INTERWEAVING PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION IN A CAPABILITY APPROACH: AN EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY IN COLOMBIA

A Dissertation Presented

by

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Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2019

College of Education

Educational Policy, Research, and Administration

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research journey would not have been possible without the support of many people. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Gretchen Rossman, Dr. Ash Hartwell and Dr. Laurel Doerr-Smith. I am especially grateful for the valuable guidance and encouragement throughout this process of Dr. Rossman. I would also like to extend my appreciation to professors Dr. Bjorn Nordtveit and Dr. Sharon Rallis who accompanied me throughout this journey. I am most grateful to have had the opportunity to pursue this research at the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, which provided a rich environment where the ideas in this dissertation could be explored with fellow students, faculty and staff committed to constructive social change.

I would like to thank all those engaged with the Preparation for Social Action program at *Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias* (FUNDAEC) in Colombia for their invaluable support and collaboration with this research.

Finally, my heartfelt appreciation to my family for their moral support and encouragement throughout this journey.

ABSTRACT

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FEBRUARY 2019

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Due to the rise of unemployment and underemployment among growing youth populations in conflict-affected areas in the Global South, education systems that prepare young people for the worlds of work in both the formal and informal economies are gaining prominence in international development agendas. The rationale that underlies many agencies that make of use of education for work programs is rooted in a belief that work opportunities will deter people from violence. Research points out, however, that such programs often framed in outdated modes of development, narrowly focused on economic growth, are not conducive to dignified working opportunities for young people nor are they conducive to social cohesion and civic engagement. In response to these limitations, a growing number of scholars and practitioners are exploring capability approaches to technical and vocational education that elevate conceptions about the world of work. This research explores, in the context of conflict-affected areas of Colombia, a specific capability approach to education aimed at the development of

capabilities that can enhance livelihood opportunities of youth populations and their engagement in positive social action. Using a cross-sectional qualitative case study from a grounded theory perspective, this dissertation examines the potential that participation in a rigorous education for development program concerned with personal and societal transformation has 1) in fostering the identities of youth as promoters of community wellbeing, and 2) for improving the wellbeing of youth, their families, and communities in conflict-affected areas of Colombia. This study found that youth engagement in a program of study with a clear social purpose that contains elements of a scientific, technical, community-oriented and moral education and is imparted through a tutorial methodology that integrates theory and practice contributed towards fostering identities aimed at promoting the common good. In addition to the knowledge youth acquired through study of the content of the program and engagement in social action, networks of social support were key to the development of youth's identities as promoters of community wellbeing and to bridging them to resources that improved their education and livelihood opportunities.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Competency-based training (CBT)

Education for All (EFA)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias (FUNDAEC)

Global Monitoring Report (GMR)

Gross domestic product (GDP)

Information and communication technology (ICT)

International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC)

International Labor Organization (ILO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

Non-formal education (NFE)

Non-governmental organization (NGO)

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

National Vocational Training Agency (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje)* (SENA)

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores the relevancy of a capability approach in relation to education for development programs with a technical education component in the Global South. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has often been described as preparing people with the skills needed for work (Hollander & Mar, 2009). This simplified definition has created difficulties in interpreting its meaning in theory and practice (Nordtveit, 2015). With this in mind, a theoretical contribution of my dissertation includes making explicit the assumptions that underlie distinct yet overlapping frameworks in which TVET systems are situated. This dissertation explores alternative approaches to TVET from a capability perspective, giving due consideration to economic sustainability but broadened to include the social, cultural and moral dimensions of learning and development.

The dissertation research focuses on an education for development program in Colombia that works with indigenous and Afro-Colombian youth populations that are marginalized from quality education and employment opportunities. The fieldwork I carried out has contributed towards the construction of a cross-sectional qualitative case study of an education for development initiative called Preparation for Social Action (PSA) being implemented in the Caribbean Coastal region of Colombia. The PSA program was developed by *Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias* (FUNDAEC), a non-governmental organization in Colombia. The aim of PSA is to help equip individuals and communities with the capacities they need to become the protagonists of the progress of their communities through participation in a rigorous

curriculum that contains a technical education component (FUNDAEC, 2006). The pedagogy of the PSA program is rooted in a capability approach to education.

In this research, I use the case of FUNDAEC's PSA program to: 1) explore how education for development programs can be approached from a specific capability perspective, and 2) to understand the potential such an approach has in contributing towards the wellbeing of youth, their families and communities. Research and practice of educational programs from a capabilities approach is still in its nascent stage of development and has been considered from a diversity of perspectives. Economist Amartya Sen's approach to capabilities is concerned with expanding freedoms that allow people to better function in society (Sen, 1999). Conceptions of wellbeing, justice and agency are interwoven into Sen's approach to capabilities (McGrath, 2012). The way FUNDAEC conceptualizes capabilities overlaps in some ways with Sen's notion of this concept; however, in many ways these approaches are distinct. Both agree that increased gross domestic product (GDP) and personal income, while very important, do not synthesize development (Farid-Arbab, 2016). However, whereas authors such as Sen consider development to be "the process of real freedoms enjoyed by individuals," FUNDAEC's approach is directed towards the development of the individual's potentialities and how they can be expressed on a social level to contribute towards the common good. In this research wellbeing is conceptualized from a multi-dimensional perspective in which not only economic, but also social, cultural, environmental, health, education and community participation aspects are considered. The comprehensive conception of well-being utilized in this research explores how individual and collective

potentialities are developed and released to contribute towards social and material progress.

Farid-Arbab (2016) has recently published research that includes an analysis, in light of relevant philosophical literature, of how FUNDAEC approaches capability development. I drew on Farib-Arbab's (2016) philosophical framework to capability development as I collected and analyzed empirical evidence that illuminates how FUNDAEC is implementing a capability approach to education in a conflict-affected area in the Caribbean Coastal region. With this in mind, this study examines the following set of questions:

- How do youth participants and tutors perceive the process through which the PSA program fosters the development of their identities as promoters of community wellbeing? What are the characteristics of a promoter of community wellbeing? What are some of the characteristics of identities of youth that are not involved in the program?

- What are the characteristics of the networks of social relationships that are formed in the Preparation for Social Action program? What do these networks actually do? How do these networks support youth in the development of their identities as promoters of community wellbeing where the PSA program is strong? What do the networks look like where the program is weak?

- What aspirations do youth in the PSA program have in regard to their future livelihoods? How optimistic are youth about their ability to advance towards these aspirations? What differences are there between the aspirations of youth involved in the PSA program and those who are not engaged in the program?

As the youth involved in this qualitative case study have similar social, economic and cultural backgrounds, I made use of a cross-sectional design that compares cohorts of youth at two distinct stages of their involvement with FUNDAEC's PSA program—at the outset of the program, and at least two years after having graduated from the program. Also, included in this study are youth who were not involved in the program. The research I conducted in this study is connected to a broad question: What potential do

rigorous education for development programs, designed from a specific capability perspective, have for improving the wellbeing of youth, their families, and communities in a conflict-affected area?

In this case study I make use of various methods, including interviews, focus groups, and participant observation with a total sample of 160 individuals. This sample consisted of PSA students who just entered the program, graduates of the program, PSA coordinators and tutors, parents, community members and intact community groups, as well as youth who were not involved in the PSA program. In this study, I also draw upon my extensive experience with the PSA program over a ten-year period.

FUNDAEC's approach to capability development seeks to support youth to pursue personal growth and to contribute at the same time to the transformation of society. Towards this end, the dual process of personal and societal transformation is a common thread that is interwoven in the educational activities as two aspects of one movement that does not imply an inherent tension between the two (FUNDAEC, 2014). This research study demonstrates how, through participation in PSA, the identities of youth in the program transformed from an identity focused on one's own interests in isolation from an awareness of the needs of the community, to an identity concerned with contributing towards the common good. Moreover, the findings show that in communities where there was a solid PSA coordination team in place at the local level and where tutors had an opportunity to participate in ongoing processes of training, youth who advanced through the PSA program developed identities focused on promoting collective wellbeing. These identities were fostered through study in a tutorial setting of the PSA curriculum that was based on a specific capability building approach to

education that integrates theory and practice.

Gaining Prominence of TVET in Development Agendas

Undertaking research on education for development initiatives in the context of TVET programs is particularly timely as they are steadily rising to the top of the post-2015 development agenda[1] (Marope, Holmes, & Chakroun, 2015). Given the high levels of unemployment among the growing youth population in the Global South, there is increasing policy interest in TVET in developing contexts. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 73.4 million young people will be unemployed in 2015, and this figure is on an upward trend in most regions (Marope et al., 2015). Policymakers claim that a major reason for youth unemployment is a gap between the skills required by the labor market and those offered by workers (Marope et al., 2015). Strategies for increased access to TVET as a means of preparation for employment have gained prominence in new global education agendas (McGrath, 2012). In 2015, the United Nations launched the Sustainable Development Goals (with targets for 2030), which place priority on youth's access to vocational and technical skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. TVET, as well as literacy and higher education, are UNESCO's three main priorities to foster quality and inclusive education and lifelong learning opportunities (Marope et al., 2015).

As regards the case of Colombia, vocational and technical training for productive work is one of the proposed solutions by the national government for the unemployment problem faced by marginalized and displaced youth populations. According to the United

[1] The post-2015 development agenda describes the United Nations global development framework that follows Millennium Development Goals (MDG), called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) youth in Colombia are a particularly disadvantaged group, as they experience high unemployment rates—twice as high as that of the other segments of the population (2010). Within these segments of the population, rural youth—and females in particular—have experienced an increased lack of education and economic opportunities.

As part of this context, after over fifty years of prolonged civil warfare, a peace treaty has recently been signed between the government of Colombia and the guerilla group, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). As Colombia moves toward a post-conflict environment, the Colombian government and international governance and donor agencies envision TVET as a means to reintegrate ex-combatant children and youth into society through the provision of access to an education that can lead to meaningful livelihood opportunities. Like Colombia, TVET is an education for development strategy that many countries have used for reintegration of ex-combatants into post-conflict environments (Nordtveit, 2016).

The prominence that TVET systems is gaining in development agendas is not uncontested. There continues to be great debate about the role of TVET in development (McGrath, 2012). Academic research stresses that TVET programs, often framed in outdated modes of development narrowly focused on economic growth and profit, are not conducive to dignified working opportunities (Anderson, 2009; DeJaeghere, Wiger & Willemsen, 2016; Casanova, 2003). In response to the limitations of mainstream approaches to TVET, a growing number of scholars and practitioners are exploring and developing a capabilities approach to TVET that is closely aligned with integral human development (McGrath, 2012; Powell, 2012; Tikly, 2012; Walker, 2006). This approach

elevates conceptions about the world of work and envisions alternative ways in which the economy has the potential to operate (McGrath, 2012). This doctoral research aims to contribute to the nascent body of knowledge being developed on a capabilities approach to TVET.

This research is based on three main arguments. The first argument is that human capital approaches to TVET based on rates of return (ROR) in investment promote outdated modes of development narrowly focused on economic growth that do not lead to improved livelihood conditions of disadvantaged populations (DeJaeghere, 2014; Marope et al., 2015; Klees, 2016; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012; Walker, 2006). This dissertation explores alternative approaches from a capability perspective that give due consideration to economic sustainability and skills development but are broadened to include the social, cultural and moral dimensions of learning and development. The second argument of this research is that academic and vocational binaries in education for development programs need to be reconsidered. This research rejects the assumption that post-primary opportunities in rural communities in the Global South need to be vocationalized, making them "accessible" to rural youth (Farid-Arbab, 2016; Rose, 2004). Reductionist definitions of TVET such as training for standalone economic activities do not foster the holistic development of learners, nor do they ensure possibilities for social and economic wellbeing (Casanova, 2003). Conventional assumptions of the vocational/academic debate have their origins in a dichotomous Western tradition of separating the head and the hand—theory and practice (Rose, 2004). This divide is a false dichotomy that has been adopted by educationalists that dismiss the intellectual content associated with the trades and crafts (Rose, 2004). Moreover, insights about educational pursuits of a more

intellectual nature are contextualized and made more relevant to social reality when practical aspects of learning are applied to educational programs (Rose, 2004). As such this research argues for education for development models that integrate theoretical and practical aspects of learning. A third argument of this study is that capability approaches that focus primarily on cultivating agency at the individual level can lead to forms of methodological individualism (Robeyns, 2006). A dynamic approach to capability development that fosters the personal and community transformation as two aspects of one interconnected movement is argued for in this research.

Background on FUNDAEC

FUNDAEC is a non-governmental organization that was established in 1973 by an interdisciplinary group of scientists and professionals in Colombia. Over the past four decades, FUNDAEC has focused its efforts on exploring alternatives to mainstream approaches to development. The alternatives that FUNDAEC pursues resist traditional paradigms that reduce development to the delivery of technical packages and services designed for the most part in the North and applied to development processes in the South. The objective of FUNDAEC is to understand the role of science, technology and education in the social and economic development of a region. FUNDAEC's initial work began in the area surrounding Cali, Colombia. Since its founding in 1973, FUNDAEC has focused its efforts on developing capacity within a region that enables populations to carry out action and research related to the various processes that make up its social, economic, and cultural life (FUNDAEC, 2006).

FUNDAEC has initiated processes of learning that have gradually resulted in an educational content and a methodology for building the capabilities of people, in

particular the youth population, to become the protagonists of their own development (Arbab, Correa, & Carvajal, 1988). Processes of learning, accompanied by action and research, have contributed to the development of specific programs dedicated to improving community life and developing youth into effective human resources that populations need for their empowerment (Arbab et al., 1988). FUNDAEC has made use of action-research processes with interdisciplinary teams made up of scientists, professionals, local farmers and community members that have led to the creation of education for development programs. The term education for development, for FUNDAEC, refers to a process through which youth and communities engage in the generation and application of knowledge, advancing the progress of their communities (FUNDAEC, 2006).

FUNDAEC's *Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial* (SAT, Tutorial Learning System) program is an education for development program of this type that has been formally recognized by the governments of Colombia, Honduras, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Guatemala as an official educational option for rural youth at the secondary level (FUNDAEC, 2006). The SAT program has reached over 300,000 rural youth with a quality and rigorous education program relevant to the needs of local communities (Robinson & Winthrop, 2016). Recently, the Brookings Institute prepared a report entitled *Millions Learning: Scaling up quality education in developing countries* in which it featured one of FUNDAEC's education for development programs, SAT, as an innovative educational endeavor that is "redefining rural secondary education in Latin America" (Robinson & Winthrop, 2016, p. 3). In this report, the Brookings Institute highlights FUNDAEC's conception of learning as "broader than gaining traditional

academic skills, as it places strong emphasis on analysis and inquiry, social responsibility, community service, moral and character development" (Robinson & Winthrop, p.7, 2016).

Academic research conducted on FUNDAEC's programs in Honduras highlights the social advantages of the program, including the development of participants' sense of social responsibility, the empowerment of women in their personal relationships and public life, and the fostering of trusting relationships among participants and with the community at large (Honeyman, 2010; Murphy-Graham, 2008; Murphy-Graham & Lample, 2014). Research on FUNDAEC's programs demonstrates that through an education content imbued with principles such as social responsibility, human interconnection, and gender equality, participants become cognizant of their potentialities as they apply the knowledge they are gaining to the betterment of their communities (Honeyman, 2010; Murphy-Graham, 2008; Richards, 2010). Honeyman's (2010) mixed methods research study on SAT in Honduras demonstrates how the program creates a social learning space aimed at bridging theory and practice by linking academic content with practical activities and research projects—for example through "encouraging students to learn mathematics and science in the context of growing vegetables or to use their language abilities to initiate study groups that promote adult literacy" (Robinson & Winthrop, 2016, p. 7). Honeyman's study also found that students in the SAT program develop "a stronger sense of social responsibility towards their communities than their peers in government-run rural secondary schools" (Robinson & Winthrop, 2016, p. 10). Her research highlights a few of the factors that contribute towards this finding, namely an emphasis on "solidarity as an overarching principle" in the program's texts; a

philosophy of education centered on personal and societal "transformation rather than on test scores; and practical application of theoretical concepts, such as sustainable development and poverty alleviation" (Robinson & Winthrop, 2016, p. 11). Moreover, through the application of scientific concepts to real life situations, research has shown that SAT students are proactively contributing to processes of community development and a culture of peace (CRECE, 2001).

Preparation for Social Action (PSA) Program

In order to respond to the interest in adopting SAT expressed by a growing number of organizations, FUNDAEC modified some of the curricular content and organized it into Preparation for Social Action (PSA), offered in a non-formal education modality (FUNDAEC, 2006). The aim of the PSA program is to equip individuals and communities with the capabilities they need to become the protagonists of the progress of their communities through participation in a scientifically rigorous curriculum relevant to the needs of rural life.

PSA is a two-year program that is tutorial in nature; it is comprised of a tutor that guides the learning process of group of 10 to 15 students who study a series of 24 books focused on science, language, mathematics, technology and community development capabilities. A principal objective of the PSA program is to strengthen the identity of youth as promoters of community wellbeing. For further information about the various components of the PSA program please refer to Appendix A. The paragraph below from a document prepared by FUNDAEC describes the notion of a promoter of community wellbeing.

> The term "promoter of community well-being" does not refer to a profession. Whether he or she studies the texts of PSA before undertaking postsecondary

> education, does both simultaneously, or becomes a participant in PSA after being already engaged in a trade or profession, the promoter needs proficiency in some area of human activity through which it is possible to earn a living. In any given locality, there are numerous individuals serving their communities in diverse ways: students, teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, social workers, farmers and many others. What the program seeks is to help such motivated individuals to acquire, in addition to the knowledge and abilities they possess, or in the case of students they will later acquire, in their specific fields, a deeper understanding of a set of concepts and to enhance certain qualities, attitudes, and skills that will enable them to serve their communities more effectively and thus promote the well-being of their people. This includes the ability to integrate knowledge from various fields relevant to the challenges they must meet in order to act on their social reality. (FUNDAEC, 2014, p. 1)

Youth in the PSA program apply the knowledge they are gaining to their own social reality through development initiatives such as those aimed at increasing sustainable agriculture and improving the environment. This approach to education, which integrates theory and practice, is aligned with Gonzalez's assertion that for knowledge to be transformed into meaningful activity students must be involved in activities in which they are not only "consumers of knowledge," but producers of locally relevant practices (Gonzalez, Andrade, Civil, & Moll, 2001, p. 130).

The pedagogy of the PSA program is rooted in a capability approach to education. For FUNDAEC, a capability is "the developed capacity to think and act within a well-defined sphere of activity and following a well-defined purpose" (FUNDAEC, 2015, p. vii). FUNDAEC operates under the assumption that a capability is not something a student either possesses or does not; it is developed progressively as the student acquires a set of interrelated skills and abilities, assimilates the necessary information, advances in the understanding of relevant concepts, and acquires certain attitudes, habits and qualities (FUNDAEC, 2014). Towards this end, a step-by-step study of an area of scientific knowledge is pursued respecting the logical order of the field without ignoring the

importance of the student's own experience (Farid-Arbab, 2016). The capabilities in the PSA program fall into three broad areas: capabilities closely related to the social action students carry out, those associated with intellectual forms of knowledge, and capabilities associated with the moral dimensions of the social action in which students engage (FUNDAEC, 2014). The capabilities related to social action are developed through participation in simple acts of service that increase in complexity as youth advance in developing these capabilities. For example, at the outset of the program, a group may organize a community education campaign aimed at the prevention of diseases such as malaria. As the group advances through the program, they develop the capabilities needed to take on more complex actions, such as organizing a solid waste management system with key community actors (Field notes, 2016). Capabilities concerned with intellectual forms of knowledge draw on the sciences, mathematics, language and history. For example, although a participant may not become a scientist the curriculum aims to develop scientific capabilities that can be applied to their engagement in social action and future professions. These include "making organized observations about phenomena, to seek patterns in data gathered through these observations and to test hypotheses" (FUNDAEC, 2014, p.5). Likewise, a participant may not become a historian, but in order to engage in social action it is important to be able to understand social reality from a historical perspective (FUNDAEC, 2014). Language and mathematics capabilities are also key for youth's engagement in social action. The curriculum aims to assist youth to express their thoughts and ideas with increasing clarity and to read the literature related to their work with greater comprehension. Moreover, mathematics is applied to the daily pursuits in which they are engaged, as they make numerical statements about physical

and social realities. Mathematical capabilities are applied to real-life situations such as accounting practices in small business enterprises and the analysis of data related to the state of the health of their community. Elements of capabilities associated with the moral realm of social action include developing the ability to listen carefully to others and to avoid false dichotomies, acquiring qualities such as love and humility, and developing an attitude of detachment while avoiding a sense of superiority, self-righteousness and paternalism (FUNDAEC, 2014).

FUNDAEC's educational programs aim to help youth build the capacities they need to become engaged in social action by making use of technology and science in such a way that is applied and relevant to the needs of local communities (FUNDAEC, 2006). The educational content of FUNDAEC's programs contains a technical component. The founders of the organization rejected narrow approaches to vocational education for youth from so-called disadvantaged populations (Farid-Arbab, 2016). They reacted with indignation to the academic/vocational divide in curriculum in which "the children of the rich learn to think, and the children of the poor learn to carry out orders" (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 34). In this dissertation, I explore how FUNDAEC has applied a holistic approach to education for development through the use of a capability orientation.

Development of the PSA Program in the Costa Caribe

FUNDAEC has offered the PSA program for over 10 years, drawing on more than four decades of experience in promoting alternative forms of development. The PSA program was initially established in the Caribbean Coastal region in the department of

Córdoba in 2007 and gradually expanded to neighboring departments as experience and human resources for the program were built up.

To set in motion a process of education at the local level for the development of human resources to engage in social action, an administrative structure for the PSA program has emerged called a unit. This unit, which is developed over a three-year period in a specific region, is comprised of a coordinator and an assistant, 10 to 15 tutors with their respective groups, and some 150-200 students (PSA Report, November, 2016, FUNDAEC). This arrangement allows for the administration of its activities and the expansion of the program. When a number of units are established in close proximity to each other, there is a need for a zonal coordination structure.

During the time of this study the PSA program was offered in 4 departments in this region reaching some 1,000 students. In the Caribbean Coast there were two zonal teams—the Southern Zonal Team and the Central Zonal Team. The Southern team was made up of four individuals from the zone; this team worked with 6 units situated in the departments of Córdoba and Sucre. The Central Zonal Team, made up two individuals from the zone, was working with two units in the departments of Bolivar and Atlántico.

Framing the Study

Youth unemployment is among the greatest development challenges facing many countries in the Global South (Benson, 2011). Scholarly research identifies a principal cause of this challenge as the ever-widening mismatch between labor force growth and employment creation (Jjuuko, 2011). In Colombia, youth unemployment is dangerously on the rise, as economic and educational systems are unable to the meet the needs of youth, who comprise over 20% of the total population (DANE, 2018).

Due to the increase of unemployment and underemployment among growing youth populations in conflict-affected areas in Colombia, TVET systems that prepare young people for the worlds of work in both the formal and informal economies are gaining prominence in development agendas in the country. Research, however, points out that TVET programs are often framed in outdated modes of development, narrowly focused on economic growth and profit (McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012). Such modes, scholars argue, are not conducive to dignified working opportunities for young people, nor are they adequate for the effective reintegration of youth ex-combatants into society (Blattman & Annan, 2011; Gilligan, Mvukiyehe & Samii, 2013; Cooper, 2010). In response to the limitations of mainstream approaches to TVET, a growing number of scholars and practitioners are exploring and developing capabilities approaches to TVET (McGrath, 2012; Powell, 2012; Tikly, 2012; Walker, 2006). Conducting such research is particularly timely due to the rise of TVET in global development agendas, and the research gap in this field of study.

Informal Economies in the Global South

Informal economies in Colombia, as in many places in the Global South, tend to operate on principles of reciprocity and mutuality within a community that shares a collective vision and common obstacles. Given such characteristics, scholars have described them as moral economies (Booth, 1994). A moral economy aims to safeguard the wellbeing and survival of the community by supporting, sharing, and caring for its members through networks and groups that emerge from the family, the neighborhood, the workplace or other forms of selection (Mains, 2012). Although there is not a pure form of a moral economy, this approach emphasizes community interests, not markets,

and highlights the values that shape economic activity (Mains, 2012). Conversely, in a highly developed market economy, the self-regulating market rules society, the goals of the market are supreme, the economy is disembodied, and individuals and their activities are atomized (Booth, 1994).

In relation to the development of capacity to participate in moral economies that promote collective wellbeing in post-conflict settings, scholars argue for a capabilities approach to TVET that places an emphasis on building social relationships and social networks, as well as outcomes for achieving economic and educational equity (McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012; DeJaeghere et al., 2016; Honeyman, 2016). Along these lines, Honeyman's (2016) work in the post-conflict environment of Rwanda shows that certain entrepreneurial programs for youth have been designed to promote social responsibility drawing on African notions of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a worldview that emphasizes the "oneness of humanity, a collectivity, community, and set of cultural practices and spiritual values that seek respect and dignity for all humanity" (Goduka, 2000, p. 72). This conceptualization of social responsibility calls for investing in the wellbeing of others and the environment (Honeyman, 2016). Scholars have also identified "affiliation, care, and imaginations of alternative futures" as forms of social relations that play a crucial role in the educational success of youth and their future livelihoods opportunities (DeJaeghere et al., 2016, p. 463). In contrast, when TVET programs place little emphasis on building social relations, the educational trajectory and the future wellbeing of youth participants are jeopardized.

Notions of Progress

Also relevant for this study is how local communities and populations frame notions of progress in a diversity of ways (Mains, 2012). Young people's aspirations for the future are generated at specific times and places in light of their conception of modernity (Mains, 2012). Modernity has been an important topic of discussion within anthropology. Anthropologists have critiqued linear notions of development and have described multiple ways of being modern (Knauft, 2002; Mains, 2012). Local understandings of *being modern* allow for culturally significant values to permeate alternative notions of modernism. Ferguson (2010), however, critiques local approaches to modernity for being detached from hierarchies of status thereby obscuring issues related to economic inequality. Notwithstanding the validity of this critique, Mains (2012) argues that young people's notions of what it means to be modern and to progress are locally specific modes of evaluation, and have implications for the construction and attainment of aspirations. For example, notions of occupational status cause youth to pursue certain career paths and reject others (Mains, 2012). Along these lines, local modernities are key to understanding young people's economic and social behavior and identity development. The values that infuse conceptions of modernity and progress with meaning are shaped by various influences, such as the forces of the economy and media. Educational processes that extend across formal and non-formal educational systems, families and religions also have a significant role in influencing the values that are instilled into local conceptions of modernity, progress, and development (Mains, 2012). By uncovering the explicit and implicit aims of educational and development programs, insight can be gained into how the identity of young people is being shaped.

This dissertation, entitled Interweaving Personal and Community Transformation in a Capability Approach: An Education for Development Case Study in Colombia, consists of six chapters, including this first chapter which provides an overview of the research study. The second chapter, called Some Elements of the Social and Economic Fabric of Colombia, aims to set the stage for the case study by discussing contextual issues related to education for development systems in Colombia. The second chapter, Rethinking TVET and Development Processes, builds the theoretical framework of the proposal by making explicit the assumptions that underlie distinct yet overlapping frameworks in which TVET systems are situated in relation to education for development strategies in the Global South. The three frameworks for human development covered in Chapter 3 are: human capital approaches (Anderson, 2009; Giddens, 1994; Klees, 2016), sustainable development approaches (Fien & Wilson, 2005; Marope, Chakroun, & Holmes, 2015) and capabilities approaches (DeJaeghere, 2016; Farid-Arbab, 2016; Powell, 2012; Sen, 1999; Walker, 2006). The fourth chapter entitled, A Methodological and Theoretical Approach to the Case Study, provides an overview of the methodology and theoretical orientation I utilized in my doctoral research aimed at the construction of a case study on the PSA program, an education for development program being implemented in a conflict-affected area of Colombia. The fifth chapter outlines the findings of this research, which are organized based on the three research questions that investigate 1) the formation of participant identity as promoters of community well-being, 2) characteristics of networks of social support formed in the PSA program, and 3) the aspirations of youth in regard to their future livelihoods. The sixth chapter contains the conclusion of this case study, which outlines the promising elements and challenges

of the specific capabilities approach explored in this research on an education for development program carried out in a conflict-affected area in Colombia.

CHAPTER 2

SOME ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FABRIC OF COLOMBIA

In this chapter, I build the context for this case study, weaving together the social and economic issues that affect Colombia's educational and development processes. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I provide general background information on Colombia, where this case is situated, and then outline the inequalities that rural youth in Cordoba, Colombia face in relation to the dearth of quality education and livelihood opportunities. In this section, I demonstrate that although during the past decade Colombia has risen in rank and become classified by the World Bank as an upper middle-income country with a GNP per capita of $12,227 (UNESCO-UNEVCO, 2013), it is a country with one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, with more than a third of its population living in conditions of poverty (DANE, 2018). In the second section of the chapter, I describe the broader context of the social and economic inequalities that rural youth face through an analysis of the agrarian system in Colombia drawing on Galtung's (1990) classification of violence into cultural, structural and direct forms of violence. Instead of conceptualizing these forms of violence as a homogenizing and hegemonic force, I make use of Asher's (2009) argument that in specific conjunctures at particular locations in specific times, alternative practices and discourses arise. I utilize this argument to transcend the paralysis of action and agency that results from approaches that overly emphasize the restricting forces of structural violence. In the third section of this chapter, I provide an overview of the TVET systems in Colombia describing the reforms that have shaped these systems in recent years in light of

educational and economic policy priorities at the international and national levels that link TVET to the globalization and opening up of markets (Jacinto, 2010).

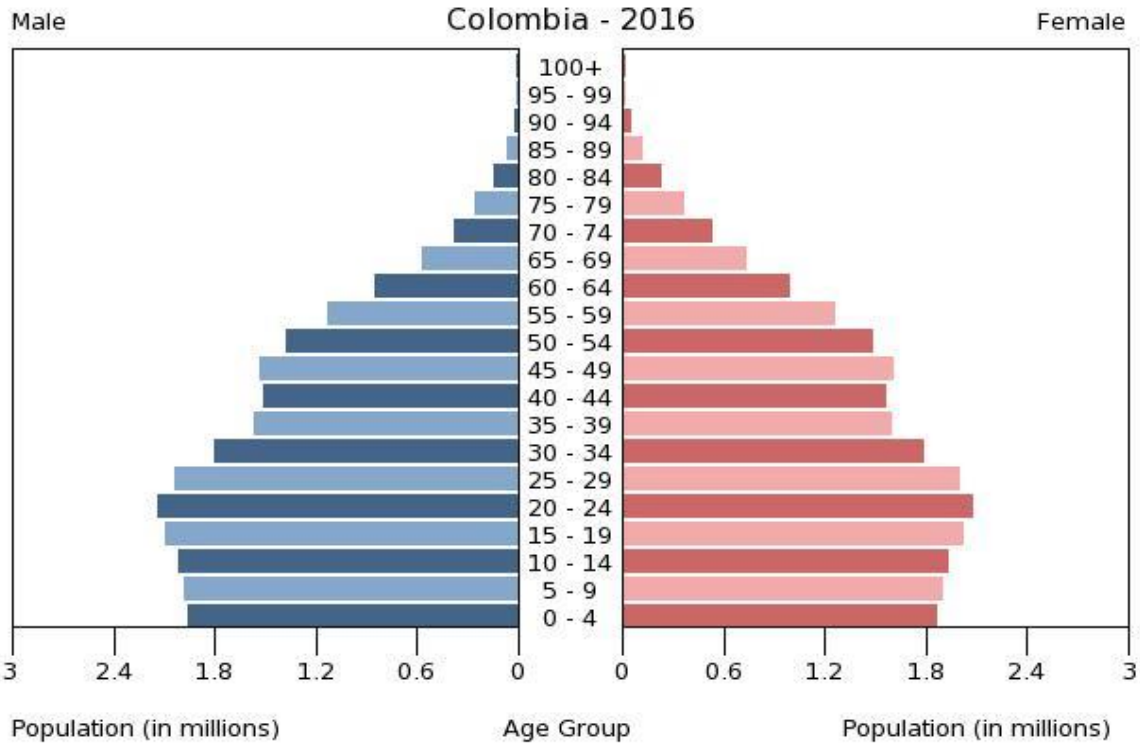
Background Information on Colombia

Colombia is situated in the Northwest region of South America. The country shares borders with Panama, Venezuela and Brazil, and Ecuador and Peru. The Muísca, Quimbaya and Tairona peoples originally inhabited the territory that is presently Colombia (Crespo, 2010). In 1499, the Spanish arrived to what is today Colombia and began a period of conquest and colonization (Crespo, 2010). In 1819, independence from Spain was achieved, and the Republic of New Granada emerged, which consisted of both Panama and Colombia (McFarlane, 1983). In 1903, Panama seceded from Colombia (McFarlane, 1983). Since 1960, the country has faced low-scale internal armed conflict related to land disputes that will be discussed in the second part of this chapter (Cotula, 2009).

Demographics

Colombia has a population of approximately 48 million inhabitants (DANE, 2016). As a result of Colombia's history it has a rich and diverse cultural heritage comprised of peoples from African, European and native indigenous backgrounds. Over 87 indigenous ethnic groups represent 3.4% of the country's total population and speak 64 different native languages (DANE, 2016). Afro-Colombians represent nearly 12.4% of the population and over 84.2% inhabitants are of mestizo (mixed) background, including the European population (DANE, 2016). The population pyramid of the country is found below in Figure 2.1 (DANE, 2016).

Figure 2.1 Population pyramid of Colombia



(Source: DANE, 2016)

From this pyramid, the following age distribution of the Colombian population can be noted:

- 0-14 years: 24.57% (male 5,940,903/female 5,659,594)
- 15-24 years: 17.54% (male 4,216,437/female 4,066,079)
- 25-54 years: 41.82% (male 9,788,057/female 9,958,982)
- 55-64 years: 8.9% (male 1,973,215/female 2,230,609)
- 65 years and over: 7.17% (male 1,412,209/female 1,974,771) (DANE, 2016)

Geography

Figure 2.2 contains a map that situates Colombia in the Northwestern region of South America and highlights the 32 departments that make up the country. Colombia possesses six principal geographic terrains—Andes mountain range; Pacific coastal

region; the Caribbean coastal region; plains; the Amazon Rainforest region; and islands in Atlantic and Pacific regions.

Figure 2.2 Map of Colombia

Within the 32 departments that make up Colombia, there are 314 different types of ecosystems (*Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible*, 2013). Colombia is categorized as one of the world's megadiverse countries; it hosts close to 10% of the planet's biodiversity (*Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible*, 2013). Main pressures and threats to the conservation of Colombia's biodiversity include the implementation of large-scale livestock and agricultural models, increasing social inequality and internal armed conflict since the 1960s (*Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible*, 2013).

The department of Córdoba, where I conducted my research, lies along the coast of the Caribbean Sea in the north of Colombia; it is bordered by the departments of Bolivar, Sucre and Antioquía. Córdoba has a surface area of 25,020 kilometers (Gobernación de Córdoba, 2018). The department contains two large geographic areas—a mountainous region to the south and a plain conformed by the Zinú and San Jorge valleys to the north. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, this territory was part of the Zenú native empire. In 1951, the department of Córdoba was founded after Jose María Cordoba led and won an independence movement from the department of Bolivar. The current population of Córdoba is about 1,600,000 comprised of indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and mestizo populations (Gobernación de Córdoba, 2018). The principal economic activity in the department of Cordoba is agriculture. Vast portions of land in Córdoba are being utilized for large-scale heavily capitalized agriculture and livestock activities—63.17% of the land in the department of Córdoba is dedicated to large-scale agriculture and cattle ranching (Gobernación de Córdoba, 2018). The use of land for large-scale production of bio-fuels such as palm oil and cattle ranching has diminished traditional agricultural practices and has had a detrimental impact on land in the region, jeopardizing the biodiversity of the region and its soil nutrients.

Education

In Colombia, basic education is obligatory and free for youngsters between six to fifteen years of age (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2013). Basic education includes a component of primary education, which extends from first through fifth grades, with the majority of students beginning at six years of age (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2013). In preparation for basic education, a year of compulsory pre-primary school called *transición*, is offered by

the government, and intended for children 5 years of age. Secondary education is divided into two cycles. In 2012, lower secondary education became compulsory, which includes sixth through ninth grades (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2013). Most students start lower secondary education at the age 11. Upper secondary education, which includes grades 10 and 11 is intended for 16- and 17-year-olds and is not compulsory (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2013). Four percent of children that are of official primary school ages do not attend school in Colombia (OECD, 2016). Among children out of school there is a large disparity between the poorest and richest children (UNESCO, 2012). Nearly 18% of secondary school age youth are out of school, with again a large disparity between the poorest and richest youth (UNESCO, 2012).

As part of a global movement to increase the educational outcomes of children and youth worldwide, goals for the Education for All program (EFA) were established at the 2000 World Education Forum. With regard to the EFA goal aimed at increasing access to primary school education, UNESCO (2012) reports that in Latin America the overall number of children not in school decreased by 9%, however in the Caribbean region it went up by 11%. Conflict-affected areas of Colombia accounted for approximately 16% of the region's children that were not in school, and over one-fifth of children drop out of primary school in Colombia (this is a statistic that has not altered since 1999). Regarding EFA Goal 4 of reaching a 50% decrease in adult illiteracy by 2015, UNESCO (2012) also reports that Colombia is far from reaching this target. Similarly, EFA Goal 6, aimed at increasing the quality of education and ensuring measurable learning outcomes for all, is not being met, with UNESCO declaring inequality in the quality of education a formidable challenge in Latin America. In 2006,

while significant gaps in reading levels among rural and urban students continued to persist among the majority of countries in Latin America, some countries reflected modest improvement. In Colombia, however, this gap persisted (UNESCO, 2012).

The United Nations Office of Human Affairs reports that in the department of Córdoba, there are chronic limitations that inhibit the right to an education for thousands of children and youth (OCHA, 2016). These factors include armed violence, social exclusion, poverty and a lack of institutional presence. In 2014, around 28,000 children and youth were out-of-school in rural parts of Córdoba. In March 2016, some 11,400 children and youth registered in public schools were unable to attend classes because teachers were not given contracts to work because of the security situation (OCHA, 2016).

In order to gain greater insight into the dynamics at play in this department and how they are connected to broader social and economic processes within the country at large, in the following section I will describe pressing social and economic inequalities facing Colombia, paying particular attention to the department of Córdoba.

