CDAC
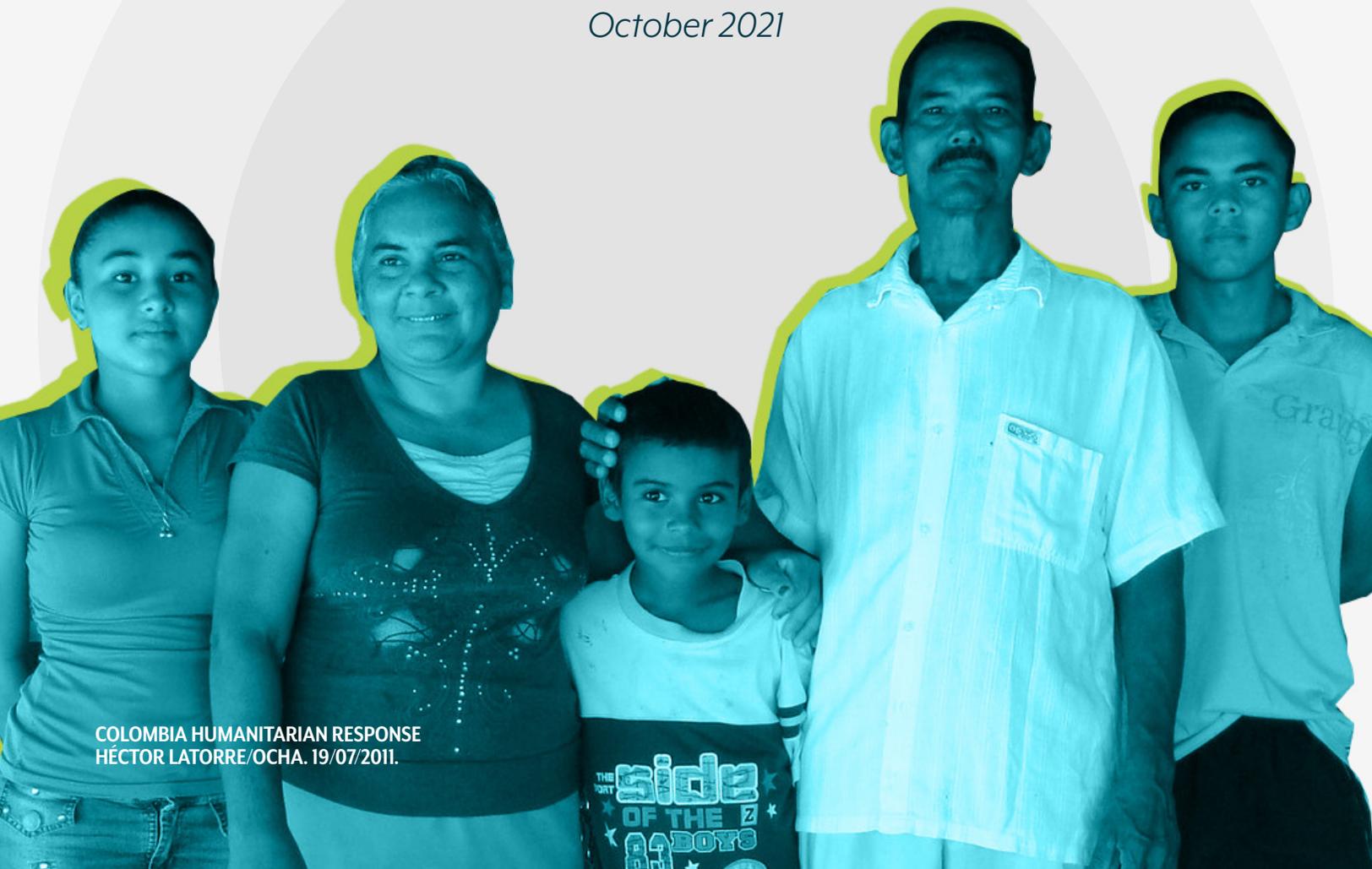# NETWORK
communicating with disaster affected communities

ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN COLOMBIA AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESPONSE-WIDE SYNERGY

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This study relied on qualitative methods to generate an understanding about the systems of beliefs, perspectives, and experiences of a diverse sample of actors, as a basis to support a collective CCEA approach in Colombia. The CDAC Executive Director and Consultant presented the project to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, which served as a launching pad for key interviews and to enhance ongoing engagement. Subsequently, the study applied a semi-structured qualitative interview with 17 respondents, representing in-country CDAC members, international and local NGOs, think tanks, academic institutions and community associations. Interviews were recorded with prior verbal consent, transcribed and then classified using Atlas.ti, in order to produce a hermeneutic analysis of prominent themes related to communications, community engagement and accountability to affected populations (CCEA).

Before presenting findings, the report offers an overview of context and background to guide humanitarian interventions in Colombia, including a review of key territories, complex urban landscapes, land and income inequality, internal displacement, anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordinances, migration from Venezuela, illicit crop cultivation, COVID-19 and humanitarian presence.

Likewise, it offers a communication overview with special focus on communication culture, languages, literacy, two-way communication, communication infrastructure, digital evolution, internet and social media usage, media outlets and press freedom. Regarding communication culture, the section notes some anthropological and psychological models that seek to classify cultural attributes among Colombians, but the report advocates for a more in-depth interpretation and an approach marked by cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence. Successful CCEA is a long-term endeavour that should be built on the basis of listening, respect, and trust-building. Such a sensible approach would illustrate diverse manifestations of communication culture, in relation to regional, cultural, class and other characteristics.

Regarding the humanitarian architecture, the humanitarian community in Colombia organised in accordance with the Cluster Approach and Local Humanitarian Teams following the Humanitarian Reform process led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Emergency Relief Coordinator in 2005. The report makes note of the following coordination structures:

- Under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator, the Humanitarian Country Team (EHP, for its Spanish acronym) enables coordination among UN agencies, international and national NGOs and donors, while facilitating outreach with national and local government agencies.
- Seven Humanitarian Clusters are currently active in Colombia: Shelter, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Protection, Food Security, Nutrition and Health, as well as the cross-cutting groups of Gender, Early Recovery and Education in Emergencies.
- Representatives of each cluster convene in the Inter-Cluster Group, which is coordinated by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). An information management subgroup (GTMI, for its Spanish acronym) operates under the direction of the Inter-Cluster Group to address cross-cutting data issues.
- Local Coordination Teams (ELCs, for their Spanish acronym) group organisational representatives present in key regions, and are reportedly active in twelve departments, including Norte de Santander, Antioquia, Arauca, Chocó, Nariño, Putumayo, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Córdoba, Meta, Guaviare and La Guajira.
- The Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM, for its Spanish acronym) operates in Colombia to coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela.
- Finally, the Communication for Development/Communication with Communities Taskforce (C4D/CwC) is a cross-sector alliance for CCEA efforts. Its objectives are helping humanitarian actors strengthen their knowledge and information management, promoting the sharing of relevant information and facilitating community access to accountability mechanisms.

Following the analysis of interview data, the report presents a series of findings on the state of CCEA in Colombia. Firstly, subject matter experts highlighted a sustained commitment to trust-building with and attentively listening to communities as part of a bilateral dialogue for ongoing

learning and improvement, as central values when pursuing CCEA. These experts discussed various tools and processes to enhance accountability to affected populations, followed by the challenges and limitations of implementing such steps. When discussing coordination, experts focused mostly on the importance of improving it among humanitarian organisations, including through the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building between them and towards local organisations. For example, many interviewees lauded Unicef for spearheading the promotion of CCEA in Colombia through training, capacity-building and technical assistance.

To a lesser degree, they stressed difficulties of collaborating constructively with government entities, and called for genuine engagement of community leaders as allies for improved design and throughout the project cycle. Recognising that the state holds the mandate to respond to humanitarian crises and guarantee the rights of residents in the national territory, several interviewees expressed concern over what they described as the irregular presence, capacity, or political will of the government across large swaths of the country. Such irregularity, in their opinion, often makes cross-sector coordination especially challenging, and stresses the role of humanitarian organisations to cover the most critical gaps.

Organisations are building a toolkit of communication channels to facilitate the transmission of feedback or complaints from community members. These include voicemail, online forms or questionnaires, toll-free phone numbers, etc. The diversity of channels is meant to enable affected populations to reach organisations depending on whatever tools are accessible, preferred, or viewed as most trustworthy or confidential, based on the content of intended messages. However, some interviewees view the irregularity of tools used across organisations as an obstacle to genuine and reliable community engagement, and thus emphasise the need for standardised tools and common guidelines.

According to interviewees, challenges to accountability centre on gaps in knowledge among some humanitarian organisations; gaps and delays in actionable information about crises; limited dedicated funding for CCEA; distance between larger operators and field contractors in contact with communities and over-reliance on unrepresentative data. Information gaps and delays persist in remote areas with limited organisational presence and haphazard communication infrastructure, blunting the ability of organisations to deliver life-saving aid. Such gaps highlight the need for a robust information system, making responsible use of innovative and increasingly accessible tools like satellite imagery, crisis mapping or mobile device tracking. Additionally, the lack of dedicated funding for CCEA may over-extend humanitarian workers and deprive organisations of the opportunity to build a coherent and effective CCEA strategy. These various scenarios call for improved collaboration between operators and contractors in terms of CCEA, including technical assistance, trust building and the exchange of information for joint learning.

Recommendations most frequently centred on technical assistance and capacity building, to be performed by leading humanitarian organisations and experts towards other international and local organisations, as well as towards community leaders in order to install durable capacity. Regarding values, recommendations highlighted the act of attentively listening to community members and the genuine commitment to enhance CCEA. Next, recommendations called for improved coordination between humanitarian organisations and discussed the use of more effective and standardised tools and processes to overcome persistent limitations of accountability to affected populations. Based on a systematic review of interviews, as well as a review of domestic and international literature and independent analysis, this report offers the following recommendations, which are developed towards the end of this report:

1. Uphold the value of listening to community members as a fundamental starting point of interventions.
2. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) should develop an inter-agency/ collective CCEA Framework for Colombia to unify leadership, agencies, and partners in one common vision.
3. Expand and upgrade the C4D/CwC Taskforce (Communication for Development/Communication with communities) as an overarching working group for CCEA efforts.
4. The Inter-Cluster Group should coordinate regular community surveys to inform response-wide decision-making.
5. Conduct technical training and capacity-building on CCEA, aligned with global standards and tailored to different audiences.

6. Jointly advocate to international donors to ensure that financial and human resources are allocated to enable a collective approach to CCEA, including through donor dedicated funding and agency pooled resources.

7. Donors should consider employing standard indicators, particularly Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) indicators for consistency and global alignment in relation to CCEA.

8. Rely on other existing national and local coordination structures, including the Inter-Cluster Group, ELCs, Clusters and GIFMM to promote collective approaches to CCEA.

9. Urgently harmonise and consolidate the hundreds of project based existing CFMs (including common vision, knowledge and Standard Operating Procedures [SOPs])

10. Provide technical assistance and capacity building to communities so they can more effectively address local challenges.

11. Calibrate communication with communities in terms of proper channels, innovative approaches, relevant information delivery and inclusive language.

12. Consider using real-time, crowdsourced data from affected populations to bridge information gaps and plan ongoing communication.

13. Act upon a shared commitment to enhance CCEA.

COLOMBIA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE
ANGELA MARIA ESCOBAR /RET. 17/03/2011.

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment was commissioned by CDAC Network. The report documents the status of response-wide Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability towards Affected Populations (CCEA) in Colombia and provides recommendations for a strengthened and more inclusive response. The report explores the operating environment, what works well and what improvements and efficiencies can be made across responses for the common good in the context of CCEA. It promotes the creation of synergies between the various

coordination efforts and supports existing collective platforms and related cluster coordination functions.

