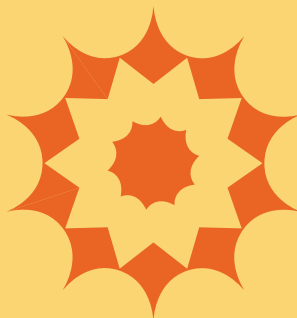


imagina



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE
COLLABORATIVE

URC

CASE STUDY 2.

Challenges and lessons learned in the development of the Departmental Action Plans to end VAC in Colombia



This case study describes the development process of the “Departmental Action Plans”, within the framework of the development and implementation of Colombia’s National Action Plan to end VAC.

Summary

- The ICBF elaborated the document “Guidelines for the elaboration of territorial action plans” which provided technical and methodological instructions and recommendations for the elaboration of local plans to end VAC.
- The guidelines were flexible enough to leave room for the local teams to respond to the needs, times, and processes of each department by making adaptations in the suggested methodology.
- The ICBF provided technical assistance and support to the local teams on an individual basis, providing them with resources and strategies for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of territorial action plans.
- Progress in the development and monitoring of territorial action plans has been differentiated: as of the date of preparation of this report, some departments were monitoring the actions of the plan

(Stage 4), while others were designing the mission, vision, and objectives (Stage 1). This has meant that technical assistance had to be individualized and respond to the specific needs of each department and local team.

- Both the ICBF team responsible for technical assistance and the teams from the departmental governments had limitations on staff number and continuity, which generated important challenges.

Development process

The development of the territorial plans began with the construction of the document: “Guidelines for the elaboration of territorial action plans within the framework of the National Alliance to end Violence against children”. These guidelines had then objective of providing a toolbox and engaging government agencies in charge of social policy at the departmental level which would afterwards lead the plan development process (e.g., the Departmental secretariats of social welfare, social integration, health or planning, among others). Throughout this process, departmental governments had technical support from the ICBF regional offices, the ICBF national team and a consultant specifically hired for this process (National Alliance, 2021). The guidelines were prepared between September and December 2020, in parallel to the preparation of the NAP. The guidelines

proposed 4 stages and 20 steps (See figure 1). In addition, they suggested a list of stakeholders who should be involve in the plan development, and included technical resources, including presentation templates, a methodology to conduct consultations, tables to list the interventions, among others.

Stage 1: Preparation

Departmental governments conducted an analysis of the situation of violence in their territories using existing national and territorial statistics, and previous needs and priority assessments. The Presidential Council for Children and Adolescents provided support in this process¹.

Also, a mapping of decision-making instances and stakeholders (with their roles and competencies) was

conducted, as well as a mapping of programs, projects, actions and strategies, which were being implemented in the territory in terms of prevention and care of VAC. In addition, departmental government shared information about the National Alliance with potential stakeholders.

In some cases, the local teams already had, at least partially, a mapping of institutions since they were already working with them in other activities related to violence prevention. Finally, in this first stage the technical teams of the departmental governments with the assistance of the ICBF elaborated the objectives, mission and vision of the territorial action plans.

Figure 1. Four stages to prepare the territorial plans (adapted from the ICBF guidelines document)



¹ This was particularly mentioned by one interview representative of one department.

Stage 3: Elaboration of the plan

- . **Step 3.1:** Step by step for the construction of the action plan.
- . **Step 3.2:** Structure of the action plan.
- . **Step 3.3:** Action plan document.
- . **Step 3.4:** Action plan matrix.

Stage 4: Monitoring and evaluation strategy

- . **Step 4.1:** Allies report efforts, activities and participants
- . **Step 4.3:** Workshop socializing consolidated information on collective implementation efforts
- . **Step 4.2:** Document advancement in the matrix

Source: Adapted from the NAP development guidelines.

