with the planet. The education project entitled 'Citizenship and Civic Coexistence' is an example of such a programme currently being implemented by the District Secretariat of Education in the city of Bogotá.

10. In order to strengthen the national youth system in the country, Colombia Joven should seek scenarios of intersectorial articulation with the education, health and other sectors at the national and local levels to create spaces and mechanisms that facilitate meaningful participation of youth in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policies, and prioritise education for participation.

Health

1. In retrospect, the relevant actors in the national government (presidency, Ministry of Health, and congress) should have made explicit that health is a fundamental right before the Colombian constitution was formed. They should reform the health system, in accord to civil society's requests, including the following overarching principles and provisions:

» Be a public and universal system.

» Restricts profit interests of intermediaries (for-profit health insurance companies) in the delivery of healthcare services.

» Frame the provision of healthcare services and health promotion under a "universal" approach, using the principles of the Primary Health Care (PHC) in the Alma Ata Declaration.

» Recognise and promote meaningful youth participation and for all institutions within the systems to be held accountable.

» Provide the same quality and quantity of services for all peoples regardless of their age, gender, race, income, patrimony and any other characteristic. Special consideration should be given for conflict victims.

2. Health information should be disaggregated by gender (recognising and respecting those non-gender conforming and trans-gender peoples) and age (with 5-years intervals). The SIVIGILA (National Surveillance System on Public Health) should coordinate with the National Institute for Forensics and Legal Medicine, the National Department of Statistics (DANE), and other institutional sources of health information for the collection, processing and sharing of information to ensure data quality. This information must be disseminated in a youth-friendly way to allow monitoring and accountability.

3. The Ministry of Health and territorial health authorities need to work together with private and public health insurers and providers to adapt facilities to be adolescent and youth-friendly and make it accessible for all young people, irrespective of their affiliation to the health system or the regime they have. This should be done in conjunction with training health professionals in youth friendliness, and an awareness campaign to promote demand/community acceptance of SSAAJ. Some important aspects to consider are:

» Universal access to modern contraceptive methods[92], and family planning counselling should be guaranteed for adolescents and youth. Condoms must be made freely available and offered to all sexually active people, or those planning to become sexually active, and not only to people living with HIV.

....

92. Modern contraceptive methods include: oral, injectable, implants, intrauterine devices, condoms, sterilization, lactational amenorrhea, and emergency contraception. Family planning, fact sheet N°351, Updated May 2013. World Health Organization.

» Implement, monitor and evaluate strategies that particularly address the health needs of young key populations (Men who have sex with men – MSM, sex workers, imprisoned people, people who inject drugs, and transgender people), with a special focus on the prevention, diagnosis, follow-up treatment of HIV.

» Provide alternatives for harm reduction services[93] and mental health services for youth.

» Adopt evidence-based methodologies to address the physical and mental health needs of youth, especially those who are victims of violence, conflict and torture. The ACOPLE[94] methodology has proven to be successful in Colombian and other low-resource settings.

» There is a need to conduct rigorous studies that yield evidence for the improvement of healthcare service delivery for young people, especially evidence on SRH, which remains weak.

4. At both the territorial and national level, the General Inspector's Office, the Auditor General, the Ombudsman office (Defensoría del Pueblo), the National Super-Intendant for Health, the Ministry of Health, and health secretariats need to establish provisions of accountability and control, using youth-friendly language, with a special focus on the respect of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and policies and programmes that affect youth health and rights.

5. The National Programme on Education for Sexuality and Building of Citizenship, led by the national Ministry of Education, needs to:

....

93. Harm reduction refers to policies, programmes and approaches that seek to reduce the harmful health, and the social and economic consequences associated with the use of psychoactive substances. Advocacy Strategy Toolkit. Restless Development, The PACT & UNAIDS (2014).