Pressing Inequalities Facing Colombia

> *We have worked in the kitchens, in the mines, in occupations of unskilled labor, in the river, sea, on the soccer field and on stage—but not structurally at the table of equal opportunities. It's not that we define ourselves by the color of our skin, but rather that society at large understands that a table with diverse colors will represent social change.*
>
> From an Afro-Colombian letter to President Obama (Villamizar, 2012, p. 34)

Youth Unemployment on the Rise

The lowest levels of social integration worldwide are found in Latin America (Jacinto, 2010). Within Latin America, Colombia is one of the countries with the greatest

social and economic inequality; its Gini index for wealth distribution is 50.8, the second highest in Latin America after Brazil (DANE, 2018). Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities in Colombia in particular face social and economic exclusion (Jacinto, 2010). The unequal distribution of economic resources is reflected in the lack of quality education and employment opportunities available to these populations, in particular to the youth population (Marope et al., 2015).

Globalization and the opening up of the trade market, through agreements such as North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), have further reinforced social segmentation in Colombia (Jacinto, 2010). In the aftermath of the financial crisis in 2008, the social and economic conditions and those of the labor market worsened (Jacinto, 2010). As a consequence of this deterioration, there have been increased unemployment levels for youth and a decrease in the quality of employment (Marope et al., 2015). Young people living in conditions of poverty are often forced to take on work at the worst end of the labor circuit, with poor quality working conditions (Jacinto, 2010). The most adverse employment challenges affect poor women with limited formal education, who are 20% less likely to find work than their male peers (Jacinto, 2010). Young poor women without access to quality education are often only able to find precarious work (for example, domestic work with low salaries, few benefits, and longer working hours) and also face race, gender and class discrimination (Marope et al., 2015).

Overall, few new jobs were created during the past 10 years and work was concentrated in the informal sector (DANE, 2018). In Colombia, working conditions are precarious, with salaries being decreased and full-time employment difficult to attain. Among the poorest sectors of the population, the informal sector has grown due to a

scarcity of employment opportunities in formal sectors (Jacinto, 2010; Marope et al., 2015).

Given its prominence in the economic landscape, the creation of employment opportunities within the informal sector has been emphasized by scholars and policy makers (DeJaeghere, 2016; Marope et al., 2015; Tikly, 2012). From a policy perspective, a great deal of interest in the informal economy has been generated due to the belief that a transition from informal to formal employment presumes an inevitable eradication of informal labor as processes of industrialization and modernization move forward (Anderson, 2009). It is becoming increasingly evident, however, that such transitions will not necessarily occur (Marope et al., 2015). Many Colombians will spend their entire working lives gaining a livelihood in the informal sector (Marope et al., 2015). The positive aspect of this trend is that the informal economy is a source of learning, innovation and entrepreneurship. The downside is that the working conditions are often precarious, given the association the informal economy has with low wages; thereby making it a vulnerable alternative (Marope et al., 2015).

Colombia, like many countries in Latin America, has been described as a dual economy, in which groups whose patterns of consumption are comparable to developed contexts reside next to those who are in economically deprived conditions, where basic needs are unmet (Jacinto, 2010). This socio-economic crisis of inequality fuels violence, which particularly affects youth. Migration in search of improved opportunities is a form of survival for many families. In sum, Colombia is confronted with great challenges with regard to social and economic development, globalization, mobility, and inequality,

which are reflected in the lack of adequate educational and socio-economic opportunities for the growing youth population (Jacinto, 2010).

As regards the case of Cordoba, this is a predominantly rural department in the Costa Caribe region that has been at the epicenter of the civil conflict in Colombia. In this department, there is a large and growing youth population between the ages of 15 and 24, which represents 17% of the total population. The total youth population in Cordoba is approximately 150,0000 (DANE, 2016). Approximately 20% of the youth are unemployed and around 80% of the employed youth population have expressed that they are underemployed as defined by the ILO (DANE, 2016). The ILO has identified several indicators of underemployment: 1) time-related underemployment, in which employees work fewer hours than agreed upon; 2) income-related underemployment, in which employees make a lower income than would otherwise be the case due to specific characteristics of the employer or workplace; and 3) skills-related underemployment, in which employees' abilities extend beyond those required for the work (Wilkens & Wooden, 2011). In Cordoba, youth unemployment is dangerously on the rise, as economic and educational systems are unable to the meet the needs of this population (DANE, 2018).

The populations of Cordoba have been affected for many years by the presence of illegal armed groups involved in drug production and trafficking and violent activities. In the Costa Caribe, the right-wing paramilitary groups were initially formed to combat the FARC. The paramilitary, like the FARC, is an illicit group that became heavily involved in drug trade and violent acts. Due to the violence caused by these groups, there is a high rate of forced internal displacement throughout the Caribbean Coast. From the ten-year

period of 2003 to 2013, a total of approximately 1,400,000 persons from the Caribbean Coast immigrated to other regions of Colombia (DANE, 2016). Over 80% of these persons relocated to urban centers such as Bogota and Medellin for employment and educational opportunities (DANE, 2016). In the following section of this proposal, I will analyze the relationship between the agrarian aspect of the Colombian economy and the violence that the country has experienced.

Violence and Exclusionary Agrarian Socioeconomic System in Colombia

For more than a half a century, Colombia has been experiencing an ongoing low-intensity war between the government, left-wing guerilla groups, paramilitary groups and crime syndicates (Grajales, 2011). At the heart of this conflict are intense debates surrounding agrarian reform (Grajales, 2013). A significant vector for the violence in this conflict has been struggles over land between different social groups—large-scale landholders and peasants (Bello, 2004; Querubín & Ibañez 2004). As argued by Jose Carlos Mariátegui (1955), who wrote about indigenous and peasant struggles in Peru in the 1920s, Latin America's propensity for rural violence is a consequence of "an unequal and exclusionary agrarian socioeconomic system" (p. 27).

The rural population of Colombia consists of 32% of the population, accounting for more than 14 million of the citizens of the country (Machado, 2011). In Colombia, agriculture consists of almost 10% of the GDP, and generates two out of three jobs in the rural sector (*Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural* [MADR], 2010). The peasant economy produces 35 to 40% of the country's basic consumable products (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States & *Corporación Andina de Fomento* [FAO & CAF], 2007). Notwithstanding, the pivotal role that peasant products have in the

Colombian economy, according to the United Nations Development Report, 64% of the rural inhabitants are poor and 29% are indigent (UNDP, 2010). Empirical evidence shows that there are key structural factors that hinder the economic progress of peasants, such as lack of access to quality land due to a high concentration of land ownership, and heterogeneity with regard to the scale of agricultural production (ECLAC, 2010). The heterogeneity of agricultural activity creates an internal gap due to large production differences between small landholders and large agro-industries. This internal gap, known as structural heterogeneity, refers to asymmetrical relationships among enterprises, which has created what many political economists consider a bipolar agrarian structure in Colombia that has contributed to the violence the country faces (ECLAC, 2010).

In the Caribbean Coast, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on large-scale agriculture production and cattle farming for commercial purposes. Despite these efforts, the region is faced with the challenge of food security—the rate of production of food for local use is not adequate, putting at risk the large low-income population of the region. Given the resources and attention being given to commercial agricultural efforts, the land on small-scale farms has been underutilized. With this in mind, the target population of FUNDAEC's education for development programs is communities that engage in small-scaled agricultural and animal husbandry endeavors. Small-scale agriculture faces many challenges in the Caribbean Coast. On the one hand, those involved in this approach to agriculture do not have access to the technologies available that can assist them in making their plots more productive; on the other, large scale production technologies are inaccessible to small-scale farmers due to their high costs (ECLAC, 2010).

Growing bodies of research indicates that small-scale farming, which is at the heart of the peasant economy, can be as efficient or more efficient than large-scale estate farming (World Bank, 2008; FAO, 2008). Small-scale farms appear to create a greater number of jobs per hectare than large-scale farms, and peasant farmers' income may be up to ten times what they would have earned from wage employment (World Bank, 2008). In addition the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) states there is growing evidence that "productivity-based agricultural growth, especially by small producers, has an overall positive economic impact on rural areas" (2008, p. 26). In contrast, the rapid growth of agro-business and the promotion of large-scale producers in regions such as the Caribbean Coast over the past few decades have had an inadequate impact on the social aspects of community life (World Bank, 2008). In the following section, I will focus attention on the dynamics of the biofuel industry at a local and global level due to the intensive growth of this type of industry in the Costa Caribe region and the detrimental impact it has on the livelihoods of the peasant communities I engaged with in the fieldwork associated with this dissertation.

Local and Global Dynamics of Biofuel Industry

Over the past few decades, there has been increasing interest to position the biofuels industry as a solution to the global environmental crisis and the plight of rural agrarian economies in the Global South (Bello, 2004; CENSAT, 2015). Advocates of this rapidly expanding industry assert that large-scale cultivation of biofuels will revitalize stagnant rural economies and help stem global warming by providing a green alternative to fossil fuels (White & Dasgupta, 2010). The expansion of the biofuel industry is based on the assumption that there is a plethora of idle and unused land available in many

countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America—land that could be made productive through the cultivation of crops for biofuels (Cotula, 2009). Many environmental and indigenous groups, among others, contest the assumption that the biofuel industry is a sustainable form of development that will result in increased social, economic and environmental wellbeing (Bello, 2004; CENSAT, 2007, 2015; Cotula, 2009). Political economists argue that the biofuel industry is not a new economic phenomenon that will be a solution to the rural agrarian struggle in Colombia (White & Dasgupta, 2010). They argue that this industry follows the patterns of economic activity of other large-scale agricultural commodities, such as sugar cane, that in many cases have further exacerbated inequalities (Grajales, 2013). Such patterns foment the integration of emerging economies of the South into economies of the North and multinational corporations (McMichael, 2010; Cotula, 2009). This leads to complex relations between donors and recipients of aid, and consumers and producers of goods (White & Dasgupta, 2010). Given the growing demand for agricultural land required by the large-scale biofuel producers, the biofuel industry intensifies volatile situations related to land conflicts (Wouters & Mieke, 2001). In order to analyze in further depth the relationship between the biofuel industry in Colombia and the civil conflict the country is facing, in the paragraphs below, I provide an overview of conceptual tools from anthropology, namely "structural," "cultural" and "direct" violence, drawing on the scholarship of Galtung (1990) and Farmer (2004). I will make use of these conceptual constructs in an analysis of the phenomenology of violence in Colombia.

Structural Violence

Building on the work of Galtung (1990) and liberation theologians, Farmer (2004) proposes that structural violence is a conceptual construct that can be used to gain insight into the implications of institutionalized social inequalities in modern life. This concept draws on Bourdieu's notion of habitus, based on a principle of structuring that constrains agency (Farmer, 2004). Structural violence refers to social structures that foster and sustain conditions of poverty and deep inequalities (Farmer, 2004). Structural violence is a grounded in pathologies of power (Farmer, 2004). The trade policies and development practices of a neoliberal economy rooted in a competition-driven market are examples of structural violence that perpetuate inequalities of power and the exploitation of local economies (Cotula, 2009). A neoliberal orientation is often described as market fundamentalism or conservative capitalism (DeJaeghere, 2014). It has been characterized by the propagation of open markets, the promotion of free trade, privatization, minimal public sector and state interventions, all in an effort to protect the autonomy of the individual (Torres, 2002). Neoliberalism is also concerned with market solutions, critiquing the usefulness of government interventions (Klees, 2016). Scholars assert that the neoliberal laws favor the interests of large agribusiness and are injurious to the livelihood opportunities of small farmers in Colombia (Grajales, 2003). Along these lines, in this proposal I will argue that that the neoliberal economic laws that regulate the biofuel industry are forms of structural violence.

Structural violence is a conceptual construct used to study the social machinery of oppression (Bourgois, 2001). Oppression has many consequences, not the least of which includes its impact on consciousness. Farmer (2004) explains that the erasure of historical

memory and other forms of desocialization are some of the most oppressive forms of structural violence. He argues that a focus on the misery and suffering of present day society from an ahistorical perspective is bereft of an understanding of how inequality is a structure that has been legitimated over time (Farmer, 2004). An example of erasure of history is how it enables taken-for-granted notions of modernity and efficiency rooted in a neoliberal economy to emerge and become consolidated as the norm (Farmer, 2004). In sum, the conceptualization of structural violence deals with the sociocultural and political economic structures of inequality that are implicated in the violences of everyday life.

Cultural Production of Violence

Structural violence, like direct violence, does not work in a cultural vacuum; it emerges from a set of cultural beliefs about human nature, society and modernity (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). Galtung (1990) refers to the conceptions that underlie direct and structural violence as cultural violence. Cultural violence signifies aspects of culture that are symbolic, such as ideology, language, art and law (Galtung, 1990). Although cultural violence is not a form of physical assault like direct violence, it can be used to legitimatize or foster violence, often in ways that are not clearly visible. Galtung (1990) makes use of a metaphor of a triangle to describe the casual flows among direct, structural and cultural violence. He also uses the paradigm of a violence image stratum to describe the phenomenology of violence. He refers to cultural violence as the substratum that fuels the other two forms of violence. The proceeding stratum is structural violence, where patterns of oppression are built up. And at the top, the only part discernable to the untrained eye is direct violence, which erupts in the form of a volcano. In regard to time, in this paradigm, cultural violence is more permanent, whereas

structural violence is process-oriented, and direct violence is episodic. Galtung (1990) explains that the greater degree of permanence of cultural violence stems from how it is embedded into the ways of thinking of groups of people.

Cultural violence works through discourses that erase historical understandings of oppression (Galtung, 1990). For example, in the Colombian context, the history of slavery is reproduced through cultural, structural and direct violence. However, in terms of language in present day educational texts, this history is forgotten. Textbooks water down slavery to phrases such as discrimination, to refer to structural violence, or prejudice, to allude to cultural violence (Galtung, 1990). This "sanitation of language" becomes a form of cultural violence that misrepresents the history of people (Galtung, 1990, p. 295). The erasure of history distorts consciousness as it obscures an understanding of present day conditions, leading to distorted conceptions of reality that pave the way for desocialization, and the emergence of hegemonic understandings of what has happened to a community and why (Farmer, 2004). Desocialization in Colombia stems from beliefs that are shrouded in colonial thinking and have historically been propagated by the elite class. These beliefs include notions that poor Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations are lazy, uncivilized and lack intelligence; that they are not interested in modernity or engaging in highly efficient productive activities; and that to be productive they must necessarily conform to the characteristics of the Western modern man (Escobar, 2012). Through the psychological dimensions of cultural violence in modern contexts, these beliefs are internalized through processes of desocialization (Farmer, 2004).

In Escobar's (2012) book *Encountering Development and the Making and the Unmaking of the Third World*, he questions contemporary notions of modernity through a case study of economic development in Colombia. He poses critical questions such as "What vast development of civilization resulted in the present conception and practice of the economy?" (Escobar, 2012, p. 59). Escobar (2012) engages with this question by considering the history of modernity through the lens of historical economic practices in Europe. By focusing on the economy from an anthropology of modernity perspective, he considers three key elements of the Western economy—the market, production and labor (Escobar, 2012). Escobar (2012) questions the taken-for-granted tales that have been created about these elements and argues that the way they have been constructed is not inherently normal, natural or the way things are. The Western economy is generally described as a production system from a material perspective (Escobar, 2012). In contrast, Escobar (2012) describes this system from a cultural perspective as a "system of production, power and signification" (p. 59). This production system, he asserts, has taken shape over time through cultural production. A quintessential aspect of modernity, he argues, is the separation of social life into functional components—economy, politics, society, and culture (Escobar, 2012). Each of these domains has its own sphere of activity and rules. At the level of signification, this implies that the economy is its own autonomous entity with its own rules—rules that are not connected to society, culture or politics. This separation of social life from the economic life is a modern development; it is a cultural production that has not always existed (Escobar, 2012). Such a separation has led to what Suchland (2015) describes as economies of violence—economies

characterized by market-led capitalism that do not provide adequate employment thereby hindering livelihood opportunities and restricting individual agency (Suchland, 2015).

Like Escobar (2012), Galtung (1990) asserts that the modern economic capitalist system is a cultural production. As such it is not the only and inevitable system. Through cultural and structural processes of change new alternatives can emerge (Farmer, 2004). Along these lines, Farmer argues that by overly focusing on the constricting effects of structural violence, acts of social change that take place on a daily basis are not validated or made visible. Along these lines, drawing on an overly structural approach to agency and violence in my dissertation would be restricting, as such an approach inhibits the possibility of recognizing and learning about alternatives that have emerged and those that are unfolding. Moreover, this stance runs the risk of portraying the poor as victims and pitying them, thereby creating representations of disadvantaged populations that strip them of their capacity to contribute to processes of social change. Notwithstanding these limitations, I feel that the conceptual constructs of structural, cultural and direct violence are tools that are useful for gaining insight into a set of interrelated factors that contribute towards violence. By making use of these tools in my proposal to analyze violence in Colombia, I will map out the wider context in which FUNDAEC is systematically pursuing processes of social change through its education for development programs. Along these lines, in the following section I provide a brief overview of the palm oil industry in Colombia, which is growing at a fast pace in the department of Cordoba. I make use Galtung's analogy of a violence stratum to carry out this analysis. As mentioned above, I pay close attention to the topic of the biofuel industry, as this is an

aspect of the economy that has had great impact on the livelihoods of the youth in this case study, and is closely related to the violence that they face.

The Spread of the Palm Oil Industry

In Colombia, as neoliberal globalization[2] gained momentum in the 1980s, powerful development organizations together with states agencies advocated that it was both economically and politically necessary to modernize regional economies in the country that had been isolated from global trade markets, such as that of Cordoba (Asher, 2009). Measures were taken to modernize regional economies based on neoliberal globalization precepts that advocate for private and market-led economic growth and a decreased role of the state government (Asher, 2009). These neoliberal measures to modernize the economy were carried out in conjunction with the country's war on drugs that was implemented through policies such as Plan Colombia (Asher, 2009). Through this policy, regional development plans were implemented that emphasized government and corporate investment in high-profit, export-oriented commercial sectors (Asher, 2009).

As Colombia moved forward with its development plans, palm oil was an attractive source of investment (Asher, 2009). This biofuel is a potentially lucrative large-scale investment and represents an alternative to oil energy sources and illicit crops. Palm oil production began in Colombia in the 1960s as part of the country's strategy for economic modernization (Asher, 2009). In the 1990s, the national and international

[2] A neoliberal emphasis is closely linked to processes of globalization that have been described as "deliberate policies to create a global market system and the reciprocal weakening of national boundaries and local economic systems" (Nordtveit, 2015, p. 322).

agencies encouraged the intensification of this strategy as a component of the country's war on drugs (Asher, 2009).

In an effort to stimulate economic growth, national policies were devised to reallocate land that had been used to grow illicit crops for productive agriculture activities[3] (Asher, 2009). Only a small portion of this land, one-fourth, was allocated to small farmers to pursue alternative forms of development. The vast majority of the land was granted to large-scale agro-industrial projects, among them palm oils. These agro-industrial projects were not administered solely by private industries. Paramilitary groups, who had a strong presence in the region, were closely connected to these projects (Grajales, 2013). Below is an account that depicts certain ways that corporations working with the paramilitary acquired land for palm oil:

> One day they (the paramilitaries) came to my place; they said – either you sell us your farm, or we'll buy it from your widow. We took all our stuff and we left. They never paid for the land. They gave me some rubber checks … My brother went back to our lands a few months ago, he told me the whole county is now planted with oil palm, hundreds of hectares. It is enclosed with fences and there is a "private property" notice. (Grajales, 2013, p. 213)

As described above, the demand for biofuels has led to a demand for land, particularly in Colombia, resulting in what many have described as "global land grab" (Grajales, 2011; 2013). Biofuel driven land grabs are often associated with transactions that take place between transnational companies and governments for the production of biofuel for exportation (Grajales, 2013). Increasingly, national and local corporations are appropriating land for the production of biofuels. Agribusinesses' push for land is

[3] The war on drugs in Colombia called for the eradication of illicit coca crops. In order to destroy these crops, powerful chemical herbicides were used to fumigate. These herbicides not only destroyed the illicit crops, but they also wiped out the subsistence farms of small shareholders and had egregious health effects on the human and animal lives. Effects that led to blindness and other health-related problems (Asher, 2009).

intertwined with the territorialization processes related to the access of land for peasants, indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups. Land grabbing is linked to an agrarian structure rooted in historical, vested power relations (Asher, 2009). Laws in Colombia have been established to place limits on the amount of land a single entity can purchase in an effort to decrease the land agribusinesses can accumulate and to preserve the social function of land at the community level (Grajales, 2013). Notwithstanding the aims of these policies, the growth of agribusinesses is increasing, largely by land grabbing. Land grabbing occurs through "illegal activities, bringing together buyers and sellers, encouraging land titles and robbing/buying land from campesinos" (CENSAT, 2015, p. 31).

The aggressive propagation of palm oil projects has destroyed ecosystems, subsistence farms and the lives of many (Asher, 2009). Black and indigenous communities have been at the center of this upheaval caused by the redistribution of land, which resulted in both death and forced displacement. Over a ten-year period, running from 1995 to 2005, over 3 million people were either displaced or lost their lives over land disputes (Asher, 2009). From 2003 to 2008, the administration of President Uribe created incentives that encouraged large-scale agricultural production, such as tax breaks on biofuels. Despite discontent from a large portion of the Colombian society and state entities, reformed agriculture and natural resource management policies were enacted in order to encourage agro-industrial development (Richini, 2013). Many groups, including Afro-Colombian, indigenous and peasant organizations, have critiqued these reforms, as they hinder environmental conservation and social improvements (Asher, 2009).

Notwithstanding these critiques, plans for modernization through the propagation of the palm oil industry moved forward with the aim of improving the living conditions

in rural communities (Asher, 2009). However, in the Caribbean coast, where the modernization project of the palm oil industry was expanding at a very fast pace, the human development indices continued to report that the basic needs of 85% of the population remained unmet (Asher, 2009). In 2009, the Caribbean region ranked as one of the regions in the country that received the least amount of funds for social expenditures (Asher, 2009). The cultivation of palm oil in Colombia has been described as an extractivist approach to development that is antiquated and destructive. Along these lines, a Minister of the Environment of Colombia suggested that the palm oil industry is "a means of territorial appropriation through violence and stimulation of poverty and marginality rather than providing access to forest resources" (Asher, 2009, p. 168).

Green Gold

As mentioned above, the dynamics of the biofuel industries, such as palm oil, are similar to other large-scale commodity crops in Colombia, like sugar cane. However, one way in which the biofuel industry may differ from other branches of agriculture is the rapid speed of growth of the industry (White & Dasgupta, 2010). Biofuel crops are expanding more rapidly than other agro-commodity booms and with greater social and environmental impacts. In 2010, it was estimated that European firms had acquired over five million hectares of land for biofuel use across South America (Borras, McMichael, & Scoones, 2010). In 2012, the Ministries of Mines and Energies established a goal for the upcoming decade to cultivate energy crops on 3 million hectares of land in Colombia alone (CENSAT, 2015). This agro-industrial model is expected to expand in the upcoming years. If projections are accurate, there will be a 4% increase in biofuels by the year 2030 in Colombia (CENSAT, 2015).

Political ecologists project that biofuels, such as palm oil, will undermine food production, and the shift to biofuels will make land availability scarce for rural livelihoods (Borras et al., 2010). This is already evident in the department of Cordoba where food security is a challenge faced by many communities (CENSAT, 2015). In addition, the expansion of biofuels has the potential to increase deforestation trends. Dispossessed indigenous groups in Colombia refer to biofuel plantations as "devil orchards"—as accelerated displacement due to the propagation of palm oil has led to a significant decrease in the number of jobs generated by family farming (Borras et al., 2010, p. 578). The replacement of food crops with fuel crops has negatively affected the family diet and economy of small-scale farmers. This form of globalization has constructed "projects of rule" through which corporate food-fuel regimes create "a politics of accumulation by dispossession" (Borras et al., 2010, p. 580).

Another distinguishing feature of the biofuels industry is that it is packaged in a language that is couched in the rhetoric of the green economy (White & Dasgupta, 2010). The association of the biofuels industry and the green economy makes corporate land acquisition, forest conversion and biotechnologies more acceptable to the general public (White & Dasgupta, 2010). Biofuels are presented as a way of decreasing greenhouse emissions without stagnating economic growth. The biofuels revolution is a strategy for decreasing dependency on Middle Eastern oil, while opening up a new source of profitability for energy and agribusiness sectors (White & Dasgupta, 2010). This win-win imaginary frames the diverse biofuel debates that feed into policy formulation. The emerging "biofuel complex reproduces a global ecology whereby planetary resources are managed through the application of market environmentalism, reinforcing a growing rift"

between people and nature (McMichael, 2010, p. 610). The consequences of market environmentalism are deepening the North/South asymmetry at the expense of local biofuel developments for local energy requirements, food sovereignty and biodiversity (McMichael, 2010).

Stratum of Violence

Structural violence is a useful concept for analyzing the effects of policies that promote biofuel crops. From the accounts above, investment in biofuels further intensifies violence and crime in the country and has led to the impoverishment and displacement of many rural families (Asher, 2009; Grajales, 2013).

Bearing in mind Galtung's (1990) stratum of violence, in order to help mitigate structural violence in Colombia, it does not appear to be sufficient to merely tackle structural violence directly by changing laws and policy related to agrarian reform. For long enduring change and peace to occur, Galtung (1990) argues that the roots of cultural violence need to be addressed, for example by asking critical questions at international, regional and local levels such as: What is the conception of modernity that underpins agrarian reform? How do notions of wellbeing and development embedded in policies reflect the evolving understandings about these topics being discussed within indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups? How can the ideologies that perpetuate historic class divisions be confronted? How can international donors take the steps needed to address the cultural and structural violence that their plans and programs contain? When thinking about agrarian reform, the role of cultural violence underscores the importance of considering these questions.

With these questions in mind, I would like to highlight Galtung's (1990) proposal to contrast the violence triad with the "triangular syndrome of peace in which cultural peace engenders structural peace, with symbiotic, equitable relations among diverse partners, and direct peace with acts of cooperation, friendliness and love" (p. 297). By including culture in peace studies, effort can be made to move beyond narrow attempts to work towards peace from a merely structural point of view. This seems to be of critical import at this historical moment when various factions in Colombia, including the government, paramilitary, guerilla groups, peasants and new social movements, have engaged in peace talks. Keeping in mind that violence is not only enacted in the moment of violence, there is a tomorrow of violence whose effects are long lasting and cyclical if not interrupted—an in-depth understanding of how the triad of violence in Colombia operates is needed in order to begin to think through alternatives.

In closing this section of the chapter, I would like to highlight Asher's (2009) research in the Pacific Coast of Colombia in which the interlinkages between capital development and social movements are not represented only in terms of oppositional relationships. By focusing on oppositional relationships, the contradictory, complex and contingent ways these two discourses are linked would be veiled (Asher, 2009). Instead Asher highlights the dialectical relationship[4] between development and social movements. This assertion moves away from perceiving Western development as a homogenizing, hegemonic force. It shows how in specific conjunctures, discourses and practices are structured (Asher, 2009). Recognition of the dialectical relationship between Western modes of development and grassroots social movements enables limiting

[4] Dialectical relationships are comprised of contradictory forces that are interdependent and co-constitute each other leading to new creative possibilities.

dichotomies that cause paralysis in action and thought to be transcended. Such dichotomies include "exploitation versus resistance, local versus global, theory versus practice, identity versus strategy" (Asher, 2009, p. 17). Asher explores how political and economic processes and struggles for social change influence one another in uneven and paradoxical ways. Towards this end, she illustrates how local struggles and cultural politics are co-constituted, albeit "differentially, unequally and discursively by and against modernizing or globalizing interventions" (Asher, 2009, p. 25).

Educational Advances and Challenges in Colombia

In Colombia, TVET systems and policies are strongly aligned with the social and economic fabric of the country and underwritten by its political ideologies (Garavan, McCarthy, & Morley, 2016). With this in mind, the previous sections gave due consideration to the economic policies being promoted at global, national and regional levels, taking into account how they affect the livelihoods of rural communities in Cordoba. TVET systems also reflect the education strategies of a country; as such, in this section, I will analyze education trends and strategies in Colombia.

Available research indicates that years of participation in quality basic and secondary education is critical to attaining meaningful work (Jacinto, 2010). Specifically, twelve years of schooling has been considered adequate to equip young people with the tools to overcome conditions of poverty (Jacinto, 2010). In Colombia, access to primary education has increased and compulsory education has extended to the lower secondary level (Jacinto, 2010). However, educational systems are facing considerable challenges in making available relevant and quality education, and in maintaining students until the end

of secondary education (Jacinto, 2010). Critical challenges facing secondary education include high dropout and school year repetition rates (Jacinto, 2010).

The impact of completion of secondary education is not the same for every person. As previously discussed, the GDP of Colombia is increasing, resulting in it becoming the third strongest economy in Latin America, surpassing Argentina. Yet poverty affects 46% of the total population and 64% in rural areas (Garavan et al., 2016). As such, it can be noted that the country continues to manifest major social and economic inequalities (Garavan et al., 2016). Inequality with regard to education adversely affects indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2012). Indigenous women in particular have experienced exclusion from the education system (Cortina, 2010). A recent World Bank report on economic mobility underscores that the ethnic and socio-economic background of a person, the level of education of their parents, the quality of education received, and access to social relations networks are factors that have significant influence on where graduates of secondary education find employment in Colombia (Ferreira et al., 2012).

Another key issue that has arisen in debates about educational systems in Colombia is that of making permeable the barrier "between academic education and technical vocational training, between theory and practice," in the context of "a world where the global knowledge economy requires the integration of skills and continuous adaption to change" (Jacinto, 2010, p. 17). Scholars argue that "an egalitarian concept of education should aim to change the stratification between theoretical and practical knowledge, abolishing divisions reflected in the school system and in the organization of curriculum" (Camilioni, 2006, p. 214). In Colombia, like many countries in Latin

America, the challenge of integration has been addressed by educational reforms that organize curricula around the development of competencies—general and or labor specific competencies (Marope et al., 2015). These reforms are linked to "major technological transformations" related to "globalization and the opening of markets," and "the complexities and tensions of diverse and segmented markets," which place contradictory demands on education (Jacinto, 2010, p. 20).

For those youth who are unemployed and out-of-school, alternative vocational training programs are taking shape that have flexible strategies and are part of the formal education system (Jacinto, 2010). However, much is to be done to ensure the quality and relevance of these programs. Jacinto's report on Recent Trends in Vocational Education in Latin America stresses that "the organization of education and training circuits that open paths to employment for youth, that are both relevant and pertinent while also responding to the demands of the labour market and local and national development, is one of the greatest challenges facing vocational training and educational transformation in the region" (Jacinto, 2010, p. 21).

Modalities for Imparting TVET

Garavan et al. (2016) argue that unequal access to education is a core cause of social inequalities in Colombia. In the face of these challenges, the national government and many non-government agencies have promoted education for work through TVET programming. There are different modalities in which TVET programming is offered to youth in Colombia. Here, I divide them into two broad categories, government-sponsored education programs overseen by the Ministry of Education of Colombia and non-formal education (NFE) programs run by non-government organizations.

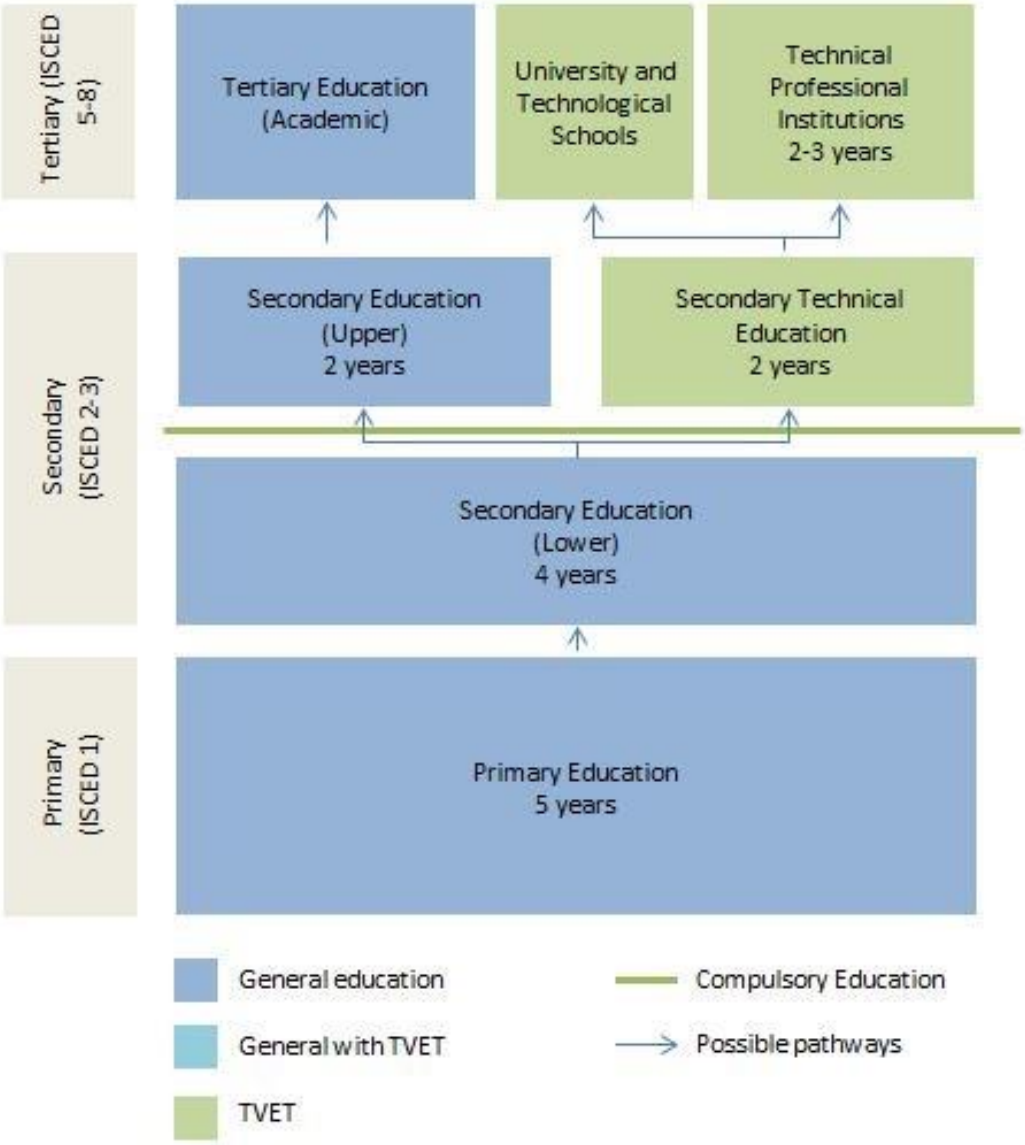
Government-Sponsored TVET System

Completion of nine years of compulsory basic education is required to enter into upper secondary education. Upper secondary education consists of 10th and 11th grades aimed at youth 15 to 16 years of age. Upper secondary education is organized in tracks—academic (*Bachillerato Académico*) and technical (*Bachillerato en Tecnología o Aplicado*). Certification as a *bachiller* provides students with an opportunity to access higher education. The technical tracks, which equip students with the preparation needed for employment in production or the service sector, are organized in the following way:

- Industrial track: prepares youth as technicians and operators for work in industry sectors in accordance with the needs of the labor market.
- Commercial track: developed as a result of an increase in trade and the economic activity connected with it.
- Pedagogical track: prepares students to teach grades 1-5.
- Agricultural track: intends to link secondary education with the rural sector.
- Social Promotion track: strives to advance the status of women by fostering their moral, intellectual and economic development.

Technical professional institutions, technological schools and universities provide tertiary education, with a TVET focus. These institutions offer programs with durations of two to three years that lead to officially recognized technological, professional technician, and professional degrees. The national TVET tertiary system is considered not to have the same prestige and quality as other types of education. It is believed that those who are not admitted to university pursue tertiary level TVET programs. Figure 2.3, Colombia's Formal Education System, below provides an overview of the components of the formal education system that includes technical and professional education options.

Figure 2.3 Columbia's formal education system



Source: UNESCO, 2012

The government-sponsored TVET system in Colombia is regulated through the Ministry of Education's mandate to provide training for work. Three types of educational entities in Colombia offer this training: secondary education institutions, institutions of higher education, and training centers. The government has promoted education for work through its National Training Service (SENA) established in 1957 by the military board

of Rodolfo Martinez Tone by Decree Law 118 of June 21, 1957. SENA's purpose, outlined in Decree 164 of August 6, 1957, is to provide training to workers, youth and adults of industry, commerce, agriculture, mining and ranching (SENA, Website, 2016). Today the mission of SENA is "to invest in the social and technical development of Colombian workers, offering and implementing comprehensive training for the incorporation of development of people in productive activities that contribute to social, economic and technological development" (SENA, Website, 2016). SENA is at this time associated with the Ministry of Labor and serves as an advisor to the Ministry of Education for the design of technical programs and comprehensive training (SENA Website, 2016).

SENA established the National System of Education for Work (SNFT). Garavan and colleagues (2016) define SNFT as a structure that works with businesses, educational institutions, and the state and that its mission is to define policies and strategies for national workforce development. SNFT is comprised of three subsystems:

- Standardization of workplace competencies
- Certification and evaluation of workplace competencies
- Developing an educational program comprised of workplace competencies.

SENA provides free educational comprehensive technical and vocational training that includes apprenticeships that are financed by levy contributions from companies (Garavan et. al., 2016). Companies benefit from the SENA's well-equipped training centers, laboratories and workshops (Garavan et al., 2016). The board of directors of the training centers is made up of employers and members of trade unions (Garavan et al., 2016). SENA constantly analyzes and monitors labor markets in order to ensure that training is congruent with the labor market needs (Garavan et al., 2016). Given that the

programs SENA offers are free it is oversubscribed and youth have difficulty gaining access (Ferreira, Rigolini, López-Calva, Lugo, & Vakis, 2012). SENA reports that other challenges its programs face are the lack of the necessary congruence between its programs and the needs of the formal and informal economies, as well as the means to assure quality in its educational content, teacher training and evaluation methods (Garavan et al., 2016).

In an effort to improve youth employment opportunities, SENA is introducing a competency-based training (CBT) model into their formal TVET curriculum. As such SENA uses industry competency standards as the foundation for the development its curricula (Marope et al., 2015). The CBT model has two main aims. Its primary objective is to hone practical skills and performance standards that are needed to become proficient in specific occupations (Jacinto, 2010). In recent years the model has also aimed to incorporate a national qualification system that includes strategies for standardizing and updating the distinct qualifications required by industries (Jacinto, 2010). Colombia is a pioneer in the field of certifying competencies (Jacinto, 2010).