Stage 2: Consultation, agreement and dialogue spaces

Dialogue meetings were held with stakeholders, including government agencies (education, health, government, mayor's office, ombudsman's office and others that work on comprehensive protection), as well as members of civil society (such as leaders, indigenous people, NNA delegates, and the LGTBIQ+ community, among others). Some of these instances were also members of the "Early childhood, childhood, adolescence, and family enhancement working group" (MPIIAFF- in Spanish)².

One interviewee from a departmental government commented on the difficulties of civil society participation. The representative narrated that the call to non-governmental stakeholders was challenging because they do not have them clearly identified or mapped. In addition, this informant shared the issue that children and adolescents were not summoned and engaged in this process, although they usually tend to participate in other spaces related to public policy design led by the ICBF.

² The MPIIAFF is a multi-sectoral and multi-agency committee led by the municipalities and the departmental government, with the technical support of the ICBF. It is constituted in each municipality at the national level and its work agenda includes issues related to children. It exists prior to the process of elaboration of the NAP and of the territorial action plans.

Stage 3: Elaboration of the plan

Based on what was proposed in the different dialogue spaces (Stage 2), a first version of the territorial action plan was prepared, consisting of a written document and a matrix with the prioritized actions with their respective managers. This document and matrix were sent to ICBF national team for review and feedback. The necessary adjustments were made to have an improved version and the leader of ICBF at the regional level was asked to include the approval of the territorial action plan on the MPIIAFF agenda. In the meeting, the Plan was socialized and approved, by signing an agreement.

The progress in the development of territorial action plans was heterogenous. At the moment of writing this report, some departments had a draft version of the document. In other cases, they have made progress in terms of defining the plan's mission, vision, and objectives. In other cases, the territorial teams are monitoring the implementation of the territorial action plan, since they managed to have it ready in 2021.

Stage 4: Monitoring and evaluation strategy

The guidelines for the elaboration of territorial action plans that were originally shared (in April 2020) did not include a process regarding Stage 4: "Follow-up, monitoring and evaluation strategy", and proposed only two

general recommendations. The general recommendations were the following:

- Agreements must be reached regarding the responsibilities in terms of monitoring the implementation of the actions of the plan. It should be the departmental government that leads this process, considering its general role in the territorial action plan.
- The role of the Public Prosecutor's Office in follow-up actions to the implementation of the plan should be considered, taking into account that both the Ombudsman's Office and the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation are the institutions in charge of defending and guarantee of Human Rights. Therefore, due to the competences of these agencies, could generate actions of requirement to the entities that do not fulfil the commitments that were acquired in the plan.

At this point, ICBF proposed that specific guidelines for this stage were going to be published in the future. The interviewees from the territories mentioned that, once they had the territorial action plan, they would monitor its implementation in the following way: first, the departmental government leading agency would request a presentation from each ally involved describing basic implementation information on the activities carried out within the framework of the territorial action plan (e.g., number and type of activities, participants, etc.). Based on this information, the government leader would feed the territorial action plan and make a consolidated presentation that would be shared in the work sessions between the government team and the directors of the institutions involved, to receive group feedback.

Although the territorial action plan is structured by both the written document and matrix, in practice the tool that was actively used and updated (based on the information collected during monitoring workshops) was only the matrix. (See annex 2). In the case of the department of Córdoba, as part of the monitoring process, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) were used to maintain permanent communication between the departmental work team. In particular, a WhatsApp group was

created that integrates representatives of the instances involved to stay connected, sustain motivation at work, resolve doubts, and more.

Development of local capacity

Key strategies to strengthen local technical capacities were delivered all throughout the processes of designing, implementing, and monitoring the departmental plans. This section describes the most important actions to develop capacities and provide technical assistance and support.