94. ACOPLE is a programme to deliver mental health services for Afro-Colombians victims of violence and torture from Buenaventura and Quidbó which has proved its effectiveness in reduction of mental health symptoms (post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety) and improved functioning. This programme is implemented by a coalition of organisations: Hearland Alliance Interncaional-Colombia, AFRODES, Instituto Cisalva -Universidad del Valle, and Johns Hopkins University. More information: http://www.heartlandalliance.org.

» Address gender issues from a non-binary approach, specifically recognising and promoting rights of transgender people and those who are non-gender conforming. The programme mentions an ambivalent gender when referring to transsexual and transgender peoples. This is discriminatory and stigmatising language not in line with Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

» The provided sexual education should be delivered in a youth-friendly way and based on evidence.

» The programme should develop strategies to include adolescents and youth not enrolled in the education system.

» The proposed monitoring and evaluation framework lacks provisions for the Ministry of Education institutions to be held accountable by the general population.

» The proposed monitoring and evaluation framework focusses only on process indicators. The Ministry of Education must include input and output analyses in the monitoring phase. Moreover, the proposed framework does not provide methodological guidelines to evaluate the programme in a way that informs outcomes.

» The UNFPA Operational Guidance for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (2014) should be used for this purpose.

6. Colombia Joven should coordinate with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and academic and scientific associations, to include gender, race, human rights, sexual and reproductive rights in the medical education curricula. This coordination should pay particular attention to the health needs of these populations.

Youth public policy

1. The strength that Colombia Joven has gained in the past years (especially in relation to its territorial presence and sectorial work) must be increased and strengthened in the next national administrations. Additionally, the articulator role of Colombia Joven must be increased greatly, so it can match the role that the ICBF plays in child and adolescents issues, liberating the tension between these issue in policy and society-at-large.

2. Colombia Joven must create a working group with DANE and statistics divisions from all sectors and government corporations (including the police and judiciary system, education, employment and health) to strengthen and standardise relevant information on adolescents and youth that could complement the information system of youth issues. This effort should be accompanied by initiatives to build capacities in the collection, processing, and dissemination of information. Such an effort has been made at the regional level (Latin America and the Caribbean) to include 20 countries on a system of standardised indicators on citizen security and violence prevention, and its methodology could be adapted for this purpose.

3. Taking in to consideration the importance of establishing an updated baseline for youth policies, the national government should ensure the resources necessary to hold a National Survey of Youth, in no more than two years.

4. Although we recognise and celebrate the construction of indicators on youth development that can guide government action and accountability, it is necessary that these indicators can be reviewed by young organisations, so they can be constructed collectively. It is crucial that youth leaders and organisations strengthen their capabilities for measurement and monitoring in the advance of those indicators.

5. On the issue of social audit, resources allocated to youth programmes and policies must reach youth people and not be caught up by intermediaries or third-parties. To ensure this, accountability of these processes need to be strengthened.

6. Colombia should be a signatory and ratify the Ibero-American Convention on the Rights of Youth to cement its commitments to youth.

7. Explicit youth policies and programmes at all levels must be built upon the recognition of adolescents and youth as rights-holders and full citizens, with abilities and autonomy to make their own decisions over their bodies and lives.

8. In some cases, the current public policies of youth have been formulated without anticipating their implementation, thus the policies are characterised by their rhetoric and are not clear about responsibilities (who does what), timeframes, budget, results, and impact. The recom-

mendation is to formulate the policy in relation to its implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

9. For policy formulation, the municipal administration, with the support of international cooperation, should design appropriate methodologies that meaningfully involve youth in the entire process and at all levels in a non-tokenistic way. Sierra Leone presents great examples of how government offices, national and international efforts are bringing together the involvement of children and youth within the response of the Ebola epidemic.

10. It is important to mention that the relationship with the international cooperation sector should be balanced so that youth autonomy is not threatened by the agencies' mandate and budget. However, going beyond the youth sector should include innovative proposals to address agencies' support, including south-south cooperation initiatives.