It further seeks to support the development and integration of a common services approach to AAP, communication and engagement with communities across coordination efforts, and helps response actors understand immediate needs, gaps and opportunities in CCEA.

SECTION 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach

A collective CCEA approach in Colombia must emerge from a comprehensive understanding of complex social dynamics and be conceptualised in close relation with affected populations, recognising contemporary and traditional ways of communicating, engaging and mobilising for social changes. Thus, this study prioritised the use of qualitative methods, which sought to generate an understanding about the systems of beliefs, perspectives and experiences of a diverse sample of actors.

To respond to the central research question of what is the status of response-wide CCEA in Colombia, this study assessed CCEA through primary and secondary sources along the matrix of capacities, capabilities, opportunities, and gaps, based on which it proposed recommendations for a strengthened response.

Literature review

The first phase involved the review and synthesis of relevant international and domestic literature, including that produced or referred to by members of CDAC, other humanitarian organisations with a significant footprint in Colombia, and actors beyond humanitarian action, public sector entities, think tanks and academia, and grassroots organisations.

Outreach and Interviews of Subject Matter Experts

The CDAC Executive Director and Consultant presented the project to the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, which served as a launching pad for key interviews and to enhance ongoing engagement. Subsequently, the study applied a semi-structured qualitative interview with 17 respondents, representing in-country CDAC members,[1] national and local NGOs, international NGOs, think tanks, academic institutions, and community associations (see interviewee list and sample questions below). Questions were mostly guiding and open so that interviewees elaborated on the issues of greatest relevance, without these being strictly pre-defined. Interviews, with an average duration of one hour each, retained sufficient structure to enable comparisons across interviewees, while being customed based on the role and area of expertise of interviewees, thus allowing flexibility to explore themes specific to actors or delve into relevant matters that emerge over the course of the discussion.

Interviewee selection and research limitation

Interviewee selection followed standards of stratified purposive sampling, which allowed an illustration of the characteristics of subgroups of particular interest, and relied on snowball sampling as a complementary method to enrich the scope of analysis.

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1. CDAC Members include NGOs, Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement, UN agencies and specialised communications entities.

Notwithstanding the relative diversity and depth of interviews in this study, key perspectives were underrepresented or absent, particularly from international donors, prominent civil society organisations, national and local government representatives, and various ethnic and other community associations. This research limitation may be caused by several dynamics, chiefly the restrictions to movement and some technical obstacles to communications due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and national strikes and social unrest. Additionally, potential interviewees had varying incentives to participate in the study if they were unfamiliar with CDAC in Colombia or had scarce available time or connectivity issues. While these dynamics can be partially overcome, the time required to perform much more stakeholder outreach would have exceeded the duration of the project. Thus, this study recommends that future studies into CCEA in Colombia secure sufficient time for strategic outreach with key stakeholders, particularly the Presidential Agency of Colombia for International Cooperation, the Pastoral Social (Bishops' Conference), community associations such as ONIC, CRIC, Colombia Diversa, Ruta Pacífica, Casa de la Mujer (among other) and US and European donors.

Data analysis

Interviews are recorded through written transcripts, which are complemented with audio recordings. Explicit permission for recording was obtained from each interviewee.

All notes and recordings were saved on password-protected laptops and will be deleted at the end of the project.

Following a process of Exploratory Data Analysis, a classification structure is built with 31 codes, related to Context, Coordination, Community Engagement, Information Management, Accountability, Cases, Recommendations, Trustworthy and Truthful Information, and Values. Responses are systematised along the classification structure using Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software, with a pursuit for impartiality, responding to the thematic prioritisation shown by participants, and moderating possible researcher biases. This systematization is a hermeneutic process, in which interview texts are classified and interpreted, helping illustrate the themes of most frequent, shared, and prominent interest among interviewees in relation to CCEA.

Finally, classified qualitative data that analyzed, with special attention to the most frequently mentioned themes, frequently co-occurring themes, recommendations related to each theme, and other noteworthy findings.

Introduction

This section provides an executive overview of context and background to guide humanitarian interventions in Colombia. As such, it serves as a basis on which a collective communication, community engagement and accountability approach would be built. This overview is not exhaustive but offers a bird's eye view of key territories, populations, challenges and resources for more in-depth examination. The section is then followed by an overview of the communication and community engagement landscape.

Among Latin American countries, Colombia is the fifth largest with 1.143 million km², the third most populated with 50,882,884 persons, and has the fourth highest GDP with $271 billion USD.[2] It is affected by substantial humanitarian threats, challenges, vulnerabilities and risks, as it continues to be afflicted by violent dynamics that draw their roots from one of the longest-lasting armed conflicts in the world. Colombia is marked by historic problems of extreme land and income concentration, precarious rural development, ethnic marginalisation, persecution of social leaders and gender-based violence (GBV) as a weapon of war. While the country is the second most biodiverse in the world and the most biodiverse per square kilometer,[3] such wealth is threatened by illicit crop cultivation, illegal mining and deforestation.

Colombia borders Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Venezuela and Panama, along what International Crisis Group (2016) described as "tentacles of instability".[4] The most tenuous border region is that with Venezuela, with which Colombia has held contentious relations since the Bolivarian Revolution. More recently, bordering departments such as Norte de Santander, Arauca and La Guajira have received the highest influx of refugees and migrants, pushed by the Venezuelan political and economic crisis. In addition, the largely uncontrolled borders with Ecuador

and Panama are especially affected by transnational crime and conflict dynamics as well as socio-natural disasters.

Territorial overview

The country is composed of six natural regions: Andean, Amazonic, Caribbean, Oriental Plains, Pacific Coast and Insular. Each region has different natural, demographic and economic conditions, and thus presents different types and levels of humanitarian need. While per capita GDP is $5332 USD annually, or $14 USD per day, only the capital district of Bogotá and six out of 32 departments—Antioquia, Valle del Cauca, Santander, Boyaca, Casanare and Meta—are above the national average.[5] Meanwhile, inhabitants of the impoverished departments like Chocó, La Guajira, Nariño, Guaviare and Norte de Santander, earn fewer than $7 USD per day.[6] Not coincidentally, these departments are among the most vulnerable to humanitarian crises.

Colombia is also vulnerable to geologic, hydrologic and climatic natural hazards, especially earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides and intense storms, resulting in socio-natural disasters that often exacerbate complex humanitarian emergencies. Between January and April 2021, Colombia's risk and disaster management agency (UNGRD, for its Spanish acronym) registered 1,365 natural disasters, mostly floods, which affected 104,829 persons.[7] Nearly half of these emergencies took place in the departments of Bolivar and Chocó, in the Caribbean and Pacific regions, respectively.[8]

The Pacific region, which concentrates historically marginalised afro-descendant and indigenous communities, is one of the most affected by conflict and violent dynamics, poverty, socio-natural disasters and humanitarian crises. In Chocó, for example, the Victims' Unit has recognised 93% of the population as victims of the armed conflict, and 86% as forcibly displaced.[9]

2. The World Bank. (2021). Colombia | Data. DataBank. https://data.worldbank.org/country/colombia
3. World Wildlife Fund. (2017, December). A look at the natural world of Colombia. https://www.world-wildlife.org/magazine/issues/winter-2017/articles/a-look-at-the-natural-world-of-colombia#popup
4. Colombia and Its Neighbours: The Tentacles Of Instability. (2016, September 28). International Crisis Group. https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/colom-bia-and-its-neighbours-tentacles-instability

5. DANE. (2021). Story Map Series. Producto Interno Bruto (PIB) Departamental Por Habitante 2020 Preliminar. https://dane.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=c5486dfd069644aeb-ca9683d63ad1c4c
6. DANE. (2021).
7. iMMAP. (2021, May). COVID-19 ANÁLISIS DE SITUACIÓN - Colombia. https://immap.org/wp-content/uploads/20210629_SitAn_COVID_Colombia_May.pdf
8. iMMAP. (2021, May).
9. Unidad de Victimas. (2021, July). Registro Único de Víctimas. https://www.unidadvictimas.gov.co/es/registro-unico-de-victimas-ruv/37394

Humanitarian interventions across this region must take into account the differential conditions and needs of afro-descendant communities, as well as indigenous peoples with unique language and cultural traditions, such as Nasa, Pasto, Embera (Chami and Katio), Awa, Misak, Inga, Coconuco and Waunan.[10]

Moreover, the region is part of the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena biodiversity hotspot stretching from Panama to northwestern Peru, and is composed of wet, tropical, mountain and cloud forests, as well as wetlands, mangroves and marine coastal ecosystems.[11] This mega-diversity is threatened by widespread mercury-dependent artisanal, small-scale and mechanised gold mining, as well as coca crop cultivation, drug trafficking corridors and deforestation.

Complex urban landscapes

Most of the national population is concentrated in cities across the Andean region, especially Bogotá (7,743,955 inhabitants), Medellin (2,533,424), and Cali (2,252,616).[12] The high level of socioeconomic inequality in Colombia is displayed in complex urban landscapes, which combine influxes of economic migrants with the forcibly displaced,[13] and are marked by a lack of "the social, psychological, political, and economic factors that promote human well-being through time."[14] Some of these landscapes, including in southern Bogotá and the adjacent city of Soacha, Comuna 13 and other hillside neighbourhoods in Medellin and eastern and hillside neighbourhoods of Cali, are afflicted by chronically high murder rates, drug micro-trafficking and other criminal activities, which especially threaten children, adolescents and youth.

As stated by UN Habitat, "...the physical and social distance between poor and rich neighbourhoods represents a spatial poverty trap marked by six distinct challenges: (a) severe job restrictions; (b) high rates of gender disparities; (c) deteriorated living conditions; (d) social exclusion and marginalization; (e) lack of social interaction and (f) high incidence of crime." In the context of armed conflict, informal settlements and other complex landscapes:

"not only congregate strangers, but also former and current enemies, victims and perpetrators, thus increasing the risk of re-victimization. These community members may face additional challenges, such as psychological trauma and the disruption of the social fabric, high rates of crime and violence, gender-based violence (GBV), and inter-group tensions."[15]

Land and income inequality

Although inequality has declined for much of the past 20 years, it remains one of the highest in Latin America and worldwide, with a Gini index of 51.3 for 2019.[16] The inequity of land distribution is also exorbitant, with two million small landholders (each owning less than one hectare) controlling 1.3 million hectares, while the top 2,200 landholders control nearly 40 million hectares.[17] In other words, 0.1% of landowners own 97% of the privately held rural territories. Thus, many experts point to inequality, particularly of land distribution, as a core explanatory factor of armed confrontation in Colombia.

Internal displacement

As of 31 May 2021, 8,143,758 persons have been displaced by conflict, nearing 16% of the national population.[18] By far, Antioquia has historically been the most affected department by forced displacement, both in terms of expulsion and reception of persons, followed by Bolivar, Valle del Cauca, Magdalena, Nariño, Cesar, Cordoba, Chocó, Cauca and Norte de Santander. While displacement has been widespread across Colombia, expulsion has concentrated in the northwest, the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and along the borders with Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama.

10. Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística. (2021). Grupos étnicos - Información técnica. https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/demografia-y-poblacion/grupos-etnicos/informacion-tecnica
11. World Wildlife Fund. (2017, December).
12. Agencia Presidencial de Cooperación Internacional (APC), Gobierno Nacional de Colombia. (2021). Mapa de cooperación. APC-Colombia. https://portalservicios-apccolombia.gov.co/mapa
13. Schoeller-Diaz, D. A., Lopez, V. A., Kelly, J., & Patel, R. (2012, June). Hope in the Face of Displacement and Rapid Urbanization. Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI). https://hhi.harvard.edu/publications/hope-face-displacement-and-rapid-urbanization
14. Leaning, Jennifer, and Arie, Sam. (2000, December). Human Security: A Framework for Assessment In Conflict and Transition. CERTI (Linking Complex Emergency Response and Transition Initiative). USAID and Tulane University. http://www.certi.org/publications/policy/human%20security-4.PDF.
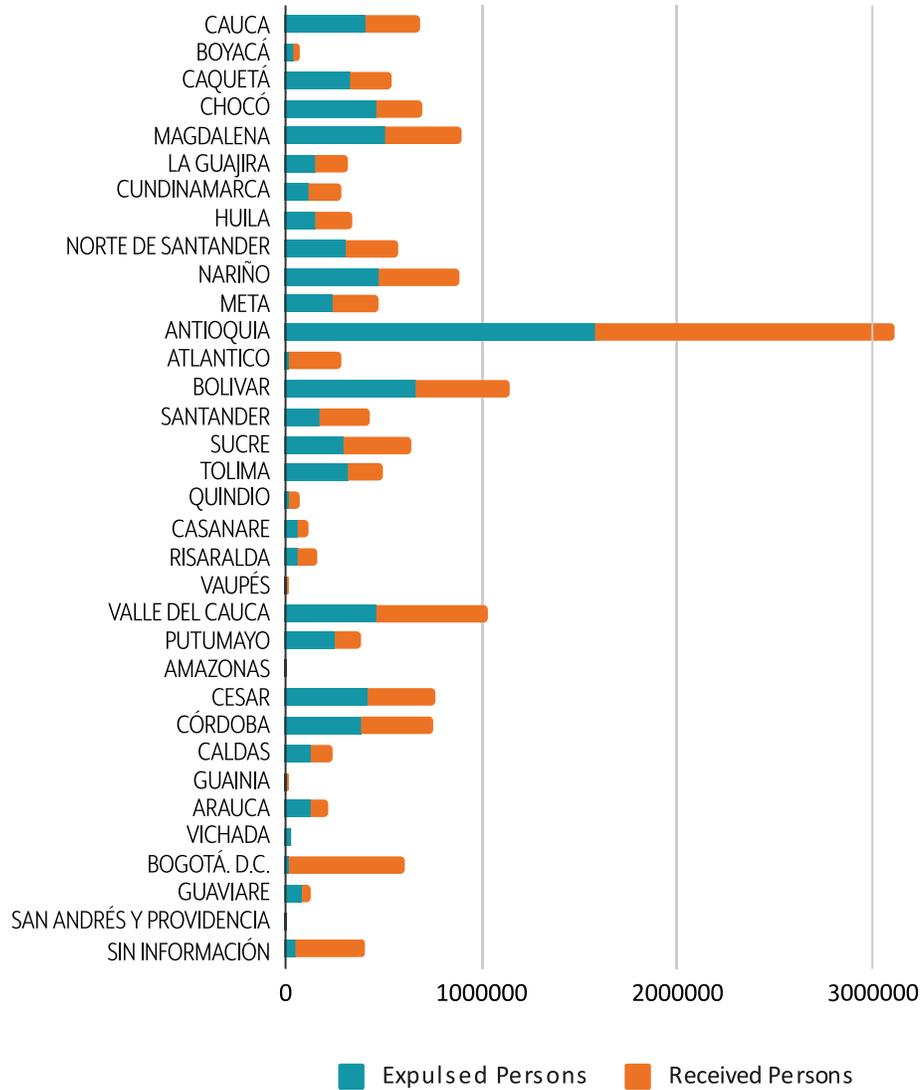
15. Schoeller-Diaz, D. A., Lopez, V. A., Kelly, J., & Patel, R. (2012, June).
16. The World Bank. (2021).
17. Posada, Alejandro R. (2010, December). Guerreros Y Campesinos: El Despojo De La Tierra En Colombia. Estudios SocioJuridicos 12.2. p. 367.
18. Unidad de Víctimas. (2021, July).

Forcibly displaced persons per department

Department	
CAUCA	
BOYACÁ	
CAQUETÁ	
CHOCÓ	
MAGDALENA	
LA GUAJIRA	
CUNDINAMARCA	
HUILA	
NORTE DE SANTANDER	
NARIÑO	
META	
ANTIOQUIA	
ATLANTICO	
BOLIVAR	
SANTANDER	
SUCRE	
TOLIMA	
QUINDIO	
CASANARE	
RISARALDA	
VAUPÉS	
VALLE DEL CAUCA	
PUTUMAYO	
AMAZONAS	
CESAR	
CÓRDOBA	
CALDAS	
GUAINIA	
ARAUCA	
VICHADA	
BOGOTÁ. D.C.	
GUAVIARE	
SAN ANDRÉS Y PROVIDENCIA	
SIN INFORMACIÓN	

0   1000000   2000000   3000000

■ Expulsed Persons   ■ Received Persons

Source: Graphic created by author based on data from the Unidad de Víctimas. (2021, July).

COLOMBIA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE
NADYA GONZALEZ/FAO. 29/08/2012.

Despite the signage of the peace accords in 2016, the plight of internal displacement continues, with at least 19,934 persons affected during the first four months of 2021, chiefly along the Pacific coast.[19] Moreover, during the first five months of 2021, over 100,000 persons, especially afro-descendant and indigenous, were victims of violence, including forced displacement, confinement and homicides.[20]

Anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordinances

Colombia is one of the most impacted countries by anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordinances (APM/UXO), with 12,051 historical victims.[21] While incidents have been declining during much of the past decade, 65 victims have been registered as of May 2021, and the risk of ongoing incidents will be protracted while demining efforts advance.[22] Historically, the most impacted departments have been Antioquia, Meta, Nariño, Caqueta and Norte de Santander.[23] Although most victims are members of the armed forces, indigenous persons, notably children, are at a disproportionate risk of detonating a device and dying from the incident.[24]

Migration from Venezuela

According to Migracion Colombia, the governmental migration agency, over 1.74 million Venezuelan migrants were present in Colombia, as of January 2021.[25] The eastern border departments of Norte de Santander, La Guajira and Arauca concentrate large proportions of migrants, especially newcomers with greater risks. Migrants also congregate in the Caribbean region, in and around major cities of Bogotá, Medellin and Cali, and along a southbound corridor to emigrate to other South American countries. "Those without regular status are more vulnerable to exploitation and violence and face barriers to socio-economic integration within the country."[26]

Given the profound political and economic crisis in Venezuela, the emigration from that country is likely to constitute a protracted migrant situation, chiefly in Colombia as a large historically integrated neighbour. This is aligned with the international trend of protracted refugee and displacement situations, which may not be feasibly resolved through repatriation to countries of origin or resettlement to third countries. The Colombian government responded by emitting a Temporary Statute for the Protection of Venezuelan Migrants, as a crucial protection mechanism that provisionally enables a legal integration of the migrant population.[27]

However, other areas of local integration, including social, economic and, more broadly, human development, demand attention to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Venezuelan migrants within Colombian society. With that aim, an international cross-sector alliance of NGOs and academic institutions led by Universidad Externado de Colombia, launched the "Barómetro de la Xenofobia" (Xenophobia Barometer) in order to counter rumours and misinformation that may encourage greater discrimination and violence towards Venezuelan migrants. Stigmatising rumours centre on Venezuelan migrants being highly involved in delinquency and insecurity, although this is belied by data that shows they are no more responsible for such incidents than the Colombian population at large.[28] According to a representative of iMMAP in Colombia, this barometer employs media monitoring techniques that are applicable for other humanitarian matters.

Illicit crop cultivation

On drug trafficking, UNODC reported 143,000 hectares of coca crops in 2020, marking a slight reduction in land use. However, cocaine yield per hectare continues to rise, resulting in a potential cocaine production of 1,228 tons.[29] Natural National Parks, Collective Territories of Afrodescendant Communities and Indigenous Reservations concentrate 29% of coca cultivation, which presents a challenge of responding to drug production while respecting environmental and ethnic concerns.

19. iMMAP. (2021, May).

20. iMMAP. (2021, May).

21. La Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz (OACP), Gobierno Nacional de Colombia. (2021, May 31). Estadísticas de Asistencia Integral a las Víctimas de MAP y MUSE. Acción Contra Minas. http://www.accioncontraminas.gov.co/Estadisticas/estadisticas-de-victimas

22. OACP. (2021, May 31).

23. OACP. (2021, May 31).

24. OACP. (2021, May 31).

25. Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows, Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V). (2021, June 11). SUPPORT PLAN 2021, COLOMBIA - TPS, GIFMM Support Plan for the Implementation of the Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelans. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Support%2520Plan%2520ETPV_DRAFT11062021_ENG_FV24062021.pdf

26. R4V. (2021, June 11).

27. Cancillería de Colombia. (2021, July 23). Estatuto Temporal de Protección para Migrantes Venezolanos. https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/estatuto-temporal-proteccion-migrantes-venezolanos

28. Universidad Externado de Colombia. (2020, September 18). Nace "Barómetro de la Xenofobia." https://www.uexternado.edu.co/finanzas-gobierno-y-relaciones-internacionales/nace-barometro-de-la-xenofobia/

29. United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2021, June 9). Datos y tendencias del Monitoreo de Territorios afectados por Cultivos Ilicitos en Colombia (2020). https://www.unodc.org/colombia/es/datos-y-tendencias-del-monitoreo-de-territorios-afectados-por-cultivos-ilicitos-en-colombia-2020.html

Over the past five years, coca crops are increasingly concentrated in frontier areas and along geostrategic drug trafficking corridors.[30]
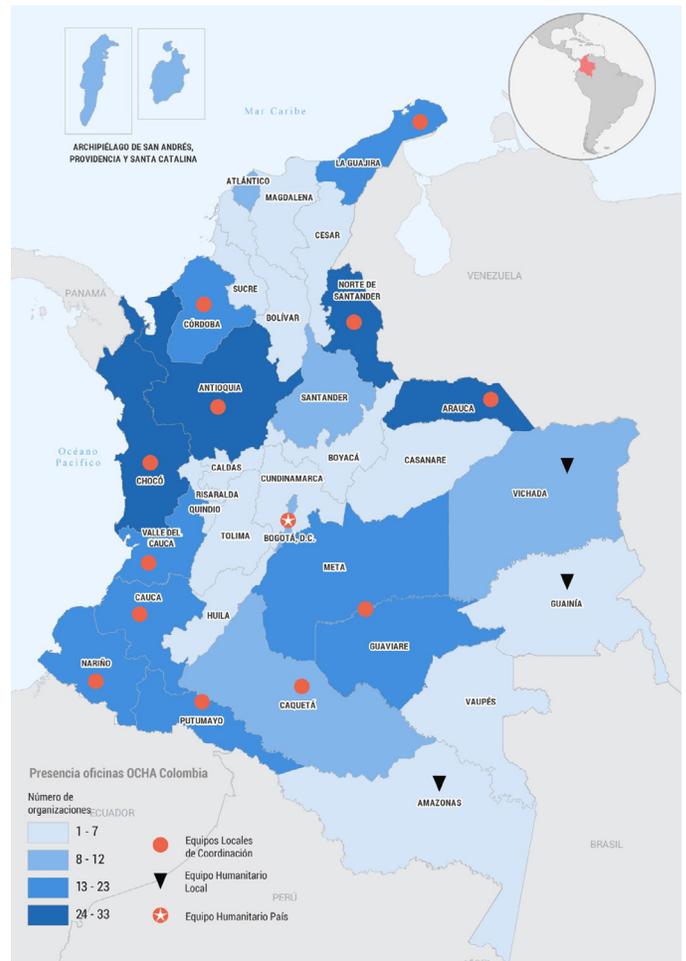
COVID-19

With 4,880,516 confirmed cases as of 20 August 2021, Colombia has the 9th highest caseload of COVID-19 in the world.[31] It has 85,085 cases per 1 million persons, nearly the rate of infections in Brazil, and has registered 109,466 deaths due to COVID-19.[32] Concerningly, refugees and migrants are the most affected groups, with a 26% increase in infections from April to May, 2021, followed by seniors with a 16% increase during the same period.[33] Despite a slow start, 27.73% of the population was fully vaccinated as of August 20, one of the highest proportions in the region.[34] However, as of May 2021, the departments that are most affected by humanitarian crises, including Chocó, Cauca, Putumayo, La Guajira, Arauca, Vichada and Guaviare, had the lowest rate of administered vaccines, between 5.2 and 11.9% of the population, suggesting a prolonged vulnerability to the pandemic in these complex areas.[35]

Humanitarian Presence

This dynamic and complex humanitarian context has drawn sustained commitments of support from the international community. While data on international cooperation in Colombia is not consistently available or reliable to determine the scope of intervention, UN OCHA recorded 90 organisations as of mid-2020,[36] 77 organisations participated in the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan,[37] and 43 are registered in the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX),[38] though the humanitarian footprint is much larger. For its part, the Colombian government agency for international cooperation (APC, for its Spanish acronym), reports 4,846 projects and

$7.67 billion USD invested or currently under investment between 2010 and 2021.[39]

As illustrated in the following map produced by UN OCHA, all 32 departments in Colombia have a humanitarian presence, but it is most heavily concentrated in the departments shown in darker shades of blue, chiefly Chocó, Norte de Santánder, Antioquia and Arauca.