ICBF technical assistance to departments

The work of technical assistance to the departments began after the publication of the guidelines in 2021. The ICBF technical assistance team provided guidance and support to local governments, initially to define a route of action and timeline, and then during the process of designing the territorial action plan. The number of technical assistance sessions was variable across territories, according to the demand of each department. As part of the assistance, the ICBF shared information, guidelines, presentations, matrices, methodologies for workshops, and more. The ICBF elaborated a template for the preparation of Departmental Action Plans that served as a reference for local teams (See Annex 1). The support was provided individually with each departmental team, and was adjusted to match the capacity, conditions and progress of each one. At first, the ICBF team tried to provide assistance collectively, that is, by holding online meetings with representatives from different departments at the same time. This approach did not work because the number of participants was too large, and it was identified that many of them did not engage nor participated. Also, the time during the meetings was not enough to learn the necessary details of each department to provide each team with relevant and specific guidance.

Because of the pandemic, the support was provided remotely, by using of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as Zoom, Teams and Meet. This required that participants in the departments had proper internet access. In some cases, there were several difficulties to access internet, so the ICBF regional offices offered their offices to hold virtual meetings.

Colombia INSPIRE Coordination Course (CICC)

The INSPIRE Coordination Course is a participatory and interactive course co-designed by the End Violence Lab, the National Alliance and multi-sectoral partners. This course aims at developing capacities in government officers for the implementation, adaptation, monitoring, evaluation and scalability of the strategies of the INSPIRE model. The Colombia INSPIRE Coordination Course (CICC) was delivered virtually between April and June 2021.

The interviewees considered that this modality contributed to having a greater number of participants per department. Originally, it was proposed that 2 persons per department would attend. However, up to 4 representatives of each department government participated. The participants indicated that the course strengthened their capacities and access to knowledge and tools. However, informants considered that the should have been delivered before the technical assistance work began (and not when it had already started). This way, when the technical assistance starts, the staff would have already developed and strengthened their skills. In addition, according to an interviewee, several people did not want to move forward with the process of preparing the plan, arguing that as they were participants in the CICC, they were still in the learning process and preferred to complete it to start the process of preparing the plans in their departments.

A thorough documentation and process evaluation of the CICC was done by Tissera, Maternowska and Fry (2021a and 2021b). These documents describe in detail the participative and collaborative construction process, and the results of the first implementation.

Participants and roles in the departmental plans development process

- **ICBF Consultant:** preparation of the guidelines, technical assistance and support to the departments in the preparation their action plans.
- **ICBF national referent:** technical support to the

departments in the review and feedback to the territorial action plans.

- **Representatives of the ICBF regional offices:** technical support and accompaniment to the departments for the preparation and monitoring of territorial action plans. Each representative works with a department, which implies technical assistance to all the municipalities that make up the department.
- **Directors of instances involved in the territorial action plan:** coordination with the government for the preparation and monitoring of the territorial action plan.
- **Government officials:** they lead the process of preparation and monitoring the territorial action plan, with the technical support of the ICBF (at the regional and national level) and the Presidential Council for Children and Adolescents.
- **Civil society (for example: leaders, indigenous people, NNA delegates, the LGBTI community, teachers) of each department:** contributions to the preparation of the territorial action plan by presenting their perceptions and their participation in decision-making.

Challenges and lessons learned

- **Collective work between the ICBF and other government agencies needs to be continuous. To guarantee this coordination, political commitment from the governors and mayors of each department is required.** Many (but not all) governments and stakeholders in the department showed their commitment. For example, similarly to the preparation of the NAP, it was expected that in each department the process would be led by the first lady of the department. Yet, her participation was limited, both from her directly and from the people she delegated to represent her.
- **The teams in the departmental governments that assume the responsibility of preparing the territorial action plan is limited and the turnover is high, so it is necessary to consider a continuous evaluation**

and reinforcement of human resources (in terms of number and capacities). Their availability is limited because in some cases they are formally assigned functions not related to the development of the territorial action plan, and yet they try to dedicate themselves to the tasks related to the plan. In other cases, public officers do have this task included in their functions but are overloaded with various other responsibilities. In addition, local teams are small (in some cases only one person) and have temporary (3 to 4 months) provision of services labour contract, resulting in a high turnover and the arrival of new people. Moreover, in most cases an adequate handover of tasks and information is not carried out, which is why the process is usually “traumatized” (according to the interviewees). For example, many people from the governorates that participated in the CICC were no longer part of the government team when the ICBF contacted them to start technical assistance and thus had to work with new teams that lack the capacity built by previous employees. Another case mentioned is when the same person is hired for the position, but after a pause of 1 or 2 months that affects the process.