11. Public youth policy in Colombia should empower young people to identify their particular needs and lead initiatives in the sectors to address them. This will also ensure the professionalisation of youth work in the country. A specific budget that is managed alongside youth must be allocated for this purpose.

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Annex 1
Colombian board of experts

No.	Name	Position	Institution / Process
1	Libardo Sarmiento Anzola	Youth expert	International adviser
5	Fernando Quintero	Adviser	Colombia Joven
4	Hugo Gamba	Coordinator of citizen participation	Ministerio del interior
2	Martha Lucía Gutiérrez	Director	Observatorio Javeriano de Juventud
3	Nélson Arévalo	Young leader	Cundinamarca's public policy process

Annex 2
Matrix of territorial entities · Field work plan

Department	Characteristics of the population				Public policies on youth	
	% of young people	Indigenous population	Afrocolombian population	Education coverage	First initiative	Current policy
Amazonas	0,19%	27.379	868	no data	0	3
Antioquia	13,26%	19.238	593.726	77,2	4	5
Arauca	0,56%	4.410	5.925	no data	0	3
Atlantico	5,04%	-	227.251	85,5	0	5
Bolivar	4,49%	-	497.667	79,0	0	4
Boyaca	2,47%	4.700	16.646	67,3	0	5
Caldas	2,01%	49.031	22.659	73,5	4	4
Caqueta	1,07%	7.742	11.670	67,5	1	4
Casanare	0,81%	6.691	4.004	no data	0	3
Cauca	3,00%	233.135	256.022	49,5	0	0
Cesar	2,29%	42.801	105.412	63,8	0	2
Choco	1,24%	54.009	286.011	51,7	0	3
Cordoba	3,72%	51.859	192.051	72,7	0	5
Cundinamarca	5,65%	-	73.651	70,9	2	3
Guainia	0,11%	16.800	185	no data	0	0
Guaviare	0,26%	10.267	2.883	no data	2	2
Huila	2,52%	6.699	11.544	65,8	1	3
La Guajira	2,05%	241.516	91.773	85,7	0	3
Magdalena	2,68%	8.421	110.349	71,8	0	3
Meta	2,03%	11.034	17.983	72,3	0	4

SUB TOTAL	Participation	TOTAL	Viability			SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	Youth Councils		Travel cost	Existence of related initiatives	Ocasa's previous work		
3	3	3	0	0	0	0	6
9	5	5	0	3	3	6	20
3	3	3	0	0	3	3	9
5	4	4	0	5	0	5	14
4	3	3	0	0	0	0	7
5	0	0	1	0	5	6	11
8	3	3	0	0	0	0	11
5	4	4	0	0	0	0	9
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
0	0	0	0	1	5	6	6
2	0	0	0	0	3	3	5
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
5	4	4	0	0	1	1	10
5	0	0	1	5	3	9	14
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
4	4	4	0	0	0	0	8
3	3	3	0	0	1	1	7
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
4	3	3	1	0	0	1	8

	Characteristics of the population				Public policies on youth	
Department	% of young people	Indigenous population	Afrocolombian population	Education coverage	First initiative	Current policy
Narino	3,64%	124.841	270.530	56,8	0	0
Norte De Santander	2,94%	4.865	22.123	74,1	2	0
Putumayo	0,80%	26.409	11.630	no data	0	0
Quindio	1,12%	-	12.744	73,5	0	0
Risaralda	1,89%	10.506	43.562	66,5	0	4
San Andrés	0,15%	-	33.861	no data	0	3
Santander	4,23%	919	60.008	78,5	0	4
Sucre	1,88%	17.823	121.738	74,4	3	3
Tolima	2,93%	23.635	15.831	74,1	4	4
Valle Del Cauca	9,33%	9.903	1.092.169	81,5	4	5
Vaupes	0,10%	19.533	270	no data	0	0
Vichada	0,17%	30.063	1.126	no data	0	0