Non-Formal Education TVET Systems

In Colombia, TVET programs are also offered through non-formal education (NFE) modalities. NFE is an organized and systematic educational activity implemented outside the formal school system that provides learning opportunities to children, youth and adults (Nordtveit, 2016). NFE plays a crucial role in imparting both primary and secondary level education, as well as vocational and life skills training, to youth and adults in developing countries. These programs have been pivotal in reaching out-of-school children and youth in rural communities that formal school systems do not have

the resources to adequately reach (Marope et al., 2015). During the past two decades, NFE programs have begun to expand their scope to include youth and children who are enrolled in school due to the poor quality of education often received (Nordtveit, 2016). Non-government organizations and government entities, as well as community groups, implement NFE programs that depend on external funding. International funding for NFE programs, from government and donor agencies, is often used as a tool for the generation of human and social capital that feeds into existing global markets (Nordtveit, 2016). These types of NFE programs build human capacity to enable prevalent social and economic systems to better function; as such, these programs are a strategy of inclusion, not one of social change (Nordtveit, 2016).

It can also be noted that a number of NFE programs have been associated with approaches to education aimed at liberation from the oppression that poor rural and peri-urban populations face (Freire, 1998). These programs, widely propagated in the 1960s and 1970s, have the objective of literacy and political reeducation (Nordtveit, 2016). The work of Paolo Freire critiques banking approaches to education as they imply an artificial separation between the individual and the world: “A person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others; the individual is spectator, not re-creator” (Freire, 1998, p. 56). Freire (1998) also argues that for educational programs to be liberatory, they should create spaces in which students can be “critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher” (p. 62). Organizations that take on an emancipatory approach to education often are faced with the challenge of how to implement the change that is envisioned (Nordtveit, 2016). As a result, often the aim of overcoming oppression is altered to “a softer message of socio-economic power within the system” (Nordtveit, 2016, p. 116).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the background information needed to contextualize the present case study of an education for development program situated in Colombia. I began the chapter by describing the inequalities that rural youth in Cordoba, Colombia face in relation to the precarious educational and livelihood options. I argued that although the GDP in Colombia has increased in recent years, resulting in the country becoming classified as a middle-income country, the high Gini coefficient has left rural youth bereft of access to quality and relevant post-primary education and dignified work opportunities.

In the second section of the chapter, I described the broader context of these economic inequalities by analyzing the growing biofuel industry in Cordoba, through the lens of Galtung's stratum of violence, consisting of a triad of cultural, structural and direct violence. In this analysis, I drew upon Escobar's case study of development in Colombia to highlight the questions he raises about notions of modernity that separate economic life from the social and cultural life of communities. I argued that such a separation has led to what Suchland (2015) describes as economics of violence—economies characterized by market-led capitalism which do not provide adequate work opportunities and restrict individual agency. I ended this section, by highlighting Asher's assertions regarding the dialectical relationship between social movements and capital development. Instead of perceiving Western forms of development as a homogenizing, hegemonic force, she stresses that in specific conjunctures within particular locations, discourses and alternative practices emerge (Asher, 2009). I argued that this approach

opens up opportunities to transcend the paralysis of action and agency that can result from overly focusing on the restricting force of structural violence.

In the third portion of this chapter, I provided an overview of the formal TVET systems in Colombia and describe how they are shaped by the economic and educational policies being promoted at the global, national and regional levels. In light of educational reforms in Colombia, like in many countries in Latin America, TVET programs have been organized around general and specific labor competencies. These reforms aim to link TVET competencies to the globalization and opening up of markets (Jacinto, 2010). In this section, I asserted that the "complexities and tensions of diverse and segmented markets" have placed contradictory demands on TVET programs that have not resulted in a significant rise in job opportunities for the youth who take part in them (Jacinto, 2010, p. 20). In addition, as the technical and vocational education programs offered by the national government are free, they are oversubscribed to, resulting in many youth not having the opportunity to participate in them.

In order to gain insight into the distinct frameworks in which TVET programs are situated, in the following chapter I compare and contrast different approaches to TVET in relation to development processes in the Global South.

CHAPTER 3

RETHINKING TVET AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

While policy and academic research in TVET in the Global North has advanced over the past few decades, in the Global South there has been little research in this field and a lack of progress with regard to its theoretical exploration (McGrath, 2012). Given the steadily rising role of vocational education in the post-2015 development agenda and the limited body of recent research on TVET from the Global South, there is a need to reconsider the role of TVET in development from a theoretical perspective.

With this in mind, the aim of this chapter is to make explicit the assumptions that underlie distinct yet overlapping frameworks in which TVET systems are situated in relation to development processes in the Global South. In this chapter, three approaches for human development are considered—human capital approaches (Anderson, 2009; Giddens, 1994; Klees, 2016); sustainable development approaches (Fien & Wilson, 2005; Marope et al., 2015); and capability approaches (Powell, 2012; DeJaeghere, 2016; Farid-Arbab, 2016; Sen, 1999; Walker, 2006).

Human capital approaches to TVET are aimed at an investment in the skills development of youth populations for the purpose of bolstering economic growth (Tikly, 2012). From human capital perspectives, a key indicator of development is a country's GDP (Tikly, 2012). Along these lines, rates of return (ROR) in investment are used to determine the success of human capital approaches to TVET (Klees, 2016). Sustainable development, in which organizations such as UNESCO have had a longstanding interest, strives towards a more holistic approach to TVET (Tikly, 2012). Sustainable development approaches to TVET place attention on some of the key omissions of a

human capital approach, such as social and environmental sustainability, while giving due consideration to issues regarding economic sustainability as they relate to the skills development of youth (Anderson, 2009). Capability approaches provide an alternative way to frame TVET that broadens prevalent approaches (Tikly, 2012). Capability orientations are infused with principles of social justice that critique narrow approaches to development centered on maximization of economic growth (McGrath, 2012). From this perspective, TVET is conceived as a means of developing ways of being and doing that help individuals to function better in their local communities and society at large (McGrath, 2012; Sen, 1999)

In this chapter, I examine these approaches to TVET, first, in light of how they conceptualize development, and then in relation to how they conceive of TVET's role in development. I have organized this chapter based on a literature review I conducted on the scholarship of educational researchers who are seeking alternatives to human capital approaches to education—approaches they assert are framed in outdated modes of development narrowly focused on economic growth (DeJaeghere, 2014; Farid-Arbab, 2016; Klees, 2016; Marope et al., 2015; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012; Walker, 2006). The work of these scholars has included a critique of human capital approaches and an exploration of alternatives such as human rights, human agency, social justice and capabilities. In this chapter, I pay special attention to the capability approaches that educational researchers are considering as these approaches closely relate to the research questions that inform my dissertation.

The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the evolving discourse on TVET. I approach the analysis of this discourse by examining the evolution of the

theoretical underpinnings of TVET and its practical expressions from the perspective of key international players in the field—UNESCO and ILO.

The second section reviews how TVET has been framed within two mainstream approaches to development mentioned above—human capital approaches and sustainable development approaches. I argue that while both prevailing approaches offer insights into TVET's potential contribution to different aspects of human development, these approaches have limitations in addressing key issues facing the TVET sector (Anderson, 2009; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012). Scholars assert that the valuable contribution of human capital approaches lies in their emphasis on the role of skills development in relation to economic development (Tikly, 2012; Marope et al., 2015). It is argued, however, that these approaches lack an adequate normative foundation and do not adequately address the environmental, social and cultural dimensions of skills development (Anderson, 2008, 2009; DeJaeghere, 2014; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012). Sustainable development approaches, on the other hand, have played a crucial role in addressing the shortcomings of the human capital approaches, by examining economic sustainability in such a way that makes an effort to be more coherent with social and environmental sustainability (Fien & Wilson, 2005; Tikly, 2012).

However, new concerns have recently come to the forefront of the debate about TVET. These include a growing skills gap within and between countries that is associated with globalization, and an increased recognition of the marginalization of groups of people based on social class, rurality, gender and ethnicity (Tikly, 2012). This has caused scholars to emphasize the role of context when addressing disadvantage and determining

the nature of knowledge and skills that are of value to society (DeJaeghere, 2016; Powell, 2012; Robertson, Novelli, Dale, Tikly, Dachi, & Ndibalema, 2007; Tikly, 2012).

The final sections of the chapter then explore an alternative approach that broadens prevailing approaches to TVET, from a capability development perspective. From this perspective, still in its infant stages, TVET is envisioned as a way for assisting with "the development of a range of capabilities that are conceived as opportunities to develop…ways of being and doing that individuals, their communities and society at large have reason to value" (Tikly, 2012, p. 4). This chapter makes use of the capabilities approaches to explore how the field of TVET can be broadened and reconceptualized (Anderson, 2009; Farid-Arbab, 2016; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012). In the final section of this chapter, I compare and contrast how scholars such as Amartya Sen (1993) and Martha Nussbaum (2003) conceptualize capabilities to the way in which FUNDAEC makes use of this concept. One of the distinctions of FUNDAEC's approach to capability development is that it aims to support youth to pursue their own personal growth while at the same time apply what they are learning to the betterment of society. The twofold process of personal and societal transformation is integrated into the educational activities of the program (FUNDAEC, 2014). This distinction allows me to outline the specific approach to capabilities that is utilized in this research study.

Evolving Discourse on TVET

The aim of this section is to broadly map out how the discourse on TVET has evolved over the past forty years. In mapping out this discourse, I discuss different ways in which TVET has been defined. I also provide clarification on a number of terms historically associated with TVET.

Simplified definitions of TVET, such as preparing individuals with the knowledge and skills needed for work, have resulted in difficulties in interpretation (Hollander & Mar, 2009). From this definition, it is not clear what the term *work* refers to—paid employment or, more broadly speaking, unpaid work, self-employment or other forms of independent work (Casanova, 2003). This fragmented conception of vocational training has led to a great deal of debate among academics, policy makers and practitioners about the aims and role of TVET (Anderson, 2009; Casanova, 2003; McGrath, 2012; Powell, 2012; Tikly, 2012). Casanova (2003) raises the question of what TVET entails, posing whether it refers to:

> a specifically technical preparation that may be necessary to perform one or many tasks in a job? Or does it refer to something broader which seeks to find a better understanding of working environments and other aspects which are related not only to people's working life but also it issues regarding their personal, cultural and political development? (p. 9)

Casanova (2003) argues against the reduction of vocational training as training for stand-alone economic activities, such as carpentry or hairdressing. He asserts that this narrow approach does not support the holistic development of learners nor does it ensure possibilities for their social and economic wellbeing. Along these lines, it can be noted that the rationale that underlies many state and aid agencies that make of use of TVET "programs to rehabilitate high-risk youth" is rooted in a "belief that peaceful work opportunities will deter young people from violence" (Blattman & Annan, 2011, p. 8). However, research indicates that frameworks that do not give due consideration to the social and moral dimensions of TVET education have not had a significant impact in mitigating involvement in criminal or violent acts or antisocial behavior (Blattman & Annan, 2011; Gilligan, 2013; Cooper, 2010). Nor have they been successful in increasing

social cohesion or civic and political engagement (Blattman & Annan, 2011; Gilligan, 2013; Cooper, 2010). In Burundi, a study found that ex-combatants that participated in a reintegration program focused on economic development led to a moderate increase in poverty reduction, whilst little satisfaction with civilian life was gained (Gilligan, 2013). Similarly, research carried out in Uganda found the vocational training and funds for business start-ups assisted participants in augmenting their work opportunities, however there was little effect on antisocial behavior, protest, or social cohesion (Blattman, Fiala & Martinez, 2014).

Terminology Associated with TVET

In addition to the simplified way in which the TVET term has been employed, it is often used interchangeably with a number of other closely associated terms creating confusion about its meaning. These terms include apprenticeship training, entrepreneurial education, vocational education, skills development and workforce development. Below is general description of each term.

- *Apprenticeship training* can be described as training that integrates first-hand work experience with formal learning. Apprenticeships can be "regulated by law or by custom" (UNESCO/ILO, 2006, p. 26).

- *Entrepreneurship education* has been described as a set of practices that educates young people "interested in socio-economic development through "entrepreneurship awareness, business creation, or small business development" (UNESCO/ILO, 2006, p. 21). Entrepreneurship education "combines technical and business skills with attitudes and values, such as resiliency and risk taking" (DeJaeghere, 2016, p. 97).

- *Skills development* refers to the development of competencies needed to become proficient in a trade or occupation in the market (EU Commission, 2012).

- *Workforce development* serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, it permits individuals to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for gainful employment or improved work performance; and on the other it provides

employers with an effective means to communicate and meet their demand for skills (McGough, Tan, & Valerio, 2010).

- *Vocational training* is "broadly defined as any type of job-related learning that raises an individual's productivity, and includes learning in formal vocational and technical school programs in training centers or institutes, and in the workplace, both on and off the job" (Tsang, 1999, p. 7).

Each of the terms mentioned above has a specific meaning and can be considered a component of the field of TVET. The ubiquitous use of these terms in referring to TVET can be problematic because individually none of these terms encompasses the field in its entirety. The "enigmatic identity and fluid status" of TVET is reflected in "the lack of clear and consistent definitions distinguishing one form and level from another" (Anderson, 2008, p. 107). There often is not clarity as to where the line should be drawn between education and training, or among vocational, technical and professional (Anderson, 2008).

According to UNESCO's 2001 Revised Recommendation, TVET is a comprehensive term used to refer to:

> those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life.
>
> Technical and vocational education is further understood to be:
>
> a) an integral part of general education;
> b) a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work;
> c) an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship;
> d) an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development;
> e) a method of facilitating poverty alleviation (UNESCO, 2005, p. 7).

From this description, UNESCO did not explicitly make use of the term "training"; emphasis is placed on education (Hollander & Mar, 2009). This use of

language reflects the historic division in the United Nations in which UNESCO was focused on technical and vocational education as part of EFA, and the ILO was concerned with training for employment, emphasizing decent work and the wellbeing of workers (Hollander & Mar, 2009). The confusion this divide created was brought up at the second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Training in Seoul in 1999 when international participants stressed:

> The two most renowned international agencies in the field of vocational education and training, UNESCO and ILO, need to address this issue seriously, so that we stop talking different things about what should be the same thing, and stop insisting that UNESCO's role is vocational education, while ILO's role is vocational training. This is not role splitting, but rather hair splitting! (Masri cited in Hollander & Mar, 2009, p. 151)

In light of this call from civil society to share "responsibility for workforce development, the term *training* was included in UNESCO's terminology" (Hollander & Mar, 2009, p. 154). From this conference onward, UNESCO made use of the more comprehensive term *technical and vocational education and training* (Hollander & Mar, 2009). For the purposes of this dissertation, I use this more expanded description of TVET that draws on UNESCO's 2001 Revised Recommendation.

Global dialogues about vocational education began prior to the Seoul Conference in 1999 referred to above. Over the past four decades, UNESCO has organized international congresses on TVET (Berlin, 1987; Seoul, 1999; Bonn, 2004; and Shanghai, 2012). The consensuses reached at these conferences, briefly described below, highlight how the discourse on TVET has evolved over the past four decades.

Berlin, 1987—At the Berlin Congress, technical education was identified as a priority for UNESCO, as it was envisioned as a means for economic growth for marginalized populations (Hollander & Mar, 2009).

Seoul, 1999—At this congress the need to integrate technical education and training into one field was stressed. The Seoul Consensus also emphasized the importance of TVET responding to a new human-centered approach to development that not only considers economic dimensions of development but also sustainability and human security (UNESCO, 1999).

Bonn, 2004—At this Congress, the relationship between TVET and sustainable development was more explicitly defined.

Shanghai, 2012—The Shanghai Consensus stressed a lifelong learning approach to TVET as a well as the need to expand beyond present formal education modalities of TVET to reach a diversity of populations.

As the shifts in the discourse on TVET mentioned above indicate, the field of TVET is not static; it is an evolving field that is shaped by a set of complex and rapidly changing economic and social factors (Marope et al., 2015). The evolution of the field of TVET is also reflected in changes ILO has made to its human resource development recommendations. Two recommendations (C142 and R150) established in 1975 for TVET were focused on preparation to perform a certain job (Nordtveit, 2016). In 2004, these recommendations were broadened (R195) to underscore that technical and vocational educational activities "should give equal consideration to economic and social objectives" and that "training and lifelong learning are contributing factors to personal development, access to culture and active citizenship" (ILO cited in Nordtveit, 2016, p. 173). A framework for lifelong learning is based on the premise that all people, at each stage of their life, should be provided with the learning opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill their aspirations and contribute to the progress of

their societies (Nordtveit, 2016). The adjustments made to these resolutions highlights growing global consensus that TVET should not just prepare youth for a specific job, but more broadly for work and social life (Nordtveit, 2016). With regard to the amount of time needed to adequately prepare youth in the areas described above, research has found that participation in short term courses that may range from a day to several months is insufficient (Nordtveit, 2016). TVET courses of short duration have been found to be useful as a complement to other more long-term vocational education modalities—however, in and of themselves, they do not sufficiently prepare youth for full engagement in a vocation. In response to these changes, policy makers have gradually included a wider "range of skills, knowledge, technologies and dispositions into the old classical concept of technical and occupational training" (Marope et al., 2015, p. 61). This broadening of the notion of TVET is making fuzzy the historic division between TVET and general education at secondary and tertiary levels (Marope et al., 2015).

As illustrated above, for the past forty years TVET has been a key component of UNESCO's mandate for education and the efforts of ILO. Scholars such as Tikly (2012) argue that UNESCO's long-standing interest in TVET can be linked to a more human-centered view of sustainable development. Other financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have recently begun to place greater priority on TVET (Tikly, 2012). In the case of these institutions, the rationale for supporting TVET is more focused on investing in human capital as a means of supporting economic growth (Klees, 2016; McGrath, 2012; Powell, 2012; Tikly, 2012). The development perspective adopted by financial institutions is embedded in a conception of

progress that is primarily measured in terms of economic growth (Klees, 2008, 2016; Tikly, 2012).

Scholars assert that the assumptions that underlie distinct views on development and how they affect educational curriculum are rarely made explicit (McGrath, 2012; Nordtveit, 2016; Tikly, 2012). In the next section of this chapter, I attempt to uncover these veiled assumptions by considering two prevailing approaches to human development that shape the design and implementation of TVET systems—human capital and sustainable development approaches. The description provided for each of these approaches is an ideal type. Research on the policies, programs and documents of organizations such as the World Bank and UNESCO demonstrate that both human development perspectives influence TVET systems, albeit with differing degrees of intensity (Tikly 2012).

Prevailing Approaches to TVET

TVET and Human Capital

Human capital approaches to TVET are focused on the education and skills development of youth for the purpose of economic growth. The central rationale behind human capital approaches is that a labor force adequately equipped with skills needed for employment will lead to economic growth (Kazmi, 2007). From a human capital orientation, investment in TVET is perceived as a means for augmenting economic competitiveness and decreasing poverty through increased levels of productivity and employment (Wallenborn, 2010). OECD (2001) describes the term *human capital* as "the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals" that open the gates to modernization by increasing productivity and global trade through the creation of

opportunities for countries to be integrated into world economies (p. 18). In sum, human capital approaches are based on the premise that investment in TVET will increase the skill level of a labor workforce, foster economic growth, augment productivity and reduce unemployment (Kazmi, 2007).

This section on TVET and Human Capital is comprised of four subsections. The first subsection describes how the rationale that underpins human capital approaches to TVET is embedded in a philosophy of productivism. In the second subsection, I discuss the linkages between human capital approaches to TVET and mainstream economic development in the Global South. The third subsection describes major shifts that human capital approaches have undergone—shifts that have led to a more pro-poor approach to human capital by addressing issues related to social welfare and poverty alleviation. In the fourth subsection, I outline a set of critiques that have been launched against human capital approaches to TVET by educational scholars (DeJaeghere, 2014; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012).

Productivist Origins of TVET

Scholars claim that TVET began during the industrial revolution in Europe and North America born out of a philosophy of "productivism" (Anderson, 2009; Giddens, 1994). Productivism is based on the premise that unlimited economic growth is the central concern of development and human existence itself, notwithstanding the social, environmental and interpersonal repercussions that ensue. In late modernity, productivism resulted in formal employment's isolation from other facets of life, and elevated economic growth as the fundamental aim of societal and personal realization (McGrath, 2012). Productivism is a form of efficiency that is measured in relation to "the

quantity of output produced per unit of input, organized in labor hours" (Anderson, 2009, p. 212). Giddens (1994) describes productivism as:

> an ethos in which "work" as paid employment has been separated in a clear-cut way from other domains of life … and where mechanisms of economic development are substituted for personal growth, for the goal of living a happy life in harmony with others. (p. 175)

Giddens (1994) perceives productivism as a result of "the capitalist imperative for unlimited economic growth," based on a premise of "continuous production of goods" (p. 163). Work as paid employment is described as a manifestation of the primacy of industry and influences how people feel they are socially valued (Giddens, 1994). Framing work in this manner has led to it becoming "compulsive in character, crowding out and negating other human values and activities" (Giddens, 1994, p. 175).

Anderson (2009) draws upon these claims to argue that the mainstream approach to TVET continues to be built upon two main productivist premises:

- Training is conducive to productivity that leads to economic growth.
- Skills transfer into employability.

Anderson (2009) expresses that:

> cast within the ethos of productivism and the ideological framework of neoliberalism, the institution of TVET is based on a restricted and instrumental view of lifeworlds which reduces people and the environment to the status of human and natural resources for economic exploitation. Such a perspective overlooks the complex and interdependent nature of human existence, the source and meanings of which are inextricably linked to the social relations, cultural practices and natural material conditions. TVET students are not only already, or aiming to become, workers. They are also human beings and citizens with a wide range of needs, relationships, duties, aspirations and interests beyond work; in the family, the local community, in civil society and the global environment. Over their life course, they give birth, raise and care for family members, consume goods and services, manage finances, fall ill, experience unemployment and hardship, elect governments, get involved in community affairs and ultimately rely for their survival on the fruits of nature. Yet in TVET they learn only to labor and produce commodities. (pp. 44-45)

A search for efficiency and capital gain is the driving force of the industrial modality, and within this framework TVET is envisioned as having a key role in building up the human capital required by industry (Anderson, 2009).

TVET and Economic Development

In the Global South, dominant models of TVET were historically associated with a big push for economic development that began in the 1960's with the diffusion of the Marshall Plan. In light of the success of the Marshall Plan in reconstructing countries in Europe after the destruction caused by World War II, this Plan was applied to the Global South, including Colombia, as a means for economic development. TVET supported the implementation of the Marshall Plan by creating the "manpower" required for industrialization and modernization (Tikly, 2012). Such mainstream approaches to TVET have been considered a social engineering project aimed at building up human capital that feeds into conventional macro-economic development paradigms (Postman, 1996).

To gain further insight into a human capital approaches to TVET, I now consider a few of the assumptions that underlie conventional economic development theory. In *Capital*, Marx (2007) explicates the ways in which capitalist economic models result in a western fixation on material goods. Illich (1971) asserts that societal patterns of consumerism cultivated by capitalist forms of economic development move forward bereft of evidence that shows that such a path towards progress will lead to societies that are "sane, or economical or that promote life" (p. 96).

Critics of conventional economic development (Baran, 1971; Frank, 1960) have drawn on "Marxist analyses of class expropriation of surplus value" to emphasize that potential surplus to mitigate poverty could be produced "if excess consumption by the

middle and upper classes were eliminated and unproductive and unemployed workers were put to work" (Hartwick & Peet, 2003, p. 190). Dependency theorists in Latin America, *dependistas*, have also elaborated theories of economic capitalist oppression of the Global South. *Dependistas* claim that many countries in the South have "found themselves in positions of underdevelopment" as a result of economic strategies employed by capitalist systems (Willis, 2005, p. 69). *Dependistas* assert that Latin America was underdeveloped by "not producing at its potential and losing its surplus to North America and Europe" (Hartwick & Peet, 2003, p. 191). Illich's (1971) scholarly research emphasizes the implications of underdevelopment on the social consciousness of groups of people. His scholarship coined the term "pre-packaged solutions" as needs created by the West (1971).

Underdevelopment is the result of rising levels of aspiration achieved through the intensive marketing of "patent" products. In this sense, the dynamic underdevelopment that is now taking place is the exact opposite of what I believe education to be: namely, the awakening awareness of new levels of human potential and the use of one's creative powers to foster human life. Underdevelopment, however, implies the surrender of social consciousness to prepackaged solutions (Illich, 1971, p. 97).

Shifts in Human Capital Approaches to TVET

In light of economic trends over the past three decades, human capital approaches to TVET have shifted towards a neoliberal orientation—oft described as market fundamentalism or conservative capitalism (DeJaeghere, 2014). A contemporary manifestation of neoliberalism can be described as "the promotion of the market mechanism to the fate of human beings by dictating the market rules to society, not the

other way around" (Ngcwangu, 2015, p. 29). This neoliberal emphasis is closely linked to processes of globalization that have been described as "deliberate policies to create a global market system and the reciprocal weakening of national boundaries and local economic systems" (Nordtveit, 2015, p. 322).

In recent times, TVET has been viewed by many national governments across the globe "as a necessary response to the exigencies of globalization" in an approach "enshrined as the 'Education Gospel'" (Anderson, 2008, p. 113):

> In virtually all developed countries, and many transitional countries as well, an orthodoxy … has emerged. I call this orthodoxy the Education Gospel because it expresses a faith in education as the principal route to salvation—as the source of economic growth and competitiveness, the mechanism of individual advancement, the solution to poverty and social exclusion. (Grubb, 2004, p. 1)

The Education Gospel orthodoxy claims that the aim of education is to develop human capital for economic progress (Grubb, 2004). This orthodoxy asserts that if the youth population acquires the necessary knowledge and skills, they will somehow seamlessly gain access to the labor market (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014). Along these lines, globalization couched in neoliberalism implies that social structures that reduce risks for young people living in impoverished conditions are not of critical concern (DeJaeghere, 2016). Klees (2008) underscores that "the dominant ideology of neoliberalism" that financial institutions adhere to results in "policies that help the advantaged accumulate ever more advantages" perpetuating conditions of "poverty, inequality and marginalization" (p. 336).

In the next paragraphs, I highlight how human capital orientations to TVET taken on by the financial institutions and national governments are wide-ranging and dynamic (see Anderson, 2009; King, 2009; McGrath, 2011; Tikly, 2012). The TVET agenda

supported by the World Bank has evolved since the 1960's from one of specific vocational and technical skills for an industrialized economy towards a more global market-driven and flexible set of skills that can be used across different types of jobs in today's global knowledge economy (McGrath, 2011).

From the 1960s to the early 1980s, the bulk of the World Bank's investment in education in the Global South was through loans for TVET (Maclean & Wilson, 2011). During this period, TVET was a crucial component of labor force planning (Tikly, 2012). This prioritization of TVET was critiqued on several grounds (see Foster, 1965; Psacharopoulos, 1991; Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). Foster's (1965) well-known research described TVET as the "vocational school fallacy." Based on research he conducted in Ghana, Foster (1965) questioned the link between TVET and the needs of the labor market. He (1965) argued that in post-independence contexts, TVET perpetuated the academic and vocational divide created under colonialism. Foster asserted that academic preparation lead to greater opportunities in the labor market (Tikly, 2012). In addition, economists from the World Bank questioned the cost-effectiveness of TVET and its rate of return on investments (Psacharopoulos, 1991; Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). These economists asserted that until the policy environment for TVET shifted, continued investment would be an unwise use of scarce resources for education (Middleton & Adams, 1991). Policy makers argued that the rate of return on investment would be higher in basic education than secondary education, including vocational education and post-basic education. This logic went on to inform the prioritization of primary education in the Millennium Development goals related to the EFA agenda (Tikly, 2012). As a result of this economic rationale, funding for TVET

from the World Bank decreased to 8 or 9% of its total education budget in 2011, from 40% in the 1960s (Maclean & Wilson, 2011).

More recently advocates of human capital approaches have started to complement their commitment to rates of return, with an interest in the role of education in mitigating conditions of poverty and improving social welfare (Tikly, 2012). In light of the post-2015 development agenda, the World Bank has identified the urgency to equip workers with the knowledge required for participation in the global knowledge economy and to address the income divide between skilled and unskilled workers by finding ways to strengthen participation in the informal economy (McGrath, 2012).

Women, youth and rural populations typically engage in the informal sector (Tikly, 2012; Nordtveit, 2016). The provision of technical and vocational skills to these populations permits the possibility of more shared and inclusive forms of growth (Marope et al., 2015). Given that in many developing countries the informal economy is the mainstay of economic activities, from a human capital perspective, TVET systems are exploring how initiatives can be designed that build relationships between the informal entrepreneurial sector and export-led growth (Biggs, Otto, & Tyler, 1996). Notwithstanding the advances being made in TVET policy to foster more inclusive forms of economic growth, vulnerable populations continue to face the challenge of securing decent employment that enables them to gain dignified work that includes wages that can sustain their families (Marope et al., 2015).

Another area that institutions such as the World Bank are placing attention on is increasing the quality of learning (Tikly, 2012). As a result of the advances that have been made with the implementation of MDGs, large numbers of children formally

marginalized from primary school education have gained access to formal schooling (Nordtveit, 2016). While it is encouraging that growing contingents of children and youth are going to school, the quality of instruction they receive is varied (Nordtveit, 2016). This has resulted in a variegated landscape of literacy skills among children and youth in school, breaking down the traditional dichotomy of literacy levels between in-school and out-of-school children and youth (Nordtveit, 2016; Wagner, Venezky, & Street, 1999). For example, in writing about Latin America, Vegas and Petrow (2008) argue that increased access to education has not led to reducing income inequality, underdevelopment or poverty.

Along these lines, from a poverty alleviation perspective, the World Bank's post-2015 agenda is aimed at equipping unemployed youth with the skills they need for employment (Tikly, 2012). These priorities have led to the World Bank's education strategy, entitled *Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development*, that argues that "growth, development and poverty reduction depend on the knowledge and skills people acquire, not the number of years they sit in a classroom" (World Bank, 2011, p. vii). The priority being placed on skills development for more inclusive growth has resulted in proponents of human capital approaches to offer new types of solutions. The World Bank's education strategy encapsulates these solutions through its focus on impact evaluations and standardized assessments of learning and skills (World Bank, 2011). These evaluations and assessments focus not only on literacy and numeracy but a variety of abilities ranging from information and communication technology (ICT) to analytical thinking, problem-solving and team building skills (World Bank, 2011). Moreover, the Bank has expanded its strategies to include not only formal education

programs provided by schools and universities but also training programs in non-formal education (NFE) settings.

Operating within a human capital orientation, the World Bank has also expanded its efforts, becoming supportive of a multi-sector approach to education that includes social and health protections (Tikly, 2012). This broadened vision of education and inter-sectorial efforts is significant because it has the potential to embrace a variety of contexts in which skills development can be addressed. Moreover, it opens up the possibility of a number of sectors supporting technical and vocational skills acquisition and learning.

The World Bank is also dedicated to increasing accountability and transparency. According to proponents of human capital approaches, greater accountability will lead to a "more diversified and market-led system which is viewed as a way to enhance the overall efficiency of the system" (Tikly, 2012, p. 8). From this perspective, it is envisioned that "accountability" will be reached as a result of a "more careful monitoring of the learning outcomes of the expanded education and training system," and by placing emphasis on support for institutional governance (Tikly, 2012, p. 8).

Limitations to a Human Capital Approaches to TVET

The policy shifts in the World Bank and other international organizations discussed above illustrate that advocates of human capital approaches are adopting an orientation towards pro-poor development and poverty alleviation. This orientation aims to reach higher levels of economic equity and inclusion, and to ensure that the rights of the poor include having a decent livelihood, whether through engagement in the formal or informal economy. Notwithstanding the expanded aim of the pro-poor approach to reduce inequalities, scholars argue that this approach continues to be framed within a narrow

view of human-centered development (DeJaeghere, 2016; Tikly, 2012). Advocates of sustainable development and capability approaches concur with proponents of human capital approaches that economic development is crucial for human development, however it is not an end in and of itself (DeJaeghere, 2016; McGrath, 2011; Sen, 1999; Tikly, 2012). They assert that a human-centered approach to development needs to expand beyond a concern for an increase in gross domestic product to include more cultural, social and environmental factors (Tikly, 2012; Maclean & Wilson, 2011; Marope et al., 2015).

In the following paragraphs, critiques that have been directed towards human capital approaches are reviewed (Anderson, 2009; DeJaeghere, 2014, 2016; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012). One set of critiques focuses on how human capital approaches seem to assume "a one size fits all approach to education and skills" (Tikly, 2012, p. 13). Along these lines, structural adjustment policies were implemented as a common set of policies prescribed to countries, notwithstanding national and local contexts (Robertson et al., 2007). In the same vein, there seems to be "the assumption that integration into the global economy requires the same kinds of skill sets" for all contexts (Tikly, 2012, p. 13). However, this is not necessarily the case. Tikly (2012) asserts that two different countries may be at a similar phase of development but have distinct needs in terms of skills for development. This is particularly relevant to the type of skills needed for engagement in the informal sector, a sector of the economy that is gaining growing recognition for its role in supporting livelihoods and growth due to limited employment opportunities in the formal economy (Adams, 2011; King & Martin, 2002).

A second critique focuses on a reliance on standardized valuations as another characteristic of TVET models with human capital orientations (Tikly, 2012). This approach to evaluation leads to the identification of measurable cognitive outcomes as the only skills that are required for TVET learners. This is a particularly limited approach for TVET because of the scope of "cognitive, affective and practical skills that are involved" in learning about a vocation or trade (Tikly, 2012, p. 13). The use of standardized assessments in TVET excludes the insights that can be gleaned from qualitative indicators and a careful review of processes (Alexander, 2008).

The final critique focuses on an emerging trend that is gaining momentum in TVET systems, discussed in Chapter 2 in the Colombian context, namely, educational reforms that promote competency-based training (CBT). CBT is considered the global benchmark for TVET programs (ILO, 2004; World Bank, 1991). CBT was born out of a conception of employment-based competences, which are viewed as forms of "human capital and a source of economic growth" (Marginson, 1997, p. 149). In a competency-based curriculum, TVET learners almost exclusively learn about industry-related standards in reference to work settings and criteria for performance (Anderson, 2009). CBT reinforces the link between learning and work, connecting TVET to the labor market (Anderson, 2009). Notwithstanding the "perfunctory references" given to the development of "social and citizenship skills," the CBT curriculum is typically organized around an "economic calculus, disconnected from culture and context and peculiarly devoid of humanity and nature" (Anderson, 2009, p. 41). Along these lines, it is argued that recent competency-based reforms have forged a tighter tie between TVET and

productivism, subordinating the needs of the individual and society to the requirements of the industrial sector (Anderson, 2009; McGrath, 2012).

Academic critiques of the post-2015 agenda argue that the CBT reforms, on the one hand, reduce learning to a set of competencies and, on the other hand, assume that these competencies will smoothly translate into employment (DeJaeghere, 2016). However, research shows otherwise: the high rates of unemployment for those who advance through TVET in much of the Global South demonstrate that a smooth transition from a learning setting to a workplace is not necessarily the case (Shamchiyeva, Taakaki, & Godius, 2014). Mains (2012) suggests that TVET competencies may not be adequate for marginalized youth to utilize in the informal or formal labor market, in particular when youth do not have access to social networks that support their education and employment.

In sum, human capital approaches to TVET have been embedded in an *ethos of productivism*. Born out of the industrial revolution, TVET has historically aimed to fuel the engine of economic productivity with human capital (Anderson, 2009). With the rise of the neoliberal markets and globalization, TVET has been utilized for processes of economic growth that are part of educational strategies of international financial institutions in the Global South. The convergence of human capital and CBT has strengthened the link between skill development and productivism (Anderson, 2009).

TVET and Sustainable Development

Like the human capital approaches, sustainable development approaches have evolved over time. Sustainable development is a dynamic and contested concept that is

neither static nor fixed. In this section, I consider the challenges related to the malleability of this broad and often ambiguous notion of development.

The classical notion of sustainable development was expressed in the well-known Brundtland Report as "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43). The Brundtland conception of development argues against the primacy of economic development and claims the need to situate the preservation of the environment in the economic and social contexts of human development (Anderson, 2008). Critical to the conception of sustainable development are human-centered responses to globalization that are based on principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability (Tikly, 2012). According to Fien and Wilson (2005), as opposed to an economic driven model of progress, sustainable approaches are more of a moral conception of development (p. 274). They comprise a:

> culturally-directed search for a dynamic balance in the relationships between social, economic and natural systems – a balance that seeks to promote equity between the present and the future, and equity between countries, races, social classes and genders. The interdependence of people and the environment requires that no single development or environmental objective shall be pursued to the detriment of others. The environment cannot be protected in a way that leaves half of humanity in poverty. Likewise, there can be no long-term development on a depleted planet. (Fien & Wilson, 2005, p. 274)

Sustainable development values play a key role in the approach to TVET adopted by UNESCO (Marope et al., 2015). The Second International Congress on TVET in Seoul in 1999 highlighted the need for TVET to respond to a "new human-centered development paradigm that recognized not only the economic considerations but also sustainable development and human security" (UNESCO, 1999, p. 4). At the Seoul

conference, sustainable development was adopted as UNESCO's approach to TVET. It was also the central theme of the Bonn Declaration on TVET (UNESCO, 2004).

Fien and Wilson (2005) express that TVET programs can address the conservation of the environment, and the betterment of the economy and society in the context of the present day global era, in a number of different ways. They suggest the inclusion of "competencies in economic literacy, sustainable consumption and managing small enterprises in relation to economic growth" and the wise use of resources (Fien & Wilson, 2005, p. 277). TVET is considered to offer a range of responsibilities in promoting environmental sustainability. These responsibilities include fostering understanding about environmental issues, promoting reflection on the consequences of personal values and lifestyle choices and the development of critical thinking and pertinent practical skills (Fien & Wilson, 2005; Tikly, 2012). With regard to the area of social sustainability, TVET systems framed by these values aim to promote social responsibility in businesses (Tikly, 2012). Special attention is placed on issues related to gender and ethnic equality, team building skills, and active citizenship (Fien & Wilson, 2005; Majumdar, 2007). Policy makers and scholars recognize that in order to precisely describe what sustainable development means, it must reflect local contexts (Fien & Wilson, 2005; Tikly, 2012). For example, consider a person who is poor. If sustainable development is to make sense in this context, it would signify a higher standard of living achieved through sustainable means, which would imply increased levels of consumption (Fien & Wilson, 2005). Whereas, for an person in a wealthy context, with "a closet full of clothes, a pantry full of food and a garage full of cars, sustainable development could

mean more modest and carefully considered" patterns of consumption (Fien & Wilson, 2005, p. 277).

