Colombia PLG: Planned Research and Learning

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The Children and Youth Consortium is a research collaboration between Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, and The Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague.

We aim to develop comparative investigative projects that use mixed methods and action research to explore several critical dimensions of child and youth in Africa and Latin America, particularly Uganda and Colombia.

Our objective is to engage in research that improves social policy for children and youth, while further strengthening comparative international research in childhood and youth studies that promotes a ‘child-centered’ focus in critical development studies.
Research Frame: 

*Drawing Children and Youth Out of Marginalized Spaces*

- The consortium is organized around the theme “*Drawing Children and Youth Out of Marginalized Spaces*”. Utilizing critical approaches to development, members of the consortium will pursue comparative research projects *with* marginalized children and youth, particularly in the post-conflict contexts of Colombia and Uganda.

- Examples of topics include young people’s experiences of poverty (developing relative child poverty measures, growing up in slums, criminality); negotiations of gender and sexuality (LGBTQI, HIV/AIDS-affected children and youth, teen pregnancy, sex work, trafficking, pornography, youth masculinities); children in and out of school (dropouts, truancy, homelessness); and, alternative care frameworks of/for children existing outside of the family unit (street children, institutionalized children).
Thematic Directions

• Social constructions of children and youth
• Empowerment of children and youth
• Protection of children and youth
• Marginalization of children and youth
• Legitimate and illegitimate spaces and places for children and youth
• Young people’s experiences of space and place
• Critical approaches to development
Consortium members

- **Kristen E. Cheney**, Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) of Children and Youth Studies in the Social Policy for Development program at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), a graduate development studies institute in The Hague, Netherlands.

- **Sandra Garcia**, Associate Professor in the School of Government at the University of Los Andes in Colombia.

- **Amy E. Ritterbusch**, Assistant Professor in the School of Government at the University of Los Andes in Colombia.

- **Serena Cruz**, PhD Candidate affiliated with the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) and the Faculty of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda.

- **Katie Gleason**, Monitoring and evaluation professional currently living in Kampala and working across Uganda.
Iniciativa de Acción Local - IDEAL

- **Project objective**: to contribute to the solution of municipal-level problems through technical cooperation and local capacity building.

- Researchers and students of the School of Government work directly with the local administration and the community to design and conduct participatory assessments that inform public policy recommendations based on research, international experiences and the voices and needs of the community.

- The IDEAL team seeks to replicate this methodology in other municipalities and contexts.
IDEAL: Specific Objectives

• Generate a model of collaboration (academic, local administration, community, private sector) to develop integral and sustainable interventions aimed at poverty reduction.

• Collect evidence of successful interventions at the local level and generate knowledge based on rigorous impact evaluations.

• Generate a critical mass of professionals trained in the sustainable development and sensitive to local realities.
Preliminary Results: Stage 1
Participatory Assessment of Poverty Using a Methods Approach

- Calculation of the multidimensional poverty index for Villapinzón using the Alkire-Foster measurement methodology and incorporating dating that has not been used before in Colombia (SISBEN survey). This data source permitted the team to calculate the MPI for a small municipality.

- Use of qualitative methods to incorporate the participatory element of the poverty measurement and exercise in Villapinzón.
  - Permitted generation of trust with local administration and community members
  - Local contextualization of poverty and exposure of researchers to the daily lives and experiences of community members.
  - Identification of important information not detected in the calculation of the MPI.
  - In depth study of problems identified through the MPI.
Multidimensional Poverty Measurement in Villapinzón

- The MPI measures deprivations in basic dimensions necessary for the development of human capabilities that enable the individual to reach his/her full potential and long terms goals.
  
  - Useful for making public policy recommendations for poverty reduction and to implement an effective M&E system.
  
  - Useful for making national and international comparison of relative poverty incidence and density.
Qualitative Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Técnica Cualitativa</th>
<th>Objetivo</th>
<th>Participantes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field visits</strong></td>
<td>Identify research population and establish rapport.</td>
<td><strong>7 families</strong> (participant selection informed by Red Unidos data). Establish rapport with community, program officials and local administration.</td>
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<td>Phase 1</td>
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<td><strong>Participant Observation</strong></td>
<td>Understand and experience the local specificity of poverty in Villapinzón (observation organized by dimensions and by shadowing different family members).</td>
<td><strong>1 rural family</strong> (7 participants).</td>
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<td>Phase 2</td>
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<td><strong>Focus Groups</strong></td>
<td>Identify and collect information about the perception of poverty, programs and different dimensions measured in the MPI.</td>
<td><strong>3 focus groups</strong> Adults; Program officials (Red Unidos); and Adolescents.</td>
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<td>Phase 3</td>
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<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td>Identify the importance of the poverty for the local administration and decision makers and understand the structure and content of national and local poverty reduction programs.</td>
<td><strong>7 interviews</strong> Local administration and decision makers.</td>
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<td>Phase 4</td>
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IDEAL: Ongoing/future projects

- Design a policy to address extreme deprivations as measured by the multidimensional poverty index in children and adolescents in Villapinzón.
  - Promotion of nutritional campaigns and additional nutritional intake via small scale harvest of high protein mushrooms.
  - Measurement of basic deprivation in children and adolescents
  - Map social protection system for children and adolescents

- Diagnose housing situation and design alternative policies to improve housing (PBS project):
  - Improve access to sanitation and clean water.
  - Overcrowding in households with children
  - Quantitative deficit
  - Inadequate wall, floor or roof

- Study of the distribution and production chain of small farmer agricultural products.