Tabla de calificacion		
0		Without information
1	Nula	It does not exist
2	Baja	It does not mean any criteria
3	Media	Meets less than half of the criteria
4	Alta	Meets more than half or the criteria
5	Exitosa	Meets all the criteria

| SUB TOTAL | Participation | TOTAL | Viability | | | SUB TOTAL | TOTAL |
	Youth Councils		Travel cost	Existence of related initiatives	Ocasa's previous work		
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	3	3	0	0	3	3	8
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3
4	4	4	0	0	0	0	8
3	3	3	0	0	0	0	6
4	0	0	0	1	0	1	5
6	3	3	0	0	0	0	9
8	4	4	1	0	0	1	13
9	5	5	0	5	1	6	20
0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1. % población joven (proyección Colombia Joven - Sistema Juaco)

2. Nivel educativo de los jóvenes (cobertura educación secundaria y superior)

3. Primera iniciativa de políticas públicas de juventud en el municipio (año (antigüedad) temática, tipo iniciativa, origen, población objeto, informacion en linea)

4. Políticas públicas de juventud (temáticas, tipo de iniciativa, población objeto, año, regida por la normatividad vigente (Colombia joven), informacion en linea)

5. Consejo de juventud (Existe o no, organización, efectividad, participación, antigüedad)

6. Otras plataformas/iniciativas juveniles conocidas (organizaciones de jóvenes, temáticas, reconocimiento, organización)

Annex 3
Valle del Cauca and Cundinamarca field visit

Valle del Cauca

Cali, Gobernor's office

Ginebra, Youth House

Cundinamarca

Bogotá, ESAP University
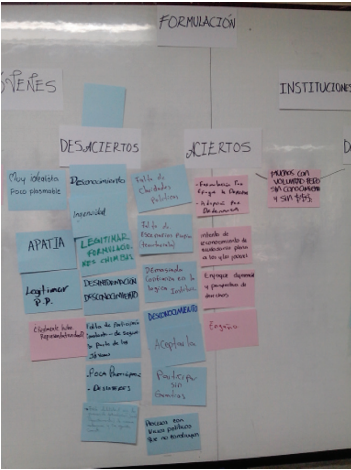
Sibaté, Mayor's office

Annex 4
People and institutions consulted throughout the research

Focal groups

Valle del Cauca (October 2014)

Name	Position	Institution/Process
Guillermo Londoño	Valle's youth coordinator	Territorial government
Felipe Solarte	Sub director of Social development	Gobernors' office
Genova Yunda	Assistant, Sub Direction of Social development	Gobernors' office
Martha Castaño	Coordinator of Valle's Sexual and reproductive health program	Gobernors' office
Horacio Bolaños	Young leader	Municipality of Cali
Harold Ibarguen	Young leader	Municipality of Cali
Emerson Bejarano	Young leader	Municipality of Cali
Antonio Mosquera	Young leader	Municipality of Florida
Ricardo Nieto	Young leader	Municipality of Candelaria
Joiner Botina	Young leader	Municipality of Pradera

Ginebra (October 2014)

Libia Saavedra	Youth coordinator	Mayor´s office
Derly Gil Jaramillo	Community development office	Mayor´s office
Johann Holguín Castillo	Imder (sports and recreation office)	Mayor´s office
Juliana Gutiérrez	Social wellness	Mayor´s office
Patricia Velka Muñoz	IE Inmaculada Concepción	Municipal schools