Source: UN OCHA (2021, June 14)

30. UNODC. (2021, June 9).
31. Johns Hopkins University (JHU). (2021, June 23). Colombia - COVID-19 Overview - Johns Hopkins. Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/colombia
32. JHU. (2021, June 23).
33. iMMAP. (2021, May).
34. JHU. (2021, June 23).
35. iMMAP. (2021, May).
36. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2021, June 14). Presencia operacional Equipo Humanitario País (EHP) - 3W. https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/infografia_presencia_operacional_humanitaria_3w_junio_2021_vf.pdf
37. OCHA. (2021b, April 26). Colombia: Plan de Respuesta Humanitaria 2021 - Colombia. ReliefWeb. https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/colombia-plan-de-respuesta-humanitaria-2021
38. OCHA. (2021). Colombia - Humanitarian Data Exchange. Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX). https://data.humdata.org/group/col
39. APC. (2021).

COLOMBIA HUMANITARIAN FUND

Communication Culture

Anthropological and psychological models have sought to classify national cultures, including communication culture. However, each model should be scrutinised on the basis of its methodological limitations, the potential for cultural biases in their interpretation, the transformations of culture through time and the diversity across groups and individuals. For example, according to Edward T. Hall's Culture Context Model (1976), Colombia is a high context culture, characterised by long lasting relationships, clearly identified insiders and outsiders of the culture, spoken agreements and ingrained and slow-to-change cultural patterns. In addition to what is said, special attention is generally paid to the context, in terms of when, where, or how it is said, in order to give it meaning.[40]

For its part, the Geert Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Theory (1980), developed on the basis of a large database of opinion surveys among global IBM employees, scored Colombian society as follows:[41]

- High power distance (67): broadly accepting of unequal distributions of power across layers in society
- Very low individualism (13): among the most collectivist in terms of having a high interdependence that binds members of society
- High masculinity (64): motivated by "masculine" values of competition, and pursuit of achievement and success
- Very high uncertainty avoidance (80): risk-averse and threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations
- Very low long-term orientation (13): normative in their preference for time-honored traditions and norms while being suspicious of societal change
- Very high indulgence (83): exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires as part of life fulfillment, placing greater importance on leisure and enjoyment

Evidently, these models were developed over 40 years ago by outside observers based on unrepresentative samples of Colombian society. From a different perspective, Clifford Geertz argued that anthropology should be conceived as a discipline of interpreting levels of cultural symbolism, instead of measuring and classifying cultures as exemplified above. "Societies, like lives, contain their own interpretations," Geertz wrote. "One has only to gain access to them."[42] Informed by

40. Costalas, G. (2009, January 1). Intercultural Communication between Colombian and American Teachers in Colombian Institutions | Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development. Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, Vol. 11 No. 1. https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/10556

41. Pinzón Velasco, J. (2018). Correlación entre la Distancia de Poder y la Descentralización en las Organizaciones Bogotanas Internacionalizadas. Fundación Universidad de América. https://repository.uamerica.edu.co/bitstream/20.500.11839/6935/1/4132739-2018-II-NIIE.pdf

42. Geertz, C. (1973). Interpretation of Cultures. Gedisa Editorial

this interpretative approach, Eduardo Restrepo, President of the Latin American Anthropological Association (ALA, for its Spanish acronym), has led and collaborated on a rich body of work focused on genealogies of "Colombianness" and ethnic communities in Colombia, especially afro-descendants in the Pacific coast.

Thus, as humanitarian organisations engage with stakeholders, they may encounter substantial differences in the communication culture exhibited by white and mestizo elites in Bogotá, working class Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and host communities in complex urban landscapes, small-scale farmers in conflict-affected rural areas, or historically marginalised indigenous and afro-descendant communities, not to mention refugees and migrants from Venezuela. Therefore, as advocated throughout this report, the cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence required for successful CCEA are long-term endeavours that should be built on the basis of listening, respect, and trust-building. Such a sensible approach would illustrate diverse manifestations of communication culture, in relation to regional, cultural, class and other characteristics.

Languages, literacy, and two-way communication

Spanish is legally recognised as the official language of Colombia and is spoken by the vast majority of the population. In addition, there are 69 other languages, including 65 indigenous languages, two creole languages (palenquero of San Basilio and creole of San Andrés and Providencia islands), Romani and Colombian sign language.[43] Based on the 2018 census, 1,905,617 indigenous persons live in Colombia, affiliated with 115 native communities, and representing 4.4% of the national population.[44] Most of the indigenous population is concentrated among the Wayuu (380,460 persons), Zenú (307,091), Nasa (243, 176) and Pastos (163,873) communities, and is located in the departments of La Guajira, Cauca, Nariño, Córdoba and Sucre.[45] Humanitarian interventions that are either targeted to or may include members of indigenous communities must ensure a differential approach, including high standards of cultural competence and use of the

corresponding native languages, possibly alongside Spanish. The 2018 census showed a dramatic decline in afro-descendant persons, from 4,311,757 persons in 2005 to 2,982,224 in 2018,[46] which may be related to limitations in the survey design or the physical reach of populations in complex urban landscapes and remote rural areas, as well as changes in ethnic self-recognition. While afro-descendants mostly speak Spanish, it is important to recognise rich linguistic traditions, such as palenquero and creole languages, and the preservation of words and modes of dialogue of African origin. Thus, communication products aimed at afro-descendant populations should be developed and validated with local community members to ensure broad understanding and appropriation of the intended messages.

Illiteracy has declined dramatically over the past 50 years and stood at 5.1% in 2018. However, results vary greatly between the main cities and remote rural areas.[47] While just 2% of respondents in Bogotá were illiterate, over 10% of those in the departments of La Guajira, Chocó, Vichada, Sucre and Córdoba were illiterate.[48] There is a strong inverse correlation between age and literacy, with the highest levels among 10 to 19-years-olds, and declining levels among older respondents.[49] Although there is a marked gender gap in literacy rates worldwide, this is not reflected in Colombia, where 91.8% of women and 91.3% of men are literate.[50]

As a middle-upper income country and member of OECD, Colombia has a relatively mature media landscape in the Latin American context, though it is uneven in relation to marginalised communities, especially in complex urban landscapes and frontier regions.

Colombia holds 14 fixed-line, 132 cellular telephone, and 14 broadband-fixed internet subscriptions per every 100 inhabitants, and 62.3% of the population regularly uses the internet. In absolute terms, this places Colombia as one of the 30 countries with most communications connections in the world, and 3rd or 4th in Latin America, just above or below Argentina (see table below for details).[51]

43. Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia. (2015, February 27). ONIC - 65 Lenguas Nativas de las 69 en Colombia son Indígenas. ONIC. https://www.onic.org.co/noticias/636-65-lenguas-nati-vas-de-las-69-en-colombia-son-indigenas
44. IWGIA - International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. (2020, May 26). El Mundo Indígena 2020: Colombia. https://www.iwgia.org/es/colombia/3739-mi-2020-colombia.html
45. IWGIA - International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. (2020, May 26).

46. DANE. (2019, November). POBLACIÓN NEGRA, AFROCOLOMBIANA, RAIZAL Y PALENQUERA: RESULTADOS DEL CENSO NACIONAL DE POBLACIÓN Y VIVIENDA 2018. https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/grupos-etnicos/presentacion-grupos-etnicos-poblacion-NARP-2019.pdf
47. Unidad de Datos, El Tiempo. (2021, February 5). ¿Cuántos colombianos sabemos leer y escribir? El Tiempo. https://www.eltiempo.com/datos/cifras-de-analfabetismo-en-colombia-564784#:%7E:tex-t=En%201964%2C%20la%20tasa%20de,no%20sab%C3%ADa%20leer%20ni%20escribir.
48. Unidad de Datos, El Tiempo. (2021, February 5).
49. Unidad de Datos, El Tiempo. (2021, February 5).
50. Unidad de Datos, El Tiempo. (2021, February 5).
51. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). (2021, July 6). Colombia - The World Factbook. The World Factbook. https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/colombia/#communications

Communication Infrastructure at a glance				
Service	**Fixed-line**	**Mobile cellular**	**Internet users**	**Broadband-fixed**
Number of connections	7,012,306	66,283,175	29,990,017	6,949,852
Per 100 inhabitants	14.23	134.47	62.26	14,1
International comparison	23	24	27	26
Regional comparison	4	3	4	4

Digital evolution

The Digital Evolution Index by the Institute for Business in the Global Context, ranks Colombia 12th in Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of its digital evolution, just below Brazil and above Jamaica, and has the 6th highest momentum in digital transformation since 2008.[52] However, Digital Planet ranks Colombia poorly in terms of public sector social distancing preparedness and government response, affording it a score of -1.0 on digital public services and society, and of -1.8 on inclusive and affordable internet, very near Mexico on both fronts.[53]

Notwithstanding the moderately high average Internet access in Colombia, it varies greatly across the country. In Bogotá, 76.2% of households have Internet access, as do similarly high proportions in wealthier and more urbanised departments like Valle del Cauca (67.7%), Risaralda (61.1%), Santánder (60.5%), Antioquia (55.4%), Quindío (63.9%) and Meta (54.0%).[54] Meanwhile, in La Guajira (20.3%), Putumayo (16.6%), Chocó (14.4%), Guainía (11.9%), Amazonas (10.0%), Vichada (5.2%) and Vaupés (1.6%), populations are overwhelmingly disconnected from the Internet.[55] Within departments, the Internet is heavily concentrated in the urban cores, where 61.6% of households have access, whereas just 20.7% of rural homes are connected.[56]

This digital divide is particularly concerning in light of the fact that Colombia has experienced some of the longest periods of school closures in the region. According to The Economist, anecdotal accounts suggest that the lack of internet connection and computer devices among marginalised children and youth is burgeoning the population of school dropouts and gang involvement, with lasting damages to wellbeing and safety.[57]

Internet and social media usage

Whereas worldwide, there are more Internet users than active social media users (60% versus 54% of the global population), this pattern is inverted in Colombia, where 34.7 million persons use the Internet but there are 39 million social media user accounts, partly related to individuals having more than one account per platform or issues cross-referencing users across platforms.[58] Notwithstanding limitations in individual user counts, data shows that Colombians are heavy social media users and involvement is rapidly increasing, with an 11% rise in active social media users during 2020, a much sharper increase than that of mobile or Internet connections. Social media usage peaks among 25 to 34-year-olds (15% of total users), and gradually declines along each subsequent age group.[59]

Moreover, among Internet users aged 16 to 64, 98.1% own a mobile phone, 97.5% specifically own a smartphone and 76.6% own a computer. In terms of time use, these users spent an average of over 10 hours per day using the Internet across devices, and almost four hours using social media, which was nearly twice as much as reading press media in either physical or online forms or three times as much as listening to broadcast radio. It should be noted that this data corresponds to Internet users, so press and radio consumption may be higher among the 32% of Colombians who are disconnected from the web.[60]

52. Institute for Business in the Global Context, Tufts University. (November 2018). Digital Evolution Index: Latin America & Caribbean Edition. [Report]. https://sites.tufts.edu/digitalplanet/files/2020/03/DEI-LAC_Executive-Summary_27Nov2018.pdf
53. Digital Planet, Tufts University. (May 29, 2020). Delivering Public Services During COVID-19: A Country-by-Country Analysis. (Report). https://sites.tufts.edu/digitalplanet/which-governments-are-best-equipped-to-deliver-public-services-online-during-a-lockdown/
54. Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE). (2020, July 14). Boletín Técnico, Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida ECV, 2019. https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/condiciones_vida/calidad_vida/2019/Boletin_Tecnico_ECV_2019.pdf
55. DANE. (2020, July 14).
56. DANE. (2020, July 14).