The sustainable development approaches provide an alternative to the "narrow instrumentalism" of human capital theory by addressing the social, environmental, cultural and economic dimensions of development from a holistic perspective (Tikly, 2012, p. 17). Such approaches offer a normative vision of TVET's contribution to development. They have also demonstrated flexibility and endurance in their capacity to address debates about TVET on a diversity of emerging matters and topics (Tikly, 2012). Notwithstanding such valuable contributions, academics have stressed certain limitations about this approach (Anderson, 2009; Tikly, 2012).

The conception of sustainable development that emerged from the Brundtland Report articulates values of great import such as inter- and intra-generational equity (Anderson, 2009). However, these values appear to be all things to all people (Tikly, 2012). Critics argue that sustainable development approaches are broad and ambiguous, and in need of greater conceptual clarification that can be gained through dialectical processes of action and reflection (Anderson, 2009; Maclean & Wilson, 2011; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012). The ambiguous nature of the conception of sustainable development leads to many interpretations, some conflicting. This, in turn, leads to vigorous debate about how such commitments can be translated into action through policies and programs. The malleability of the conception of development has, at times, led to its distortion in practice, leading to further tensions and contradictions, explored in the paragraph below (Anderson, 2009).

Sustainable development strives to protect public and collective wealth by fostering a "more just, democratic, equitable and inclusive human society that lives within environmental limits and in harmony with nature" (Anderson, 2009, p. 48). However, scholars argue (Anderson, 2009; Peet & Watts, 1996) that terms such as "'green capitalism,' 'ecological modernization' and 'sustainable growth' are used as discursive strategies to maintain an uninterrupted growth-oriented political economy while hiding behind a greenish smokescreen" (Anderson, 2009, p. 48). The case of the biofuel industry in Colombia, discussed in Chapter 2, is an example of green capitalism. Anderson (2009) claims that these terms are expressions of "neo-productivism"—an "ideological response to the ecological crisis of production and the growing popularity of environmentalism over the past decades" (Anderson, 2009, p. 18). Neo-productivism is described as minor adjustments to industrial practices that make production processes a bit cleaner, while concomitantly expanding operations based on the logic of capital accumulation and the commodification of natural resources, thereby further exacerbating environmental problems in unprecedented ways (Anderson, 2009). Elkington (1997) argues that the motivating force behind neo-productivism is not how to achieve sustainability in the face of eco-social risks, but rather how to "sustain capitalism in the face of its natural, material and human contradictions and the emerging 'environmental revolution'" (p. 19).

Dobson (1995) has critiqued managerial approaches to environmental issues that are influenced by political and economic practices. Drawing on ecological thought, he asserts the need to critically examine the assumptions that underlie policies and practices that perpetuate economies of unlimited growth (Dobson, 1995). Baxter (1999) addresses

issues of sustainability by advocating for an abandonment of "the folly of quantitative growth and embracing the wisdom of qualitative growth" (p. 227).

With the above-mentioned contradictions in mind, TVET scholar, Anderson (2009) asks clarifying questions such as—What is to be sustained? How is it to be developed and toward what ends? What is to be sacrificed within this process, and by who, taking into account unequal stages of development from a historical perspective? Linked to this expressed need for the field of sustainable development to gain greater theoretical depth is the concern about the underlying process of how this will be achieved. Along these lines, scholars stress that there is a risk that sustainable development policies and practices adopt prescriptive approaches, rather than contextually relevant ones (Anderson, 2009; Tikly, 2012).

Anderson (2009) contends that a key question that remains unanswered is what modes of sustainable development will permit social, economic and environmental goals to be coherent with one another? Who will help to determine this and how? These complex questions apply to both the field of sustainable development and to particular instances of practice, such as TVET. Along these lines, the 2012 Shanghai Consensus emphasized that in order for TVET to meaningfully impact development it will need to undergo a sustained transformation that will require careful reflection on the part of policy makers and other stakeholders (Marope et al., 2015).

Capability Approaches

Capability approaches are being utilized to reconceptualize human development (Farid-Arbab, 2016; Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 1993). Although still in its nascent stage of

development in comparison with the other two prevailing approaches outlined above, it has gained a certain degree of influence (Tikly, 2012).

Sen's (1993) approach to capabilities is born out of a conception of development aimed at enhancing freedoms and wellbeing, as opposed to the mere pursuit of economic wealth (Tikly, 2012). This approach does not dismiss the economic dimensions of development; it gives this critical aspect of life due attention; however, it puts individual wellbeing at the center of development, not economic growth. Within such approaches, prosperity and wealth are viewed as means, not ends—their meaning is found in how they can advance valued societal contributions (Tikly, 2012). Sen (1993) does not align himself with perspectives that equate development with "growth of national products," "rise in personal income," "industrialization" or "social modernization" (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 142). He stresses that these are means through which freedoms are augmented; he underscores that they should not be mistaken for goals (Sen, 1999).

The notion of development as a process that enhances freedoms does not dismiss issues of poverty. Sen (1999) stresses the removal of poverty along with other *unfreedoms*. Situating the notion of freedom at the heart of development leads to focusing on the role of local peoples as actors of processes of development (Farid-Arbab, 2016). Along these lines, Sen's (1999) concept of agency[5] brings into development thought the notion of an individual who is active and able to affect change rather than a "passive entity that lacks resources, patiently waiting to be saved by others" (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 145). Sen (1999) argues that people will be in a position to shape their future when

[5] Sen's notion of agency is distinct from how it is used in economics literature, "where it is attached to an individual who is acting on someone else's behalf and whose achievements are to be assessed in light of someone else's goals" (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 147).

unfreedoms are removed and they are provided with social opportunities. From this perspective, they are not perceived as an "inert population, objects of fine-tuned targeting of policy makers and passive recipients of cunning development programs" (Sen, 1999, as cited in Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 147).

Closely linked to Sen's (1999) conception of freedom and agency is the notion of *capability*. Sen uses this term in order to "explore a particular approach to well-being and advantage in terms of a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being" (Sen, 1993, p. 90). For Sen, the term *capability* expresses "the alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or be—the various 'functionings' he or she can achieve" (Sen, 1993, p. 31).

According to Sen, "the freedom to live certain types of life is reflected in the person's capability set" (Sen, 1993, p. 33)—an individual bereft of a capability does not have the freedom to pursue the life that she values. Sen's approach to poverty is not focused on low income but on "capability deprivations" (Sen, 1999, p. 88). Income is only one generating capability, and, in designing policy, he argues there should be awareness that "the instrumental relation between low income and low capability is variable between different communities and even between different families and different individuals" (Sen, 1999, p. 88). The capability perspective heightens awareness about "the nature and causes of poverty by shifting attention away from means to ends that people have reason to pursue" (Sen, 1999, p. 90). Priority is placed on freedoms that allow an individual to advance towards their desired end (Farid-Arbab, 2016).

Although education was not the major focus of Sen's work (1993, 1999), he recognizes the key role of education in capability development (McGrath, 2012). Sen

(1999) identifies education and skills development as having a crucial value in fostering livelihoods, generating income and reducing human insecurity (Farid-Arbab, 2016). Since 2005, literature in international education and development using capabilities approaches has grown (DeJaeghere, 2016; Murphy-Graham & Lample, 2014; McGrath, 2012; Powell, 2012; Tikly & Barrett, 2009; Unterhalter, 2007; Walker, 2006; Walker & McLean, 2010). As a way of expanding Sen's (1999) perspective on capabilities, Walker (2006) asserts:

> A capability is a potential functioning; the list of functionings is endless. It might include things such as being well nourished, having shelter and access to clean water, being mobile, being well-educated, having paid work, being safe, being respected, taking part in discussions with your peers, and so on. The difference between a capability and functioning is like one between an opportunity to achieve and the actual achievement, between potential and outcome. (p. 165)

Walker's theorizing on Sen suggests that, "capabilities developed through TVET may include literacy and numeracy and the ability to apply basic scientific knowledge, but they are not reducible to these and may relate to a wider range of cognitive, affective and practical outcomes" (Tikly, 2012, p. 18).

Comparing Human Capital and Capabilities Approaches to TVET

The main thrust of human capital approaches for TVET is to create a pathway for economic growth. As previously discussed, human capital approaches to TVET framed in neoliberalism do not adequately account for the lack of social supports and structures in some societies. In contrast, capability approaches to TVET are concerned with equality and wellbeing, in addition to economic outcomes (Sen, 1993, 1999). Capability approaches to human development are more than living life on the edge of poverty; they are about creating a space for acquiring dignified and sustainable livelihood opportunities (DeJaeghere, 2016). Towards this end, DeJaeghere (2016) suggests that complementary

policies to TVET should include those that support greater gender equality, given constraining gender norms for entrepreneurship such as lack of access to land and credit. At the same time, she argues that policies should address the over-representation of women in the precarious informal sector. Moreover, reforms should include policies directed at youth that consist of paid apprenticeships and employability programs, as well as polices directed at the macro-environment including equitable access to formal and informal sectors and financial services (Balwanz, 2012).

A fundamental difference between the human capital and capability framings is their approaches to equality. Human capital orientations about equality view freedom as being able to freely participate in the economy, free of social status inequalities. In contrast, capability approaches regard an unregulated economy as leading to the production of greater economic and social inequalities (DeJaeghere, 2016).

Capability approaches elevate conceptions about the world of work. It allows us to conceive of vocational learning as being connected to the vocation of becoming fully human. Main's (2012) research in Ethiopia demonstrates that "neoliberal policies do not cause all relationships to function on the basis of the market" and asserts that diverse economic practices are embedded in social relations (p. 16). Tripp (1997) argues that a moral economy of reciprocity, solidarity and community has persisted in the South notwithstanding the influence of global capitalism. Both Main's (2012) and Tripps' (1997) arguments speak to the limits of capitalism and the possibility for alternative framings of the worlds of work and the preparation needed to excel in one's vocation. Capability approaches to TVET can be summarized in McGrath's (2012) terms: they replace a productivist framework aimed at developing human capital for employability by

putting the wellbeing of people first and removing any "unfreedoms" to achieve their wellbeing.

DeJaeghere (2016) expands Sen's (1999) analytical use of capability to consider the wellbeing of self in relation to others, considering the extent to which the individual is autonomous or embedded in society (DeJaeghere, 2016). For example, in a study carried out by DeJaeghere (2016) in Tanzania, young people often conveyed that their work not only provided a livelihood for themselves, but also for their younger siblings or other children. In this way they perceived their labor as important for the wellbeing of their close and broad community (DeJaeghere, 2016). This approach to capabilities demonstrates how individuals are socially embedded and that their value to society is based on the meaningful contributions they make, not merely their economic productivity (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014).

Approach to Capability Development in this Study

As discussed above, there is a growing body of literature being generated on capabilities (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2003; Walker, 2006). In order to contextualize the approach to capability development explored in this study, in the paragraphs below I outline some of the notions that underlie prevalent approaches to capabilities in TVET, drawing on the work of economist Sen (1999) and political philosopher Nussbaum (2003), and then compare and contrast these notions to FUNDAEC's conceptualization of capability development.

Sen's (1999) approach to capabilities is based on a broad normative framework concerned with what people are able to be and to do—what they are capable of. Sen's (1999) approach to development places at the center the role of the individual as a

protagonist of social change. This is a significant departure from approaches to development that place the maximization of economic growth at the center of their models. As discussed above, Sen's (1999) notion of capabilities is rooted in a conviction of development as freedom—a freedom that implies removing obstacles that impede the individual from functioning in society, allowing the individual to act freely and to be able to make choices (Sen, 1999). This notion of development is aligned with the perspective that the good life is synonymous with a life of freedom (Sen, 1999). For example, people with economic means may choose to fast for religious or health reasons, whereas people who are poor person may have no choice but to go hungry.

While there is sound logic to this argument, placing freedom at the heart of capability development is an ambiguous construct that leaves many issues unresolved (Nussbaum, 2003; Farid-Arbab, 2016). Nussbaum (2003) highlights that "some freedoms limit others"—for example "the freedom of rich people to make large donations to political campaigns limits the equal worth of the right to vote…. The freedom of the landowners to keep their land limits projects of land reform that might be argued to be central to many freedoms for the poor" (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 44). Nussbaum argues that not all freedoms are desirable social goals nor can they be considered to be equal (Nussbaum, 2003). Some freedoms "lie at the heart of a view of political justice, and others do not. Among the ones that do not lie at the core, some are simply less important, but others may be positively bad" (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 44).

While Nussbaum's and Sen's approaches are related in their critique of utilitarian economics, they differ on a number of issues. Nussbaum's treatment of capabilities is distinct from Sen's—whereas Sen's use of capabilities to refers to wellbeing and the

quality of life, Nussbaum uses them as a foundation for political principles that underlie political agreements and constitutions. She uses a capabilities approach to develop a partial theory of justice. Towards this end, Nussbaum (2003) has developed a list of "central human capabilities" for constitutions aimed at promoting the common good and setting the basis of political equilibrium. Nussbaum (2003) extends her conception of capabilities to the field of education for development based on a two-fold process that promotes the human development of students and promotes in students an understanding of the goals for human development for all. She elaborates on three sets of capabilities: 1) the ability for critical thought; 2) the ability to see oneself as a member of a heterogeneous nation and world, and to understand something of the history and character of diverse groups that inhabit it; and 3) the ability to feel sympathy. These laudable aims, crucial as they are, deal with discrete ideas and are not easily integrated into units of instruction—especially at the K-12 level.

Sen's (1999) approach to capability development has been critiqued as too individualistic, taking on a posture of methodological individualism—a claim that everything can be explained by reference to individuals and their properties only (Robeyns, 2006). This approach to capability development is also critiqued as not giving sufficient attention to the role of groups and social structures in bringing about social change (Robeyns, 2006). Sen refutes these critiques, expressing that individual choices are influenced by society, and vice versa, the individual has an influence on society (Sen, 2009). He argues that "perhaps the misconstruction in this critique arises from an unwillingness to distinguish adequately between individual characteristics used in the

capability approach and the social influences that operate on them" (Sen, 2009, pp. 244-245).

The research I conducted found that the PSA program is aligned with certain aspects of Sen's and Nussbaum's approaches to capability development in that they conceive of individuals as active agents contributing towards the development of their communities, rather than passive entities burdened with a bundle of needs. Individuals are conceived of as possessing intellectual and moral capacities that can contribute towards the betterment of their communities, not as passive recipients waiting for pre-packaged development solutions. Yet FUNDAEC does not adopt Sen's (1993) approach to capability development. The agency put forth by Sen (1993) does not explicitly extend to community and institutions, who together with the individual are conceived by FUNDAEC as protagonists of change. The framework that guides FUNDAEC's efforts draws upon agency in this broader sense, taking into account the protagonistic role of communities and institutions in the transformation of society.

Moreover, for the purposes of FUNDAEC's educational curricula, an awareness of the influence that social forces exert on one's thought, language and action needed to be addressed in an approach to capability development, as well as the opportunity to analyze the operation of such forces and how to deal with them (Farid-Arbab, 2016). However, the way in which Sen (1993) analyzes social forces is not sufficient for the education for development programs FUNDAEC has been striving to create—the inclination towards individual freedom, even when aligned with elevated social ideals, could too readily be translated into the promotion of individualism (Farid-Arbab, 2016).

> While the ability to articulate the effects of the negative forces operating in society—greed, prejudices of many kinds, unbridled individualism and

> oppression, to name a few—plays some role in the development of capabilities, when overemphasized, it leads to cynicism and alienation. What is needed is a strong sense of belonging to the whole, not the detachment of a critical outsider. (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 311)

FUNDAEC's approach to capability development seeks to support youth to pursue personal growth and to contribute at the same time to the transformation of society. The dual process of personal and societal transformation is a common thread that is interwoven into the educational activities as two aspects of one movement that are not inherently at odds with each other (FUNDAEC, 2016).

FUNDAEC (2006) has used the concept of a capability as "developed capacity to think and act in a particular sphere of activity and according to a specific purpose" (p. 3). This concept is used by FUNDAEC as a "heuristic device, a way of thinking about educational objectives and content, a strategy to organize elements of a curriculum according to a specific overall aim" (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 267). FUNDAEC's conception of a capability allows it to make use of a pedagogy that integrates theoretical and practical knowledge. The use of capability by FUNDAEC is not limited to functionings—as used by Sen (1999), freedoms to choose beings and doings of value to the individual—but situates it in a much broader context of learning where knowing, being and doing are intertwined to contribute to a two-fold process of individual and social change (Farid-Arbab, 2016).

Broadening the View of TVET

Understanding TVET through the lens of capabilities allows for the vocational and academic binaries to be reconsidered. All too often the argument is used that in order to expand post-primary educational opportunities, curricula need to be "dumbed down" by vocationalizing them (McGrath, 2011). Rose's (2004) research rejects the assumption

that vocational education is an easy option for the academically challenged. He shows that the conventional assumptions of the vocational/academic debate have their origins in a dichotomous Western tradition of separating the head and the hand—theory and practice (Rose, 2004). Through an exploration of the actual work that tradesmen, such as carpenters, carry out in comparison with the work of surgeons or teachers, Rose (2004) powerfully argues that educationalists too easily dismiss the intellectual content of the trades. He (2004) further asserts that vocational contexts may offer more effective learning conditions for higher-level cognition than is currently the case with a more theoretical academic approach. Rose (2004) suggests a TVET model that integrates the practical, theoretical and moral dimensions of learning. Scholars argue that this model should accept the notion that all learners can learn without assumptions about their intelligence or lack thereof based on class, gender or ethnicity (McGrath, 2012; Rose, 2004; Tikly, 2012).

The lens of capability approaches can also be used to reconsider the dichotomy that exists between indigenous and modern knowledge. Tikly (2012) argues that the capability approaches of placing weight on what is valued in society moves the emphasis away from debates about the nature and worth of distinct types of knowledge, to a concern for the pressing needs of individuals and communities. This allows for debate on how distinct types of knowledge, including traditional and indigenous knowledge, can be integrated in TVET curricula. Such an approach is aligned with UNESCO's emphasis on indigenous knowledge for processes of development (UNESCO, 2005).

Anderson (2009) argues that capability approaches to sustainable livelihoods can help overcome assumptions in TVET that create an "artificial separation and

compartmentalization between the needs and interests of learners, society, economy, and nature" (p. 213). In light of Dewey's (1916) liberal-humanistic construction of "vocation," TVET can be understood as a means for reaching "higher levels of connectedness among life's pursuits" (p. 12). This conception of vocation is broader than, but inclusive, of work as paid employment. TVET is a key site for subjectivity formation, and one that has been historically dominated by notions of productivism (Anderson, 2009). As such, Anderson (2009) argues that public debate with diverse stakeholders should critically reflect upon the origins, assumptions and purposes of TVET in order to actively promote sustainable livelihoods for all and respond to the changing social and economic landscape.

Summary

In summary, this chapter has explored different approaches to conceptualizing TVET. Each approach provides a distinct perspective as to the nature of the challenges facing TVET at present, and each proposes distinct solutions to those challenges. The chapter argues that human capital is a too narrow an approach for preparing young people for the worlds of work and social life. Moreover, its one-size-fits-all solution to obstacles does not take into account complexities and differences at the local level. Sustainable development approaches, while shedding light on many key normative aspects of sustainable development approaches to TVET, emphasize universal solutions and do not adequately account for the processes through which policies and values regarding TVET can be contextualized for local realities. Moreover, the ambiguous nature of this frame gives rise to its distortion in practice. I have argued that capability approaches, although still in a nascent stage of development, provide a fresh way of framing TVET in relation

to human-centered development (Tikly, 2012). At the end of this chapter, I compared and contrasted FUNDAEC's approach to capabilities to the way in which Sen and Nussbaum utilize the concept. This analysis has allowed me to outline the approach to capability development that shapes the education for development program in this case study.

These polyvalent framings of TVET arise from varying conceptions of society and the state and how development occurs in specific times and places. Differing approaches to TVET do not exist in isolation from each other as separate practices and discourses; they encounter each other through the ways in which programs are designed by policy makers and taken up as programs by staff and young people. Along these lines, counterhegemonic possibilities of social and economic life emerge from the friction created by a set of heterogeneous goals and practices (Ferguson, 2010). In this way, the practices of TVET and development are being reshaped and continue to evolve through dialectical processes of action and reflection with all those involved in TVET systems. These actors include policy makers, scholars, educationalists, representatives of industry, government and local communities, and, most importantly, the learners themselves and their families.

In this dissertation, I explore the implications of a specific capabilities approach from the perspective of the diverse actors involved in an education for development program in Colombia as a way of contributing to the growing body of research being generated on TVET in the Global South. In the following chapter, I outline the methodological and theoretical approach to this case study.

CHAPTER 4

A METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE CASE STUDY

Research Questions

This dissertation utilizes the case of FUNDAEC's Preparation for Social Action program: 1) to explore how an education for development initiative designed from a capabilities perspective is being implemented in a conflict-affected area, and 2) to understand the potential such an approach has in contributing towards the wellbeing of youth, their families and communities. This research study is connected to a broad question:

- What potential do rigorous education for development programs designed from a specific capability perspective have for improving the wellbeing of youth, their families, and communities in conflict-affected areas?

Along these lines, this study examines the following questions related to youth identity development, networks of social relationships, and the future aspirations of youth.

Youth identity development

- How do youth participants and tutors perceive the process through which the PSA program fosters the development of their identity as promoters of community wellbeing?
- What are the characteristics of the identity of a promoter of community wellbeing?
- What are some of the characteristics of the identity of youth who are not involved in the program?

Networks of social relationships

- What are the characteristics of the networks of social relationships that are formed in the Preparation for Social Action program?
- What do these networks actually do?

- How do these networks support youth in the development of their identity as promoters of community wellbeing where the PSA program is strong?
- What do the networks look like where the program is weak?

Future aspirations of youth

- What aspirations do youth in the PSA program have in regard to their future livelihoods?
- How optimistic are youth about their ability to advance towards these aspirations?
- What differences are there between the aspirations of youth involved in the PSA program and those who are not engaged in the program?

In this research, I explore the interplay between the identity development of youth, networks of social relationships, and optimism about future livelihood aspirations as they relate to participation in an education for development program framed in a specific capability perspective.

Research Design

This research is designed as a cross-sectional, qualitative case study. I chose to utilize a case study approach given its contextual nature "in addressing contemporary phenomena in real life contexts" (Meyer, 2001, p. 330). Another strength of the case study approach for this research is that it offers an opportunity to acquire to a holistic perspective of a process. Gummeson (1991) explains that "the detailed observations entailed in the case study method enable us to study many different aspects, examine them in relation to each other, view the process within its total environment and also use the researchers' capacity for verstehen[6]" (p. 76).

[6] Verstehen is a sociological term that refers to an empathetic and deep understanding of human behavior.

A case is a "specific, complex, functioning thing" (Stake, 1995, p. 2). Educational ethnographer, Louis Smith (1979), defined the case as a "bounded system," drawing attention to a process which occurs in an integrated system (p. 323). The bounded and integrated system that I analyzed in this case study is the PSA program. By designing the research as a case study, I was able to explore the complex real life interactions of the various actors engaged in the PSA program as a composite whole (Weiss, 1998). This research took place in a natural setting, where the boundaries between phenomenon and context were intertwined, through the use of multiple sources of evidence (Alkin, 2013).

As the youth involved in this qualitative case study have similar social, economic and cultural backgrounds, I made use of a cross-sectional design that compares cohorts of youth at two distinct stages of their involvement with PSA—at the outset of the program and at least two years after having graduated from the program. This approach enabled me to investigate the processes through which youth develop identities as promoters of community wellbeing and how this affects their optimism about future aspirations in relation to the networks of social relationships in which they interact. I also included in the study non-PSA participants in order to compare the identity development and future aspirations of PSA participants to non-participants.

Along these lines, the sample selected to participate was comprised of a range of youth including those at least two years post-graduation, those just entering the program, and those with no connection at all with the program. To be able to triangulate the data collected, the sample also included PSA tutors and coordinators, parents, and intact community groups.

I complemented this sample with an analysis of secondary data that come from the PSA textbooks developed by FUNDAEC, program documents, such as reports that systematize the learning that has occurred in the program in the Costa Caribe as well as documents prepared by FUNDAEC that describe its philosophical and pedagogical approach. I also drew on my experience with the program over the past ten years.

In the analysis of the data, I drew upon a grounded theory perspective (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory entails systematic, yet flexible, principles for analyzing qualitative data that serve to build theories from an inductive analysis of data drawing on sensitizing concepts (Charmaz, 2014). I chose to analyze the data from a grounded theory perspective to construct a case study rooted in empirical evidence from a Colombian context with the aim of generating new insights on education for development programs in conflict-affected areas in the Global South.

The Study Site

At the time of this study the PSA program was being offered in 5 departments in the Costa Caribe region reaching some 1,000 students (PSA Zonal Reports, November, 2016). There were two zonal teams—the Southern Zonal Team and the Central Zonal Team. The Southern team was made up of four individuals from the zone; this team worked with 6 units situated in the departments of Córdoba and Sucre. The Central Zonal team, made up of two individuals from the zone, was working in the departments of Bolivar and Atlántico with two units. For the purposes of my dissertation, I conducted qualitative research in the Southern Zone of the Caribbean Coastal region, situated in the department of Córdoba where the PSA program is in the most advanced stage of development. I focused on this Zone for the following three reasons:

- The Zone possesses the greatest amount of experience with the program and contains the largest numbers of graduates.
- It has high levels of violence and poverty.
- There is widespread large-scale agricultural production of biofuel crops that has resulted in diminished fertile land for small-scale farmers.

The table below includes the number of communities, graduates, groups, students, tutors and coordinators in each unit in the Southern Zone. The high levels of violence in this Zone stem from the activities of illegal armed groups. The Zone also faces the challenge of food security, despite the large amount of land in the region, due to large-scale cattle ranching and monoculture farming owned by large companies exogenous to the region.

Table 4.1 PSA statistics for the Southern Zone as of October 2016

Communities	32
Coordinators	10
Students	650
Graduates	147
Tutors	60

Methods

To generate the data for this cross-sectional case study, I utilized several methods, including focus group discussions, unstructured and semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. I also relied on secondary data that came from program documents, such as reports that systematize the learning that the Zone has gained with the program as well as documents prepared by FUNDAEC that describe its philosophical and pedagogical approach. I also drew on my over ten years of experience working in FUNDAEC's education for development programs. Please refer to the Ethical Considerations sections for a discussion of my relationship to FUNDAEC in this research study. Over a six-month period, I engaged in an intensive and iterative process of data

collection and analysis. I conducted the interviews and focus groups in Spanish and translated portions into English during transcribing**.**

In implementing the methods, I adopted an emic perspective that attempts to understand the lives of participants from their own cultural worldview, bearing in mind that the researcher can never fully understand the perspective of others (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). The measures that I took to ensure that an emic perspective was reached are discussed in the Ethical Considerations section. As this research sought to emphasize the voices of the individuals that were involved in the program, as well as those who did not participate, a number of quotations from the focus groups and interviews are included in the study. I complement the emic perspective with an etic view that derives from analytic framing integrating social science theory, my own experience as a researcher, and my extensive experience with FUNDEAC (Rossman & Rallis, 2016).

Through the use of these various methods, I strove to build a thick description of the patterns and principles associated with the participants' interaction with the PSA program (Geertz, 1973). I used thick description to develop a case study in which conceptual categories are created in relation to a capability approach to education for development programs (Merriam, 1998).

Sample

The total target sample of this study is 160 individuals. I conducted focus groups, interviews and open-ended questionnaires with the target sample group detailed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Sample target group

Role	Focus Groups	Interviews	Open-ended Questionnaires
PSA Graduates	4 groups with 31 individuals	16 (9 females)	31 (17 females)
PSA Early Students	3 groups with 32 individuals	15 (8 females)	32 (13 females)
Youth Non-Participants	3 groups with 20 individuals	16 (7 females)	
PSA Tutors	5 groups with 35 individuals	12 (6 females)	35 (12 females)
PSA Coordinators	1 group with 15 individuals	5 (3 females)	
Parents		7 (5 females)	
Community Members	2 intact groups with 20 individuals (teachers association and Afro-Colombian community group)	5 (2 females)	
Total	18 groups with 153 individuals	78 (40 females)	98 (42 females)

Drawing on the logic involved in case study research, I chose samples with the goal of broadening emergent theory related to capability development in TVET programs in a conflict-affected context, and providing examples for a range of types that are representative of the entire population involved in this case.

The delimitations of this research included 32 communities in the Southern Zone that created a geographic boundary around my case study. In selecting samples for this research, my goal was not to achieve geographic saturation of the area. My goal was to reach an adequate level of saturation with regard to how the different components of the program are being implemented in relation to the contextual factors being examined in this study. With this approach in mind, I used purposive sampling to choose a set of five communities to focus on that met the following conditions:

- High levels of illicit armed activities
- Prevalence of large scale palm oil crops used for biofuel purposes
- Scarce economic opportunities for youth
- At least 8 years of experience with the PSA program

By focusing on the 5 communities selected, I was able to obtain rich data about the program and learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the *purpose* of my research, through *purposeful* sampling (Merriam, 1998).

Once the communities were chosen through purposive sampling, I selected sample target groups for each population in this study. The distinct sample groups in this study included:

1. Youth participants at the outset of involvement in the program
2. Youth not participating in PSA
3. Graduates of the PSA program
4. PSA coordinators and tutors
5. Parents
6. Community members

To ensure the reliability of the study, I triangulated the data collected among a robust sample comprised of the principle actors associated with the program. Outlined below are the sampling choices for each target group and the methods administered. These choices were made bearing in mind that a case study is comprised of "cases that are typical or representative of other cases" (Stake, 1995, p. 4).

PSA Participants and Graduates

Focus groups, interviews and open-ended questionnaires were administered to participants who had just begun their participation in the program and to graduates of the program. Participant observation was another method employed in this study.

Focus Groups

I began the research process with focus group discussions, as a way of building on the strength of the group dynamics of the PSA program. Focus groups were organized with participants in the context of the activities of the PSA program. The focus group discussions lasted approximately two hours and were usually followed by some type of social activity which included sharing refreshments, walking around their neighborhood together to meet members of their families and community leaders who lived close by. We would also get to know where participants carried out their service activities and other important locations in their communities, such as communal agricultural plots and key water sources.

During these discussions, relationships of trust were fostered among the participants and myself as a researcher. Moreover, the focus groups allowed the participants to engage in rich discussions in which their contributions about the topics being addressed built upon one another. Participants expressed that they found the discussions that took place during the focus groups beneficial as it allowed them to reflect together on issues that are closely connected to the progress of their communities. Such topics discussed during the focus groups include the forces that influenced youth to get involved in the activities of illicit groups and how collective learning environments helped build capabilities youth need to engage in positive social action.

Interviews

I made use of purposive sampling to select youth from these groups, whom I asked to participate in an interview. I identified graduates who would be able to describe different ways in which the program had influenced them, and how they were applying

what they had learned in the program to their own lives and communities. I ensured that graduates identified came from the five different communities included in the study so that different experiences with the program could be explored.

I also interviewed youth who had just started off in the program to gauge their perspective on their engagement in the community and the purpose of their education at the outset of the program. As there were only a few new groups being initiated at the time of this study, I tried to interview as many of the youth in these groups as was possible.

Open-ended Questionnaire

The open-ended questionnaire was administered to all of the students in three PSA groups who were just initiating their activities in the five communities that make up this sample. It was also administered to the graduates of the program who participated in the focus groups. However, as this population expresses itself more fluidly and openly about the topics addressed in this research study through verbal communication, the data collected from the open-ended questionnaires was not rich enough to be drawn upon in the findings.

PSA Tutors and Coordinators

Focus Groups and Interviews

I conducted focus groups and interviews with tutors and coordinators who are selected through nomination by the Zonal team in an effort to work towards programmatic saturation. The tutors and coordinators selected came from areas that are most affected by violence and who have ample experience with the production projects and community activities that are part of the PSA programs. Focus groups with the tutors

took place over a two-hour period in the tutor reflection gatherings offered by the program.

Parents and Community Members

The sample of parents to interview was chosen purposively in consultation with the coordinators in order to ensure that both parents of participants who have excelled in the program and those who have experienced challenges were interviewed. I also interviewed members of community groups, such as an Afro-Colombian association, to understand from a community perspective the impact of the program on the identity formation of youth and the community at large.

The focus groups with the community groups were action-oriented in the sense that they opened up possibilities for further collaboration between the PSA program and these groups. During one of the focus groups, it became clear that lines of communication needed to be strengthened between the PSA program and community group, as they were not aware that they were both planning the same exact service activity. As a result of the focus group, they put in place processes for further consultation.

Youth Not Participating in PSA

Focus groups and interviews were conducted with peers and neighbors of PSA students to ensure that these youth had similar social, economic and cultural backgrounds as the PSA students in the study. I did not administer the questionnaires to the non-PSA participants in this study, as many of the youth interviewed were youth whom I was introduced to in social spaces with their families or friends, or during a break they were taking from their work activities. Moreover, as writing is not a common way in which

this population expresses their thoughts and feelings, this method for collecting data did not seem appropriate for this population.

Participant Observation

In addition to carrying out focus groups and interviews, I engaged in participant observation by taking part in the various formal activities of the PSA program, such as PSA groups, tutor gatherings and trainings, coordinator gatherings, community meetings organized by the PSA program, and visits from PSA students' parents. I also participated in informal spaces with the participants of the study, sharing many meals together, watching soccer games, and attending cultural and artistic gatherings held in the community. Over the past ten years, I have had the opportunity to participate in these spaces through my work with FUNDAEC, and during the past few years I have also participated in these spaces as part of my doctoral studies. Participation in these spaces provided me with a deeper understanding of the social and cultural context of the data being gathered through the interviews and focus groups.

Limitations

- One of the limitations of this research design is that it considers a single case that does not extend over a large geographical region. Although the region that is studied in this research is not vast, the study was designed to generate theoretical depth through the data I collected.

- Another limitation of this doctoral research is the time constraints that I faced. Given the six-month period I had available to collect the data, I was not able to conduct longitudinal research that follows the same cohort of youth throughout

their entire participation in the over two and one half year program, in addition to their involvement in livelihood and community activities for years after they graduated from PSA. In order to organize a rigorous study that aligned with my time availability and resources for research, I made use of a cross-sectional design that aims to understand the changes and transformation that youth experience throughout their participation in the program. Future research can include a more long-term study that follows the same cohort of youth throughout the duration of their entire participation in an education for development program.

Ethical Considerations

In an effort to ensure the integrity and safety of the participants involved in this research, a description of this study and tools developed for it have been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board at the University of Massachusetts. As part of this procedure, an informed consent form for the participants in study approved by Management System for Human Subjects department at the University of Massachusetts was administered. Appendix C contains a copy of the consent form that was administered to participants in this study.

In order to help ensure that participants' consent was informed and ongoing, in addition to administering the consent form, I had conversations with the participants during which the purpose, scope, and voluntary nature of the study was discussed. In an initial conversation the following topics were covered:

- My role as a member of FUNDAEC who is carrying out research on the Preparation for Social Action program, as part of studies in a doctoral degree program in education at the University of Massachusetts.

- The purpose of this study to understand how student involvement in the Preparation for Social Action program has affected their lives as individuals and has made a contribution to their communities and families. I further explained that an aim of the study is to understand the opportunities and challenges communities are faced with and how they are connected to what students are learning in the PSA program.

- Participation in this study did not influence in any way participation in the PSA program—only if individuals were interested in participating in this study and sharing their experiences about the PSA program did they do so. If a person was not interested in taking part in the study or did not have the time do so, that was completely understandable. If at any point an individual wanted to terminate their participation in the study, that was fine and not looked upon unfavorably.

- It was made clear that participants' names and the communities they come from would not be used in the study nor would situations arise that may put the participant in an uncomfortable or dangerous position. The participant had the right to determine what she or he would like or not like to be included in the study.

- It was explained to participants that they could have a role in the analytical process of the research process, thereby contributing to the interpretations being made about the data.

- Participants were told that the general results of this study would be used to help improve the PSA program and would be shared with other individuals and entities interested in learning about the experience being gained in the Caribbean Coastal region with the PSA program.

In follow-up conversations, I discussed with participants in greater depth the purpose of the study. I have a long-term relationship with a number of the participants in this study. This relationship of trust allowed me to engage in conversations about the purpose of the study, enabling me to gauge participants' comfort in becoming part of the study. Participants did not directly express that they were uncomfortable talking about topics related to the security situation and violence that took place in their communities. However, during the initial conversations and in the formal space of focus groups, they did not mention incidents of violence that had taken place in their communities. But as part of the participant observation I engaged in during lunch or in other informal spaces,

they recounted detailed descriptions about violence they experienced, including how neighbors or family members had been assassinated during the recent weeks. When participants shared these accounts, I asked if this content could also be included in the study, and each agreed.

In order to protect the identity and confidentiality of the participants, the names of the students and the communities that they come from are not included in the study. Along these lines, topics discussed that specifically reference their community, their families or themselves are not mentioned. References to general themes are mentioned, not specific topics that can be linked to participants and their communities. Special care has been given to these measures, given that this study was carried out in areas requiring conflict sensitivity.

Personal Biography

Rossman and Rallis (2016) describe qualitative research as a quintessentially active and constructive process in which the researcher and participants in the study have an interactive and face-to-face relationship. The researcher and participants interact in the field with each other in complex and varied ways during interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, and data analysis (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). These interactions lead to the construction of knowledge through an interpretive process in which the researcher creates meaning out of what is learned as the research process advances (Rossman & Rallis, 2016).

Given the interpretative nature of qualitative research, the personal background of the researcher influences data collection and analysis, and as such must be taken into account as an ethical issue in order to help ensure the validity of the study (Stake, 1995).

With this in mind, in this section I will describe my personal background as it relates to the study.

My ethnic and cultural background is different from the background of the participants in the PSA program in Colombia. However, I have extensive experience with the PSA as a collaborator with the program over the past ten years. My involvement with the program has included helping local teams build their capacity to engage in action-research processes in the PSA program, as well as working with program coordination and tutor development.

During this research study, my experience with the program could not be set aside. Stake (1995) explains that "researchers do not step outside their ordinary lives when they observe and interpret and write up the workings of a case" (p. 134). Instead of considering prior exposure to the PSA program as an obstacle, I found it to be beneficial, in that I have a close rapport with participants, giving me ease of access to a diversity of key actors during the process of data collection and analysis.