Francisco Corrales	La Salle	Municipal schools
Sandra Milena Prieto	IE Manuela Beltrán	Municipal schools
María Eunice Vivas	IE Manuela Beltrán	Municipal schools
Claudia Patricia Restrepo	Hospital del Rosario	Municipal hospital
Danna Carolina Quintero	Fundación Funrefa	Civil society organization
Héctor Hernández	Veeduría ciudadana	Civil society organization
Ana Saldarriaga	Fundación Escuela Social Integral	Youth plataform
Verónica Sanabria	Fundación Escuela Social Integral	Youth plataform
Juan Pablo Sánchez Tabares	Fundación Escuela Social Integral	Youth plataform
Cristian Camilo Cortés	Fundación Escuela Social Integral	Youth plataform
Alejandro Higuita	Fundación Escuela Social Integral	Youth plataform

Cundinamarca (October 2014)

Andrés Duarte	Youth Coordinator	Municipality of Cajicá
María Angélica Gómez	Youth leader	Municipality of Cajicá
Angel Alarcón	Youth leader	Municipality of Facatativá
Oscar Rodríguez	Youth leader	Municipality of Facatativá
Mónica Ladino	Youth leader	Municipality of Mosquera
Alvaro Moscoso	Youth leader	Municipality of Tabio
Johanna González	Youth leader	Municipality of Chía
Andrés Jiménez	Youth leader	Municipality of Soacha
Johaam Suta	Youth leader	Municipality of Cachipay
Johanna Bohórquez	Youth leader	Municipality of Madrid
Andrés Gudiño	Youth leader	Municipality of Zipaquirá
Rogel Rodríguez	Youth leader	Municipality of La Palma

Sibaté (December 2014)

Eliana Bedoya	Youth coordinator	Mayor's office
Erick Bravo	Young leader	Youth plataforms
Fabián Buitrago	Young leader	Youth plataforms
Brandon Jhair Dominguez	Young leader	Youth plataforms
José Beltrán	Young leader	Youth plataforms

Interviews

Valle del Cauca (October 2014)

Diego Matta	Territorial adviser	Colombia Joven

Ginebra (October 2014)

Libia Saavedra	Youth coordinator	Mayor´s office

Cundinamarca (October 2014)

Andrea Matías	Youth Coordinator	Gobernor's office
Alvaro Moscoso	Young leader	Municipality of Tabio
Olga Lucía Mendoza	Territorial adviser	Colombia Joven

Sibate (December 2014)

Eliana Bedoya	Youth coordinator	Mayor´s office

National level (November - December 2014) / Meetings - conversations

Juan Carlos Reyes	Director	Colombia Joven

Diana Rojas	Territorial adviser	Colombia Joven
Nicolás Diaz	Territorial adviser	Colombia Joven
Viviana Palacios	Unfpa territorial advisor	Unfpa
Cristina Buitrago	Antioquia Joven Program adviser	Antioquia Joven
Alix Valencia	Youth coordinator	Department of Quindio
José Gregorio Hernández	Youth coordinator	Municipality of Usiacuri, Atlántico
Neill Badel	Youth coordinator	Department of Córdoba
Carlos Andrés Santiago	Young leader	Pacto por la educación
Dionisio Salazar	Young leader	JuventudEs Colombia
Adriana Mejía	Former Aecid adviser	International cooperation

Interviews and meetings out of the field work plan

Ernesto Rodríguez	Director	Centro latinoamericano de juventud (Cejalu)
Martha Lucía Rubio	Youth adviser	United Nations Population Fund (Unfpa)
Martha Castaño	Sexual and reproductive health programm coordinator	Secretary of Health, Valle del Cauca
Jhoaam Suta	Youth coordinator	Municipality of Cachipay, Cundinamarca
Andrea Vargas	Communication coordinator	Red Colombiana de Jóvenes (Recojo)
David Racero	Subdirection of youth	Mayor's office Bogotá
Juan Felipe Barrera	Adviser	Colombia Joven
Patricia Granada Echeverri	Profesora titular	Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira

Annex 5
Chronological line · Political and historical context

Presidencies		National Politics' Milestones	
Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970)	1968	Establishment of the ICBF — Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Instute for the Family's Wellbeing)	1968
Belisario Betancur (1982-1985)	1984	Rodrigo Lara Bonilla's assassination	
Virgilio Barco (1986-1989)			1988
			1989
Cesar Gaviria Trujillo (1990-1993)	1990	Establishment of the DNE -Dirección Nacional de Estupefacientes (National Department of Anti-Narcotis)	1990
	1991	Youth Social Movement "the Seventh Ballot"	1991
		Colombian Political Constitution	1992
Ernesto Samper (1994-1997)			1994
			1995
			1996
			1997

Youth Public Policy's Milestones		International Milestones
	1964	World Youth Conference UNESCO
Establishment of Coldeportes		
	1985	International year of the Youth
General guidelines established to formulate the Youth public policy.		
Minor's Code (Decree 2737)	1989	United Nations Convention for the Child
Establishment of the Presidential Counseling for the Youth, Women and Family	1990	United Nations Guidelines to prevent juvenil delinquency
DNE executes the Drug Addiction Prevention Program, targeted at young people		
First National Youth Poll		
First CONPES study about the youth	1992	Establishment of the Latin American Youth Organisation
Establishment of the Deputy Ministry of the Youth		
Second CONPES study about the youth	1995	Establishment of the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth
VI National Youth Festival. This event contributed to develop the Law 375		
Law 375 or Youth's Law		

Andrés Patrana (1998-2001)		1998
		1999
		2000
Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2005)		2003
		2004
Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2006-2009)		2006
	2008 Scandal "false positives"	
Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2013)		
		2012
		2013

Establishment of the Alliance for Youth public policies' impacts (up to 2001)		
Establishment of the Division for Women, Children, Youth and Elder's Rights.		
Decree 089, Decreto 089, Youth councils rulings		
Third CONPES study about the youth		
Program for youth in the countryside (up 2002)		
Second National Youth Poll		
Decree 822. Establishment of the presidential program "Young Colombia" (Administrative Presidential Department)		
The National Development Plan demands the establishment of a specific Youth public policy.		
A published document refers to basic needs for carrying out the Year Plan for Youth		
	2005	Latin American Convention of the Rights of the Youth
The program "Young Colombia" is now under the Vice-presidency		
The Code of Childhood and Adolescence is approved (Law 1098)		
	2007	Expansion of the Global Action Program
	2008	Ibero-American Summit of Heads of the State and Heads of Goernment
	2010	International year of the Youth
	2011	United Nations Conference on Youth
Third National Youth Poll starts		
Youth citizenship status		
JUACO: Colombian National Information System on the Youth and Adoslence		

Annex 6
CONPES documents on youth

Year	1992	1995
Name	Social Policies for the Youth and Women.	Not mentioned
Published	Yes. CONPES 2626. 23 November	Yes. CONPES 2794. 28 June
Author	Presidential Program for the Youth, Women and Family	Ministry of Education, Deputy Ministry of the Youth
Age standard	From 12 to 24 y/o	From 15 to 25 y/o
Diagnosis		
Education	Low coverage (47%), high drop-out rates and deficit in four major cities (which cities - they should be mentioned here, I reckon).	Coverage problems in primary, secondary and higher education. Major difficulties in rural areas.
Unemployment	High unemployment rates, especially in poorest youth. High rates of youth working in the informal sector.	Highest rate of unemployment found with people between the ages of 12 to 29: 15% (national rate was 9.8%). Unemployment is lower in rural areas. However, rural people receive lower incomes
Health	Accidents and traumatic homicides are young men´s main problems. Young women´s health-related issues are associated with their reproductive systems. There is low use of contraceptive methods, especially among poor and rural women. 62% of women are uneducated mothers. Other health-related hazards: sexually transmitted diseases and drug abuse and addiction (highest 15 to 19 years).	The most common problems are associated with violence and trauma, especially among young men. Young women are primarily affected by problems related to their reproductive function. The increased drug use occurs in men between the ages of 15 and 29.
Violence and conflict	Youth linked to criminal phenomena. 50% of the total syndicated and captured are young people between the ages of 21 and 30.	25% of defendants are people aged 16 to 24. The majority are men.
Culture and leisure	Unmet demand of culture, recreation and sports	Access and participation of young people in cultural, recreational and sporting events is insufficient due to the lack of space and high costs.