57. The Economist. (2021, July 8). A teachers' union tries to keep Colombia's schools closed. https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2021/07/10/a-teachers-union-tries-to-keep-colombias-schools-closed
58. Estimates of Internet usage in Colombia are largely consistent across sources, ranging from a low of 31.28 million according to Internet World Stats and a high of 33.2 million based on the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Bank.
59. Kemp, S. & Hootsuite. (2021, February 11). Digital in Colombia: All the Statistics You Need in 2021. DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-colombia
60. Kemp, S. & Hootsuite. (2021, February 11).

Regarding content, online videos are extremely popular, with 99% of Internet users aged 16 to 64 consuming them on a monthly basis. These are followed by online radio stations, which enjoy listenership of 53% of Internet users, and podcasts with 42% of users as audience.[61]

While YouTube is the most-used social media platform in Colombia, with 96% of Internet users connecting on a monthly basis, the Facebook parent company commands the next four places, with Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Messenger, ranging from 70-94% of users. Other platforms, like Twitter (59%), TikTok (39%), Snapchat (30%) and Telegram (21%) also enjoy substantial appeal among more niche audiences. Among these, TikTok is experiencing a dramatic rise, partly driven by the stay-at-home orders due to COVID-19, securing its place as the top most downloaded app in 2020.[62] Concerningly, an estimated 40-60% of TikTok users are between 13 and 24 years, who may be vulnerable to especially privacy and safety issues, as highlighted in recent scandals over risky "#challenges".[63],[64] For its part, the Colombian Superintendency of Industry and Commerce has opened inquiries into potential privacy and data protection violations by TikTok, as well as by Facebook and other social media platforms.[65]

Media outlets

In terms of the quantity of media outlets, the most prevalent communication tool in Colombia is the radio, which covers 95% of municipalities and enjoys widespread listenership among urban and rural audiences. Outside the major cities of Bogotá, Medellín and Cali, there are 1,235 radio stations across Colombia, of which 585 are owned by communities, 434 by commercial entities, 110 by the public sector, and 106 by the armed forces.[66] Moreover, there are 387 TV networks of community (237), commercial (139), and public ownership (11), as well as 336 print newspapers and 228 digital ones.[67]

Despite this, 60% of Colombian municipalities lack local journalistic content.[68] Unsurprisingly, most outlets are concentrated in the more populated and developed departments of Antioquia (253), Cundinamarca (179), Santander (136), Nariño (129), Boyacá (119) and Valle del Cauca (102).[69] Meanwhile, less populated departments, often with greater humanitarian vulnerabilities, such as Chocó (45), La Guajira (42), Putumayo (38) and Arauca (38) have fewer local outlets.[70] More concerningly, areas with reduced media coverage tend to have less diversity, and a prominent or exclusive dominance by the armed forces. In fact, the Colombia Estéreo Radio of the armed forces has enjoyed three decades of sustained growth, resulting in 104 stations across 87 cities, and an unrivalled position as the most robust communication network in Colombia.[71] An ACDI/VOCA consultant in Chocó, highlighted the extensive radio infrastructure of the police across the Pacific region, where "stations adapt to the musical tastes of each area to keep people tuned in".

Likewise, digital media is also concentrated in major cities and is overwhelmingly derived from preexisting newspapers, TV channels, or radio stations, so it has had moderate success in diversifying media ownership or broadening geographic reach.[72]

Press Freedom

According to AmericasBarometer, a survey applied to 1,563 Colombians, 58% of respondents said there was very little freedom of the press and 37% said news media is not pluralistic, which is closely aligned with expert perceptions. Such scores are closely correlated in Colombia and across Latin America and the Caribbean, and position the Colombian press as one of the least free and pluralistic in the region.[73] Regionally, the proportion of respondents who report having high trust in the media dropped to its lowest level in 2016/17. With 45% of respondents expressing low trust and 19% intermedia trust, Colombia was the country with least trust in the media across the region.[74]

61. Kemp, S. & Hootsuite. (2021, February 11).
62. Kemp, S. & Hootsuite. (2021, February 11).
63. Radio Nacional de Colombia. (2020, May 13). ¿Cuáles serían los riesgos de seguridad para menores en TikTok y cómo prevenirlos? https://www.radionacional.co/cultura/cuales-serian-los-riesgos-de-seguridad-para-menores-en-tiktok-y-como-prevenirlos
64. Semana. (2020, August 29). Tik Tok: la aplicación detrás del peligroso reto de los adolescentes. Semana.com Últimas Noticias de Colombia y el Mundo. https://www.semana.com/vida-moderna/articulo/tik-tok-la-aplicacion-detras-del-peligroso-reto-de-los-adolescentes/650683/
65. El Tiempo. (2020, May 12). SIC investigará a la red social viral TikTok por datos de menores. https://www.eltiempo.com/tecnosfera/novedades-tecnologia/tik-tok-es-investigada-por-la-sic-por-tratamientos-de-datos-de-la-red-social-a-menores-de-edad-494488
66. Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP). (2019, May 2). Periodismo roto: viaje por las grietas de la información en Colombia. https://flip.org.co/index.php/en/publicaciones/informes/item/2335-periodismo-roto-un-viaje-por-las-grietas-del-periodismo-colombiano
67. FLIP. (2019, May 2).

68. FLIP. (2019, May 2).
69. FLIP. (2019, May 2).
70. FLIP. (2019, May 2).
71. FLIP. (2019, May 2).
72. FLIP. (2019, May 2).
73. Rodríguez, M., & Zechmeister, E. J. (2018, February 8). Media Pluralism, Public Trust, and Democracy: New Evidence from Latin America and the Caribbean. The Communication Initiative Network. https://www.comminit.com/bbcmediaaction/content/media-pluralism-public-trust-and-democracy-new-evidence-latin-america-and-caribbean
74. Rodríguez, M., & Zechmeister, E. J. (2018, February 8).

Humanitarian Architecture

Following the Humanitarian Reform process led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Emergency Relief Coordinator in 2005, the humanitarian community in Colombia organised in accordance with the Cluster Approach and Local Humanitarian Teams.[75] Under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator, the Humanitarian Country Team (EHP, for its Spanish acronym) enables coordination among UN agencies, international and national NGOs and donors, while facilitating outreach with national and local government agencies.

Seven clusters are currently active in Colombia: Shelter, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Protection, Food Security, Nutrition, and Health, as well as the cross-cutting groups of Gender, Early Recovery and Education in Emergencies, which works closely with the Education Ministry. The highest number of organisations is concentrated in the protection cluster (67 organisations), followed by health (38), WASH (37), and education in emergencies (32).[76] The most wide-reaching clusters are protection and health, which have relevant organisations involved across 31 and 32 departments, respectively.[77]

Representatives of each cluster convene in the Inter-Cluster Group, which is coordinated by UN OCHA and engages with a mailing list of 50 persons. An information management subgroup (GTMI, for its Spanish acronym) operates under the direction of the Inter-Cluster Group to address cross-cutting data issues. All the above-mentioned national groups generally convene in Bogotá, though prior to the COVID-19 pandemic some organised delegations to affected territories to highlight humanitarian conditions across regions, while fostering decentralised collaboration between national and local coordination structures.

Local Coordination Teams (ELCs, for their Spanish acronym) group organisational representatives present in key regions, and are reportedly active in twelve departments, including Norte de Santander, Antioquia, Arauca, Chocó, Nariño, Putumayo, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Córdoba, Meta, Guaviare and La Guajira.[78] These groups generally convene on a monthly basis, unless otherwise required for extraordinary sessions. Although most of them met primarily in-person, offering participants the option to connect virtually if needed, they were pressed to shift to virtual-only meetings due to COVID-19. That rapid transition may have inhibited coordination efforts, especially among field staff in remote regions with haphazard Internet or phone connections, while enabling engagement from other staff with adequate connectivity but difficult or costly mobility.

ERF COLOMBIA
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75. IASC Transformative Agenda | IASC. (2019, October 9). Inter-Agency Standing Committee. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-transformative-agenda
76. OCHA. (2020, June 8). COLOMBIA, PRESENCIA OPERACIONAL EQUIPO HUMANITARIO PAÍS (EHP) - 3W. https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/infografia_presencia_operacional_humantiaria_3w_junio_2021_vf.pdf
77. OCHA. (2020, June 8).

78. ELCs differ in membership, participation, and coordination practices, and some are in fluctuation, being activated or deactivated in relation to regional humanitarian dynamics. Organisations launching initiatives should verify current local coordination dynamics in their target regions.

Humanitarian Architecture

Humanitarian Coordinator

EQUIPO HUMANITARIO COLOMBIA

Intercluster coordination group

Information Management Working Group

Food Safety and Nutrition	Protection	Water and basic sanitation	Health	Shelter	Early recovery	Education in emergencies

Group of mines

Local Humanitarian Teams

Norte de Santander	Antioquia	Arauca	Chocó	Nariño	Putumayo	Valle del Cauca	Córdoba	Meta

Active cluster

Sector
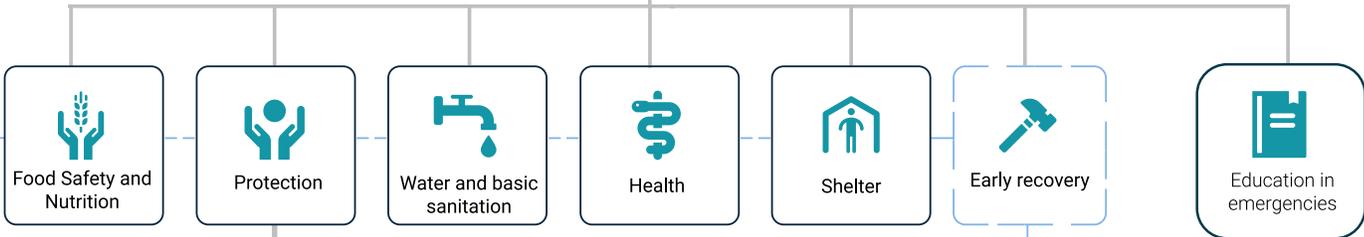
Cross-cutting issues
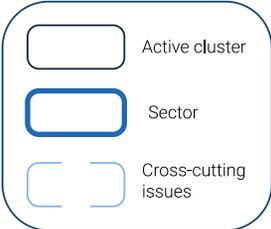
In 2018, UNHCR and IOM formed the Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM, for its Spanish acronym) in order to coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. It is part of the R4V—Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela—and has a communicating with communities inter-agency platform at the sub-national level involved in the Venezuela Migration Crisis Response. GIFMM is distributed among eight clusters and ten regional groups, covering the main regions where migrants are concentrated.[79]

CCEA Coordination

The C4D/CwC Taskforce (Communication for Development/ Communication with communities) is a cross-sector alliance for CCEA efforts. Its objectives are helping humanitarian actors strengthen their knowledge and information management, promoting the sharing of relevant information and facilitating community access to accountability mechanisms. While the Taskforce was previously housed under the Protection Cluster, it began to operate independently following the recognition of its cross-sector significance. The taskforce was formed under the auspices of UNHCR and Unicef, and is presently coordinated by Save the Children, Bethany Christian Services, and Fundación Apoyar, with a facilitating role by IOM. It involves 17 member organisations, including ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross, UN agencies, international NGOs and national and local organisations. As such, it exhibits the crucial diversity necessary for a collective approach to CCEA.