In an effort to ensure that my connection with FUNDAEC over a long period time did not inappropriately influence my interpretation of the data through premature judgments or outright bias, I have shared my analysis of the data with a team of critical friends comprised of doctoral students who are familiar with my research and theoretical orientation but are not closely connected to FUNDAEC. The analytical and critical feedback they provided me complemented the expertise and insights of the members of the Doctoral Committee who reviewed my analysis of the data throughout the research and writing process.

In order to understand the social science lens that influenced how this study was shaped, I will now make explicit my orientations towards research in the social world. Fundamentally, I am inclined towards a "critical humanist" perspective in which human consciousness is perceived as an agent for empowerment, transformation, and liberation from dominating social processes (Rossman & Rallis, 2016, p. 46). This approach to research emphasizes the notion that "false consciousness" constrains human agency through ideological superstructures (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 32). It asserts that radical change usually takes place at the local level as social relations are transformed (Rossman & Rallis, 2016).

Along these lines, I am committed to research that is useful to participants and the work of FUNDEAC as an institution, rather than being involved in research that is extractive, for my own academic purposes only. As such, I implemented a collaborative approach to this research that included a team at FUNDAEC that provided feedback on the research questions that framed the study, the protocol tools used for data collection, and analysis of the data. This team helped with refining the protocol tools and has begun drawing on the findings generated from this study in their operations. Notwithstanding the input that the team provided to me throughout this process, as a researcher I had the autonomy and independence required to guide the research process and interpret the data collected.

I also made use of the critical realism lens that focuses on power relations embedded in political and economic structures (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). More specifically, in my research I drew on a radical tradition of development that frames transformative approaches to development from a critical modernist perspective. Critical

modernism "begins with the premise that rather than reject development" completely, it needs to be rethought (Hickey & Mohan, 2005, p. 243). In this sense, a critical modernist perspective is distinct from post-modernist approaches that completely reject development. Critical modernism begins with a critique of existing material power relations, particularly a "critique of capitalism as a social form adopted by modern societies, rather than a critique of modernism as overgeneralized discursive phenomena" (Hickey & Mohan, 2005, p. 244).

The personal biography, outlined above, strives to be reflexive about how my presence and perspectives affected this case study (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). By being explicit about my purpose and being myself in the study, I have tried to ensure that the data collection and analysis was systematic and sound. For Rossman and Rallis (2016), being oneself means that we have "articulated our perspectives and frames of references toward the topic—that is, we know our beliefs and values and assumptions and biases relative to that topic," and "we are clear about our theoretical and methodological orientation" (Rossman & Rallis, 2016, p. 51). Stake (1995) highlights that:

> the way the case and the researchers interact is presumed unique and not necessarily reproducible for other cases and researchers. The quality and utility of the research is not based on its reproducibility but on whether or not the meanings generated, by the researcher or the reader are valued…. Each researcher's style and curiosity will be unique in some ways (p. 134).

The goal of this case study was not to discover one truth that could be mechanically applied to different contexts, but to find meaning through various stories and events that I was able to learn about due to the unique spaces in which I had the opportunity to participate (Nordtveit, 2005).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Drawing on a grounded theory perspective, the process of qualitative data analysis I utilized consisted of "iterative strategies of going back and forth between data and analysis," and using comparative methods that kept me interacting and involved with the data and the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2014, p. 1). The grounded theory perspective that I used drew on sensitizing conceptual constructs that emerged from the literature on TVET and capability development. In the following paragraphs, I organize these concepts in an analytic framework that guided the analysis of the data.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for this research was comprised of key ideas and critiques contained in the literature, as related to my understanding of FUNDAEC's experience with the PSA program. Outlined below are the key themes in this framework:

- The role of a scientifically rigorous curriculum that integrates theory and practice in a capability approach to TVET: I analyzed the data to gain insight into how the academic rigor and applied components of the PSA program build capabilities that youth can use to promote the wellbeing of their families and communities. I contrasted this capability approach to both 1) TVET programs framed in modes of development narrowly focused on economic growth, and 2) other ways that capabilities approaches to education are understood (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2003; Walker, 2012).

- Navigating the presence and pressure of illicit armed groups while facing impoverished living conditions: I analyzed how the insecurity and poverty in the region are contextual variables that shape the opportunities available to youth and the constraints they face.

- The notion of networks of social relationships in contributing to the identity formation of youth: As I analyzed the data, I looked for examples of how networks were established within the program, as well as how networks in the community linked back to various components of the PSA program.

In the paragraphs below, I describe the approach to qualitative data analysis I used in this study to embark upon the building of an emergent theory pertaining to the question

of the identity development of youth as promoters of community wellbeing that draws on the themes outlined above.

Open Coding

After having put in place a system that organized the data around my research questions and themes from the analytic framework, I continued upon the process of qualitative data analysis by sifting through and thinking about the data as I sought out emerging patterns through inductive analysis (Galman, 2007). As is a common sentiment of many researchers, I felt overwhelmed by the immensity of the data—overwhelmed with all of the information acquired, by the diversity of observations made, and by the scope of ideas, opinions and feelings communicated by participants in the research project.

The use of open coding allowed me to organize and make sense of the data in a structured way by systematically micro-analyzing the data, breaking it down into components. Line-by-line coding and incident-by-incident coding was utilized in my analysis. Table 4.3 below provides examples of these types of coding.

Table 4.3 Example of line-by-line coding

Codes	Excerpt from an interview with a PSA graduate
	Interview setting: Background noise consisting of music, birds, motorcycles and cars with a rat running through the shack-like dwelling. The interview took place in a part of Maria's home that contains a small store she set up as a result of her studies in the PSA program. During the interview, she would from time to time would sell products to her neighbors.
Precarious living situation	How old were you when you started the program? I was twenty years old when I began this program with my cousin, Anna, who encouraged me to participate in it. I moved to an area where there was an *invasión* [*invasión* refers to a place where people set up community on land that they do not own but is not being utilized]. My whole family eventually moved to this invaded land in which we established the 6 *de enero* neighborhood—my mother, stepfather, brother, uncle, cousin.
Motivating factors	What motivated you to participate in the PSA group? How the tutor taught the classes—how he explained things. Another motivating factor was the changes that I saw in myself.
Shyness/fear to express one's ideas Developing powers of expression	What changes did you see in yourself? I was different before. I used to be shy, if I wanted to express an idea I did not have the courage to do so. Now I feel I am more open, I spontaneously express myself. I don't keep quiet, if someone says something to me—I can defend myself, I'll say "No señor." I have felt the change that there has been in me. I am now not afraid to talk in public or any of these things.
Depth of study in PSA texts vs superficial approach of schools	What did you like about the PSA program? I like the books. In the book "Classification" we learn to differentiate the animals by the class they are in—we learn by examples. The teachers in school do not go deeply into subject matters like the PSA program does—in school they look at the subject matters superficially.
Initiating social action Building relationships with community organizations Collaborative relationship between PSA group and community Community participation in social action Building bridges with local companies	In what social action have you participated? In my neighborhood, we had a very interesting social action that transformed into a project of the neighborhood. In my community, we did not have water. We only had one hose from which the whole community was able to get water. The whole community would stand in line to get the water. When I would get back from my PSA group I would have to run to get water at the bottom of the hill, and then carry it all the way up this steep hill to my home. So that is when I began to talk with one my *compañeros*, who was a PSA student. I told him that I would like to discuss with the group an act of service related to water. He helped me. As he is the president of the barrio, he was able to organize a meeting with the community and discuss with them about this topic. The community was in agreement as every day we had to go to collect the water. So we organized ourselves to meet with the water company. The PSA group together with the community made preparations to build a well to get water. Everyone helped out with this project, the women made and served juice, the men helped to dig out the well. We organized ourselves to get the materials needed to have the water installed in our homes. We met with the water company so that they would explain to us the billing system for the water. They wanted to check to see if we were in agreement or not with this billing arrangement. The water company explained that we would get a bill every month for 11.000 pesos a month. The people were in agreement because imagine for three years we were here without water, looking for water every day. We were living here for three years, and we did not have water…

Table 4.4 Comparing incidents with codes: Making choices

Excerpt 1:	
Edwin on setting up a small shop in his community	
The way in which I perceive my community is the biggest change that took place in me. To be truthful, my outlook before led me to think as soon as I finish my high school studies, I would … go to another place, to a city—I would study there. I did not perceive the potential in my community. When I began to study the PSA program, I began to gain an understanding about the potentialities that are in my community.	Change in mentality Rural-urban migration Recognizing potentialities in the community
During our study of the unit Environmental Issues, the tutor highlighted that in the environment there are resources that we can make use of in a sustainable way. He mentioned that in another department of Colombia, the Eje Cafetero (the Coffee Region), a student has set up a recycling business— … a formal micro-enterprise that he established and was running. I remember that the tutor asked us—now what can we do here, what can you all do. It was there when I made this connection with this example of what had occurred in the Eje Cafetero, and I thought—"What can we do with the resources in our community?" I focused my thoughts on this, the class continued, but my mind remained focused on the idea of what we can do with the resources in our community. I was able to apply this thought into action.	Sharing of experiences among tutors Making use of community resources Livelihood choice related to community and family needs
Notes: Edwin put this thought into action by opening up a small-scaled business in his community that sells locally produced cheese. He also established a small grocery store in his community. These activities are supporting the livelihoods of his family, including his mother, who is the head of the household, and his younger siblings. Edwin has also spearheaded community research focused on generating learning about the propagation of highly efficient and diversified agricultural crops. The experience, knowledge and accompaniment Edwin received in the PSA program enabled him to initiate these activities. For example, as part of the study of the unit Environmental Issues, Edwin had an opportunity to meet with the owners of small- and medium-sized businesses to learn about the	Building relationships: Practice activities of PSA texts

Excerpt 2:	
Gloria on choosing career path	
In our communities there is great potential, there are resources that are there that can be exploited, but we do not notice them, they think that we do not have any economic options here and they leave, or they put aside the artesanias. Here in Nueva Estrella they are leaving this behind, they do not see or envision its potential. But I think that the artesanias are something of value and they make beautiful things in our communities, so we have to organize ourselves, see what we can do, what we want to do and how it can be achieved. This is one of the purposes of my studies. I am studying financial administration and business and during all of the semesters there is always some idea or project that I can relate to the development of artesanias in our region. There are institutions here in Colombia that we can work with such as Artesanias de Colombia. When one studies with Fundaec there is a change in mentality. You can think about the purpose of your studies. Usually the chicos say, I'll go get a job in the city at a bank or with a business.	Valuing community resources Appreciation for local cultural expression Mobilizing Community Studies related to community needs and opportunities. Change in mentality Brain-drain

environmental sustainability of their entrepreneurial practices. During the study of an arithmetic unit Addition and Subtraction, Edwin acquired basic accounting skills that he uses in his production projects. Upon graduation from the PSA program, Edwin began to pursue an undergraduate degree program in mathematics through a distance education modality that enables him to pursue a higher education while engaging in community enterprises.	Professional development integrated with community development	

Language is intimately related to the process of open coding, as open coding implies naming and labeling the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). When engaging in open coding, I paid attention to creating labels that drew on language that reflected the cultural context in which the data were collected. Along these lines, I did not create the codes for this study in abstraction, nor did I blindly adopt concepts from bodies of literature from the field of education or development—such as youth empowerment or community participation. There is a danger in mechanically making use of borrowed concepts from the literature in open coding. The application of well-established concepts as codes can potentially veil the innovative findings the data contain. However, by using sensitizing concepts from the literature one can create a space for dialogue and enter into "sophisticated conversation in a substantive area" in a nuanced way that brings innovation and depth to the field (Charmaz, 2014, p. 309).

A sensitizing concept from the field of education related to this study is the *development of capabilities.* I drew upon this concept when analyzing and coding the data, to gain insight into the process in which youth were developing capabilities for social action. A number of the codes that emerged were related to this process, such as: overcoming fear, developing powers of oral and written expression, and building relationships with community members. As I was drawing on a grounded theory

approach, when analyzing the data, I did not confine myself to the way in which the literature frames the concept of capability development in order to ensure that a more nuanced and reliable understanding of the phenomena being studied unfolded. When conceiving of codes, other sensitizing concepts from the fields of education, development and sociology, such as network theory, helped shape the codes in light of the analysis of the data collected. Open coding allowed me to compare and contrast the data collected, interrogate it, generate new questions, and form hypotheses from it. Table 4.5 below is a full list of the preliminary codes I used for this study.

Table 4.5 Preliminary codes

Identity development in traditional education	**Social action**
Vision to be someone in life	Purpose of social action (community gains understanding of its potentialities)
Individualistic goals	Engaging in social action in various degrees of complexity
Education irrelevant to social reality	Preventing the spread of diseases
Information dictated and memorized	Carrying out acts of service with the community
Teaching to the test	Promoting collective wellbeing
Preparing youth for city life	**Relationships**
Brain drain: urban-rural migration	Relationship of trust and mutual support between tutor and student
Identity development in PSA program	Mutual support among participants
Rigorous education aligned with social reality	Developing relationships with parents
New vision of what it means to be a professional	Developing relationships with communities
Integrating theory and practice	Networks of relationships with members of the community
Motivating factor: Applying what is learned for development of one's community	Network of collaborative relationships among tutors
Putting into action what one is learning	Network of learning about production projects
Joy of serving	Intergenerational networks
Valuing resources/knowledge in one's community	**Developing capabilities**
Generating knowledge relevant to the community	Timidity and fear to express one's ideas
Sharing knowledge with others	Difficulties with mathematics and reading
Collective learning environments	Developing reading and writing capabilities
Curbing urban-rural migration	Developing powers of expression
Process oriented change	Developing confidence
Role of youth in development	Community ownership of development
Capacity to reflect on one's culture	**Future aspirations of PSA participants**
Organic growth of program	Clarity of vision about future aspirations
Obstacles	Realistic Plans
Legacy of welfare approaches to development Early pregnancy	Optimism
Drug Use leading to robberies and violence	**Non-PSA youth**
Getting drawn into illicit groups: False friendships	Lack of clear vision
Tempted by easy money	Lack of motivation
Free time	Obstacles to enter university
Research/practical components of PSA texts	Difficulties finding jobs
Application of Mathematics	
Agricultural Production	
Generating knowledge through research activities	

Translation

The data for this research were collected in Spanish through the use of multiple methods—semi-structured interviews, focus groups, open-ended questionnaires, secondary document analysis and participant observation. As language is intimately connected with the process of coding, I open-coded the data in Spanish to ensure that the codes that emerged were born out of an analysis of the data as was expressed in its original form.

A portion of the data was translated into English, including the excerpts contained in the dissertation. When data are translated, a certain degree of interpretation is required as words reflect the cultural characteristics in which they are embedded. The notion of a direct translation oversimplifies the translation process. An understanding of the cultural context is required when translating so that the translation represents as best as possible the intent of the words participants use to express their thoughts and feelings in a particular context.

Two considerations required particular attention during the translation process. The first is related to words that do not have a direct translation, and the second to words with multiple meanings. There is not a direct translation for a number of the terms included in the data as they are unique to Spanish and, in certain cases, to Colombia itself. In order to preserve the integrity of the word or phrase expressed by participants, in a number of instances, the Spanish word is included in the dissertation alongside the English translation. These terms include phrases such as *callejeando* which means to spend time outside of the home, often hanging out with friends on the streets, and *quiero ser alguien en la vida*, which refers to the aspiration of wanting to be successful in life.

The phrase *quiero ser alguien en la vida* contains underlying assumptions about what it means to be successful, which are discussed in Chapter 5.

In addition, as a number of words have multiple meanings, when translating I had to give careful attention to choosing the closest possible word in English to help ensure that the thoughts expressed by participants were not distorted or mispresented. For example, youth emphasized their efforts to *"aprovechar los recursos en sus comunidades*", "to make the most of the resources in their communities." The word *aprovechar* has multiple meanings, several of which have nuanced differences. It means to exploit, to abuse, to take advantage of, to benefit from, to put to good use, and to make the most of. An understanding of the context and careful consideration was needed to help ensure that the words I chose to use in English most accurately depicted the data in their original form.

Analytic Memo Writing

Analytic memo writing was critical to the process of open coding as a reflexive strategy. It helped ensure the groundedness of the research, favoring the data over any other input (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It provided me with a space to reflect on the data collected by outlining my analysis and interpretation of the data, as well as thoughts and questions for future direction. During the process of open coding, I made meaning out of the data. Memo writing coupled with open coding led to the formation of concepts that describe the phenomena in the study (Charmaz, 2014). Below is an example of a memo that analyzes the educational content of the PSA program.

Table 4.6 Analytical memo

Educational content—Developing moral structures for decision-making

The data I am analyzing indicates that the educational content of the PSA program helps youth to make decisions about their future.

> *The good thing about the texts of the program is that they have a unique characteristic that are the reflections… The program is not only about increasing economic productivity it also has a spiritual component. In the reflections, we discuss working as a team, respect, attitudes and qualities. The reflections invite participants to think profoundly about qualities and attitudes that benefit the community, the desire to serve… so these reflections have helped a lot*. (PSA tutor)

The content does not have a moralizing tone nor does it contain a set of rules that tell youth what is wrong or right. Rather it opens spaces in which they can reflect, gain understanding and thinking critically, thereby helping them to develop a conceptual framework that they have ownership of, a framework that guides their decision-making processes.

Free time

Having free time has been mentioned by community members in this study as a problem that leads to delinquency because when youth are idle they use that time to engage in destructive activities. Tutors and parents explained the PSA program helps address this problem:

> *through the education they receive, accompaniment and in their participation in student encounters, spaces in which the youth share and learn from the other group. Through their participation in the program the youth don't feel alone. A lot of youth go to high school or university and then the rest of their time is free…*
>
> *The service activities that are included in the texts also helps to mitigate the challenges that we are confronted with—they help the youth occupy their time in positive things, as such they will not have so much idle time to become distracted in destructive activities.* (PSA tutor)

The schedule of the youth in the PSA program is full—many go to school, participate in the program around 10 hours a week and then carry out their service activity and a production project. In this way, they are protected from being drawn into activities of illicit groups—their schedules are full, and they are not as vulnerable to negative forces.

Nonetheless, the purpose of the PSA program is not to fill up their schedules, keeping a "potentially dangerous" youth population occupied and entertained. Such a paternalistic and patronizing approach would not enable them to develop the capabilities they need to become the protagonists of change. The program is helping them to build a moral and intellectual structure that allows them to find meaning with regard to their educational process and future path.

The memos prepared used rich narrative description and analytical frames that gave depth to the analysis, as they helped uncover and interpret phenomena from the field in an informed way that drew on substantial empirical evidence.

During the process of qualitative data analysis, I was open to unexpected insights that I uncovered in the data by going over the data a number of times and reflecting on the relationships and patterns that I identified. In order to scrutinize the data, to gauge

how it shaped the core of the research, I moved the data around, reorganizing larger categories into smaller categories so that relationships and patterns could be identified. Field notes from observations and interactions were also critical in assisting me map out the process of youth identity development. I retraced the steps of my data analysis by making refinements to the analysis in order to help ensure the reliability of the research.

While engaging in data analysis, I strove to take into account the subjectivity that I brought into the research process. I addressed the subjectivities that I brought to the analytical process, through the triangulation of methods and by sharing my emerging findings while I was in the field with the participants involved in the research as well as with my critical friends and dissertation committee (Galman, 2007). As mentioned above, the research I engaged in during this process attempted not to be a superficial, extractive process. Memo writing allowed me to analyze my role as a researcher throughout this process and question the assumptions that I was making about the realities that youth and communities face. In-depth, ongoing conversations that I had with students, graduates, tutors, coordinators as well as parents and community members also helped inform this analysis. Through the triangulation of research methods with distinct populations involved in the PSA program and the community at large, I endeavored to safeguard the reliability of this study.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the research cross-sectional design of this qualitative case study. Given that the youth in this study have similar economic, social and cultural characteristics, I was able to make use of a design that compared cohorts of youth at distinct stages in their involvement with PSA—those at the outset of the program with

those at least two years post-graduation. To further understand the influence of the program on the identity development of youth, I compared these cohorts of PSA participants to those with similar characteristics who had not taken part in the program.

In this chapter, I also provided a detailed account of the methods employed and the sample population of the study. I discussed how my presence and perspectives affected this research and the ethical considerations that guided this study. In addition, I described how the grounded theory perspective I used to analyze the data served to build this case study rooted in empirical evidence within a Colombian context, which draws upon sensitizing concepts from the literature. In the next chapter, I discuss the findings that emerged from the design and methods outlined here.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

I utilized the case of FUNDAEC's PSA program: 1) to explore how an education for development program designed from a specific capability perspective is being implemented in a conflict-affected area, and 2) to understand the potential such an approach has in contributing towards the wellbeing of youth, their families and communities. This research study was connected to a broad question: What potential do rigorous education for development programs designed from a specific capability perspective have for improving the wellbeing of youth, their families, and communities in conflict-affected areas?

More specifically, this study examined three interrelated questions related to the areas of youth identity development, networks of social support and the future aspirations of youth. The sample for this study included two distinct cohorts of PSA participants who come from five different communities—participants who just began their participation in the program and graduates of the program. In addition, youth who had not participated in the PSA program were included, as well as tutors and coordinators. Purposive sampling was used as a logical and powerful choice that addresses qualitative questions such as the discovery of what occurs, "the implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences" (Honigmann, 1982, p. 84). Through purposive sampling, I was able to acquire "information-rich cases" that could be studied in-depth (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). The data collected included of 78 interviews and 17 focus groups. I use quotes from the focus groups and interviews with participants in the study so that their voices and perspectives can be expressed in the findings. I also present findings from the field notes

of the participant observation in which I engaged, which included taking part in formal activities of the PSA program in the Costa Caribe region and in cultural, social and family activities with the participants in the study in over a six-month period. In addition, findings will be presented from an analysis of the textbooks of the PSA program developed by FUNDAEC, as well as key documents and reports about the program that have been prepared by FUNDAEC.

The findings of this study show that in communities where there was a solid coordination team in place at the local level and tutors had an opportunity to participate in ongoing processes of training, youth who advance through the PSA program develop identities focused on promoting collective wellbeing. These identities are fostered through study in a tutorial setting of PSA curriculum, which is based on a specific capability building approach to education that integrates theory and practice.

The study also found that the coordination structure at the local level is pivotal for the development of the program, as it foments the construction of networks of learning and support that assist youth participants to develop the capabilities needed to become agents of social change in their communities. For the program to be integrated into the life of the community and for networks that bridged youth to community resources to be built, this study found that coordination teams built relationships of a collaborative nature with community members and institutions; these were further reinforced by the activities of the groups. In the units where strong coordination teams were in place, attention was placed on fostering such relationships. In units where the coordination team was weak, it was difficult for relationships to be built with institutions. As an education for development endeavor, the PSA program aims to be integrated into the social fabric of

the community; as such, the development of a diversity of relationships is key as it works towards this aim. This study demonstrates that from the initial stages of the establishment of a unit throughout its various phases of its development, there was a need to place attention on this area.

Factors internal to the functioning of the program that limit the influence of the program on the lives of youth participants include weak coordination structures and the lack of adequate tutor training. Social and economic factors within the region that constrain full participation in the program include lack of employment opportunities, drug trafficking and early pregnancy.

Delimitations of the PSA program

As mentioned above, the scope of reach of the PSA program is limited by two types of constraints: those that are related to the internal operations of the PSA program as well as factors external to the activities of PSA, such as certain social and economic forces that affect the lives of youth in the Costa Caribe region. These constraints, both internal and external, cause youth to leave the program or not to apply to participate in it. The coordinating team of the PSA program, cognizant of these constraints, strives to take them into account in their programmatic activities. Notwithstanding these measures, the constraints affect and shape the influence and reach of the program in the region. As such, before outlining the findings of this research, described below are the principle external and internal constraints associated with the program.

External Constraints

The external constraints in the region can be organized into four categories: 1) lack of employment opportunities and financial means, 2) the activities of illicit armed

groups, 3) early pregnancy, and 4) patterns of paternalism fostered by non-governmental agencies in the region.

Lack of financial means and employment opportunities

Youth in the region are in need of employment opportunities in order to be able to contribute towards the household expenses of their families. However, as there is a scarcity of employment opportunities in their communities, youth migrate to the urban centers in search of jobs. Once in the city, many find it difficult to find jobs and encounter drug trafficking groups that try to entice them to consume and sell illegal drugs as a way of making "quick and easy money" (Field notes, May, 2016, personal conversation with program coordinator). These groups encourage youth to sell drugs to youth from their own communities when they return to their home communities in order to increase the number of consumers.

The tendency to leave the program in search of jobs in the city occurs for the most part during the first six months of the youth's participation in the program. Approximately one-third of the participants leave the program during this period (Field notes, May, 2016, personal conversation with program coordinator). Following the first six months of the program, youth participation in the program remained steady. Production projects have been integrated into the PSA program as a way of mitigating the need to pursue work outside of the local community.

Many parents of the PSA participants have not had an opportunity to complete a basic education. These families also face a great deal of pressure to generate funds to sustain the family economy. A constraint to the participation in the program is that some parents feel that it is more important for their children to be involved in income-

generating activities than “wasting time” at school or in other educational activities. To help build understanding about the purpose of the PSA program and collaborative relationships with parents to address the abovementioned concerns, tutors and coordinators meet with parents on a regular basis.

Activities of Illicit Armed Groups

There is a high prevalence of illicit armed groups in a number of the communities of this study (Grajales, 2011; Field notes, May, 2016, personal conversation with program coordinator). Poor youth in Cordoba are a population vulnerable to becoming involved in the activities of these groups. Due to the economic conditions these youth face, criminal groups prey upon this population, enticing them with monetary rewards to become involved in their activities. They attract young people into joining their groups by deceiving them with a false sense of friendship and the promise of quick and easy money. As youth become involved in the PSA program, their vision of their own future and that of their community evolves from a purely materialistic vision, towards a vision focused on wellbeing from a broader perspective. Moreover, through the network of constructive social support they develop in the program, they eschew involvement in illicit activities.

Early Pregnancy

According to a study carried out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2010, 20% of adolescent girls in Colombia had been pregnant at least once. When young mothers are invited to join the program, they are occupied with the responsibilities associated with raising their children, which impedes them from participating in the program. The program tries to accommodate young mothers;

nonetheless, given their responsibilities and family pressures, many find it difficult to participate.

Expectations Based on NGO Presence in the Region

The paternalistic approach adopted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the region has created expectations among community members that FUNDAEC's approach to development will also be based upon the delivery of services and charity interventions such as donations. Given the legacy of NGOs in this region there is a tendency for community members to initially expect that FUNDAEC will secure and distribute monetary goods or services to the community. The long-term approach to development, which emphasizes the generation of knowledge that underscores the activities of the PSA program, is a shift in the way in which development is practiced and takes time for community leaders to understand.

Internal Constraints

When there is pressure for the program to expand into new communities at a pace that is not commensurate with the human resources required to support this growth, quality training and accompaniment that tutors and coordinators need for the effective implementation of the program are not able to be sustained. Introducing the program into new communities at too rapid of a pace has resulted in certain key aspects of the program being overlooked, such as the building of relationships with local leaders and institutions. This can lead to the program being perceived as irrelevant to the pressing needs that face the community.

Another tendency that occurs when the program expands too quickly is that the practice and service components are not given due attention, limiting the impact the program has on youth participants and the community at large. The scaling up and growth of the program is built into the program in a deliberate and thoughtful way by focusing on the development of human resources that can expand the program in a gradual and incremental way.

Youth Identity Development

This study examined the identity development of youth in relation to the questions:

- Did youth participants in the PSA become promoters of community wellbeing?
- If so, through what processes of the PSA program fostered the development of their identities as promoters of community wellbeing?
- What are the characteristics of the identities of promoters of community wellbeing?
- What are some of the characteristics of the identities of youth who are not involved in the program?

Notions of Success, Progress and Education

This study found that as youth participants, as well as PSA tutors and coordinators, progressed through the PSA program, they gradually developed identities focused on promoting the common good. New insights into notions of success, progress and the purpose of education, shaped the identities of youth in this program as did the relationships they were building with community members. Youth's identities as promoters of community wellbeing was expressed and consolidated through social action carried out with the community. The development of this identity was a gradual process

which was fostered as they began to take ownership of their education and contribute towards the betterment of society.

The methodological tool that FUNDAEC makes use of in its curricula is a capability. A capability can be described in terms of "a set of interrelated concepts, pieces of information, attitudes, spiritual qualities, skills and abilities that empower a person to think and act according to a well-defined sphere of activity and according to a well-defined purpose" (FUNDAEC, 2006, p. 6). An educational characteristic of the capability approach of the PSA program is to foster understanding about concepts youth interact with in their efforts to contribute to the transformation of society, as opposed to mere information processing that traditionally has drawn upon rote learning methodologies (FUNDAEC, 2006). FUNDAEC makes use of two powerful tools to achieve understanding. One is analysis, described in its texts as breaking things into smaller parts and then examining the relations and interactions of these parts (FUNDAEC, 2013). The other is placing things in larger and larger contexts in order to gain insights into the causes and reasons for their existence and behavior (FUNDAEC, 2013). The paragraphs below elucidate how enhanced understanding of concepts such as the relationship between the individual and society, the aims of education, and notions of progress and success contributed to the development of the identities of youth as promoters of community wellbeing.

The identities of PSA participants in this study evolved from being primarily concerned with fulfilling their own individual interests towards an identity focused on improving their lives in broader ways while also promoting the common good. Many youth expressed that at the outset of the program they were concerned with wanting *ser*

alguien en la vida (to be someone in life). The assumptions that underlie how youth made use of the phrase *ser alguien en la vida* are connected to notions of success that are influenced by societal norms. Their descriptions implied that being someone in life signified leaving rural life behind and migrating to the city in search of a professional job in an office setting. Messages and images transmitted through the media convey this perspective of success. In collages youth made, they depicted perceptions of prosperity valued in society as correlated to life in a modern urban setting. The pictures below depict their work in making these collages.

Figure 5.1 Collages of perceptions of prosperity

Conceptions of what it means to be successful were not only transmitted in the media but also through the educational content of the formal school system.

> Many of the PSA students are in high school—in school they are taught mathematics, physics, chemistry, and language for their own personal growth to increase their own personal benefits, *para ser alguien en la vida*. (PSA coordinator)

At the early stage of participation in the PSA program, youth perceived other livelihood paths, such as the pursuit of trades, animal husbandry and agricultural production, as less prestigious with little social value and, generally speaking, were not interested in these fields. The way in which youth in this study used the term *para ser alguien en la vida* signified to have a job deemed prestigious in society.

At the outset of participation in PSA program, many youth felt the only way that they could progress was by migrating outside of the region:

> I am in the tenth grade and am in the secretarial course. I want to keep studying after high school *para ser alguien en la vida.* My strategy is to never give up, to always move forward, if I fall I will work towards my goal. I want to study in the field of hotel and tourism in order to learn many languages and to get to know the world, to travel to many places. I will have to leave the region after high school to pursue this goal. (New PSA student)

When youth first entered the program, their educational goals tended to be focused on individual interests that were ambiguous and connected to notions of success that were transmitted to them.

> This year I am in 11th grade and am taking a course in secretarial studies. I want to study fashion design because I like to be creative. (New PSA student)

> I dream of becoming a professional. (New PSA student)

Prestigious jobs were associated with urban life, delegitimizing the dignity of working in a trade or craft, and minimizing the potentialities for work within rural communities.

Before entering the PSA program, many participants expressed that they were not conscious of the role of the community in their lives:

> Before entering the PSA program, I was not sociable or very communicative. I knew my neighbors but didn't really talk with them. I did not know what was happening in my community nor had I taken part in community activities. (PSA graduate)

New students in the program, when asked to describe their communities and their strengths and weaknesses, provided brief statements such as the ones below.

> My community is small. (New PSA student)

> A strength of my community is that it is united and beautiful, and a challenge we face is alcoholism. (New PSA student)

Many of the youth who had just entered the program indicated that they had not been involved in the activities related to the development of their communities. At the outset of their participation in the program, youth did not have an understanding of the meaning of the notion of a community.

As described above there are a number of external constraints that hindered the engagement of youth in the full duration of the program. About one-third of the youth who initially joined the program were not able to participate in its full duration due to the need to look for employment. High rates of early pregnancy also hindered the full participation of young women who entered the program. In more fully developed units, where tutors participated in the tutor training program offered by FUNDAEC, as PSA students progressed through the program and engaged in the study of the materials and the practice activities, their vision of how they could engage in meaningful livelihood activities broadened. They began to recognize meaningful livelihood possibilities within their own communities. The following quote is illustrative of this development:

> At times one thinks that the only way to be productive is to be a professional, to *ser alguien en la vida*. Or to progress and develop one has to go to the city and be the best professional. But we have our own capacities and resources (at the community level) that we often do not take advantage of. I think that the

> knowledge of the arts and crafts is something that we can develop. This is something that is being lost that can be used to promote the development of our communities
>
> If one studies a profession, for example architecture, and does not exercise it within one's community but goes to other places, it is the cities that benefit from this profession. The community does not grow or advance. But when one focuses on the arts, trades or production projects in the community with resources from the community, then employment and capacities can be generated from within the community. Then the individual and the community will grow together. (PSA graduate)

Participants' notions of progress also changed as a result of participation in the program. A graduate of the program expressed the following:

> How I conceive of the process through which a community progresses has changed as a result of my participation in the program. I am breaking away from the thought that we, human beings, have to wait for development to come from the outside. We are a community that is materially poor but we have many resources that we can make use of for the progress of our community… (PSA graduate)

This graduate went on to highlight that the community possesses a great of knowledge that can be drawn upon to contribute to its progress. She stressed that development depends upon working together as a community with locally initiated projects over a sustained period of time:

> The community has a lot of knowledge related to agriculture, pisciculture, as well as animal husbandry and plant life. This knowledge has to be put into practice. Within the community there are many different types of projects, so what we need to do is lend a hand, and strengthen these projects with the knowledge that we are gaining in the PSA program—putting aside apathy … If we work with these projects we can generate prosperity for our community without expecting that there will be drastic changes one day to the next, but with an understanding that change is a process and that one has to work for this to occur—as promoters of community wellbeing we support projects that are in our community and spearhead new ones. (PSA graduate)

As youth engaged in the practice and service components of the program and began to interact with community members, they came to have a greater understanding of and appreciation for their community.

> In each text there are research activities that one carries out in the community. There are also concepts in the texts. Through the research activities we conduct research related to the concepts that we are studying that allow us to get to know what is happening in our community. (New PSA student)

Through this process, youth began to identify resources and possibilities for social action in their community. They developed a sense of commitment to the community and an interest to pursue a future livelihood path that is aligned with the community's needs.

> The PSA program helps you to change your mentality, to appreciate all the resources that are in your community. For example, in my community there are many people who work with arts and crafts. They make very good products; however, they are in need of administrative capacities in order to be in a sound position to sell their products. I am studying financial administration and business (at a university) in order to be able to assist community members to market their products within the Costa Caribe region and throughout Colombia. The PSA program helped me to be able to discover what I wanted to study and to understand the reasons why. (PSA graduate)

A student who is more advanced in the program also expressed how his relationship with the community changed through participation in the program:

> The way in which I perceive my community is the biggest change that took place in me. To be truthful, my outlook before led me to think as soon as I finish my high school studies, I would … go to another place, to a city—I would study there. I did not perceive the potential in my community. When I began to study the PSA program, I began to gain an understanding about the potentialities that are in my community. (PSA graduate)

As youth advanced through the program, their vision of the possibilities for their future changed. They began to foresee the possibility of pursuing meaningful livelihood opportunities in their communities. At the time of this research, graduates of the program were pursuing post-secondary educational opportunities that they planned to apply towards the progress of their own communities. Through their participation in the program, youth gained the capacities needed to set up small local businesses—for example, grocery stores, a cheese shop, a fresh juice business, and a fish farm. The

establishment of such enterprises helps curb rural-urban migration. Moreover, it helps to increase the livelihood opportunities of youth populations and their families.

As youth progressed through the program, they also began to develop new conceptions of the purpose of education. A graduate of the program expressed that "the purpose of education should be aimed at helping people to be able to work towards the progress of their own community, to assist people to do things in their community." Through participation in the PSA program, participants gained an understanding of the purpose of education as being focused on acquiring and generating knowledge that can be applied in practical ways to improve the conditions of their own life and that of their community. This vision of the purpose of their education fueled their motivation to study.

> The participants understand why they are receiving an education—if they are educated they will have the capacity to contribute towards the betterment of their community. It is with this perspective that they equate education. Their vision of education changes, it is not like in the past when they see that their brother is educated but he is doing the same thing that I am doing without having an education, he did not improve his life situation as a result of studying. In the PSA program, they put into practice what they are learning and perceive the purpose of their education. They see that their quality of life increases, that they are able to do a range of things and began to value their education.
>
> This is very different from traditional approaches to education where the vision or purpose of education is not clear. The students just study to study. Many times after even after finishing a bachelor's degree they are not able to achieve the purpose of their studies. Because the purpose of their studies is to make money—to become a professional and to make money. Many times they see college graduates, who are working as "x," the same as them and are not making much money. So they think college graduates are not making money, so education has no purpose. So when the purpose and approach to education is changed, there are higher levels of motivation. (PSA graduate)

The motivation that impelled youth to participate in the program was directed towards acquiring knowledge that could be used to contribute to the betterment of their community.

> Here we receive an education that enables us to help others. This was something new for me at that time—my vision began to change—I began to think about others and what would be of benefit to them. I wanted to support community members in developing their capacities to help others. This is what I most liked about the program. I did not only think about myself. (PSA graduate)

The findings of this study show that, through participation in PSA, the identities of youth in the program transformed from an identity focused on one's own interests in isolation from an awareness of the needs of the community, to an identity concerned with contributing towards collective wellbeing. In the following section, I look at the process through which this identity is fostered through an analysis of how the distinct components of the program have been applied in the context of the Costa Caribe region.

Components of the PSA Program

The following section describes how, through engagement with the principal components of the PSA program, youth participants developed identities as promoters of community wellbeing. These components are: the texts, tutor, group and community.

Texts: A Dialogue between the Author and Students

In its early years, FUNDAEC carried out action-research around key life processes in rural communities (Arbab et al., 1988). The texts of the PSA program are a systematization of this process of action-research (FUNDAEC, 2006). These books have been designed as a dialogue between the author and the student (Arbab et al., 1988). PSA participants advance in the development of capabilities through a series of the texts that enable them to acquire concepts and skills related to certain fields of action, for example, agriculture, and then to build upon this knowledge through practice, research, and service activities. Below is a description of how theoretical and practical aspects of knowledge are integrated into the PSA texts.