- Given that the high turnover is considered to be one of the main difficulties, **it is suggested to find mechanisms that guarantee that the responsible persons remains throughout the plan development process.** This could be achieved by hiring people for longer periods or by involving only permanent personnel. It is recommended to build capacities in teams that will stay throughout the process. If rotation occurs, **it is recommended to strengthen the transfer and induction process for new personnel.** This scenario will be unavoidable when the change of government authorities occurs due to the next elections. In view of this, it will be essential for the current team to organize and systematize the information on progress up to that moment so that they can inform the new managers in detail.
- Additionally, a very important lesson learned is to **have a leader in each local government, dedicated exclusively to the elaboration of the plan.** A person with

knowledge and experience on the subject, proactive, sensitive, with interest, vocation, commitment and resources to provide accompaniment and follow-up, face-to-face, in each territory-municipality of the governorate. Said leader should have, at least, the support of one person (under suitable conditions such as those previously suggested), in order to fulfil the assigned responsibilities.

- The level of participation of institutions (both governmental and non-governmental) has been varied, in some cases with high commitment and in others very limited, making it difficult to guarantee their engagement. According to the comments of those responsible for the governorates, then reason sometime was that they did not prioritize their participation and support to the National Alliance. Thus, although some institutions participate in work meetings, it is perceived that they only do so as an act of presence but without active participation.
- The fact that the meetings were virtual, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is also considered a barrier to participation, since they could not progress at the pace that they believe they could have had in face-to-face working conditions.
- It is suggested that the mapping of instances and actors (step 2 in stage 1) should identify if there is a history of joint work between each institution and the government. If so, it is important to evaluate how it worked in terms of attendance at meetings and active participation, and other elements that allow knowing the culture of organization and relationship of the instances to propose appropriate communication, dialogue and negotiation dynamics.
- In addition, considering that in the “Matrix for mapping stakeholders”, it is contemplated to list one or two referents of each institution, it would be pertinent to ask each institution to assign people with interest, motivation and commitment to the subject as well as with soft skills for collaborative work. This can contribute to involving people willing to work at a common goal and

not only to raising awareness of the specific interests of the instance they represent.

- **It is recognized that ICBF's technical assistance was comprehensive and constant. However, the limited number of team members and resources made it difficult to reach all departments equally. Future efforts should be made to strengthen the team in number and capacity.** The ICBF team did not have enough members (a responsible person who sometimes had the support of one or two people) nor the operational capacity for the accompaniment to be sustained with all the departments.
- With those departments that had the will and technical capacity (team with experience in the subject, interest, willingness to dedicate themselves to the process, etc.) and operational conditions to move forward, the assistance allowed greater progress in the plan. **It is necessary to increase the resources for technical assistance to the territories, in particular, to those that do not have the resources or the necessary conditions, for which reason they require greater follow-up and support. In addition, it is suggested that assistance be kept individualized, according to the department's own rhythms,** and face-to-face, in such a way that the territory and populations are visited who, according to the participants, demand the presence, at least periodically, of the authorities and/or representatives.
- **Interviewees expressed their concern about the sustainability of the plans due to the lack of resources for the implementation, so it is necessary to carry out the costing of the plan and ensure future resources accordingly.** Interviewees agreed that preventing violence is a complex task, so it is necessary to carry out permanent activities and interventions. Yet they point out that the budget has been cut or they do not allocate what corresponds. In addition to the budget limitations of activities that already are in the field, economic limitations also do not allow implementing new actions according to the INSPIRE model in which the teams from the governorates were trained. In this way,

there is a gap between the needs that were identified in the process of drawing up the plans and the actions that are being developed.