Open data on humanitarian matters

There is a significant availability of public data portals relevant to humanitarian action and related matters in Colombia, but these predominantly lack reliability, regularity or consistency in their data; may hold restricted inter-disciplinary or cross-sector content or may permit limited inter-institutional articulation. There are also important security concerns with sensitive information, which may be compromised by hackers or inappropriately used, such as hacking or use for military intelligence. This results in limited confidence in the information, an atomisation of platforms, and often a sub-utilisation of available resources. To improve the future development or integration of such databases, organisations should pay special attention to accessibility, usability, purpose, methodology, storage a

nd security. Below is an illustrative list of key humanitarian and other related databases:

- HDX: platform by UN OCHA for international inter-institutional information sharing regarding humanitarian issues.

- Monitor Humanitario: platform by UN OCHA and fed by various sources, with interactive georeferencing and graphics based on thematic or demographic factors regarding socio-natural disasters and armed violence.

- SIDIH - Sistema Integrado de Información Humanitaria para Colombia: platform by UN OCHA, with data on different humanitarian sectors, displacement, projects, contact information on key organisations and regional profiles/snapshots. It facilitates mapping, graphing and reporting humanitarian dynamics, with other contextual information. Access is free and open to pre-approved organisations working on relevant issues.

- FTS - Financial Tracking Service: platform by UN OCHA that serves as a centralised source of curated, continuously updated, fully downloadable data and information on humanitarian funding flows at an international level.

- 345W: platform by UN OCHA to monitor humanitarian preparation and response activities by different organisations and UN agencies. The tool is active in Colombia, as well as other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

- COVID-19 Data Explorer: platform by OCHA to monitor COVID-19, with map data layers for IDPs, food insecurity, organisations present, health facilities and immunization coverage, as well as indicators for funding, school closures and pandemic severity.

- DEEP: humanitarian data and review platform, developed by Data Friendly Spaces, in collaboration with iMMAP and other organisations.

- Datos del Conflicto Armado en Colombia: CERAC organises, codes and processes publicly available information on the Colombian armed conflict and adds it to the System for Analysis and Register of Conflict Actions (SARAC). Content is publicly available for analysis.

79. Grupo Interagencial sobre Flujos Migratorios Mixtos (GIFMM). (2021, August 4). GIFMM Colombia page | R4V. R4V. https://www.r4v.info/en/node/383

Rutas del Conflicto: database developed by VerdadAbierta.com (associated with FIP), ConLupa.co, and Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, to track the armed conflict through over 700 massacres since 1982. Information can be accessed based on advanced searches, keywords, georeferencing or time periods.

- Base de Datos de Conflicto Armado: Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP) gathers information on actions related to the armed conflict from 1986. The data is not presently public, but they share specific datasets to trusted partners (by year, zone or actor).

- DNP - Departamento Nacional de Planeación: the go-to place for government data on many types of public policy and planning issues.

- Municipal and departmental governmental offices: local offices have their own selection of publicly available data, though data may be outdated, difficult to locate and of varying scope and quality.

- SIMCI - Sistema Integrado de Monitoreo de Cultivos Ilícitos: data starting from 1999 on illicit crops in Colombia, including the extent, dynamic and impact of these, as well as the productivity, yield

- and prices of coca leaf and its derivatives, and the socioeconomic conditions of cultivators and producers.

- Sirirí: platform by Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), which has monitored formal civil society participation regarding peacebuilding and territorial development, since 2014.

- Homicide rates by municipality are provided by DIJIN (Dirección de Investigación Judicial e INTERPOL) and Medicina Legal.

- RUV (Registro Único de Víctimas): state-managed platform that registers IDPs and all other officially registered victims based on Law 1448 of 2011.

- GeoNode Sala Humanitaria: an open-source platform for sharing geospatial data and maps focused on humanitarian and peacebuilding issues.

- Wiki Humanitaria: open-source wiki for sharing Spanish-language materials on humanitarian matters, with a special focus on Colombia.

- ECLA - Encuesta Longitudinal Colombiana de la Universidad de los Andes: bi-annual longitudinal study on wealth, income, labour and land since 2010.

COLOMBIA: INCREASING HUMAN SECURITY IN SOACHA
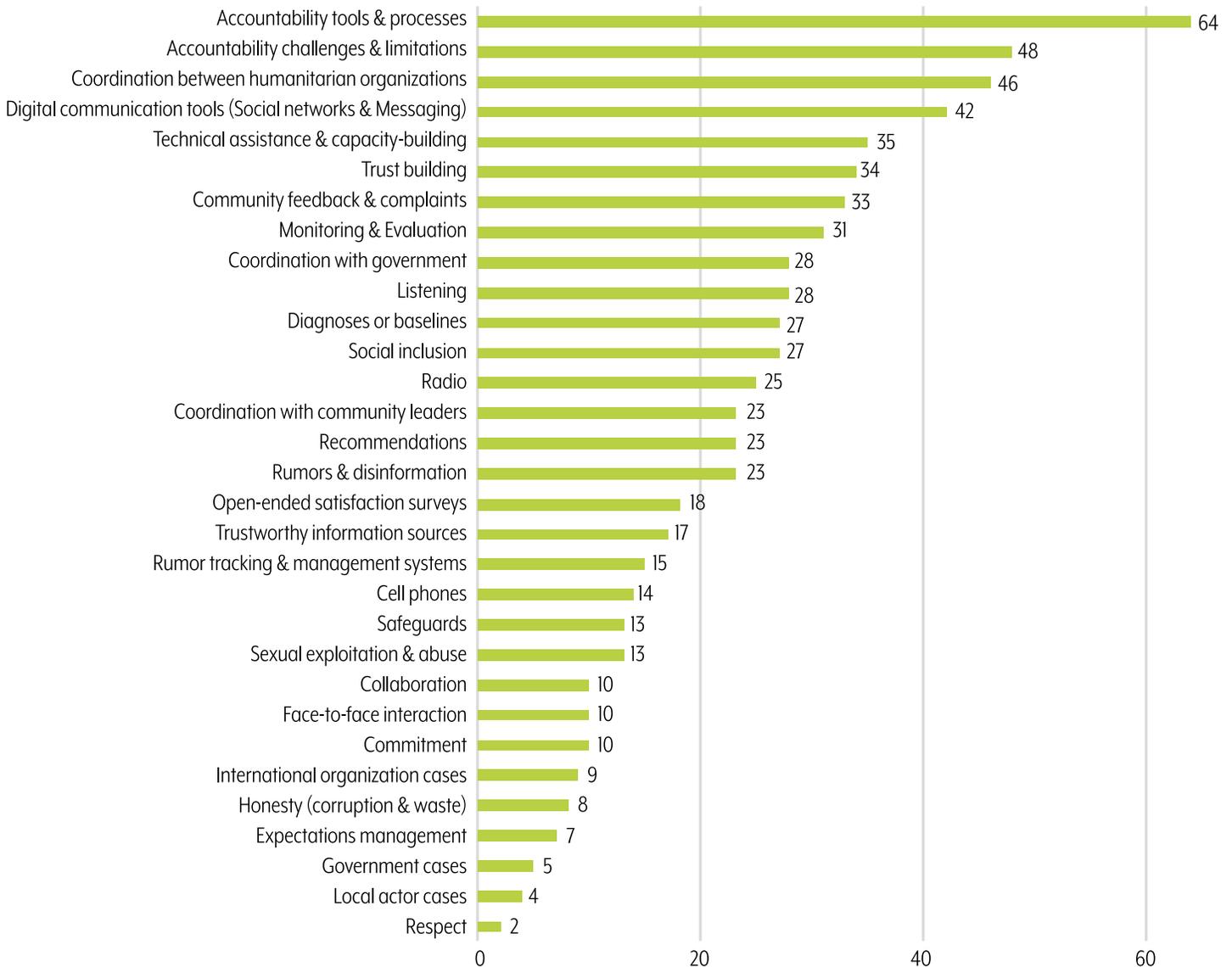OCHA

Institutional capacity-strengthening on CCEA

Many interviewees lauded Unicef for spearheading the promotion of CCEA in Colombia. An international NGO leader, for example, highlighted their training sessions, the provision of technical guidelines and the involvement of community leaders in aid delivery. She also spoke of Communication for Development (C4D), as a Unicef-led strategy that highlighted the work of the UN agency across territories, teaching how to develop and disseminate stories through community radio in remote areas.

For their part, organisations contracted by Unicef also attributed significant and durable institutional learning in terms of CCEA as a result of their collaboration. A local NGO representative recognised learning from Unicef about C4D, with alternative and community-level emphasis, and adequate follow up, as well as on thematic matters such as domestic violence, mental health, and COVID-19 vaccines. Likewise, a representative of another local NGO said they learned to consistently ask participants for feedback in order to continuously iterate and build trust with communities. That learning process "has not been about numbers but from a more human perspective about impact so the population can trust and engage".

Interview Findings

Firstly, subject matter experts discussed various tools and processes to enhance accountability to affected populations, followed by the challenges and limitations of implementing such steps. When discussing coordination, experts focused mostly on the importance of improving it among humanitarian organisations, including through the provision of technical assistance and capacity building between them and towards local organisations. To a lesser degree, they stressed difficulties of collaborating constructively with government entities, and called for genuine engagement of community leaders as allies for improved design and throughout the project cycle. The most important values for these experts when pursuing CCEA are a sustained commitment to trust-building with communities, and attentively listening to them as part of a bilateral dialogue for ongoing learning and improvement. Although experts noted the widespread reach of radio content, especially among crisis-affected populations, they mentioned digital communication tools, such as social networks and messaging, twice as often.

Most frequently mentioned themes by humanitarian interviewee [80]

Theme	Value
Accountability tools & processes	64
Accountability challenges & limitations	48
Coordination between humanitarian organizations	46
Digital communication tools (Social networks & Messaging)	42
Technical assistance & capacity-building	35
Trust building	34
Community feedback & complaints	33
Monitoring & Evaluation	31
Coordination with government	28
Listening	28
Diagnoses or baselines	27
Social inclusion	27
Radio	25
Coordination with community leaders	23
Recommendations	23
Rumors & disinformation	23
Open-ended satisfaction surveys	18
Trustworthy information sources	17
Rumor tracking & management systems	15
Cell phones	14
Safeguards	13
Sexual exploitation & abuse	13
Collaboration	10
Face-to-face interaction	10
Commitment	10
International organization cases	9
Honesty (corruption & waste)	8
Expectations management	7
Government cases	5
Local actor cases	4
Respect	2

The following graphic illustrates the co-occurrence of key technical themes in discussions with humanitarian subject matter experts, in other words, when two or more of these themes were mentioned simultaneously within the same citation, generally understood as a self-contained statement. For example, the most common co-occurrence is between the closely related themes of tools, processes, challenges, and limitations of accountability to affected populations. Conversely, although trustworthy information sources are a cross-cutting requirement for actionable and collaboration among parties, they were mostly treated in isolation and only occasionally mentioned in relation to accountability tools and processes, and to rumour tracking and management systems. Other noteworthy co-occurrences are discussed ahead in relation to accountability and coordination between humanitarian organisations.