Description of the Unit "Classification"

"Classification" is the first unit of FUNDAEC's text entitled, *Basic Arithmetic*. The purpose of this unit is to support students in developing a certain degree of proficiency with the fundamental capability of classifying things (FUNDEC, 2005). The other units that make up the Basic Arithmetic text are "Numerical Statements," "Addition and Subtraction," and "Multiplication and Division." In "Classification", attention is focused on the mathematical concepts related to set theory. Students apply the language of set theory to classify things found in their own social context. In the last lesson of the "Classification" unit, called Your Microregion, students make use of the capability to classify to begin to read the reality of their microregion as an initial step in carrying out social action. They are asked to identify, in the context of their microregion, the following sets—sets of common animal and plant species, sets of crops grown and animals raised for food, sets of crops that are combined to increase agricultural production and to repel insects, sets of crops grown for commercial purposes, sets of industries that process food, sets of shops, service-oriented jobs, government and private services, as well as sets of jobs that people in their microregion have. They think about how much work is carried out in rural areas and urban areas. In addition, they think about how trustworthiness and integrity are associated with the responsibilities of each profession and how the principle of justice is related to wellbeing in the context of work. These questions are investigated through conversations with community members. After having carried out this research, they come together as a group and share the insights they have generated, which are then systematized into a document that becomes a resource for the community. By classifying elements of sets related to key community life processes,

youth are in a sound position to be able to begin to consult with the community about social action that they would like to collaboratively engage in to improve the conditions of their community. For further details about how the activities in this text are organized, please refer to Appendix B which contains lessons from FUNDAEC's "Classification" unit.

Knowledge and Service

Because the PSA program does not perceive rural youth from a deficiency perspective, the content contained in the books is not watered down to make it "easy enough" for rural youth (FUNDAEC, 2006). Youth acquired knowledge progressively, by gaining an in-depth understanding of a concept, and drawing upon local funds of knowledge situated within their communities (Gonzalez et al., 2001). Youth gradually constructed their capacities by participating in a rigorous conceptual and action-oriented scientific curriculum, as described by a program tutor and a PSA graduate:

> When the PSA program begins in a community, it starts with small actions. At first they are very small but significant. Developing the capacity to have conversations about topics that are of interest to the community will assist youth in the future, as they progress and begin to engage in more complex actions.… The program starts with very simple acts of service, such as talking with people about environmental issues, until the conversations become more advance as they discuss putting in place systems to manage solid waste. At first the groups do not have the capacity to carry out such acts, but as they advance through the program they are able to do this. (PSA tutor)

> In high school one only studies, studies, and studies. In the PSA program we study and put in practice what we are learning. Theory and practice go hand in hand. This is very exciting—we learn about a theory and then we put it into action—it is very motivating for us youth to see what we can do and contribute to improve the betterment of society. (PSA graduate)

Below is a list of a set of common activities identified in this study that groups planned in collaboration with community members—including parents, local leaders and community organizations, and government agencies.

1. Establishing recreational parks to create spaces where the community can come together to strengthen community ties.
2. Putting in place the management of a solid waste system in neighborhoods that do not have access to such services.
3. Carrying out educational campaigns to prevent the spread of diseases such as zika and dengue.
4. Securing access to potable water for a neighborhood.
5. Setting up community gardens to help improve food sovereignty.
6. Offering classes to pre-school aged children and junior youth.

These service activities drew on the content groups were studying in the texts. However, the activities were not prescribed. The groups designed service projects based on the needs of their community. These activities were organized and implemented with community representatives to help ensure that they were integrated into the life process of the community. Below is a description of a service project focused on mitigating the spread of a virus called *chikunguña*. This activity emerged from the groups' discussion on an exercise contained in the PSA mathematics unit entitled Classification, which asks them to think about how viruses transmitted by insects can be prevented.

> The virus chikunguña is a new virus that is effecting the Colombian population, it is similar to dengue. Our region is very susceptible to this virus.… There are many people in the community who wanted to do know what we could do about this disease that was affecting a great number of people. Given the prevalence of chikunguña in our community, our PSA group decided to carry out a service project focused on this virus. We held meetings with the different entities in our region to coordinate this project—with the neighborhood councils, community leaders, as well as representatives of the mayor's office who work in the areas of health and those who work with the environment.

> There are preventative measures that the community can take to control the virus—but if we don't, there are very negative consequences. The health secretary reported that during the past season 14 people died from the virus in our department. Through this service activity, which consisted of holding community meetings, we were able to raise consciousness about how this virus spreads and how it can be controlled together with community leaders and government representatives. (PSA tutor)

This type of service activity was carried out by a number of PSA groups in the Cordoba region to help decrease the spread of viruses such as zika, dengue and chikunguña. Moreover, as a result of participation in this service activity, a number of participants became interested in the area of health and received further training upon completion of their participation in the PSA program to work as community health educators. Engagement in social action such as this contributed to identity development of youth and their vision for their future.

Below is an account of a project of a more complex nature that a PSA group organized with the community as they advanced through their study of the sequence of the texts in the program:

> In my neighborhood, we had a very interesting social action that transformed into a project of the neighborhood. In my community, we did not have running water. We only had one hose from which the whole community used to get water. The whole community would stand in line to get the water. The water would only come for a short time around 6:00 a.m. I would have to run to get water at the bottom of the hill, and then carry it all the way up this steep slope to my home. I began to talk with my PSA group about this challenge. We discussed as a group an act of service related to water.
>
> With the help of the president of the neighborhood council, a meeting was organized with the community to discuss with the topic of water. The community was in agreement that we had to do something about this as every day we needed to collect water. After this community meeting, we organized ourselves as a community to meet with the water company. The water company agreed to provide water to the community at a reasonable price. However, the responsibility of the community was to dig a well and connect all of the homes to the well. The PSA group together with the community made preparations to build a well to get water. (PSA graduate)

This project was initiated by a female participant that at the outset of the program was afraid to share her thoughts and ideas with others:

> I was different before. I used to be shy, if I wanted to express an idea I did not have the courage to do so. Now I feel I am more open, I spontaneously express myself. I don't keep quiet, if someone says something to me, I can defend myself—I'll say "No, señor." I have felt the change that there has been in me. I am now not afraid to talk in public. (PSA graduate)

These examples help demonstrate how PSA groups began to carry out social action with higher degrees of complexity that could evolve into community projects as they advanced through the texts in the curriculum.

Tutors: Facilitating Learning Processes

PSA groups are carried out in a local setting with the assistance of a local tutor who is trained by FUNDAEC. The following excerpt from a document prepared by FUNDAEC describes the role of the PSA tutor:

> The term "tutor" is not synonymous with "facilitator" as the word has come to be used in educational approaches that borrow the terminology from group therapy. The tutor is a trained teacher who knows more than the student. Yet, the teacher is also a learner and does not wield arbitrary authority. Tutors guide the students through the textbooks, raise questions and help find answers, clarify obscure matters, encourage reflection on real-life experience, and supervise experiments and social action. They do not lecture or dictate, but nor are they mere facilitators of group discussion. (FUNDAEC, 2006, p. 4)

In describing the relationship between the tutor and the student in the teaching/learning process, a tutor explained:

> From the first time that the program is presented it is made very clear that the tutor is not the person that knows the most. So the group begins in this way with the aim of forging a friendship. The tutor is the one who guides, who orients, the group learns together, a relationship is built that is not common in other educational systems. In other systems, the teacher is the one who knows, the one who gives orders, the one who says what is to be done. Here, there is freedom for someone who has an idea to share it, an idea that will help the group learn better is welcomed. The tutor is this friend, a guide and an orienteer. (PSA tutor)

In this way, tutors assisted participants to build their capacities by avoiding a banking approach to education; they adopted a posture to the teaching-learning process that enabled students to explore concepts and to build confidence in their potentialities, as demonstrated in these descriptions:

> Our work with the PSA groups is grounded in the belief that participants have potentialities that can be developed. I ask questions to participants, which opens up a space for them to share their thoughts on the topics being studied. (PSA tutor)

> I like being in these groups because they engage in dialogue about what they are studying. In the PSA group, everyone has an opportunity to contribute and share their ideas. (New PSA student)

> The tutor is a person with knowledge but the participant also has the opportunity to generate knowledge. (PSA graduate)

> The tutor is always there for us, but she makes it clear that she does not know everything perfectly and that we must contribute to this knowledge—helping one another. (New PSA student)

Along these lines, it can be noted that Gonzalez highlights that "accessing knowledge is not only an individual construction, but is socially mediated through more knowledgeable others, which is a category that is constantly shifting" (Gonzalez et al., 2001, p. 127). A key role of a tutor was creating spaces that allowed participants to engage in an ongoing learning process characterized by action-reflection consultation and study.

> As a tutor, I eschew rigid approaches to learning frequently utilized in formal schooling—we do not treat the students as a machine. I try to help participants to analyze and interpret what they are reading. (PSA tutor)

PSA students expressed that they appreciate participating in the PSA groups because it provided them with a space to engage in a dialogue about what they were studying. In the group, everyone had an opportunity to contribute and share their ideas. Participants described the methodology of the program as a process in which collective

understanding was built through consultation about the concepts studied in the texts. This approach was different to what they experienced in high school; for example, one student shared:

> In high school, the teacher just dictates lessons to us, we do not learn how to read and write well. The student may or may not pay attention to the teacher—but it doesn't really matter to the flow of the class. However, here youth are always participating in the group, it is like a dialogue or a conversation where we interact and share ideas, and we all reach an agreed upon conclusion. We all contribute what we are thinking, even if we have different ideas, we come to a common understanding. (New PSA student)

The careful consideration that FUNDAEC places on the formation of a tutor is connected to the emphasis that Vygotsky places on the key role of the instructor in a student's developmental process (Vygotsky, 1986). Vygotsky is very much concerned with the type of instruction that will help a student learn and internalize new ideas and concepts. He argues that a student cannot be likened unto a machine that automatically and mechanically assimilates new information and concepts. There is a complex process that the student goes through when learning a new concept. As instructors, PSA tutors supported youth in their conceptual development by engaging in a dialectical process through which youth interacted with a system of interconnected concepts found in the texts and the communities within which they were embedded.

The coordination team supported the formation of tutors' capacities through ongoing processes of training and accompaniment. Every three months tutors took part in a 4- to 5-day training in which they were prepared in the upcoming texts that would be studied with the group. The support the tutors received was not limited to participation in training. Coordinators regularly accompanied tutors in the group's study sessions. When the group was first formed, these visits were more frequent to help the tutor gain

confidence and experience with the materials and group. These visits also helped the coordinator to learn about the experience being generated with the different components of the program. In addition, tutor meetings were also held monthly with all of the tutors in the unit so that they could learn together about the implementation of the different components of the program. In this way, the coordinators and tutors worked shoulder to shoulder to promote the wellbeing of their communities through their efforts with the PSA program.

Groups: Microcosms for Participation in Society

As discussed above, the pedagogical relationships within the PSA group were not traditional ones; they were based on students working together to reach a common objective (FUNDEAC, 2006). Students and the tutor were challenged together to address concrete problems, and, in this way, a path of learning that the group has ownership of is opened up (FUNDAEC, 2006). The PSA group is a group of neighbors who share with each other their possibilities and challenges (FUNDAEC, 2006). In the context of the group, learning to dialogue is not only a learning objective but also a formative one. The PSA group becomes a space in which participants can develop their voice and gain the confidence needed to express their views and perspectives. In this sense, the PSA group is a microcosm for their participation in other social spaces within society. Towards this end, it can be noted that Gonzalez and colleagues emphasize that the construction of meaning is regulated through social relationships (Gonzalez et al., 2001). As a result of participation in the group with the assistance of the tutor, participants were able to express themselves more clearly.

> I was very shy, quiet, when I started the program. I did not have much verbal communication with others. PSA has helped me to communicate better with

> others. I have developed the capacity to dialogue in the program—working as a group, we maintain dialogue with others in a natural way. We are able to create ideas that can help solve the difficulties that the communities face. (PSA graduate)

A tutor highlighted:

> Many participants are shy when they first enter the program. As they advance through the program they begin to participate more—they want to talk, and are interested in sharing their ideas. At first they were very reluctant to have an opinion in relation to anything that one would ask them but as they advanced through the content they wanted to say what they were thinking about in relation to the theme being discussed. So all of these changes take place through this process, and as the books contain a lot of reading they give the students a lot to reflect on. (PSA tutor)

Through participation in the PSA program, young women and men developed their powers of expression. A female graduate of the program explained:

> What I learned in the PSA program was about participation … how to express myself … In high school I wouldn't participate in classes or share my ideas in an oral or written form. I have improved a lot in this aspect because of the PSA program. The methodology of the classes and the way in which the texts are organized enabled me to share my ideas and acquire knowledge. (PSA graduate)

The majority of students entered the program with low reading and writing skills. Parents conveyed that due to the oversized classrooms and the poor quality of education in the formal school systems, when their children reach high school, they do not know how to read and write. Parents expressed that the methodology of the PSA program, which gradually and systematically covered the concepts in the materials with depth, helped their children to gain a solid understanding of the content and improve their reading and writing capacities.

> We have many skills and capacities, but sometimes they are just there (latently) and we do not develop them. The PSA program has helped my children to develop many abilities—for example in writing and reading, these are areas in which they have great difficulties but through the program they have been able to steadily improve. (Parent)

The groups advanced as a collective whole, taking into account the diversity of the participants in the group. Such an approach eschewed competitive approaches to learning and fostered collaboration. Through the methodology employed in the PSA program based on principles of collaboration and mutual support, the participants "learned how to respect one another" as they made an effort to improve their reading and writing skills.

> The PSA youth become expressive. When they gain understanding about a concept, they then take the risk to express themselves, and to even express aspects of the concept they still are learning about and to make mistakes. At first when some students made mistakes, there would be those who would tease them. However, with time they learned that the person gave their opinion and made a mistake. This is really an excellent methodology—not only does it have an impact on an intellectual level, it has an impact on a social level—it helps them in their interactions as youth. (Government official)

The collective learning environment that was fostered in the PSA group encouraged participants to dialogue with each other about the concepts they were learning about in the PSA texts and how they could be applied to the reality of their community. Through this process participants improved their capacity to communicate with others and overcame their fears to express their ideas. The types of relationships developed in the group extended beyond the activities that took place in the program, influencing their interactions with members of the wider community.

Community: Building Mutually Reciprocal Relationships

Engaging in service with the community is at the heart of the educational process of the groups. Students participated in education, production, and other local activities with the community. Participation in these activities gave purpose and meaning to the youth's educational processes. Engagement in acts of service also built the legitimacy of the program, as community members were able to perceive the impact of the program.

The communities supported the groups by sharing with them their knowledge. As such, in a mutually reciprocal way, capacity for social action was built within the participants and the community members with whom they carried out acts of service.

An example of practical ways in which youth applied the mathematics they learned in the program to the needs of their communities was by helping their families and small businesses prepare budgets as well as profit and loss statements. This practice was useful in assisting small businesses and families adjust their financial operations in order to increase their profits. The paragraphs below provide a few accounts of how participants applied this knowledge.

In an effort to assist his mother with the challenging economic situation they faced, one youth and his mother opened up a small store. They began the store as a small initiative drawing on the learning the son gained in the PSA program. The PSA graduate and his mother described this initiative:

> What one learns in the PSA program is how to identify profitable options or the best economic options that one has available. With my mother, we began our store small, as you do in the PSA program. We decided that if things worked out we would increase the variety of products that we sell. (PSA graduate)

> We saw the results and our store grew little by little and we have been able to maintain it. Our house used to be much smaller; with what we have been able to save from the store, we have added two rooms, two bathrooms, and this addition that can be used for family gatherings or community events [a large room where the interview was taking place]. We just built this room three months ago. (Mother)

This small enterprise was organized around the principle of organic growth—they started the store small and expanded it based on the experience they were gaining. The PSA student was conscious of the need to take an approach of organic growth in order to ensure that the business endeavor grew steadily on a strong foundation.

Many small businesses in Colombia are informal and do not keep financial records. Without these records, entrepreneurs do not know if they are making or losing money. They also do not know what their profits and losses are, placing the enterprise in jeopardy. With the learning students gained in the PSA program, they were able to put in place financial systems that tracked the movement of funds and resources within their enterprises. Fishing is a mainstay of the livelihoods of many of the communities in the department of Cordoba. Through the knowledge acquired in PSA, graduates working in the area of pisciculture have learned how to better organize their fish-farming activities.

> Luis was not that good in mathematics but he has now learned how to do some accounting, which has helped him a lot. Now he is planning and is more organized—for example when he buys fish, he knows how he can organize the sales so that he can sell under more favorable conditions—so the PSA program really gives us a basis for planning things. (PSA tutor)

Study and engagement in the practice components of the PSA texts supported students to develop the capacity to analyze their communities by focusing on processes of community life. Examples of processes of community life included in the PSA texts are the education of children, animal husbandry, and agricultural production. Participants examined the chains of activity that made up community life processes, while acquiring knowledge that assisted them to work with community members to help advance these processes. Participants learned about forces, such as cultural, political, and economic forces, that affected the unfolding of these processes. Below is an excerpt from a document prepared by FUNDAEC that describes how participants are supported to understand and engage with forces that affect the life of their community.

> The manner in which the chains of activity constituting a given process of community life are carried out does not stay constant over time. Economic, political, technological and cultural forces cause often gradual and at times sudden change. These changes, while inevitable, have consequences for the social

> and spiritual life of the community. To take ownership of its own development requires people to become more and more aware of these consequences. The promoter of community well-being, therefore, needs to comprehend the nature of various processes of community life and the forces that affect them, beginning with one in which he or she is intimately involved. A group of promoters serving a given community must ask: How can individuals and groups within the community be enabled to analyze one or another process of life and to envision a desirable direction of change? How can the corresponding chains of activity be improved in order to bring about the desired change in the process, no matter how small? What acts of service can we perform to spearhead these improvements? (FUNDAEC, 2016)

Community Meetings

Community meetings are a way in which the PSA program is integrated into the community. At the outset of program, community meetings were focused on presenting the program to the community. As the program progressed, the purpose of the meetings evolved. Community meetings served as a way for consultation to take place—in this space, community members, local leaders and youth gained ownership of the development processes being promoted in the program. This approach to development is distinct from pre-packaged programs that dictate prescribed, rigid measures to be followed.

As a way to foster learning on a community level, PSA groups organized community meetings as a space in which the PSA group and community have an opportunity discuss their knowledge about agriculture and other matters related to the life of the community. During community meetings, knowledge was shared—the knowledge of community elders and knowledge the younger generation was acquiring.

> There is traditional knowledge, knowledge that comes from our grandparents, from *campesinos* that we should value—not only the knowledge from theory, but knowledge from the community. If we want this to work (sharing of knowledge at the community level)—then we need to promote a sense of ownership, belonging, membership. This is achieved when people participate—and in fact many adults, parents of the PSA students, have shared and collaborated a lot with their

> knowledge and with their actions. This is how we are conceiving of community meetings at this time. (PSA tutor)

During community meetings in which the topic of agriculture was addressed, the community and PSA groups consulted about their knowledge regarding agricultural production (Field notes, Cordoba, 2014). The aim of this interchange was to marry together traditional and modern knowledge in such a way that could be used to increase agricultural production (Field notes, Cordoba, 2014).

Mode of Operation: A Methodology of Action-Research

The implementation of the PSA program makes use of a methodology of action-research. Through the use of this methodology, the PSA regional coordination team strove to operate in a mode of learning in which they consulted, acted, studied and reflected on their action in order to plan for next steps with the program and to make any needed adjustments. The administrative arrangements of FUNDAEC include a core group at its central office comprised of people who have a long-term commitment to the organization, thereby ensuring that the adaptations made to the program are connected to its vision. At the same time, processes of ongoing human resource development have been built into the program through the ongoing training and accompaniment of tutors and coordinators to ensure the continual advancement and sustainability of the program. This approach is distinct from a mechanistic approach to program implementation that formulaically follows a prescribed list of do's and don't's. Appendix A contains a description of some of the principal activities of the PSA program and how they draw on a methodology of action-research to help ensure that its efforts are both aligned with the vision of the program and correspond to local realities. The description of these activities sheds further light on the perception youth in the study had with regard to how the

program contributed to the development of their identities as promoters of community wellbeing. The programmatic activities described in Appendix A include the formation of PSA groups, community meetings, the service and practical components of PSA, and production projects.

Networks of Social Relationships

This study also explored the role of networks of social relationships in the PSA program in relation to the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of the networks of social relationships that are formed in the Preparation for Social Action program? What do these networks actually do?
- How do these networks support youth in the development of their identities as promoters of community wellbeing where the PSA program is strong?
- What do the networks look like where the program is weak?

This study found that in communities where the program was more fully established, networks of social relationships were formed and made up of ties that served as bonds and bridges. In this section, I present data that illustrate how the bonds that comprised these networks of social relationships were characterized by mutual support, collaboration, and trust among the various actors in the PSA program. I also demonstrate how these networks were made up of ties that functioned as bridges—bridges that linked PSA participants with key community entities and resources that helped to improve their educational and livelihood opportunities. In the paragraphs below, I describe the findings as to how network ties functioned as bonds and bridges and the influences these had on the identity development of youth in the PSA program as promoters of community wellbeing.

Bonds of Mutual Support, Collaboration and Trust

Networks made up of bonds of mutual support and collaboration emerged at three different levels of the PSA program—1) at the level of the tutors, networks of collaboration were built, 2) among the student, tutor and the PSA group, networks of learning were developed, and, 3) among the parents, tutors and students, networks characterized by mutual support and trust were fostered.

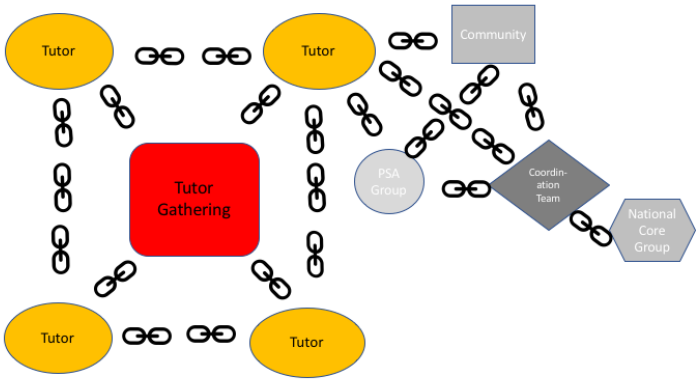
Networks of Collaboration among Tutors

This study found that tutors did not work in isolation from one another, nor did they work together in a competitive way. In order to foster relationships of collaboration among the tutors, the program incorporated spaces that supported tutors to work as teams. In these spaces, strong relationships of a collaborative nature were developed among tutors. During regularly held tutor gatherings, tutors freely and openly shared the knowledge they were gaining with the program (Field Notes, Cordoba, 2016). This knowledge and experience was transmitted to the students and the groups with which they worked (Field Notes, Cordoba, 2016). Below is an account of how a PSA graduate benefitted from the collaborative relationship among the tutors from different regions in Colombia.

> During our study of the unit Environmental Issues, the tutor highlighted that the natural environment contains resources we can make use of in a sustainable way. He mentioned that he had learned during a tutor gathering from a fellow tutor in the Eje Cafetero (the Coffee Region) that a FUNDAEC student had set up a recycling business—… a formal micro-enterprise that he established and was running. I remember that the tutor asked us—Now, what can we do here? What can you each of you do? It was there when I made this connection with the example of what had occurred in the Eje Cafetero, I thought—What can we do with the resources in our community?… I was able to put this thought into action by setting up my own small business with resources local to our community. (PSA graduate)

In order to be able to strengthen the networks of tutors throughout the country, a key function of FUNDAEC's coordination teams at the national and regional levels is to systematize and disseminate the learning being generated within the program (Field Notes, Cali, 2016). The example above illustrates how the experiences generated in one region can help strengthen the program in other regions of the country. The graphic below (Figure 5.2) illustrates how the networks of collaboration among the tutors and the coordination team facilitated a flow of knowledge. The symbol ⚯ in the graphic represents the flow of knowledge. The dense relationships among the tutors, community, PSA group, and coordination team is depicted in this graphic. The knowledge generated among the collaborative efforts of these actors is shared with the core group that systematizes and disseminates the learning being generated with the program at a national level.

Figure 5.2 Network of collaboration among PSA actors

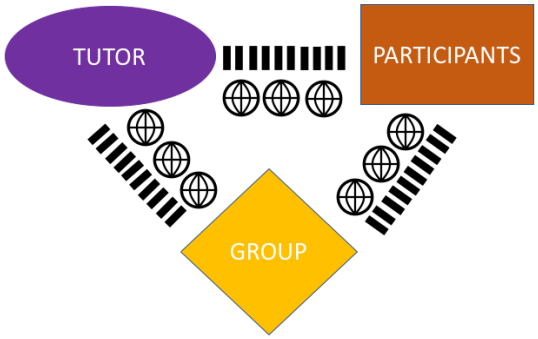


Networks of Learning among Participants, Groups and Tutors

As previously described, the environment within the PSA group is characterized by bonds of mutual support. This environment fosters the development of close bonds between the tutor and student, and among the members of the group. These relationships

led to the development of a positive social network characterized by mutual support and an attitude of learning. The graphic (Figure 5.3) below represents the bonds that characterize the network of learning that is created among tutors, participants and the group in the PSA program. The symbol in the graphic presents a bond characterized by an attitude of learning and the symbol represents bonds of mutual support that made up this network that the program helped create.

Figure 5.3 Network characterized by learning



Through participation in these networks, youth gained an awareness of the potential they have to contribute to the betterment of their communities and an inner motivation required to develop the capacities necessary to do so.

> The PSA participants enjoy learning with other people, it is a collaborative learning process. If a participant is not able to understand something a peer explains it to them in their own words … The members of the group become friends—each one is concerned about the wellbeing of others. When a participant doesn't attend the group the others want to know why he or she is not there and they go and find out. In the same way, when one of them does not understand a concept, someone from the group explains it to them, if that doesn't work someone else tries. They keep working together until the group can guarantee that they all understand the concept. (Government official)

> If there is a problem, one should not get stuck, always search for a solution. There is not a fear of failure, we are trying to learn how to advance. (PSA tutor)

Networks of mutual support and trust among tutors, PSA participants and parents

Many parents and youth in this study expressed that participation in the PSA program helped to strengthen their familial relationships, as the program opened up spaces in which they had an opportunity to increase communication. The program helped to strengthen the bonds between the parents and their children by engaging parents in the social action youth initiated.

> I had the opportunity to establish a plot with my group. We were so moved when we invited the parents to a meeting and they all came. So they asked—what are we going to do? The participants explained, we are planning on planting a vegetable garden. And I was so surprised when one of the parents mentioned but we don't have land to plant it on and then another said, I have some land that we can use for the vegetable garden.… All of the parents and the students helped with the garden. We were there every day—we were all there planting and caring for the crops. I think this is because the PSA program fosters this type of relationship between the students, parents and tutors.… We always invite the parents to integrate and participate in the community and service activities … so they too are integrated and feel part of the program. (PSA tutor)

The collaborative relationships generated with parents among various groups helped participants increase knowledge that was put into action at the community level.

> When the group harvested the corn that they had grown, they were not sure what do with it. After consulting for some time they decided that they want to learn how to make *bollos* and one of my daughters said, I don't know how to, but my mother does. So they came to me and asked if I would teach them how to make *bollos*, so I said—Okay, bring me the corn and I will help, so amongst us all we ground the corn, I taught them to make the *bollos*, we wrapped them, and then they went out and sold them. The community was surprised—they said, What are these *bollos* for? So the youth explained that it was a production project of their group, they grew the corn and now they were selling the *bollos* to pay for their textbooks. (PSA parent)

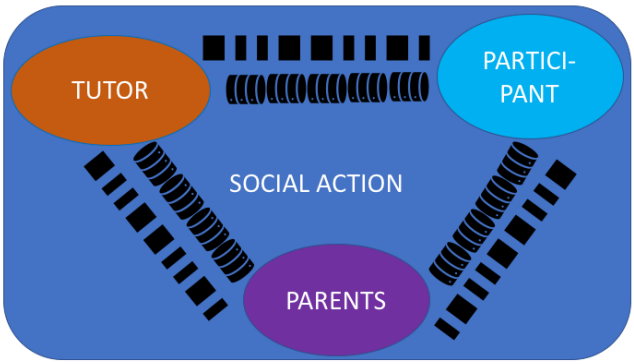
Tutors made a conscious effort to develop strong relationships based on trust with participants' parents. These relationships were nurtured through periodic visits to parents and inviting them to engage in the social action initiated by the group. The aim of these

relationships was to both integrate parents into the community building efforts of the program and to support their children's participation in the program:

> One has to become friends, not simply a teacher, but really know the students' families. As a tutor, I always like to get to know my participants' families and engage in conversations with them so that they can get to know me. As such when they have a difficulty with their child they come to me and we discuss it. So I always like there to be this trust, this mutual support between the parents, the tutor and the student. I work on building this trust. (PSA tutor)

Below is a graphic (Figure 5.4) that shows how engagement in social action served to strengthen the bonds of trust and mutual support between parents, tutors, and PSA participants. The symbol ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ signifies the bonds of trust that are strengthened in the program and the symbol (((((represents the bonds of mutual support generated through participation in social action.

Figure 5.4 Networks of mutual support and trust



The development of relationships of trust and collaboration through increased communication with parents supported youth in the development of identities aimed promoting community wellbeing, and to eschew engagement in illicit activities.

> Here in the neighborhood there are people who use drugs, who are a security risk because they have to steal in order to maintain their habit. This is the case of family members of the participants. Sometimes a participant expresses that, for example, an uncle stole something from his wife so that he could sell it to maintain his habit. These are things that happen on a daily basis—we do not like youth to be involved in these things…. It is a constant struggle because there are

> dangers, dangers that offer temptations to the youth, these things are inevitable, one has to know how to deal with them.
>
> It is for this reason that I try to have a very good relationship with the parents of the participants and the participants themselves. I visit the parents to strengthen our relationship, whenever there is an activity, the parents are always willing to participate, not because I visit them but because they know the movement that we are advancing. (PSA tutor)

In areas where the PSA is strong and more fully established, visits to parents is an activity that begins at the outset of the program and is maintained throughout its duration—ensuring that parents are a key part of the social action in which the youth engage. In conversations that I had with parents, they expressed their appreciation for the PSA program because of the ethical values and principles that the program transmitted to their children (Field notes, May, 2018, personal communication with parents). They also highlighted the academic advances their children experienced in the program:

> When my children entered high school, they could not read and write well. The formal school system does not provide quality education. The PSA program goes deep into explaining concepts, it helped my children to improve their reading and writing skills. (Parent)

Eschewing Engagement in Illicit Activities

The bonds of mutual support, collaboration, and trust that were built among youth, tutors, and parents through engagement in the PSA program resulted in the emergence of networks of positive social relationships aimed at promoting individual and community wellbeing. Parents, community members, and youth themselves expressed that the social support and guidance youth gained from participation in these networks prevented them from engaging in delinquent activities and helped to improve their academic performance (Field notes, Cordoba, 2016). The respect that participants gained for one another and their community members in the program extended beyond their participation in the group activities and was applied to their wider involvement in society,

enabling them to resist the pressures and negative forces of armed and drug-trafficking groups in the region (Field notes, May, 2016, personal communication with community member).

> We have had a lot of firsthand experiences with these criminal groups. It was almost every day that someone from our community was assassinated—the youth here have been influenced by the activities of the criminal groups—for example where I live a criminal group came around and began to interact with members of the community. (PSA graduate)

Criminal groups target vulnerable youth populations to become involved in their activities. These groups try to recruit vulnerable populations to become a part of their activities by creating what participants in this study have called "false friendships" that manipulated youth to getting involved in illicit activities. Once youth got involved in the activities of these groups it was very difficult for them to leave them. As the majority of the families of participants in the PSA program in the Costa Caribe have limited economic resources, these youth are targeted to be drawn into the activities of criminal groups.

> In order to gain recruits for their activities, these groups would try to become friends with you, but it was a false friendship they were making. Even I experienced this, I was playing soccer and then one of them came up to me and we started to talk. My friends and I didn't realize who these people were, but then we saw them take out their guns and put them away. We were frightened when we saw this, and began to ask who these people were and what are they doing here. We discovered that they were paramilitaries, so we did not interact with them—except one person from our group. He began to have a relationship with them, and although he didn't invite me to join their activities, he insinuated this option to other friends. Many people who got involved in these groups had to leave the community, because later their lives were threatened. A friend of mine had to leave the community for a while because they came to kill him.
>
> This friend told me about his involvement with them. He joined the paramilitary group, ACCU, to get some work. They told him they were going to take him to Antioquia work on a farm where he would oversee the plantain crops. Mid-way to Antioquía, the leaders stopped the truck and told everyone in the truck that they had to do what they ordered and if they did not their families would pay. My friend told them that he didn't want to be there—they responded

> by telling him that it didn't matter he was obliged to stay and could not leave. (PSA graduate)

A strategy these groups utilized to recruit youth to participate in their activities was by enticing them with the illusion of acquiring money in a quick and easy way.

> They begin by asking them—Do you want to make a million pesos in a month? There are many people who are in difficult economic situations. The paramilitary take advantage of this by saying—work with me.… they make everything sound so easy, even though they know that it is not easy. In this way, the paramilitary entices the youth to join. (Member of a teachers association)

The tutors and PSA participants tried to have meaningful conversations with youth from their communities in which they explored the perils of getting involved with armed groups and discuss how prosperity could be pursued. Nonetheless, as described in the account below, the alluring expectation of receiving a significant amount of money in a short amount of time was compelling to a number of youth who had not participated in the PSA program. A PSA tutor offered the following account about how a youth from his community became involved in an armed group:

> I had an experience related to this with a youth from here—he said that he wanted a pair of expensive shoes and pants. I mentioned that if you work toward that you can get it. Six days had passed and I was looking for him. No one had seen him. I went to his mother's house every evening to ask for him, and they didn't know where he was. And then one day around this time he came to my house. He was very scared, frightened—he said Jorge, what happened is that I got myself into a really big problem. Do you remember that I told you that I wanted some things—I didn't know what I was going to do but I wanted these things. Well, I got involved with a group of *sicarios* (hired killers that work for drug cartels). I got out of the group and look what happened to me. He, then showed me his ribs that were all beaten up and swollen. He explained to me in these words what happened—I presented myself to the *sicarios*. They gave me a gun and told me that this gun was my working tool. They would pay me a million pesos each month to do whatever they told me to do. If I did not do what they said, they would kill my whole family. (PSA tutor)

This study found that being drawn into the activities of criminal groups was a reality that youth in certain communities in this zone faced. Youth who do not have not a

strong family unit are at greater risk of falling into the trap these groups. The PSA program helped prevent youth in the program from getting swayed into being involved with these groups through the orientation they received from the tutors, the strong positive friendships that they built with the tutors and students, the relationship that were fostered between parents and the students, the educational content they studied and the service activities in which they engaged.

Struggles with Drug Addiction

The Costa Caribe region has been targeted as a region to traffic illicit drugs such as cocaine and others because of the presence of the network of the armed groups throughout the region (UNOCD, 2015). The rate of illicit drug use among the youth population between the ages of 18-24 increased 38% in Colombia from 2008 to 2013 (UNOCD, 2015). In a number of the small communities in the Costa Caribe region where the PSA groups are being formed, these drug cartels organize large fiestas with music in the central plazas during which drugs are widely distributed at no cost with the hope of getting youth hooked on their product (Field Notes, November, 2016, Conversation with tutors). The increased levels of drug trafficking and consumption in these communities has resulted in increased violence and robberies in order to sustain drug use (Field notes, November, 2016).

Within this climate, PSA had a transformational impact on the lives of youth who came into the program and were struggling with the challenges of drug use. A member of a teachers association explained that:

> parents are concerned about certain social problems, such as drug use, that are affecting society in general—in the rural and urban areas…. I know many examples of youth that left our educational system and they were hitting rock bottom and their situation was one in which they were stealing, among other

> things. And today I see them with a different attitude. Through their process with the PSA program there was great improvement, human life was improved, which is what is the objective of education. (Member of a teachers association)

Below is an account of a youth who was struggling with drug addiction when he entered the PSA program and the transformation that he experienced in the program:

> There was a youth in our community and his parents could not control him—especially when he entered adolescence. The PSA program came to him, because some of his friends invited him to participate in it. At first he was not interested, and the group began to develop a relationship with him, and they also built a relationship with his parents. Today his parents' give a lot of thanks to the PSA program—they say that the program has totally transformed him. He is a person who is totally different now, concerned for the wellbeing of others—he has been helping out as a community facilitator for the past few years. He made studying a priority and finished his high school degree and completed an associate's degree. This individual is now a great resource for the community.…
>
> This individual was dealing drugs and stealing for his drug use. The change was not immediate, but little by little he began to drift away from his old friends and until he completely detached from them. But most important was to rebuild the trust of the community; this took time. This is very difficult to do, because when one is involved in these activities, the community has a great deal of mistrust.… He was able to rebuild this trust and know the community loves him very much, they respect his work and there is no doubt that these other activities are in the past. (PSA coordinator)

Most of the youth in the PSA program where the program was well-established had a network of social support and a trained tutor who was taking them through the PSA curriculum, developing in them capacities that prevented youth from becoming involved in illicit activities. However, in units where the program was not fully developed, the influences of drug trafficking groups continued to influence the decisions that tutors and youth made.

Developing Moral Structures for Decision-Making

> This study found that youth who were not in the program had a lot of free and idle time that they spent *callejeando* (hanging out on the streets with friends).
> I finished high school two years ago, I was going to continue studying but I began working with as a *mototaxista*. Whenever I have free time, I spend it hanging out

on the streets. (Non-PSA youth)

Idle time on the streets was found to make youth vulnerable to engagement in illicit activities. However, participation with PSA helped counteract the pressures youth faced to engage in such activities. The program helped youth become less susceptible to being drawn into these activities "through the education and accompaniment they received, and their participation in student encounters, spaces in which the youth shared and learned from the other groups" (PSA graduate).

> A lot of youth go to high school or university and then the rest of their time is free. The PSA program helps youth not to feel alone, they feel that there are people who want them to progress and they become empowered by this. (PSA graduate)

The schedule of the youth in this study who participated in the PSA program was full—many were attending high school, participating in the program for some 10 hours a week plus additional time they dedicated to carrying out service activities and production projects. In this way, they were protected; as their schedules were full, they were not as vulnerable to negative forces they would encounter if they were *callejeando*. Nonetheless, the purpose of the PSA program was not to fill up their schedules by entertaining them. Such an approach would have been paternalistic, patronizing, and thus would not have enabled them to develop the capacities they needed to become protagonists of change. The program was helping them to build a moral and intellectual structure that allowed them to find meaning with their educational experience and how this connected to their future plans. The program enabled participants to build a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve and the capacities needed to work towards that vision. With this vision at the forefront of their minds, they had the internal motivation to make use of their time constructively, which served as a guide to orient the network of

positive social relationships that were developing in the program, relationships that helped support them in their efforts to contribute towards the betterment of their community.