2010	2014
National Youth Policy	Guidelines for the Creation of Opportunities for Youth People
No	April
Not mentioned	Colombia Joven; Ministries of Labor, Education and Foreing Trade; ICBF (Colombian Institute for the Family's Wellbeing), Presidential Department for Social Prosperity.
From 14 to 26 y/o	From 14 to 28 y/o
	Focused on education and employment
Improvements regarding education´s coverage across the nation	Youth´s school attendance rate: 49.4% Youth ages´ percentage (percentage or average??): 17 Occupation (of? Maybe „as students"?): 61.8%.
10% of children between the ages of 12 and 13, and 27% of adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17, are working. Women's participation in the labour force is lower than men's.	The offering job training and human development is insuficient compared to the total labour force. Regarding the total youth, 17.7% of its workforce is unemployed. At the national level, the unemployed workforce accounts for 10.3%.
56.7% of young people between the ages of 14 and 26 are affiliated to the social security system. 61.9% of births are from adolescents and youth.	Dropping out is high for all youth´s age groups . Reasons for not studying: lack of money, high educational costs and the need to work. Desertion is linked to institutional, contextual and individual family-related situations. Dropout rate in higher education has been declining, but it is still high.
75% of teen deaths are due to violent causes (total statistics, 20%). Mostly men. The number of children and adolescents who are part of the armed groups, prior to the demobilization of paramilitary groups, is unknown.	High number of unemployed. The situation is particularly critical for young people between the ages of 18 and 21.
Limited operation of the National System of Youth; Preeminence of sectoral action, with inadequate coordination; insuficient human and financial resources; Weak ownership and knowledge of the society about the reality of youth	"Young people, contrary to the social imaginary, are the most involved in volunteer activities or belong to civic groups, sports and recreational, cultural character" with the exception of religious groups and activities

Participation	Less than a third of young people participate in organisations.	The offer does not meet expectations.
Youth policy	Municipalities lack programs to serve the youth. Planning, design and financing is concentrated at the national level. There is partial and uncoordinated action between the municipalities and the national government.	The search for a comprehensive youth policy has among its most significant achievements the establishment of youth offices in 20 municipalities and 11 states.
Policy Objective	To ensure full participation of youth in social, economic, productive life of the country and improve their living conditions.	To integrate policies on education, employment and access to social services to create conditions to strengthen the capacity of the state and society to support young people as full citizens.
Strategies	1. Human development: to overcome problems related to education, culture and health.	1. Personal development and comprehensive training: to overcome education, culture and health-related issues.
	2. Bonding in economic life: Modernisation and strengthening of SENA and job placement. Lines of credit to productive enterprises.	2. Participation and citizenship: expanding opportunities for participation in local decision-making proceses and participatory design of youth policy
	3. Participation and organisation: creating funds for youth initiatives and promoting through the media a positive image of the Colombian youth.	3. Help the youth join the working force: SENA will increase quality, coverage and relevance.
		4. Institutional strengthening: to create an instance for intersectoral coordination and link civil society actors with such instance.