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80. This graphic is the product of a hermeneutic process, in which interview texts are classified and interpreted, and thus helps illustrate the themes of most frequent, shared, and prominent interest among interviewees in relation to CCEA.

Co-occurrence between technical themes

	Accountability challenges & limitations	Accountability tools & processes	Community feedback & complaints	Coordination between humanitarian orgs	Coordination with community leaders	Coordination with government	Diagnoses or baselines	Expectations management	Monitoring & Evaluation	Open-ended satisfaction surveys	Rumor tracking & management systems	Safeguards	Sexual exploitation & abuse	Technical assistance & capacity-building	Trustworthy information sources
● Accountability challenges & limitations	-	16	8	6	3	8	7	0	2	2	1	1	1	7	2
● Accountability tools & processes	-	-	12	8	3	4	13	0	12	9	3	2	4	12	4
● Community feedback & complaints	-	-	-	5	1	1	2	2	5	4	0	2	3	7	0
● Coordination between humanitarian orgs	-	-	-	-	8	8	7	0	6	0	1	0	2	12	1
● Coordination with community leaders	-	-	-	-	-	8	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	5	1
● Coordination with government	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
● Diagnoses or baselines	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	8	3	0	2	0	5	2
● Expectations management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
● Monitoring & Evaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	2	0	0	3	0
● Open-ended satisfaction surveys	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	2	0
● Rumor tracking & management systems	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	4
● Safeguards	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	0
● Sexual exploitation & abuse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0
● Technical assistance & capacity-building	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
● Trustworthy information sources	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Since UN General Assembly resolution 48/218B of 1994, UN agencies and other humanitarian organisations have been developing accountability standards and pursuing greater response-wide coordination on the matter.[81] Specifically, members of the UN system have been consolidating audit, evaluation, inspection and investigation functions, in order to systematically maintain an ongoing dialogue with communities through pertinent, transparent and safe mechanisms, in accordance with each territorial context.[82] Notwithstanding this background, most interviewees vaunted CCEA as a longstanding priority, but admitted that it is a relatively fledgling field in Colombia, and much effort must be made to disseminate standards, build capacity and coordinate response-wide efforts.

81. UN General Assembly (48th sess. : 1993–1994). (1994, August 12). Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations : United Nations Digital Library System. https://digitalli-brary.un.org/record/194334?ln=en

82. Unicef. (2020, May 10). Cartilla de rendición de cuentas a la población afectada. Unicef Colombia. https://www.unicef.org/colombia/informes/cartilla-de-rendicion-de-cuentas-la-poblacion-afectada

Accountability Tools and Processes

During interviews with subject matter experts, accountability tools and processes most commonly co-occurred with accountability challenges and limitations (16 co-occurrences), followed by diagnoses or baselines (13), community feedback and complaints (12), monitoring and evaluation (12), technical assistance and capacity building (12) and coordination between humanitarian organisations (8).

Organisations are building a toolkit of communication channels to facilitate the transmission of feedback or complaints from community members. These include voicemail, online forms or questionnaires, toll-free phone numbers, etc. Mercy Corps, for example, uses Community Accountability Reporting Mechanisms (CARM), a global policy and system to channel any and all types of community feedback, suggestions, complaints and concerns in a safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible manner. The system processes community inputs, starting with collection, and followed by log and grade, action and closure. Importantly, while the policy and system were developed globally, they are implemented by country and program level focal points and are budgeted for in all programs, ensuring they can be locally managed and properly resourced.[83]

The diversity of channels is meant to enable affected populations to reach organisations depending on whatever tools are accessible, preferred, or viewed as most trustworthy or confidential, based on the content of intended messages. However, some interviewees view the irregularity of tools used across organisations as an obstacle to genuine and reliable community engagement, and thus emphasise the need for standardised tools and common guidelines and highlight the role of Unicef in delivering relevant technical assistance.

The Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessments (MIRA) are well instituted in Colombia to build consistently structured baselines and assessments. Nevertheless, open-ended satisfaction surveys are a powerful tool to freely gather feedback for continuous learning and iteration, yet it is unevenly applied across organisations. Kuja Kuja, a platform for tracking customer satisfaction among affected populations, and aggregating suggestions on how to improve them, has been making inroads in Colombia with a plain proposition.[84] Upon receiving funding from US Agency for International Development (USAID)/Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and partnering with eight humanitarian organisations, it has positioned itself in the country as a trustworthy provider of third-party community surveys through a simple methodology composed of two open-ended questions delivered through in-person, phone or digital channels.

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83. Mercy Corps. (2020, June 3). Community Accountability Reporting Mechanisms (CARM) Policy. https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/CARMPolicy.pdf

84. IDEO.org. (2019, August 21). Kuja Kuja | Project. https://www.ideo.org/project/kuja-kuja


ERF Colombia
Navor Vargas

Accountability Challenges and Limitations

Accountability challenges and limitations most often co-occurred with coordination with government (eight co-occurrences), as well as the collection of community feedback and complaints (8), the performance of diagnoses or baselines (7), and the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building, especially among humanitarian organisations (7). According to interviewees, challenges to accountability centre on gaps in knowledge among some humanitarian organisations; gaps and delays in actionable information about crises; limited dedicated funding for CCEA; distance between larger operators and field contractors in contact with communities and over-reliance on unrepresentative data.

Despite the well-recognised role of OCHA coordinating information flows, or the complementary role of iMMAP disseminating content on key matters like COVID-19, information gaps and delays persist in remote areas with limited organisational presence and haphazard communication infrastructure, blunting the ability of organisations to deliver life-saving aid. Such gaps highlight the need for a robust

Frequency of themes mentioned in relation to recommendations
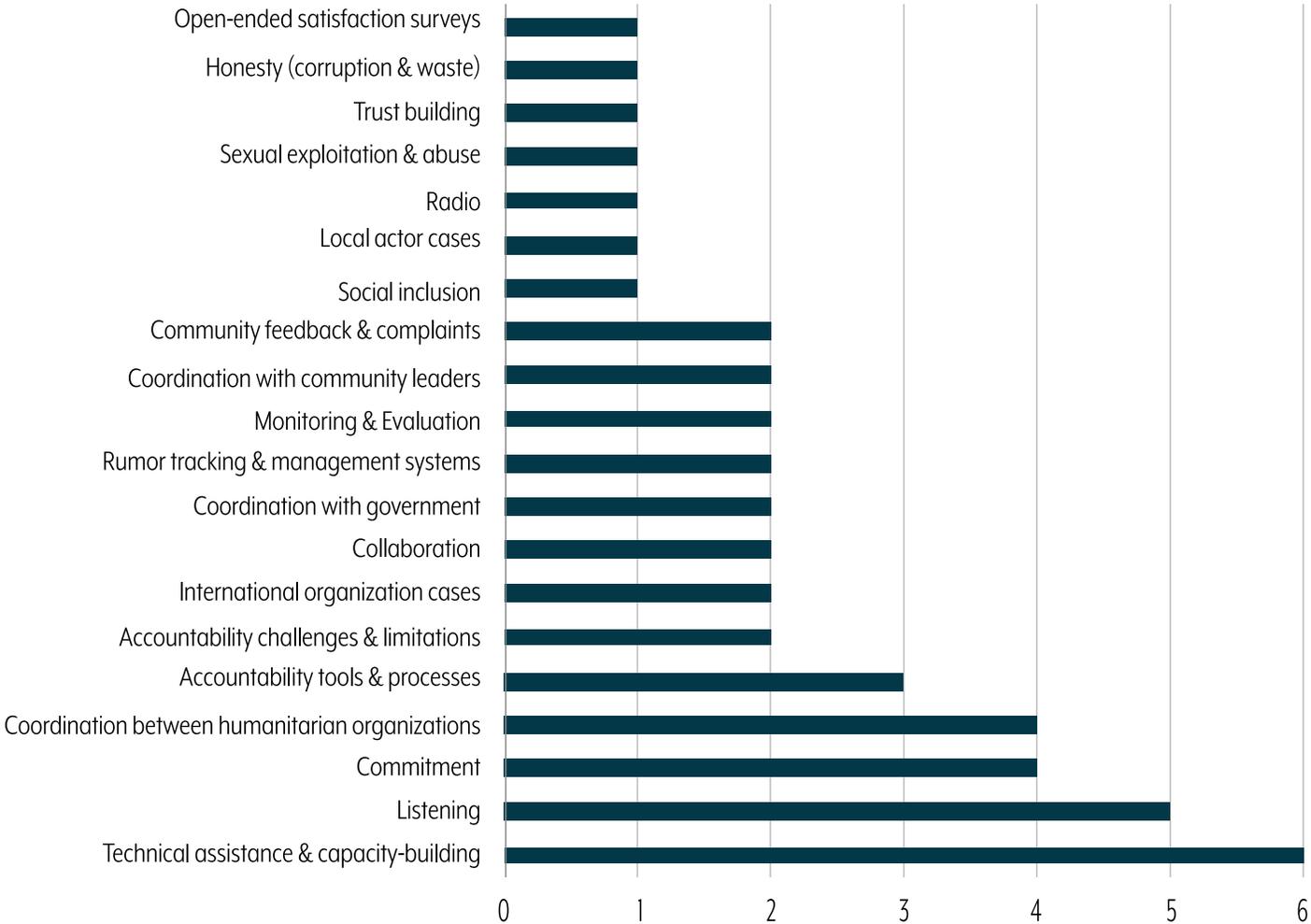
information system, making responsible use of innovative and increasingly accessible tools like satellite imagery, crisis mapping or mobile device tracking.

Additionally, the lack of dedicated funding for CCEA may over-extend humanitarian workers and deprive organisations of the opportunity to build a coherent and effective CCEA strategy. Despite such potential limitations, an international NGO representative posited alliances with traditional media in order to drive content that highlights humanitarian needs and efforts in a cost-effective manner.

As discussed by a civil society leader and a representative of a local NGO, the potential distance between larger operators that receive funds directly from international donors, and contractors that implement activities in the field can play out in different and significant ways. In some cases, community members may face hurdles transmitting relevant messages to the operators, which deprives the latter of an opportunity to iterate their programing and build trust with communities. On the other hand, community members may sometimes enjoy greater trust and feel a sense of gratitude towards contractors who they most directly engage with, and thus feel hesitant to share more transparent feedback with operators. These various scenarios call for improved collaboration between operators and contractors in terms of CCEA, including technical assistance, trust building and the exchange of information for joint learning.

Finally, interviewees had different views on the types of data to prioritise in CCEA. Whereas many called for a standardisation of tools and processes, some also warned against an over-reliance on "cold data" that may obscure rather than reveal the actual satisfaction of affected populations. These messages need not be at odds, as they accentuate the need for pertinence when collecting data or inviting feedback.

Coordination with the government

The state holds the mandate to respond to humanitarian crises and guarantee the rights of residents in the national territory.

Accordingly, some NGO representatives echoed the primacy of the government in emergency response and sought to limit their own scope to a supporting role. An international NGO representative, for example, lauded the government for making important efforts to come closer to communities, recognising that NGOs are meant to help bridge gaps where institutional capacity is lacking. Likewise, a member of a UN agency noted that ELCs regularly extend invitations to the Victims Unit and the Disaster Risk Management Unit (UARIV and UNGRD, respectively, for their Spanish acronyms) to participate in the conduct of MIRA.

However, the presence, capacity, or political will of the government is uneven across large swaths of the country, which often makes cross-sector coordination especially challenging, and stresses the role of humanitarian organisations to cover the most critical gaps. Regrettably, much of the discussion among interviewees regarding coordination with the government stressed challenges and limitations. The leader of a local organisation, for example, complained that "humanitarian responses by the government have been harmful, they do not participate in [coordination] scenarios, they cannot stand having their actions questioned, and they don't accept recommendations", suggesting serious gaps in terms of CCEA. A civil society leader offered a systemic critique of the government as chronically weak, ineffectual, or corrupt, arguing that the bulk of public contracts is compromised to (re)pay political campaigns and bribes. In contrast, he posited that "international cooperation is not contingent on such corruption, especially when finances are jointly overseen and managed with communities". Humanitarian organisations echo some of this sentiment, as most interviewees did not associate government initiatives that served as reference for CCEA. Some members of the C4D/CwC Taskforce pointed to ad-hoc instances of coordination, such as the Primero la Niñez[85] and Visibles[86] campaigns with the Migration division of the Foreign Relations Ministry, but said the government has not shown involvement in or facilitated CCEA efforts.