The educational content of the PSA program helped youth to make decisions about their future. However, the program did not take the approach of imparting moralizing sermons, which tell youth what is wrong or right. Rather, it opened up spaces in which they reflected, gained understanding, and thought critically, thereby helping them to develop a conceptual framework that they had ownership of and that guided their decision-making processes.

> The good thing about the texts of the program is that they have a unique characteristic that are the reflections.… The reflections invite participants to think profoundly about qualities and attitudes that benefit the community, they fostered a desire to serve … these reflections have helped us a lot. (PSA graduate)

Below is an example of a reflection from a science unit called "The Heating and Cooling of Matter". This unit aims to help participants foster some of the capabilities that scientists draw upon to study and understand the world around them (FUNDAEC, 2005, p. viii). Scientific concepts studied in this unit include observation, temperature, heat, force and pressure, among others—after studying about these concepts in the realm of science, participants reflected on their meaning in their everyday lives. The following reflection in "The Heating and Cooling of Matter" is from the Lesson called Pressure. After having considered the concept of pressure in the context of the physical sciences, students reflect on the concept of peer pressure:

> Just as the word *force* has meanings outside the realm of science, pressure is also a concept that is used in everyday contexts. One important concept, especially for youth, is that of *peer pressure*. Peer pressure can be a powerful force, either positive or negative, that leads a person to make decisions out of a desire to "fit in" or gain the acceptance of others. Positive peer pressure occurs when a group

> of friends influence each other to act morally and make good decisions. Sometimes, unfortunately, a person may feel pressure from his peers to do something that he does not want to do or feels is wrong. He may be tempted to leave his better judgement behind out of the fear of not being accepted.
>
> Your task as promoters of community well-being is to create an atmosphere around you in which others are encouraged to act wisely and with good judgment. The power of a peer group for positive change can be a major force. What are some of the ways you can create positive peer pressure around you? (FUNDAEC, 2005, p. 50)

Ties that Bridge Youth to Community Resources

The paragraphs below describe how the PSA program developed a network of ties that bridged youth to valuable community entities and resources, and how these ties influenced the development their identities as promoters of community wellbeing. Particular attention is placed on how the program that linked youth to educational institutions and local businesses in the region enabled them to enhance their livelihood opportunities.

Linking youth to educational entities

In the communities where the PSA program was more fully established, coordinators were developing relationships with educational institutions in the region, which allowed youth to gain access to further specialized vocational training. The Colombian government provides free technical training to young people in order for them to be able to become proficient in a trade or craft that they can apply in the formal or informal market. This education is offered through the National Vocational Training Agency—*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (SENA). The programs offered by SENA are difficult for young people to access because of the limited number of spaces available. From the interviews and focus groups conducted with the young people in this study, it was found that those who were not in the PSA program who had applied to the technical

degree offered by SENA were not accepted. These youth felt disillusioned by the lack of educational opportunities available to them, and had given up trying to pursue a technical education (Interviews and focus groups with youth not in the PSA program, July 2016). On the other hand, those youth affiliated with the PSA program were provided with accompaniment and support that enabled them to be accepted into the programs offered by SENA.

As a result of an initiative of the PSA coordinators, FUNDAEC was able to develop agreements with SENA on a regional level through which SENA offered its programs to groups of youth affiliated with the PSA program. Through this agreement, SENA made available its programs to groups of at least 25 participants interested in the same technical training that was organized by FUNDAEC. This arrangement allowed for youth in the PSA program to participate in technical training in primary and secondary agricultural production. At the time of this study, there were ongoing plans for SENA to offer further training to PSA youth participants and other contacts that FUNDAEC has with the youth population. Youth who participated in the training offered by SENA were applying the knowledge that they gained to the production projects they were carrying out. The relationship FUNDAEC is developing with SENA is an example of FUNDAEC serving as a bridge between government resources and marginalized youth populations.

Connecting Youth to Local Businesses

PSA coordinators had developed relationships with local business owners, such as seamstresses, carpenters, bakers, mechanics and construction companies, who offered apprenticeship and internship opportunities to youth. These practical experiences enabled

youth engaged with the PSA program to develop the capacities needed to become proficient in a trade or production project.

> The tutors carried out research activities in which they visited different people in the zone that dedicate themselves to a trade—particular attention was placed on tailors, carpentry, cheese producers, mechanics, bakers, and seamstresses. Through this research project, the tutors had an opportunity to get to know each one of these trades people—how they acquired knowledge about their field of expertise and decided to dedicate themselves to a particular trade or craft. This was a very important exercise, as the tutors were able to appreciate the role that these trades have in the economy and wellbeing of the region. As a result of this research activity many tutors are interested in learning about these trades. The tradespeople who visited have offered to teach their trade of expertise to those who are interested in learning about them. (PSA coordinator)

As a result of the relationships developed with business owners, FUNDAEC put in place an apprenticeship program. This apprenticeship program linked diverse groups of people working with trades to the youth population, increasing the livelihood opportunities of young people participating in the PSA program in their local communities. In order to strengthen the efficacy of FUNDAEC's work in bridging youth to these resources, PSA coordinators concentrated their efforts on widening the scope of businesses with whom they had a relationship.

The graphic (Figure 5.5) below depicts how the PSA program bridged youth typically isolated from community resources to educational entities and local businesses, enhancing their livelihood opportunities. The symbol ||||| in the graphic represents the bridging function of the PSA program to key educational and economic opportunities. A later section in this chapter will illustrate how many of the youth in these communities with similar socio-economic characteristics but not involved in the PSA program were constrained from accessing these resources.

Figure 5.5 Bridging youth to community resources

Building relationships with organizations

As described above, FUNDAEC envisions one of its key roles in promoting processes of social change as being that of a bridge—bridging marginalized groups with resources that the community offers. It also aims to bridge together like-minded organizations in the region so that integrated and coordinated efforts can be advanced that serve to promote the development of a region. FUNDAEC does not presume to be an organization that has the answers or a prescribed recipe for development. It strives to carry out its programs with other like-minded organizations in the region. Below is an extract of a conversation a regional coordinator was having with members of the teachers association that demonstrates this perspective.

> I think that we can do a lot together, and that undoubtedly your support is fundamental… FUNDAEC cannot do it alone.… we do not have a formula.… but together among the efforts of many we will be able to construct development for our region. So it is not about receiving things from FUNDAEC, it's about together how can we learn and how can we carry out all these programs together. (Regional PSA coordinator)

Coordinators built relationships with like-minded community organizations and local government agencies in the region—these groups include teachers associations,

Afro-Colombian and indigenous groups, artisan groups, community councils, the regional ministry of health, and secretary of education. These relationships were drawn upon in the service activities and other community activities that the groups carried out with the community. Such activities include establishing community agricultural plots, putting in place solid waste management systems, health awareness initiatives, and water-related activities. Through the collaborative efforts that these organizations engaged in, together they began to operate as a network among themselves.

> Due to the PSA program, the community itself is getting involved in development activities—the different institutions in the community are working together for the progress of the community, we didn't see this before. (PSA tutor)

The development of relationships with like-minded organizations is an area that the program wants to further strengthen. When strong relationships are not built with local leaders and organizations, the program is perceived as not being relevant to the development of the community. For example, in one of the units, the coordination team was experiencing difficulties and did not have the resources needed at the unit level to develop relationships with the local institutions. During focus group discussions with community groups in this unit, it became apparent that there was not coordination between the program and these groups. This lack of collaboration resulted in a duplication of community building activities and that inhibited the program from being integrated into the community. The lack of a strong coordinating team inhibited the community from having ownership of the program.

Youth Not Engaged in the PSA Program

Youth in this study who were not engaged in the PSA program did not have access to the networks described above that would have helped link them to educational

institutions or apprenticeship opportunities. Many youth tried to access such opportunities and were unsuccessful, causing them to feel frustrated by the obstacles they faced. Examples of challenges encountered by these youth included studying at degree programs in newly established technical institutes that were not officially recognized institutions by the government. These institutions, referred to as *institutos de garaje* are unregistered institutions that deceive youth by causing them to believe that they will receive a valid degree upon graduating from their program. During a focus group, a youth explained that he had spent all of his and his families' hard-earned savings on the registration fees at an unregistered institute where he was studying a mechanics program. After having studied at this institute for several years, it suddenly closed down and disappeared. Due to this experience, this youth was frustrated and decided not to continue his studies:

> I fix automobile and motor bike tires and do some mechanical work. I learned how to do this watching my father at his repair workshop. I was never able to study mechanics. I submitted my papers to study a mechanical degree with the SENA but I never got a space in the program. After having graduated from high school, I studied at a technical institution, but it was a *pirata* ("pirate") and the program was not officially recognized, valid. I was there for two years, and was very angry when I found out it wasn't a legal institution—so I have decided to stay at [my father's] workshop. (Youth not in PSA program)

Unregistered educational institutions (*piratas*) in the region deceive many youth from rural communities charging them high fees to study in their programs, which are not registered. Youth in the PSA program receive an orientation that ensures that the places they apply to study are officially recognized institutions that offer quality education.

Other challenges that youth who had not participated in the PSA program faced included difficulties in obtaining the documentation needed to register for programs of study in officially recognized institutes. For example, during a focus group a youth

shared that he was not able to acquire an identity card from the government after having tried for several years. This youth explained:

> I would like to study a technical degree in mechanics to be able to fix the *mototaxis* here in our community to ensure that people have access to transportation. However, my papers are not in order, I don't have an identity card which is the most important document for being admitted into an educational institution—if I had this document I would be studying now. I do not have it because of a *parentesco* problem, which means that there is another person which has the same identity as I do—someone else in the country with the same first and last name and same identity number—another person who is identified the same way that I am. It is a very long and costly process to fix this and get an identity card, there is a solution to this but it is quite complicated. (Youth not in the PSA program)

Support to obtain such documentation is extended to youth in the PSA program. This study found that those youth who had not participated in the PSA program had possessed the intention and desire to pursue a higher education; however, due to the lack of support and obstacles faced, they were unable to obtain these objectives.

Future Aspirations of Youth

A third area examined in this research is the future aspirations of the youth, comparing the aspirations of PSA participants with those who had not participated in the program. Towards this end, the following questions were explored in this study:

- What types of aspirations do youth in the PSA program have in regard to their future livelihoods?
- How optimistic are youth about their ability to advance towards these aspirations?
- What differences are there between the aspirations of youth involved in the PSA program and those who are not engaged in the program?

The youth who graduated from the PSA program had a clear vision of the purpose of their future career path—they were interested in pursuing careers that would both increase their own livelihoods and contribute to the wellbeing of their community. The

majority of the youth who graduated from the program had a desire to pursue some form of post-secondary education. Their vision for their future became clearer as they advanced through the program, as noted by a tutor and program graduate:

> Upon graduating from the PSA program, many youth continue to study and work. They have a sense of responsibility upon completion of the program to continue to move towards their goals (*proyecto de vida*). These graduates are focused and enthusiastic. (PSA tutor and graduate)

Youth involved in the PSA program not only had a clear vision with regard to the purpose of their future studies, they also understood what factors would limit their access to post-secondary opportunities. These limitations were centered around three main categories—limited economic resources to fund further education, dearth of post-secondary opportunities in their region, and lack of developed academic capacity needed to pursue such paths. Given their awareness of these constraints, as youth advanced through the program, they developed plans that helped them overcome these obstacles and work towards their goals. Inspired by the content of the PSA program, youth made plans to carry out production projects or engage in an economic activity in order to save money for their studies.

> During the next two years of high school, I would like to be a good student, make many friends and graduate from high school. Then I would like to enter university, but first I will have to work to be able to go to university. I can work helping to clean houses and save money for university. I am very optimistic about achieving these goals. (PSA student)

Many planned on studying a technical degree program as an initial step, and then in the future, in certain cases, to pursue undergraduate studies. The students who were more advanced in the program had developed well-thought-out plans. They identified career paths that could be applied to the betterment of their communities—career paths in fields such as agriculture, engineering, and education. PSA graduates had a high level of

motivation to carry out their plans, which was fueled by an inner motivation to contribute towards the wellbeing of their localities. For example, upon completion of the PSA program, a graduate decided to initiate a fish-farming project. The aim of this project, which received modest seed funding from FUNDAEC, was not only to improve his own livelihood. He organized this project in such a way as to be able to create employment opportunities for as many members of his community as was possible:

> We studied about production projects in the program. I then saw how these projects could benefit our community, they can be useful for us all. I saw that we had enough land, so this motivated me a lot … in our community the fish is brought in from outside of our community. They bring it here to sell, so I got the idea that instead we could produce things and sell them in our community.
>
> First we had to build the fish pond. The construction of this fish pond was a source of employment for the community. There are not employment possibilities in our community. We worked hard in this project and shared a lot of good moments. (PSA graduate)

The production projects that the PSA groups and graduates have implemented aim to improve the livelihoods of the youth themselves as well as the members of their communities. This quote highlights how the production project component of the program was an experience in which youth started think about their future and how they could pursue a livelihood:

> The productive projects have helped the youth in many ways—it helps them to set goals, not to think that they only have to be dependent on their parents, but that they can also look for sources of work—however, sources that are productive. They are left with learning related to the project, and, as the participants mentioned, it helps them to become more responsible. They have a greater level of consciousness since they have entered the program. They do not think like the youth who are hanging out on the streets or partying—no, now they are more focused, they have a future vision that is reflected in what they do. (PSA coordinator)

As young people got involved in production projects, they were also provided with an opportunity to think about how they could pursue a livelihood path in a rural setting:

> Involvement in production projects enables youth to realize that they can progress in a rural setting … taking advantage of the land, their plots.… Often youth who finish studying decide to go to the city because they believe that their future is there, so they leave their communities because they do not have anything to do. But if we look at our communities, there are many sources of wealth, so it's like learning how to take advantage of this. (PSA graduate)

Many of the aspirations of participants when they first entered the PSA program were often career paths associated with what the media portrays as success but which were not commensurate with job market opportunities, the academic background of youth or financial possibilities. Youth who were not in the program, as well as those who were initiating the program, often had grandiose plans that were not connected to their own reality or that of their community. More than half of the youth interviewed expressed that they wanted to be a doctor or an engineer but did not understand the implications of these careers paths, nor had they thought through out how they would pursue such a path. The following quote from a youth not in the PSA program and about to graduate high school illustrates the lack of clarity and practical plans in relation to the future:

> I am the 10th sibling out of 12. My family and I work weaving and selling sombreros…. I will be graduating high school in a few months. I would like to study medicine. I am not sure where such programs are offered…. If I this is not possible I will try to study engineering as I find it interesting…. Mathematics is one of the areas that I struggle with in high school. (Non-PSA youth)

The youth in this study who were not in the PSA program lacked knowledge about where programs of higher education were offered, the requirements for entering such programs or the costs associated with them. For example, a youth about to graduate from high school expressed: I would like to study engineering. When asked what type

and where, he responded—"I am not sure what the types of engineering are or where these programs are offered." These youth did not have an understanding of the profession and were not able to draw upon support from their parents, as it was not the practice of most of their families to study beyond a basic education.

Many of the youth in this study who were not in the PSA program were frustrated with obstacles they had encountered in the educational systems at both the secondary and post-secondary level. They were pursuing livelihoods readily accessible, such as working as *mototaxistas*—precarious work that entails the transportation of people on a taxi. They did not have clear aspirations for the future. One youth, Jose, representative of many others, had graduated from high school a few years ago and since then had been working as a *mototaxista*. He was interested in electronics and applied to an electronics program in the SENA but was not able to get in as there was not enough available space. Jose spent his time hanging out on the street—*callejeando*. He did not have a clear vision for his future; he was not sure what he would be doing in five years.

> I am not sure what I will be doing in five years' time. My mother tells me go to the SENA and see what is available. But it depends, because the other day I tried to get into a basic welding course at the SENA, I went and left my papers and applied for the course. They said they would get back to me, and they never called me. I want to study but I haven't gone out again to look to see what's possible.… I just go here and there with the *mototaxi* work that comes up. (Non-PSA youth)

In addition to working as a *mototaxista,* Jose worked as a DJ for at a *discoteca* in the nearby city in Lorica. "The majority of the people at the *discoteca* consume drugs and then get into fights. But that's not for me," he explained. Unlike the students who graduated from the PSA program, Jose did not have a clear vision of how he could pursue his studies. He was interested in welding, but hadn't been able to get into the courses offered by SENA. As we concluded the interview, Juan asked me how one could join the

PSA program. This study found that many youth, such as Juan, were concerned about their future and the next steps to take, however they needed orientation and support to work towards these goals.

Summary

This chapter is organized around three interrelated areas—youth identity development, networks of social relationships, and the future aspirations of youth. The insights gained from an exploration of these areas are connected to the broad research question of this study: What potential do rigorous education for development programs from a specific capability perspective have for improving the wellbeing of youth, their families and communities in conflict-affected areas?

As discussed above, this study found that as youth participants, as well as PSA tutors and coordinators, advanced through the PSA program, they gradually developed identities concerned with contributing towards the collective wellbeing of their communities. These identities were characterized by qualities and attitudes such as mutual support, solidarity, and trustworthiness—characteristics that were expressed in the social action they initiated with their communities. Through interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, this research demonstrates that when youth first entered the program, their aspirations were connected to notions of success prevalent in society that placed little social value on collective wellbeing or rural life. Their aspirations were concerned with wanting "to be someone in life" (*ser alguien en la vida*) through the pursuit of professional work in urban settings. This research shows how as students progressed through the program and engaged in the study of the materials and their practice activities, their vision of success and how they could engage in livelihood

activities broadened, as they began to recognize possibilities within their own communities that would improve their livelihood opportunities and that of their community.

In this research, I identify the process through which this identity is fostered by analyzing how four distinct components of the program have been applied in the context of the Costa Caribe region—1) the texts which have been designed as a dialogue between the author and the students, 2) the tutor who facilitates processes of collective learning, 3) the community with whom mutually reciprocal relationships are built through service activities, and 4) the group conceived of as a microcosm for participation in society. This research indicates that these components of the program supported youth in developing capabilities—a term FUNDAEC describes as "a set of interrelated concepts, pieces of information, attitudes, spiritual qualities, skills and abilities that empower a person to think and act according to a well-defined sphere of activity and according to a well-defined purpose" (FUNDAEC, 2006, p. 6). This approach to capabilities is distinct from the literature on capabilities rooted in Amartya Sen's framework based on development as freedom and the cultivation of individual agency. This research shows how capability development is approached as a dual process of personal and societal transformation that is interwoven into educational activities as two aspects of one movement. In this chapter, I also provide evidence that shows that in units where the program is more fully established, networks were built comprised of ties. These ties were organized into two categories—bonds and bridges. Through the data analyzed, I identified that bonds of mutual support, learning, collaboration and trust linked the different actors of the program together leading to the formation of networks of social support. Practical

examples were provided that illustrated the bonds of social support between the tutors, parents, participants and community members. This research demonstrated how these bonds helped to form the identity of youth as promoters of community wellbeing and eschewed their engagement in the activities of illicit groups in the region. Another category of ties identified in the program served to bridge youth to valuable educational and community resources, such as institutions of higher learning and local businesses that improved their livelihood opportunities.

Moreover, through interviews and focus group discussions, it became evident that youth not engaged in the program did not have access to networks that linked them to valuable educational and livelihood resources. In focus groups and interviews with youth not in the program, they expressed their frustration with the obstacles they faced in their attempts to pursue post-secondary opportunities. This study found that more than half of the youth not in the program had grandiose aspirations for their future without practical plans as to how they would pursue such a vision; whereas, other youth not in the program expressed a lack of clarity and frustration with regard to their future plans. These tendencies were also found in youth who were just beginning the PSA program. In contrast, this study found that two thirds of the youth who had participated in PSA were optimistic about the future plans they had carved out, plans which, in concrete and practical ways, outlined how they would be able to contribute to the wellbeing of their communities and that of their families.

The research encountered a number of constraints within the program that may limit its impact on the lives of youth participants. These constraints were organized into two categories—external and internal constraints. The external constraints were social

and economic factors, such as the dearth of employment opportunities in the region, the presence of armed groups and early pregnancy. The internal constraints consisted of weak coordination structures and the need for increased tutor training, especially in cases where there was pressure for the program to grow rapidly into new communities. Interviews with members of the coordinating team of the program indicated that there was an awareness of these constraints, and that an effort was made to take these into account in the programmatic activities. My research showed that notwithstanding these measures these constraints impacted and shaped the influence and reach of the program in the region.

In the concluding chapter that follows, I offer a summary of this dissertation and discuss its implications, focusing on a specific approach to capability development in light of the findings highlighted in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The cross-sectional qualitative research conducted for this dissertation has resulted in the construction of a case study on an education for development program carried out in Colombia in conflict-affected areas with Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations (Giddens, 2007; Yin, 2000). This dissertation used the case of FUNDAEC's Preparation for Social Action program to: 1) investigate how education for development programs can be approached from a specific capabilities perspective, and 2) understand the potential such an approach has in contributing towards the livelihoods of youth and communities. The case study explored the potential for participation in a rigorous educational for development program concerned with personal and societal transformation to help foster the identities of youth as promoters of community wellbeing in a specific Colombian context. The three areas of investigation that shaped this study are: 1) the formation of participants' identity as promoters of community well-being, 2) characteristics of networks of social support formed in the PSA program, and 3) the aspirations of youth in regard to their future livelihoods.

This study found that youth engagement in a program of study with a clear social purpose that contains elements of scientific, technical, community-oriented and moral education and that is imparted through a tutorial methodology that integrates theory and practice contributes towards the development of identities aimed at promoting the common good. The characteristics of these identities, including taking initiative, solidarity, cooperation, and perseverance, are demonstrated in the social action that emerged from the groups' activities during the program and after its completion. The

social action that the participants undertook grew in complexity as they developed sets of capabilities that can be organized in three categories: those related to community service, those pertaining to intellectual forms of knowledge, and those with a moral dimension. The individual growth of the students was rooted in their connection to the community through the acts of service in which they engaged.

In addition to the knowledge they gained through their study of the content of the program, networks of social support were key to the development of youth's identities as promoters of community wellbeing and to bridging them to resources that improved their educational and livelihood opportunities. The future aspirations of three-fourths of the graduates of the PSA program were focused on the pursuit of educational and livelihood paths that fostered the development of their community. At the outset of the program, many of the youth in the program did not have clarity about their goals and those who did had aspirations that were connected to finding opportunities in urban centers remote from their communities. Youth who were not in the program were not engaged in social action in their communities. They were more prone to being drawn to the activities of illicit groups in the region and were not optimistic about their future life paths. These youth were discouraged by the many obstacles they had faced in pursuing educational opportunities.

This study found that key elements for the sound functioning of the PSA program are a well-functioning coordinating team at the local level who operated in a mode of learning, and a pool of tutors who participated in ongoing processes of training. The coordination teams were key for the development of the program, as they played a pivotal role in putting in motion processes that foster community ownership of the program, and

building networks of learning and support that assisted youth participants to develop the capabilities needed to become agents of social change in their communities.

The methodology of action-research that orients the development of the PSA program reinforces a guiding principle of FUNDAEC, which emphasizes that education is not a static process but is rather dynamic in nature and must respond to the evolving and changing social realities of a community and its youth population. Towards this end, coordinator and tutor gatherings helped ensure that processes of action, reflection and consultation were integrated into the program's operations so that necessary adjustments could be made to the programmatic activities avoiding a rigid approach to implementation. When adjustments were made, conscious attention was given to ensuring that the changes were aligned with the overall aims and specific purpose of the PSA program, its pedagogy and methodology, in order to safeguard the integrity of the program.

This approach to program development helps to, on the one hand, make an education for development initiative adaptable to the dynamic changes and opportunities at the local level, and, on the other hand, ensures that the vision and principles that guide the program are maintained. One of the key guiding principles of the program is its long-term approach to development that is focused on the generation of knowledge. Such an approach is distinct from development interventions concerned with the delivery of services.

Capability Development

The holistic approach to identity formation that I studied in this research is distinct from the approach adopted in mainstream TVET programs that conceive of the

individual primarily as a worker (Anderson, 2009). Along these lines, Chapter 3 stressed TVET as a site of identity formation, which historically has been shaped by a philosophy of productivism born out of the industrial revolution in North America and Europe (Anderson, 2009). This paradigm of productivism has resulted in isolating work, conceived of as paid employment, that is distinct from other domains of life. The productivist paradigm employs mechanisms of economic development that are substituted for personal growth and the goal of living a prosperous life in harmony with others (Giddens, 1994). Scholars argue that capability frameworks can help overcome the artificial separation between the needs of the individual, society, economy and nature that productivist approaches to education and development perpetuate (Anderson, 2009; DeJaeghere, 2016; McGrath, 2012; Tikly, 2012; Walker, 2006). As was discussed in Chapter 3, although scholars who engage with capabilities have a common critique of producivist paradigms of development, they engage with the concept of capabilities from distinct perspectives, given the assumptions that underlie their approaches. FUNDAEC's approach to capability development seeks to support youth to pursue personal growth and to contribute at the same time to the transformation of society. The dual process of personal and societal transformation is a common thread that is interwoven into the educational activities as two aspects of one movement, without an implication of an inherent tension between the two.

Promising Elements of a Capability Development Approach

Described below are a few elements of FUNDAEC's capability approach to education that show promise for being applied to the field of TVET.

Explicit Social Purpose of Education

The definite and explicit social purpose of the PSA program to develop capacities aimed at improving the well-being of local communities created a learning environment that is distinct from the one in most traditional TVET settings. This purpose instilled in participants an inner motivation to learn, as it imbued young people with a social purpose, that of contributing to the betterment of their communities. The motivation of PSA students to learn was very much connected to the relevancy of the educational content of the program to their local social reality. The youth and tutors in the program were also duly concerned with their own social and economic development; however, such concerns were aligned with the contributions that they could make to society at large. In contrast, the content of rural education programs in the region is for the most part irrelevant to the exigencies of rural life and treats academic subject matter superficially, drawing on rote learning and teaching methods. As such, the levels of motivation to study in these institutions is low.

Integration of Theoretical and Practical Knowledge

As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the great challenges of educational systems is how to overcome the divide between practical and theoretical knowledge. Technical programs typically provide "manual skills for some," while academic programs focus on "book-learning for others"; this results in "training to carry out orders for the majority, and the capacity to participate in planning and decision making for the few" (Arbab et al., 1988, p. 27). The findings of this study demonstrate how FUNDAEC strove to maintain students' interest in practical skills, for example, basic accounting, planting crops, or chicken raising, while teaching concepts such as those related to plant life, atomic theory

and animal physiology. The social purpose of the program and ongoing reflection on the needs and opportunities of the rural communities oriented the development of the program. The integration of practical and conceptual knowledge, guided by a clear social purpose, resulted in overcoming prejudices and false senses of prestige associated with certain vocations and professions. For example, youth gained greater appreciation for the role of agriculture as a key community life process in their community and began to value the efforts of small-scale farmers. The participants from the program engaged in a reciprocal learning process with farmers in which they shared traditional and modern knowledge about farming with each other. A number of those who graduated from the PSA program had a desire to study agriculture at the university level, a field that is typically undervalued notwithstanding its prominent role in the Costa Caribe.

In order to overcome the dichotomy between practical and conceptual knowledge, FUNDAEC made use of the methodological tool of a capability in a specific way that "refers to complex spheres of thought and action, each requiring a set of related skills and abilities" as well as the "gradual understanding of concepts" and "assimilation of relevant information, and the development of certain attitudes and advancement in a number of qualities" (Arbab, 1994, p. 42).

Integration of Spiritual Concepts

The PSA content also integrated into its curriculum moral concepts and spiritual qualities. The curriculum did not teach religious dogma or a code of ethics. Spirituality was treated through qualities that expressed themselves in action, in everyday choices and in the contributions made to society and the life of the community (Arbab, 1994). Spiritual concepts explored in action throughout the program included solidarity,

cooperation and trustworthiness. These concepts were integrated into both the content of materials and the methodology of the program. A concept that was prominent in the materials is the balance between in personal liberty and social obligation—for example, between making use of local natural resources in livelihood activities and being a custodian for their preservation (Farid-Arbab, 2016). As part of the activities of the program, these concepts were expressed in service activities and production projects, as well as in the relationships of mutual support and collaboration developed among the tutors, participants, coordinators and community members. Service projects youth carried out with the community during the program were aimed at preserving the health of the environment—these projects included putting in place community systems for waste management. Outside of the program, graduates of the program applied the concepts they developed in PSA in the livelihood paths they were pursuing. For example, youth graduates who started up their own small businesses consciously organized their activities in such a way that they would generate employment opportunities for those in need in their community. Their primary motivating factor was not to maximize their own personal gain.

This study found that youth in the program developed an attitude of learning in relation to the knowledge gained in this program and to opportunities that opened up for them subsequent to their participation. They did not consider themselves superior to others in their community. They valued the knowledge that members of their community possessed and made great effort to create opportunities to share the knowledge they were gaining with the members of their community.

Relationship Between the Individual and the Community

Service to the community was the organizing principle around which the PSA curricula was developed; this implies that service was not external to the content of the program—it was integrated into the educational activities of the program. Within this context, the relationship between the student and the community in this study can be considered. The idea of service in many educational programs is conceived of as "doing something for the less fortunate"—often based on the belief that those who are well-suited to serve have higher levels of material wealth than the members of the communities with which they work (Vanderdussen, 2009).

This distinction between the student and the community leads to service being external to the daily life of the student (Vanderdussen, 2009). The educational approach of this program did not conceive of service as something to be carried out by a group of experts from the outside or by those with greater economic means. This study found that youth participants worked with their own community to promote meaningful and sustainable change that was aligned with the exigencies and possibilities they observed around them. Towards this end, service to the community was not a short-lived pursuit they carried out in the context of the program. The livelihood paths that PSA graduates chose to dedicate themselves to were aimed at contributing to the progress of their communities—such career paths included small-scale production projects that bolstered the local economy, community educational endeavors, and community health professions. Engagement in the program linked them to educational and community resources that supported them in developing the capacities and making the connections needed to exercise such professions.

Challenges Faced

This study found that, as a result of participation in FUNDAEC's education for development program with a specific capability approach, as described above, youth participants who advanced through the program increased their language-use capabilities. Moreover, the majority of the youth in the program did not get involved in the activities of illicit groups during the program, and, after the program, they pursued career paths aimed at increasing their own livelihood opportunities and the wellbeing of their communities. As described in Chapter 2, at the time of this study, the peace agreement between the government and the guerilla groups was being negotiated and thought was being given to programs that could be used to reintegrate ex-combatant youth soldiers into civilian society.

This study found that the educational process of the PSA program has many promising insights and practices as related to the fostering of capabilities in the youth population in conflict-affected areas. However, there are also certain challenges with that the program has faced—and is facing—in its efforts to contribute to the development of promoters of community wellbeing, in particular when there is pressure to take the program to scale at a rapid pace. Some of these challenges are bottlenecks for the growth of the program in general, whereas others are specific to the context of the Costa Caribe.

Developing a Strong Pool of Tutors

As described, the basic organizational structure of the PSA program is a unit that is comprised of 10-15 tutors, a coordinating team, and 150-200 students who reside in a cluster of villages and town in close proximity. In order to form new groups within a unit, new tutors are needed. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, tutors ideally came from the

same locality in which the group was situated. This helped to ensure that there was a sense of community ownership of the program, that the learning generated through the program was applied to local reality, and that strong bonds of mutual support could be created among the participants, tutor and community members.

Although the PSA program has a set of core elements that include the PSA texts, it is not a pre-packaged program that is delivered to communities. Education is considered dynamic and evolving, not a static process. As such, in addition to carrying out training in the texts, the coordinating teams provided key support to the tutors' process of reflecting on the experience being offered by the program as a way of assisting them to increase their capacity to facilitate the group activities. When tutors were not accompanied by a coordinating team, the quality of the program was lowered, diminishing the impact that the program had on youth participants. This demonstrates that the growth of the PSA program will need to be commensurate with the human resources that are available to train and accompany tutors, thus posing a limitation in taking the program to scale at a rapid pace.

Developing Collaborative Relationships with Community Members and Institutions

In order for the program to be integrated into the life of the community and for youth to gain access to community resources, this study found coordination teams built networks of collaborative relationships with community members and institutions (as discussed in Chapter 5); these relationships were further reinforced by the activities of the groups. In the units where strong coordination teams were in place, attention was focused on building these relationships. However, in units where coordination teams were not as strong (too few members or experiencing difficulties), it was difficult to focus attention

on fostering relationships with local institutions. For the program to continue to evolve, an area that can be more fully developed is that of building relationships with like-minded institutions in the region. For example, further relationship development with agriculture research institutions would open up possibilities to reinforce the efforts being made to generate experience and knowledge that could increase participation in agricultural production and marketing systems. As an education for development endeavor, the PSA program aims to be integrated into the social fabric of the community; as such, the development of a diversity of relationships is key. This study found that the integration of the program into the life of the community necessitates deliberate attention on the area of relationship building from the early stages of the establishment of a unit throughout the distinct stages of its development.

Contextual Constraints

The challenges described above, related to the growth and consolidation of the program, were internal constraints pertaining to the program's operations. These are constraints that in some ways the program itself has control over. The program also faced other challenges that were more contextual in nature as they related to particular circumstances in the Costa Caribe region. Although the challenges outlined below are specific to the Costa Caribe, many other regions in the Global South also face challenges such as these.

Lack of employment opportunities—Due to the scarcity of employment opportunities in the rural communities in the region, some youth left their communities prior to enrolling in PSA or during their participation in PSA in search of jobs and/or education opportunities in more urban contexts.

Early pregnancy—A number of young women and girls were not able to begin or complete their participation in the program due to family responsibilities associated with early pregnancies. Although the activities of the program were organized in such a way that tried to foster their participation, many young mothers had difficulties in fully participating.

Influence of guerilla groups and drug trafficking activities—Youth in these communities were susceptible to becoming involved in the activities of illicit armed groups and drug trafficking groups. As many came from poor families, they were targeted by armed groups who tried to entice them to become involved in their activities with the promise of economic rewards and by becoming "friends." As youth went through the PSA program, many were able to overcome these pressures through the knowledge and qualities they acquired in the program aimed at promoting the common good and the network of constructive social relationships they had developed.

Future Research Possibilities

The research conducted for this dissertation, as is typical with most research endeavors, brings to light possibilities for future avenues of inquiry. In the case of this dissertation, I believe that it is timely for research to be conducted that generates greater understanding about the relevancy of capability approaches to TVET and development in conflicted-affected areas in the Global South. I recommend that such research be carried out in a collaborative way, drawing on the contributions of key stakeholders in the various phases of the research projects.

TVET is rising to the top of international development agendas, resulting in a great deal of resources being invested in this area—of time, energy and money. Action-

oriented research can help inform the policies and practices that are emerging, drawing on first-hand experience with TVET programs in different contexts in the Global South. Making use of a grounded theory approach in such research will help to ensure that the experience in the field is being captured in a way that is not overly confined to the previous literature that has been carried out on TVET—much of which has been conducted in OECD countries. With this in mind investigations may focus on:

- **Reconceptualizing the relationship between TVET and development.** Over the past decades, the vast majority of research on TVET has been conducted in Northern contexts (McGrath, 2011). The growing policy and programmatic interest in TVET in development does not match the academic debate. While there has been continued academic development in OECD countries with regard to TVET, in the Global South there has been scarce research or theoretical exploration of TVET. The debate on TVET subsided some 20 years ago, when, from a human capital perspective, TVET was deemed not a good investment of international funds—it was considered both ineffective and inefficient (Foster, 1965; Psacharopoulos, 1985, 1991). During the past 20 years, the millennium development goals (MDGs) focused on the promotion of basic education, creating little incentive for academic research on TVET. Recently there has been a return of policy interest in TVET for development. Given this, academic research from a grounded theory perspective will open up possibilities for reconceptualizing the relationship between TVET and development. In particular, attention should be focused on TVET from the perspective of youth living in rural contexts or in marginalized neighborhoods in urban settings.

- **Transcending the vocational/academic divide.** When carrying out such research, it will be pertinent to explore ways in which the dichotomous academic/vocational divide that perpetuates inequalities and inhibits holistic processes of learning can be transcended (Rose, 2004). The argument has been made that in order for post-primary educational opportunities to be expanded to rural communities in the Global South, curricula needed to be "dumbed down" by vocationalizing them (McGrath, 2011). The research for this dissertation shows how capabilities are developed in youth through their participation in scientifically and technically rigorous educational models that integrate practical, theoretical and moral dimensions of learning. Further research is needed to explore how the vocational/academic dichotomy can be overcome, drawing on the notion that all students can learn without assumptions about their intelligence based on class, gender, race or ethnicity (McGrath, 2012; Rose, 2004; Tikly, 2012).

- **Capability approaches to TVET**. Although there are different ways in which the concept of capabilities has been approached in TVET, a common thread that runs through these approaches is their objective to replace a productivist framework that reduces development to economic growth. The work of Amartya Sen has advanced a discourse on capabilities that emphasizes the role of individuals as potential protagonists of development through a conception of development as freedom. Sen explores "a particular approach to well-being and advantage in terms of a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being" (Sen, 1993, p. 30). This is a notable departure from perspectives of development

focused on growth of national products or maximization of profits. Nonetheless, the interplay between individual freedom and social embeddedness is not clear in Sen's approach to capabilities. The emphasis on personal freedom has been critiqued as being a form of methodological individualism. The research that I conducted explored capabilities from the perspective of how "the skills, assimilated information, understanding of concepts, attitudes, habits and spiritual qualities interact and take on collective meaning in the context of action in the community" (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 153). Social embeddedness does not necessarily imply conformity, but rather gives meaning to the capabilities being developed and contributes to change.

> A human being can always be original, can step beyond the limits of thought and vision of contemporaries, can even be quite misunderstood by them. But the drive to original vision will be hampered, will ultimately be lost in inner confusion, unless it can be placed in some way in relation to the language and vision of others. (Taylor, 1990, p. 37)

Given that capability approaches to education for development are in the nascent stages of development, further research is needed in this area—in particular, research that explores the development of capabilities with a rootedness in community. This study found how a capabilities approach can help foster an orientation towards the common good that integrates personal development and social obligation. Further research in this area that makes explicit the theoretical assumptions of education for development programs of study and how they are operationalized is recommended.