Methodology

Objective: To describe the actions carried out in the development of the territorial action plans, and the challenges and lessons learned.

Participants: Based on the suggestion of current and former members of the ICBF, teams from five departments were contacted, which are in different stages of the process of design and implementation of territorial action plans. By interviewing members of departments at different stages, the research team would be able to collect different experiences and challenges.

Table 3. *Departmental Action Plan development stage*

Departament	Stage
Córdoba	Stage 4. Monitoring the implementation of the plan
Vaupés	Stage 2. Elaboration of the plan (initial stage)
Chocó	Stage 2. Elaboration of the plan (final stage)
Guajira	Stage 2. Elaboration of the plan (process in hold)
Meta	Stage 2. Elaboration of the plan

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Data collection:

Document review: guidelines, reports from consultants that were responsible for preparing the PNA and technical assistance to the departments.

Semi-structured interviews with members of departmental governments and the ICBF regional offices, and with former and current ICBF members

References

Alianza Nacional contra la violencia hacia niñas, niños y adolescentes (2021). Plan Nacional de acción contra la violencia hacia la niñez y adolescencia en Colombia 2021-2024. <https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/Plan%20Nacional%20de%20Accion%20-Colombia.pdf>

Alianza Nacional contra la violencia hacia niñas, niños y adolescentes. (s.f.). Lineamientos para la elaboración de los planes de acción territoriales en el marco de la Alianza Nacional contra la violencia hacia niñas, niños y adolescentes.

Tissera Luna, M., Maternowska, M.C., and Fry, D. (2021a). Colombia INSPIRE Coordination Course Documentation and Process Guide. End Violence Lab at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Tissera Luna, M., Maternowska, M.C., and Fry, D. (2021b). Colombia INSPIRE Coordination Course Evaluation – Final report. End Violence Lab, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Annex 1 Template for the elaboration of Departmental Action Plans

1. Introduction

2. Background

The template suggested that this section should present:

Information on the National Alliance, and the existing national and international regulatory frameworks. It was suggested to include departmental regulations.

- The aim of the Colombian government in reducing violence, the violence reduction goal of the Colombian government, suggesting that the department's violence reduction goal should be included.

Suggested components based on the INSPIRE strategy Metodología de consulta para la formulación del plan de acción territorial

Se sugirió incluir un apartado que incluya los principales resultados de los procesos participativos de construcción, concertación y diálogo que se adelantaron durante el proceso. Se sugirió incluir los actores que participaron, el número de espacios y los principales resultados.

3. Consultation methodology for the formulation of the territorial action plan

The template suggested that this section should include the main results of the consultations. Describing the actors who participated, the number of spaces and the main results.

4. Theoretical framework

It was recommended to develop conceptual aspects linked to the INSPIRE strategy and approaches such as differential, life course and rights approach.

Assessment of the situation

It was requested to include in this section a summary of no more than 4 pages that includes the status of the department, in relation to all forms of violence against girls, boys and adolescents that occur in the department, specifying the prevalence and causes identified structures. It was noted the importance of providing the facts and figures of the main types of violence along with their reference.

Likewise, it was requested to include the priorities identified in the consultations of stage 3, in addition to those identified by the team later.

5. Mission, vision, general objective and specific objectives

The template included the following as reference:


a. Mission



www.imagina.uniandes.edu.co

info@imagina.uniandes.edu.co

 [@ImaginaUniandes](https://www.instagram.com/ImaginaUniandes)

 [@IMAGINACentrodeInvestigacion](https://www.youtube.com/@IMAGINACentrodeInvestigacion)

 [imagina-centro-de-investigación](https://www.linkedin.com/company/imagina-centro-de-investigacion)

 **Universidad de
los Andes**

imagina La infancia y
adolescencia son
nuestro centro

Universidad de los Andes | Vigilada MinEducación Reconocimiento como
Universidad: Decreto 1297 del 30 de mayo de 1964. Reconocimiento
personería jurídica: Resolución 28 del 23 de febrero de 1949 MinJusticia