85. For more information, see: https://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/primerolaninez/
86. For more information, see: https://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/visibles

Following the classification of interview responses, the following pie chart displays the co-occurrence between the code recommendations and all other codes. Thus, we find that recommendations most frequently centred on technical assistance and capacity-building (six mentions), to be performed by leading humanitarian organisations and experts towards other international and local organisations, as well as towards community leaders in order to install durable capacity. Regarding values, recommendations mostly highlighted the act of attentively listening to community members (five mentions) and the genuine commitment to enhance CCEA (four mentions), and touched on other values like sustained trust-building, social inclusion and honesty to combat corruption and waste (one mention each). Next, recommendations called for improved coordination between humanitarian organisations (four mentions) and discussed the role of accountability tools and processes (three mentions), as well as its challenges and limitations (two mentions). To a lesser extent, recommendations pointed to strengthening mechanisms for community feedback and complaints and highlighted relevant use cases from international organisations (two mentions each). Finally, recommendations called for greater coordination between humanitarian organisations and with community leaders, as well as touching on tools, processes, challenges and limitations of accountability (one mention each).

Upon an in-depth review of interviews, as well as a review of domestic and international literature, and independent analysis, this report offers the following recommendations:

1. Uphold the value of listening to community members as a fundamental starting point of interventions. Listening should be based on a recognition of and respect for the resources and capacities of community members as the first, most important, and durable protagonists in responding to crises. For example, the director of AFRODES stressed that "communities are wise to identify needs and propose solutions, which is why international cooperation should be closely attached to that knowledge to continuously overcome the gaps of inequality and crises". As a member of Mercy Corps expressed, listening can be a valuable service by its very nature, because "participants value feeling heard, sharing their problems, and not feeling so alone". A representative of 5ta con 5ta noted that listening is not only valuable to community members, but also organisations, because hearing testimonies of gratitude can be inspiring and can motivate greater efforts and continuous improvements. Many interviewees drew the distinction between "speaking to" and "speaking with" affected populations, including through the promotion of community confidence to express their satisfaction levels towards services. The national chief of Kuja Kuja was emphatic about listening, saying: "We promote a radical approach to listening to what communities have to tell us before deciding how we are going to respond, because those who are facing a problem may have already thought of a solution. For us, the first and only step is to listen and then decide how to act. Communities offer fantastic ideas. Our dream is that when there is a planning process for humanitarian attention, we put ourselves at the same level, and they themselves tell us how to approach a situation as a basis to build upon."

2. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) should develop a collective CCEA Framework for Colombia to unify leadership, agencies, and partners in one common vision. HCT agencies that have not done so already, should appoint AAP focal points to integrate inter-organism collective efforts (HCT Compact's commitment to AAP). To promote this vision, CDAC Network or leading organisations on the matter, should deliver a high-level technical presentation for the HCT on AAP/CCEA, including nuances on the terminology (AAP beyond C4D/CwC) and possibly share highlights of the experience and key lessons learned of the HCT work on AAP being developed in Venezuela (2020-2021).

3. Expand and upgrade the C4D/CwC Taskforce (Communication for Development/Communication with communities) as an overarching working group for CCEA efforts. As such, the working group may include different taskforces focused on Common Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs), CwC, and Meaningful Participation. Additional financial and human resources would enable the Taskforce to play a more proactive role as a generator of CCEA products, guidelines, platforms and other support. It should build upon its success involving organisations like Fundación Apoyar, to expand membership to other local and community-based organisations, particularly of afro-descendant, indigenous, rural and migrant populations, in order to more directly engage with communities throughout joint initiatives.

4. The Inter-Cluster Group should coordinate regular community surveys to inform response-wide decision-making, with an independent provider such as Kuja Kuja. While the Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessments (MIRA) are well instituted, open-ended satisfaction surveys are a powerful tool to freely gather feedback for continuous learning and iteration, yet it is unevenly applied across organisations. Kuja Kuja received funding from USAID/OFDA and has partnered with eight humanitarian organisations in Colombia, positioning itself as a trust-worthy provider of third-party community surveys, through a simple methodology composed of two open-ended questions delivered through in-person, phone or digital channels.

5. An NGO leader highlighted the potentially transformative role of Kuja Kuja for enhanced community engagement and accountability. According to him, satisfaction surveys can be most valuable when they eschew extensive structured questions and institutional protagonism. Moreover, natural language processing is increasingly powerful at mining large datasets of unstructured spoken words for insights. Finally, the use of common questions among humanitarian organisations, along with standard donor indicators, would also facilitate comparisons and decision-making for future programming.

6. Conduct technical training and capacity building on CCEA, aligned with global standards and tailored to different audiences. Key audiences include UN Agencies and organisations heads/leadership, Inter-Cluster, Program directors, AAP et al. focal points, PI/Communication specialists, and IM and Monitoring officers. Several interviewees attributed significant and durable institutional learning as a result of training sessions by Unicef.

7. Jointly advocate to international donors to ensure that financial and human resources are allocated to enable a collective approach to CCEA, including through donor dedicated funding and agency pooled resources. An international NGO officer called for an articulation of inter-agency efforts around budgeting to ensure CCEA commitments are backed up with actions. As the main national coordination structure, the Inter-Cluster Group is well positioned to coalesce and advocate on this matter.

8. Donors should consider employing standard indicators, particularly Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) indicators for consistency and global alignment in relation to CCEA. This would offer guidance to operators and contractors, incentivise the streamlining of CCEA throughout the project cycle, facilitate coordination on CCEA matters among humanitarian organisations, and enable comparison and improved decision-making on future programing.

9. Rely on other existing national and local coordination structures, including the Inter-Cluster Group, ELCs, Clusters, and GIFMM to promote collective approaches to CCEA. Numerous interviewees encouraged greater coordination among humanitarian organisations in order to produce and disseminate guidelines, hold platforms for knowledge exchange, and jointly conduct surveys or generate communication products. In particular, ELC can be crucial to build a network of CCEA focal points in order to have a coordination structure and input at the field level. Moreover, each cluster can include information and feedback as a standing agenda item at periodic meetings to facilitate the practice of bringing voices of affected communities into these forums. Each cluster can review its progress addressing what it is doing to better address two-way information exchange, feedback and community engagement activities.

10. Urgently harmonise and consolidate the hundreds of project-based existing CFMs (including common vision, knowledge and Standard Operating Procedures [SOPs]). This would avoid further proliferation of project-based lines before collective technical alignment and further effort to collectively close the feedback loop. In light of the relatively strong recent inter-institutional developments on CFMs for PSEA and GBV, enhance collaboration with these areas, and consider a collective CFM, with distinct routes of attention within a coherent system, as a potential solution. Analyse the current data trends from all operating CFMs (For AAP and complaints PSEA, GBV, etc.) and produce one report/product to periodically communicate to Inter-cluster and HCT with clear recommendations for course correction including level of priority and hotspots.

11. Provide technical assistance and capacity building to communities so they can more effectively address local challenges. Various interviewees, particularly

ethnic population leaders, critically approached the distance between larger operators with technical expertise and direct access to international funds, and grassroots organisations that may have community legitimacy, territorial contextualisation, and high stakes in sustainable change. Thus, they recommended greater community involvement with an emphasis on boosting durable capacity, which is too often retained within intermediaries. Such local capacities should facilitate the more assertive and strengthened role of grassroots organisations to express their needs, propose solutions, and be resilient in the face of ongoing challenges.

12. Calibrate communication with communities in terms of proper channels, innovative approaches, relevant information delivery, and inclusive language. Communications outreach must start with an identification of the channels that the target population considers most accessible and trustworthy. For example, interviewees most often referred to digital communication channels, chiefly Facebook and WhatsApp, as well as community radio, as the most effective channels to reach affected populations, but the selection varies depending on the intended messages, the situation and the makeup of the population.

    As examined by Open Society Foundations and the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, Journalistic innovations such as live video on Facebook or Periscope, virtual reality, infographics and other graphic communication, interactive games, and podcasts, offer windows of opportunities for journalism to broaden their reach to new and younger audiences.[87] However, research has shown that digital innovations have had limited effectiveness broadening the territorial reach of journalism to areas without or with scarce media coverage.[88] Thus, for the time being, these innovations are especially pertinent for reaching urban audiences, such as at-risk youth and relatively integrated IDPs or migrants from Venezuela.

13. Finally, communication styles and language should be adapted to the target populations, particularly in the case of indigenous languages, but also with special consideration for afro-descendants, migrants from Venezuela, and other cultural or regional linguistic variations, and with more conversational and common sense approaches that avoid technical jargon and acronyms. For example, as noted by a member of Mercy Corps, that organisation seeks to translate complex matters such as the Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan migrants into digestible and approachable messages and relies on the informal pronoun of "tú".

87. Open Society Foundations & Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas. (2020, August 6). Innovative Journalism in Latin America. Journalism Courses Knight Center. https://journalismcourses. org/ebook/innovative-journalism-in-latin-america/
88. FLIP. (2019a, May).

Noteworthy CCEA cases from local organisations

FUNDACIÓN
La otra
Juventud

#Challenge	To promote capacity building among youth through the creation and strengthening of alternative and community-based digital communication processes, in order to transform risky environments into peaceful ones.
#How-to	By engaging with communities through 30 grassroots-level media outlets, aimed at ethnically and sexually diverse, youth, rural and conflict-affected audiences.
#Influencers	They work jointly with radio stations to disseminate content and with the public to do oversight, in order to combat rumours and disinformation, and deepen civil engagement around critical issues like vaccines, xenophobia and violence prevention. They especially support socially committed youth leaders who go on to participate in community decision-making and development efforts.

apoyar

#Challenge	To deliver vital support like food security, childhood protection, rights promotion, peace building, prevention of gender-based violence, and other aims for indigenous communities, migrants from Venezuela and other persons in need in the Arauca department.
#How-to	By driving a variety of social projects on the basis of over 30 years of experience and close coordination with humanitarian organisations, governments, and communities.
#Influencers	They have built trust among communities in an organic way, by centring on transparency and sustained commitments. Recently, they are employing KoboToolbox to build baselines that include questions on the most used and reliable channels to communicate with communities.

Annex 1: Organisations consulted by CDAC Network in Colombia by July 2021

Organisation	Role
Inter-Cluster Group	Participants in ordinary monthly meeting
Fundación 5ta con 5ta Crew	Director and Legal Representative
ACDI/VOCA	Regional Consultant, Chocó
AFRODES	Director and Legal Representative
Fundación Apoyar	Director of Strategic Alliances
Bethany Christian Services	Program Manager
Fundación Ideas para la Paz	Coordinator of Citizen Participation
Fundación La Otra Juventud	General Coordinator
iMMAP	Project Manager
iMMAP	Country Director
IOM	Interagency Communications Coordinator
Kuja Kuja	CEO, Colombia
Mercy Corps	Communications and Corporate Relations Manager
Save the Children	Accountability Officer
UN OCHA, LAC Regional Office	Accountability to Affected People & Community Engagement Advisor
UN OCHA	Analysis and Reporting Unit Lead
Unicef	Regional Coordinator
Unicef	Migration Protection Officer
Universidad de los Andes; London School of Economics	Professor; Co-director, Gender Justice, and Security Hub

C D A C
N E T W O R K
communicating with disaster affected communities

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