- **Role of networks of social relationships.** This study found that the development of capabilities in isolation from social networks that support further education and

future employment will not be sufficient for marginalized youth to gain access to the informal or formal labor market. This coincides with research that indicates the high rates of unemployment for those who advance through TVET in much of the Global South, demonstrating that there is not a smooth transition from a learning setting to a workplace (Mains, 2012; Shamchiyeva et al., 2014; DeJaeghere, 2016). Further research is needed to understand how networks of social support can be integrated into capability approaches to education for development programs in order to support youth in accessing livelihood opportunities.

- **Preventing involvement in illicit activities.** Many educational programs are based on the premise that increased capacity to engage in income generating activities will prevent youth from becoming involved in illicit activities and will help ex-combatant youth reintegrate into society. A number of research studies have shown that such endeavors do not increase social cohesion or civic engagement. This study, carried out in conflict-affected areas of Colombia, found that the development of capabilities that integrate moral, community, scientific and technical dimensions of education both increases the livelihood opportunities of youth while it enhances their engagement in life of society through participation in activities they initiate aimed at promoting the common good. Research is needed to gain further insight into understanding how education for development initiatives in conflict-affected areas can contribute towards increased civic engagement and livelihood opportunities for youth.

Closing Reflections

In this research, I explored how education for development programs can be approached from a specific capabilities perspective and sought to understand the potential such an approach has in contributing towards the livelihoods of youth, their families and communities in conflict-affected areas in Colombia. In investigating these topics, I drew on distinct yet interrelated literature from the fields of technical and vocational education and training, development, and violence studies. As it would have been impossible for the scope of this limited research study to duly consider all of the topics contained within these vast bodies of literature, I chose to focus on the area of a capability approach to education for development programs in the Global South. Key themes that informed the analysis of this study included the role of a scientifically rigorous curriculum that integrates theory and practice, the relationship between the individual and community, networks of social relationships in contributing to the identity formation of youth, and navigating the pressures and presence of illicit armed groups.

Drawing on a grounded theory approach, I complemented an emic perspective based on the data collected with an etic view that integrates insights from the literature, my own experience as a researcher, and extensive experience with FUNDAEC. In this study, I have argued that policy and practices related to TVET need to be broadened so that they are not narrowly focused on skills development within a productivist paradigm that does not give due consideration to the social, cultural and moral dimensions of learning and development (Anderson, 2009; McGrath, 2011). I have also argued that academic and vocational binaries need to be reconsidered—rejecting the assumption that

post-primary opportunities in rural communities in the Global South need to be vocationalized, making them "accessible" to rural youth (Rose, 2004).

This study had the potential to contribute to discourses on capabilities and education for development programs, as it provides a thick description about the ways in which youth can develop the capabilities they need to both improve their own livelihood opportunities while contributing to constructive social change in their communities. The approach to capability development in this study is distinct from approaches based on the work of Amartya Sen's notion of development as freedom that emphasizes individual agency.

Through a close analysis of youth's participation in the PSA program in Colombia, an education for development program based upon a specific capabilities approach, this study has demonstrated the potential of such programs to contribute towards the development of identities aimed at promoting the common good. These identities were developed through engagement in a program with a clear social purpose that was imparted in a tutorial methodology that integrated theory and practice. This study also demonstrated that livelihood opportunities of youth were increased through participation in this program. Networks of social support were essential in the development of youth's identities as promoters of community wellbeing and to bridging them to resources that improved their education and livelihood opportunities.

There are a number of challenges that remain as obstacles for the program's development in the region, such as the influence of illicit armed groups, scarcity of employment opportunities, and early pregnancy. There are also areas for further growth of the program, such as the strengthening of coordinating teams and tutor training. The

action-oriented aspect of this research supported the coordination structures at the regional level in their efforts to think about the evolution of the program in light of these areas for growth. These challenges were considered in light of the ongoing processes of learning characterized by action, reflection, and consultation that characterize the coordination structure of the program.

While I have argued that the context of this program is unique to the specific conflict-affected areas of the Costa Caribe, there are many other populations in Colombia, and more widely in Latin America and beyond in the Global South, which have similar educational, social and economic characteristics. Thus, the considerations that have been elucidated in this study may be applicable to other such contexts in both rural and peri-urban settings.

APPENDIX A
PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES OF THE PSA PROGRAM

This Appendix contains a description of some of the principal activities of the PSA program: the formation of PSA groups, community meetings, the service and practical components of PSA, and production projects. The description of these activities is based on the research conducted for this study, as well as my personal experience with FUNDEAC, and aims to shed further light on how the identities of youth as promoters of community wellbeing is fostered in the PSA program.

Formation of PSA Groups

The identities of youth as promoters of community wellbeing are fostered through their participation in a PSA group that is accompanied by a tutor. The PSA group is comprised of 10-15 youth between the ages of 15 to 25. There are a number of factors that are critical for establishing a PSA group in a community. The first is the establishment of relationships with different actors at the community level—these actors include *juntas de acción comunal* (neighborhood councils), schools, local officials and community leaders. In indigenous communities where the program was carried out, it was first presented to the *cabildo*, the local indigenous chief, and then to the community at large in the form of a community meeting. The relationships built with the community were a critical first step for ensuring that community ownership of the program was fostered and that the program could be integrated into the life of the community.

> The groups here are not separate from the community, they are integrated into the community—you can go to any neighbor in the community and mention the PSA program and they will know it because they have interacted with the different groups. When the program was presented there was a meeting with the community itself that including the parents, the *cabildo*. The *cabildo* even participated in the first block of study—he has knowledge of what we are doing

and supports us. (PSA tutor)

When introducing the program into a region, PSA coordinators and tutors focus their attention on learning about how to initiate and maintain ongoing conversations with local actors about the purpose and vision of the program. These conversations have a two-fold purpose—on the one hand, they aim to foster understanding among community members about the purpose of the program, and, on the other, they enable the coordinator to get to know better the community, its conditions, strengths and challenges. With the support of community leaders and institutions, populations of youth are identified who can be invited to participate in the program. Youth, their parents and community leaders are then invited to a community meeting where the different aspects of the program are discussed.

Generally speaking, it is not sufficient to meet only once with potential participants, families and the community. A series of community meetings are held in order to be able to discuss the program's purpose. When the purpose is not clearly reflected in presentations due to pressure a tutor may feel to quickly start a group, groups disintegrated, as participants' expectations did not align with the program's aims. Misconceptions about the program that created confusion included the idea that youth would benefit economically from the outset of the program through their participation in production projects.

Coordination teams have learned that their presentations are more effective when they are interactive and when an environment is created in which the coordination team and community understand the implications of the program in the context of the life of the community (PSA Report, November, 2016, FUNDAEC,). As the purpose of the PSA

program is to raise capacity in the local population to pursue their own path of development, it is crucial that the PSA program is promoted in such a way that a sense of ownership is fostered from the outset. Along these lines, in the initial presentations, tutors emphasized the responsibilities the community has with the program—for example, identifying groups of people from which tutors and students can be invited, and securing a place in which the group can study and carry out the different practice activities, in particular those related to agriculture. The tutors also explained the commitments that youth have to make to participate in the program. For example, being able to commit to studying with the group over a period of 10 to 15 hours a week, in addition to participating in the practice and service activities, and covering the costs of the materials. In certain cases, after such meetings, the community sends FUNDAEC a list of participants interested in participating and a letter expressing their interest in the program. This list serves as a tool that the tutors use to visit and register youth in the program.

Obstacles that Hindered Youth Participation in PSA

In general, during the first six months of the PSA program, approximately one-third of the participants discontinue their participation in the program's activities (Conversation with coordinator, 2018). Youth participation in the program during this period has waned for three principal reasons: 1) pressure to search for employment, 2) early pregnancy, and 3) lack of parental support (Field notes, May, 2018, personal communication with coordinator). After the first six months of the program, youth participation in the program remained steady.

The principal reason that caused participants to leave the program was the pressure they faced to pursue income-generating activities for their families. One of the ways in which youth sought out such opportunities was by migrating to urban centers. Often the opportunities that most readily presented themselves to these youth, who possessed minimal skills and training, were selling simple products such as coffee or sweets on street corners or at traffic lights. When youth in these vulnerable conditions were searching for work, they were also confronted with the possibility of making money by selling drugs.

Another reason that prevented some young women from continuing their participation in the program was early pregnancy. Given the familial responsibilities associated with caring for their children and the pressure they faced to generate funds for their family, some young mothers found it difficult to sustain their participation in the program's activities.

Lack of parental support and encouragement to take part in the program was also found to diminish youth participation in the program. Due to the pressing economic needs families face, some parents felt that engagement in income-generating activities should be the primary focus of youth, and that activities of a more educational nature were not a productive use of their children's time. Thus, pressure youth faced from their parents caused them to withdraw from the program.

The PSA program does not make use of the term drop-outs. The opportunity was open for youth to rejoin the program when the conditions were propitious for them to do so. Moreover, the identity of a promoter of community wellbeing was perceived as being incrementally fostered throughout the duration of the program, not a final product that

was achieved at the completion of the program. As such, those who were not able to complete the program were considered promoters of community wellbeing, equipped with a certain level of skills and capacities that they could apply in the distinct contexts in which they were engaged. Moreover, when possible, coordinators, tutors, and participants made an effort to invite these youth to community-wide activities that were organized on behalf of the program. In order to address the above-mentioned challenges that hindered youth from participating in the PSA program, production projects were integrated into the program's activities as well as regular visits to parents.

Service and Practical Components of PSA

As mentioned above, the PSA curriculum consists of a series of 24 units that are studied for 12-15 hours a week over two and a half years. These materials are studied in a tutorial method that permits the activities of the group to be organized in a flexible timeframe, taking into account the academics, work, and community activities in which youth are involved. A key feature of the pedagogy of the curriculum is that it allows youth to develop capacities of social action through the integration of theory and practice. As discussed earlier, one of the key objectives of FUNDAEC is the empowerment of individuals and communities to contribute towards social change through the generation and application of knowledge. The criteria for integration, then, in the PSA curriculum is not solely pedagogical (FUNDAEC, 2006).

> The curriculum for the PSA program is designed to support a clear social purpose that is at the heart of all of FUNDAEC's activities: to improve the well-being of community life. Service to the community is the axis around which its integrated curriculum is built. To develop educational units in keeping with this approach, FUNDAEC looks beyond what students should know about a given set of subject matters and considers the more fundamental question of what they should be capable of. In their entirety, the textbooks present a pattern of thinking, attitudes, and behavior which is to be followed in a sequence of research-action-learning

> activities in a path of service to the community…that is continually examined and adjusted (FUNDAEC, 2006, p. 6).

Production Projects

Another type of action that the PSA groups carry out is intended to improve the economic conditions of their own lives, families and community. These types of endeavors, called production projects, are built into the program as learning experiences. FUNDAEC envisions that, through these learning experiences, participants will develop the capacities they need to initiate their own projects with technical assistance and seed money when needed from FUNDAEC.

Paying for Texts

One of the initial experiences that participants gained with production projects is through activities they carried out to raise funds to cover the costs of their texts. Participants do not pay a registration fee to participate in PSA—however, they do cover the costs of the textbooks, which contain the majority of educational activities in the program, including all of the reading and writing exercises. As not all families had the funds needed to pay for these books, groups planned to raise money to cover the costs of the texts when needed. In many instances, they drew upon the knowledge and assistance of the adult members of their community to carry out these fund-raising projects, in particular their parents. Groups often prepared and sold food products that are traditional to their communities. Not only did these fundraising activities serve to cover the costs of the books, they also helped youth and their parents gain a sense of ownership of the program and built relationships among the youth and adult members as they collaborated in carrying out these projects. The youth population gained cultural knowledge about

traditional recipes from their community and gained experience in learning how to set and work towards their goals. Towards this end, a participant expressed:

> If there is a problem, one should not get stuck, always search for a solution. There is not a fear of failure—we are trying to learn how to advance. (PSA participant)

Applying Knowledge to Livelihood Activities

The knowledge and experience participants gained in PSA helped them to initiate projects in different areas of production such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and pisciculture. Youth participants undertook production activities that helped them to develop the capacity to gain a sustainable livelihood, taking advantage of local resources. Through their participation in these projects, youth became familiar with resources available to them within their communities. The following examples of production projects illustrate how participants applied what they learned in the technology and mathematic texts to production projects.

Increasing Agricultural Production

Youth in the program study a series of technology texts aimed at developing capacity to engage in small-scale farming practices that produce highly efficient and diversified crops. Through their study of these books, they learn about sustainable agricultural practices. The exercises in these books also provide the PSA group with an opportunity to meet with local farmers in order to learn from their experiences and to share what they are learning.

> In the text, planting crops, we share the knowledge we are learning with other members of the community. In addition, there is a research activity in the text that is carried out with people from the community, through this we investigate how crops used to be cultivated and how they are cultivated now. So we are able to gain knowledge from both traditional and current sources….
>
> During community meetings, we discuss these concepts we are studying in the texts. Community members quickly join in the discussion sharing their

> experiences and perspectives. Sometimes farmers expressed the need to use a lot of pesticides. Participants explain that compost can be used instead to fortify the soil and will contribute towards a good harvest. Some farmers agree to try using compost, mentioning their knowledge of the role of worms in providing nutrients to the soil. This is a mutual learning process because the parents learn from the students and the students from the parents. (PSA participant)

Through this educational process that integrated traditional and modern knowledge, PSA groups advanced in their understanding about how to improve agricultural practices in their communities. Participants explained that the PSA program helped their communities in learning how to increase agricultural production as they gained knowledge about crop associations, organic fertilizers and in planting rows. The learning the PSA participants gained did not remain at the level of the group. PSA groups constructed agricultural plots that were used as demonstrative plots that were a learning site for community members. Through these plots, community members learned how to improve their agricultural practices. Increased agricultural production has helped to reduce the costs of the family economy as the need to purchase produce from the market decreased. These crops have also helped to improve the nutritional level of families, as they have been able to introduce a greater variety of vegetables into their diet. The establishment of these plots responded to a community need.

> We initiated this productive project because we saw the need, so we said we can produce and we can show the people that they can increase their agricultural production in our small plots. (PSA participant)

Community agriculture plots have been established that apply the knowledge being generated. As a result, PSA groups increased agricultural production and diversified the crops being planted in their communities. These efforts helped to address the pressing food security challenges the region faces.

Running Microenterprises

The mathematics units contained in the PSA program have a focus on helping youth to acquire basic accounting skills. These units contain practice activities that provided youth with opportunities to assist small neighborhood businesses and family members with their financial accounting. The mathematic units also contain examples of small-scale businesses that respond to community needs. The examples contained in the PSA books provided young people with ideas of microenterprises they could initiate. The aim of these projects is two-fold—on the one hand, they serve to improve participants' livelihoods, and, on the other hand, help bolster the economy of their local community.

Many small businesses in Colombia are informal and do not keep financial records. Without these records, entrepreneurs do not know if they are making or losing money. With the learning students gained in the PSA program, they were able to put in place financial systems that tracked the movement of funds and resources within their enterprises. Students were also able to calculate the amount of products that they needed in order to run their businesses.

In addition, PSA participants gained knowledge necessary to calculate the materials needed to build infrastructures. The PSA graduate quoted above was able to calculate how much material he needed to construct the new additions to his family's home based on the knowledge he gained from a PSA text called *Multiplication and Division*. This text contains exercises in which participants calculate dimensions used in construction such as volume, area, and diameters. They then carried out practice activities in which they apply such calculations to architecture plans.

Animal Husbandry and Pisciculture

The production projects groups develop were based on the needs of the local economy. For example, one participant noticed a potential for a business project that could save the community money:

> Generally speaking in our community, chickens are not being raised for sale. We can find them in community stores, but they are bought in a nearby town and resold here at a higher price. (PSA participant)

This PSA group decided to begin a small chicken-raising project and to share the learning they gained from the project with members of their community. They hoped to be able to set up small businesses that would create job opportunities for community members through the learning they gained from this pilot project. The desire to generate employment at the community level through production projects was a common thread that ran through the production projects. In another example, upon completion of the PSA program, a graduate decided to initiate a fish-farming project. The aim of this project was not only to improve his own livelihood. Roberto organized this project in such a way as to be able to create employment opportunities for as many members of his community as was possible.

> We studied about production projects in the program. I then saw how these projects could benefit our community, they can be useful for us all. I saw that we had enough land, so this motivated me a lot.… in our community the fish is brought in from outside our community. They bring it here to sell, so I got the idea that instead we could produce things and sell them in our community.
>
> First we had to build the fish pond. The construction of this fish pond was a source of employment for the community. There are not employment possibilities in our community. We worked hard in this project and shared a lot of good moments. (PSA graduate)

The production projects that the PSA groups and graduates implemented aimed to improve the livelihoods of the youth themselves as well as the members of their

communities. This quote highlights how the production project component of the program was an experience in which youth started to think about their futures and how they could pursue viable livelihoods:

> The productive projects have helped the youth in many ways—it helps them to set goals, not to think that they only have to be dependent on their parents, but that they can also look for sources of work—however, sources that are productive. They are left with learning related to the project, and as the participants mentioned it helps them to become more responsible. They have a greater level of consciousness since they have entered the program. They do not think like the youth who are hanging out on the streets or partying—no, now they are more focused, they have a future vision that is reflected in what they do. (PSA coordinator)

As young people got involved in production projects, they were provided with an opportunity to think about how they could pursue livelihoods in a rural setting.

> Involvement in production projects enables youth to realize that they can progress in a rural setting … taking advantage of the land, their plots.… Often youth who finish studying decide to go to the city because they believe that their future is there, so they leave their communities because they do not have anything to do. But if we look at our communities, there are many sources of wealth, so it's like learning how to take advantage of this. (PSA graduate)

APPENDIX B

LESSONS FROM THE UNIT "CLASSIFICATION"

The lessons below (Lessons 1 and 12) help illustrate how FUNDAEC approaches the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge in its textbooks. These lessons are extracts from the first unit of the Basic Arithmetic text, called "Classification" (FUNDAEC, 2005). The purpose of this unit is to provide students with an opportunity to develop the fundamental capability of classifying things with the overall aim of contributing to processes that lead to constructive social change (FUNDAEC, 2005). In the unit "Classification", mathematical concepts related to set theory are introduced such as sets, subsets, elements, and classification by rule or roster. The lessons on the following pages demonstrate how participants learn to classify sets in the context of their microregion.

1 Sets

One of the most basic capabilities that we all have to develop in our lives is that of *classification*. Classification is a mathematical capability which we acquire from early childhood and develop to a higher and higher degree as we grow. For example, at some point in our lives we learn to distinguish a shirt from other things people wear such as dresses, pants, and coats. What we are actually doing is classifying clothes, calling one type of clothing "shirts". The purpose of this unit is to help you advance further the capability of classification, which you already possess.

Whether we are aware of it or not, the concept that underlies classification is that of sets. You are familiar with this concept from primary school, so let us begin this unit with a review. Complete the following phrases:

a. We are a set of _____ who wish to use what we learn to promote the well-being of our communities.

b. A team is a _____ of people who work together towards common goals.

c. The set of people who give freely to others of that which they possess can be called the set of _____ people.

d. The _____ of truthful people consists of individuals who always tell the truth.

e. A library is a building that contains a large set of _____ .

f. The set of interdependent _____ having common traditions, interests, and institutions forms a society.

g. A group of _____ is a set of people who enjoy each other's company.

Write down other sentences in which the word *set* is used in the same sense as in the text above:

a. _____

_____

b. _____

_____

c. _____

_____

From these examples we see that a set is made up of what may be called *elements*. For instance, a team is a set of individuals, and each individual is an element of the set. When we know what the elements of a set are, we may say that we have defined it.

Name the elements of the set "your study group"._____

_____

_____

Name some elements that do not belong to this set._____

_____

_____

There is a concept that we often use in our texts and which will be helpful to you in your work in promoting the well-being of others, namely, the concept of a *microregion*. To understand what a microregion is we must first know that a region is a broad geographical area. For example, we may speak about the region of western Africa, South America, or Southeast Asia, which are large areas made up of many countries. A region can also refer to an area within a country, such as the valley of the Nile in Egypt.

We will use the word *microregion* to refer to a region that is relatively small, but large enough to contain some towns and villages and maybe a large city. Throughout the microregion the weather is more or less the same, the crops grown are similar, and the activities of the people are closely related. Usually the people share certain common customs.

Picture in your mind your own microregion. Write down some of the elements of the following sets:

a. The set of crops grown in your microregion:_____

_____

b. The set of towns in your microregion:_____

_____

c. The set of animals found in your microregion:_____

_____

d. The set of villages in your microregion:_____

_____

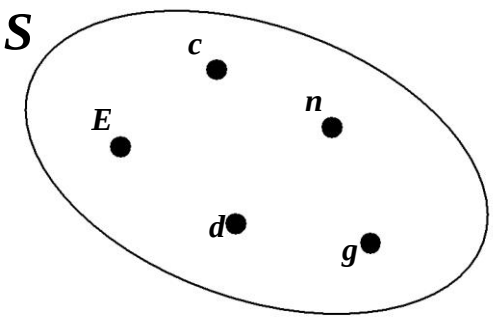
e. The set of musical instruments played in your microregion:_____

_____

f. The set of occupations in which people are engaged in your microregion:_____

_____

To represent sets we sometimes use diagrams such as the one shown below.



We will represent each element of the set with a dot placed inside the boundary. The diagram shows the set *S* formed by five famous scientists: Einstein, Marie Curie, Darwin, Newton, Galileo. Place outside the boundary some dots, representing elements that do not belong to the set *S*.

Think of another set and draw a diagram to represent it, indicating its elements with dots.

To describe a set we can make a list of its elements. For example, to describe a set of several words referring to colors we may say, “It is the set formed by red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet.” Describe other sets in this way:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

The descriptions of sets we have just made are known as descriptions by *roster*. To determine a set by roster it is necessary to name every one of its elements. In mathematics it is customary to present the descriptions by roster in this form:

$$C = \{\text{red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet}\}.$$

Note that we use a capital letter to name the set and that the list of its elements is enclosed within brackets.

Write in this form the descriptions of the sets that you named in relation to the microregion in which you live:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

It is also possible to describe sets without naming all of their elements. Can you think of how this might be done? Remember that for a set to be well defined, everyone must be clear about which are the elements of the set and which are not. This can be done by naming a characteristic property that all of its elements possess, making sure that only these elements possess the characteristic property, and no others. Here are some examples:

- The set of inhabitants of a given village in your microregion
- The set of even numbers less than one hundred
- The set of rivers that run through your microregion
- The set of planets orbiting the sun

Give other examples:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

The descriptions we have just made are called descriptions by *rule*. Whether one determines a set by roster or rule is a matter that must be decided in each case. What is important is that there should not be any doubt about which elements belong to the set in question.

Determine the following sets by rule:

$X = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$. _____

$Y = \{\text{north, south, east, west}\}$. _ _____

Define other sets, stating whether you are doing so by roster or rule:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

Extension

1. Complete the following:
   a. If two sets have exactly the same elements, then they are _____ .
   b. When we name each and all of the elements of a set we say that it is described by _____ .
   c. When we name a characteristic property shared only by all of the elements of a set we say that it is described by _____ .
2. Decide which of the following sets are named by rule and which by roster:
   a. The countries in Africa rule roster
   b. {happy, sad, angry, content} rule roster
   c. Members of our soccer team rule roster

d. Letters of the alphabet rule ☐ roster ☐

e. {farmer, doctor, teacher, cook} rule ☐ roster ☐

3. Which of the following sets are identical to each other? A = {cat, dog, parrot, snake}

   B = {cat, dog, parrot}

   C = {cat, parrot, snake, dog, mouse} D = {snake, parrot, cat, dog}

4. Describe the following sets by rule:

   a. X = {a, e, i, o, u}._____

   _____

   b. Y = {Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday}.

   _____

   _____

   c. Z = {1, 2, 6, 8}.

   _____

   _____

   Did you actually find a way of defining Z by rule?

5. Determine the following sets by roster:

   a. X = the set of the months in the year._____

   _____

   b. Y = the set of your favorite foods._____

   _____

   c. Z = the set of people in your family._____

   _____

6. Do you think there is a set that can be written as { }? How many elements does it have? What do you call it? The set without elements is represented by the symbol ∅.

12 Your Microregion

We began this unit by reviewing the idea of a set, learning to define a set by roster and rule, and learning about the concept of subsets. We then applied these ideas to the classification of animals and plants and looked at the different categories into which animals and plants can be grouped, namely, species, genera, families, orders, classes, phyla, and kingdoms. In this last lesson let us return to the concept of a microregion, which was introduced in the first lesson. We already referred to this concept a few times when we learned about the classification of animals and plants, but now let us make a more complete analysis of the physical and social environment of your microregion.

Begin by making a detailed map of your microregion on a separate piece of paper. Include on your map outstanding land formations such as mountains, valleys, rivers, and lakes. Mark the important urban centers. Find out the population of your microregion and, by making the appropriate divisions on your map, indicate how the population is distributed.

Describe in some detail the climate in your microregion, including the pattern of rainfall, and make a small table of the monthly average rainfall in the space below.

The forests in a region are among its most important natural resources. They -absorb carbon dioxide and convert it into oxygen to help keep the air clean. They maintain the rainfall cycle, are home to thousands of species of plants and animals, provide cures to diseases, prevent soil erosion, and are integral to the culture of the region. Mark the forests in your microregion on your map, and write down the most common animal and plant species that live in them.

_____

_____

_____

In the inhabited microregions of the world, the most basic system is usually agriculture because it sustains human life. Make a list of the crops grown and animals raised for food in your microregion.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Consider the crops you listed. Each species of crop can be divided into smaller sets called *subspecies*, or *varieties*. In the same way, species of animals can be divided into subspecies called *races*. For each crop and each animal raised for food in your microregion, find out the names of the most common varieties and races.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Crops are sometimes grown as a monoculture, in which only one crop is raised at a time over a large expanse of land. But good farmers have systems in which they grow many different types of crops together on the same piece of land. This method of farming helps preserve the soil and aids the growth of plants that benefit from each other. For example, certain crops naturally repel insects, which benefits the other crops planted nearby. Find out which types of crops are grown together by the farmers in your microregion, and list them below.

_____

_____

Are there criteria by which the crops grown in your microregion can be classified? Could you, for example, put the crops grown for commercial purposes usually in large farms into one group and the crops found on small farms in another? In what other ways could you classify the crops of your region?

_____

_____

_____

Agricultural production is only one of many kinds of production. Another type is industrial production, which can be done on a large or small scale. In a given microregion one might find industries ranging from large factories to medium-sized manufacturing plants to individual crafts (known as cottage industry). Make a list of the various types of industrial production found in your microregion, from the big factories all the way down to cottage industries. What criteria could you use to place the items on your list into different categories? For example, there are industries that process food, produce construction material, and so on.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Another process that maintains the economic life of your microregion is trade. One important element of trade is a store or shop, whether it is an isolated shop or one found together with other shops in a bazaar or mall. There is also an informal sector made up of street vendors; not all trades people sell their wares in formal shops and stores. Mention as many types of shops as you can think of in your microregion, for example, grocery stores, shoe stores, music stores, and so on. Now try to classify the items on your list.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

There are also types of production which are service oriented. Sometimes shops have this role, as is the case of a barbershop or the shoe repair shop. It is also possible for individuals to engage in service-oriented jobs, for example, the person in the village

who plows fields with his tractor, or the person in the city who fixes the plumbing. Other services imply work at schools or health clinics. Write down some of the jobs in the service sector in your microregion. Try to put the jobs into categories, for example, government services versus private services.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now let us turn to the population itself. The people of your microregion are engaged in various types of work, mostly in the units of production we have talked about. For example, there are judges, health workers, teachers, farmers, government officials, police officers, and merchants. List other types of work done by the people of your microregion. Is it easier to think about the jobs in groups rather than just having a long list? Can you classify the various jobs so that they can be thought of more easily?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Consider the types of work done by the people in your microregion. How much of this work is done in urban areas and how much of it is carried out in rural areas? Is the work spread out evenly between the two? What percentage of the population lives in urban centers and what percentage in rural areas?

_____

_____

_____

The well-being of the people in your microregion demands that those working in each profession carry out their responsibilities correctly and with trustworthiness and integrity. List some of the responsibilities of the groups mentioned in your list above. For example, what are some of the responsibilities that doctors have? Or farmers?

_____

_____

Will there be prosperity in a microregion if each group of people only defends its own interests? In other words, is it correct for the doctors or teachers in a region to try to get more and more for themselves? And is it correct for those who are in power to try to pass legislation to their own advantage? Is it right for the people living in urban areas to pass laws that give them an advantage over rural people? Such laws and regulations include those that force down the price of farm products, which leads to migration to the cities and cheap labor, allowing the industries owned by the urban people to get richer. How do you think the principle of justice should govern the behavior of groups with common interests?

APPENDIX C

ASSENT AND CONSENT FORMS FOR RESEARCH STUDY PARTICIPATION

Assent Form

What is a research study?

A research study is a way to find out new information about something. You do not need to be in a research study if you don't want to.

Why are you being asked to be part of this research study?

- You are being asked to take part in this research study because we are trying to learn more about Preparation for Social Action program. We are inviting you to be in the study because we are interested in learning about the PSA program has contributed to your participation in community service activities and thoughts about your future career path. About 200 participants will be in this study.

If you join the study what will you be asked to do?

- We want to tell you about some things that you will be asked to do if you are in this study.
- In this study you will have an opportunity to talk and write about your participation in the PSA program.
- As part of your participation in this study, the interviews and groups discussions that you take part in will be audio recorded. You will be in the study for a period of two years, during which you will have an opportunity to talk in a group setting, with the person who is coordinating this research about your experiences with the program and complete a questionnaire. The talk in the group setting and the conversation with the coordinator of the research will each only last no more than 90 minutes. You will also have an opportunity to fill out a simple questionnaire about the PSA program, your involvement in community activities, and future aspirations that will take no long than 90 minutes.

☐ Please check the box below if in future you would like to be contacted about this study.

How will being in this study affect me?

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. Therefore, if there is any topic or question that you are uncomfortable talking about that comes up in this research study, you will NOT have to discuss that topic or question and may wish to let the coordinator of the study Stephanie Pirroni know ([redacted]).
- On a personal level, during this study you will have an opportunity to reflect on the contributions that you can make to your community through service activities and your future career path. The benefits of your participation in this study is that your thoughts and feedback will serve to improve the Preparation for Social Action program.
- Your contributions to this study will help organizations that work with young people. There may, however, be no direct benefits of your participation in this study.

Do your parents know about this study?

- This study was explained to your parents and they said that we could ask you if you want to be in it. You can talk this over with them before you decide. If you want to be in the study, your parents will need to sign a form too.

Who will see the information collected about you?

- The information collected about you during this study will be kept safely locked up. Nobody will know it except the people doing the research.
- The study information about you will not be shared with anyone including your parents, teachers, or PSA tutors. The researchers will not tell your friends.

Do you have to be in the study?

- You do not have to be in the study. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this study. If you don't want to be in this study, you just have to tell us. It's up to you.
- You can also take more time to think about being in the study.

What if you have any questions?

- You can ask any questions that you may have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call Stephanie Pirroni (+2-331-6001).
- You can also take more time to think about being in the study and also talk some more with your parents about being in the study.
- If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at [redacted] or [redacted]. You can also contact the faculty sponsor of this study [redacted] Gretchen Rossman at [redacted] or [redacted] or at [redacted].

Other information about the study:

- If you decide to be in the study, please write your name below.
- You can change your mind and stop being part of it at any time. All you have to do is tell the person in charge. It's okay.
- You will be given a copy of this paper to keep.

If you want to be in this study, please sign your name below.

Signature _____
Date_____

Participant Name_____
Date_____

Name of Person obtaining consent _____
Date_____

Consent Form for PSA Participants

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?
This form is called a Consent Form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research.

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. We encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?
Participants in this study include:

- Youth between the ages of 15 to 25 *
- Tutors of the PSA program
- Members of local, regional and national coordination PSA teams
- Community members associated with PSA including parents, farmers, neighbors, and representatives of local NGOs and governing councils.

*If you are under the age of 18 your parents will have to sign a consent form for your participation in the study.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this research is to describe the ways in which the PSA program has contributed to the livelihoods of participants and their families, and to explore how the program is integrated into the life of the community. This research will identify the strengths of the PSA program and the ways in which it can be improved. It will also open up opportunities to share with others the learning beneficiaries have generated through their involvement in the PSA program.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
This study will be conducted in 2017 and 2018 in the department of Cordoba. In this study you will have an opportunity to take part in three spaces—an interview, focus group discussion and questionnaire. Each session will run for no more than 90 minutes. If you interested in future in being contacted to have an opportunity to analyze and discuss the findings that emerge from this study, please check the following box. ☐

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?
If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a maximum of two focus group discussions, one interview and a questionnaire during which you can share your experiences with the PSA program in the context of development processes in your community. Your total participation in the study will not exceed three hours.

- Participation in this study will not influence in any way your involvement in the PSA program. Only if you are interested in participating in this study and sharing your experiences about the PSA program should you do so. If at any point, you would like to terminate your participation in the study please feel free to let me know or the local PSA coordinator, Gender Gomez (57-331-6001). You should also feel free to skip over any questions that you are not comfortable answering.
- Your name and the communities you come from will not be used in the study. In addition, any information that you share with during this study that you are not comfortable including in the study will be disregarded for the purposes of this research.
- If you are not interested in taking part in the study or do not have the time do so that is completely understandable and will not effect in any way your participation in the PSA program.

6. WHAT ARE THE SOCIETAL AND PERSONAL BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

By participating in this study you will be contributing to the generation of knowledge about how educational initiatives such as the Preparation for Social Action program can be used to promote of processes of community development in Norte de Cordoba, and beyond. More specifically, your participation in this study will help strengthen the ways in which the PSA program is implemented in Norte de Cordoba. You may not personally benefit, however, from this study.

7. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however it is worthwhile to mention the following. Physical risks associated with this study include participants´ transportation travel to the place where the research will be conducted, as such I will conduct interviews at participant´s home or in spaces where the activities of the program are carried out. A possible inconvenience of this research may be the time it takes to complete the study. In addition, I understand that you will be sharing personal information with me about your life and community, in relation to your participation in the PSA program. You may find the recounting of certain experiences distressing. You should feel free to only share what you are comfortable sharing at this time and to skip over any questions that you would prefer not to answer. As mentioned above I will not use your name in the study, and will not refer to specific situations that you would like excluded from the study. I would also like to mention that at all times the information that I record will be kept in a safe and secure place. The specific procedures for handling your data are described below.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

Your participation in this study will include having your interview and focus groups audio recorded. The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your study records, including audio and video digital files. I will keep all study records, including any codes to your data, in a locked file cabinet. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location.

The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed 3 years after the close of the study. All electronic files such as databases, spreadsheets containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only the members of the research staff will have access to the passwords. At the conclusion of this study, the researchers may publish their findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations.

10. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. We will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact Stephanie Pirroni *at* [redacted] *or by Skype* [redacted]*, or by email* [redacted]. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at [redacted]. You can also contact the faculty sponsor of this study Gretchen Rossman at [redacted] *or* [redacted] or at [redacted].

11. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

You will be notified of all significant new findings during the course of the study that may affect your willingness to continue.

12. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

13. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Signature	Print Name	Date

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Print Name	Date

Consent Form for Youth

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?
This form is called a Consent Form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research.

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. We encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?
Participants in this study include:
•Youth between the ages of 15 to 25*
•Tutors of the PSA program
•Members of local, regional and national coordination PSA teams
•Community members associated with PSA including parents, farmers, neighbors, and representatives of local NGOs and governing councils.
*If you are under the age of 18 your parents will have to sign a consent form for your participation in the study.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this research is to describe the ways in which the PSA program has contributed to the livelihoods of participants and their families, and to explore how the program is integrated into the life of the community. This research will identify the strengths of the PSA program and the ways in which it can be improved. It will also open up opportunities to share with others the learning beneficiaries have generated through their involvement in the PSA program.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
This study will be conducted in 2017 and 2018 in the department of Cordoba. In this study you will have an opportunity to take part in three spaces—an interview, focus group discussion and questionnaire. Each session will run for no more than 90 minutes. If you interested in future in being contacted to have an opportunity to analyze and discuss the findings that emerge from this study, please check the following box.

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?
If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a maximum of two focus group discussions, one interview and a questionnaire during which you can share your experiences with development processes in your community. Your total participation in the study will not exceed three hours.

Your name and the communities you come from will not be used in the study. In addition, any information that you share with during this study that you are not comfortable including in the study will be disregarded for the purposes of this research.

If you are not interested in taking part in the study or do not have the time do so that is completely.

6. WHAT ARE THE SOCIETAL AND PERSONAL BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

By participating in this study you will be contributing to the generation of knowledge about how educational initiatives such as the Preparation for Social Action program can be used to promote of processes of community development in Norte de Cordoba, and beyond. More specifically, your participation in this study will help strengthen the ways in which the PSA program is implemented in Norte de Cordoba. You may not personally benefit, however, from this study.

7. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

I believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however it is worthwhile to mention the following. Physical risks associated with this study include participants´ transportation travel to the place where the research will be conducted, as such I will conduct interviews at participant´s home or in spaces where the activities of the program are carried out. A possible inconvenience of this research may be the time it takes to complete the study. You may find the recounting of certain experiences distressing. You should feel free to only share what you are comfortable sharing at this time and to skip over any questions that you would prefer not to answer. As mentioned above I will not use your name in the study, and will not refer to specific situations that you would like excluded from the study. I would also like to mention that at all times the information that I record will be kept in a safe and secure place. The specific procedures for handling your data are described below.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

Your participation in this study will include having your interview and focus groups audio recorded. The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your study records, including audio and video digital files. I will keep all study records, including any codes to your data, in a locked file cabinet. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location. The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed 3 years after the close of the study. All electronic files such as databases, spreadsheets containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only the members of the research staff will have access to the passwords. At the conclusion of this study, the researchers may publish their findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations.

9. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
Take as long as you like before you make a decision. We will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact Stephanie Pirroni at [redacted] or by Skype [redacted], or by email [redacted]. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at [redacted]. You can also contact the faculty sponsor of this study Gretchen Rossman at [redacted] or [redacted] or at [redacted].

10. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?
You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

You will be notified of all significant new findings during the course of the study that may affect your willingness to continue.

11.WHAT IF I AM INJURED?
The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

12. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT
When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Signature	Print Name	Date

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Print Name	Date

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