"Information about youth's participation and organisation is limited to young people between the ages of 18 and 26 participating in the 2003 elections for mayors and governors. 20 year olds are significantly more present than other ages, only 16.1 % of them voted"	Lower vocational guidance, labour certification compentencies are scarce, mechanisms for the transition to the labour market are needed
Limited promotion, protection and security regarding youth's opportunities and rights.	Trust in others: 18-25, 19.8% (the highest) 26 - 35 13.8% (The lowest). Young people are those who show higher levels of distrust in institutions.
Strengthen action of state and society to foster human rights and the country's youth, enable the development of their capabilities and leverage its full potential, so they can take life responsibly and autonomously for their own benefit and of society.	Implement strategies to ensure the transition of young people to the labor market in terms of quality, stability, and special protection
1. Strengthen the national system of youth: to update the regulatory framework and to promote a system for youth information.	1. Generation of social capital and trust as recovery factors for minimizing conditions of vulnerability.
	a. To promote and strengthen the role of youth in the discussions and decisions regarding the processmaking of Youth public policy.
2. Strengthen the State's coordination at its national and territorial levels and work along with civil society groups: development of a programmatic platform, knowledge networks, etc.	b. To promote affirmative action so as to positively impact the community environment surrounding the Colombian youth.
	c. Support youth initiatives
	2. Enhance youth´s skills
	a. To promote attendance and retention
	b. To promotion vocational guidance
3. Support and promote mechanisms that encourage youth participation.	c. To promote joint spaces for the productive and the education sectors
	3. Improving youth´s transition to employment with dignity and decency.
	a. To promote initiatives for income generation
4. Ensuring the availability of human and financial resources, identifying resources in various sectors	b. To establish hiring methods that encourage youth employment
	4. Strengthening institutional coordination on opportunities (interagency coordination)

Institutions liable for Youth Policy	State plans, designs instruments and cofinance. However, the execution is handled by other actors in society. Local consultation bodies and teams for specialized care must be created.	The implementation of programs aimed at the youth is the liability of the municipal, district and provincial institutions. The municipality will be the main actor implementanting programs that encourage youth participation.
Money allocation	252.500 million COP for four years	Not clear
Comments	This study is not only focused on Colombian youth. It also gives attention to gender issues.	The analysis that links the youth with criminal acts focuses on the strong values upheld by Colombian society.
	In its objective, this study does not mention political participation.	This study does not have a rights' view
	This study does not have a rights' view	

Youth policy must be transverse to the programmatic and administrative structure of the nation or territorial entity. It does not replace other sectorial policies - it only articulates with them.	The Labour Ministry must coordinate their actions with the Ministry of Education, Colombia Joven and the Administrative Department of Public Service
	Not clear
This study mentions the distinction between youth and adolescents.	This study only refers to socio-econonomic opportunities. In few cases, it mentions opportunities for human development.
About Youth Law 1997: Youth system and the full guarantee of rights are not fully functioning. Public youth policy is more than the sum of the actions of the sectors (which sectors??)	This study defines adolescents and youth separately.
	This study only links education to the productive sector, and human development is only linked with youth accessing to the labour market.

Annex 7
Key word analysis · CONPES documents

CONPES 1995

CONPES 2010

CONPES 2013

Annex 8

Key word analysis · Youth Act and Youth Citizenship Statute

Youth Act

Youth Citizenship Statute

Youth and Public Policy in Colombia

The failure of political systems to respond to the demands of young people and the inability of the current economic model to accommodate young people into the labor market, presents a significant challenge for many countries including Colombia. This is particularly relevant considering that between 2015 and 2035 Colombia will have the largest youth population (15-24 years) of the history.

Despite efforts to make sure the inclusion of young voices in policymaking processes, much remains to be done to ensure youth participation in economic and social development.

With this context in mind, this review aims to analyze youth policies in Colombia, focusing on those related to health, education and participation. The review is framed within the notion of 'a decent life' and it considers the current peace process in Colombia.

About the Youth Policy Review Series

This review series researches and analyzes public policies affecting youth.

Many countries have stated their youth policies, but are they executing them? Do these policies allow young people to achieve their rights? How do youth policies interact with broader policies that affect young people?

Country-specific titles lay out the evidence on which young people, their organizations, and the entire youth sector, can advocate for the adoption and implementation of sound national and international youth policies, and hold governments, agencies and donors to account on the promises they make to young people.

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