

## PROJECTION OF A PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROMOTION OF A CULTURE OF PEACE IN SAN MARTIN DE LOS LLANOS META<sup>1</sup>

Marta Osorio de Sarmiento<sup>2</sup>

German Rolando Vargas Rodriguez<sup>3</sup>

Martha Isabel Sarmiento Osorio<sup>4</sup>

José Arles Gómez Arévalo<sup>5</sup>

Julio Esteban Univio Molano<sup>6</sup>

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** In order to understand peacebuilding, it is necessary to reflect on violence and conflict, which have been present in the history of Colombia and the particular case of the territory of San Martín de Los Llanos (Meta), where the inhabitants have been victims of this scourge that has historically permeated the daily lives of citizens for generations. However, the most worrying aspect is the impact on vulnerable populations. That is why it is urgent and necessary to think of strategies promoting protective environments to build peace scenarios.

**Objectives.** Contribute to the processes of interpretation of social phenomena through the implementation of protective environments and spaces for training and artistic creation with the community of San Martín (Meta) to make visible the reflection and reconciliation of the victims of the armed conflict from a plural, non-exclusive perspective, allowing dialogue and symbolic reparation.

**Method.** The research was based on the qualitative paradigm, with an interpretative, hermeneutic epistemological approach, which allowed to identify from the promotion and projection of protective environments from the artistic creation and cultural manifestations with the population of San Martín (Meta) the construction of peace cultures from the organization of sustainable communities, from strategies such as entrepreneurship expressed in their cultural and artistic traditions as an opportunity for peace.

**Results.** It was found from the collective voices of the victims of the conflict that a culture of peace and protective environments can be created, from their artistic and cultural expressions, recognizing from the historical memory the causes and consequences of the conflict of which the

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<sup>1</sup> This article is the result of the research entitled: Promotion of protective environments, based on pedagogical practices and artistic and cultural creation, as social appropriation of knowledge for the interpretation and reconciliation of social phenomena related to the armed conflict in San Martín (Meta).

<sup>2</sup> PhD in Education from the University of Granada, Spain, Post-doctorate in Narrative and Science from the University of Santo Tomás and University of Córdoba Argentina, MBA in Management and Leadership at the European Graduate Institute Madrid Spain, Specialist in Management of Educational Centers Universidad de la Sabana, Bachelor of Social Sciences Universidad de la Sabana, Bachelor of Science in Education Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia; Dean of the School of Education and Social Sciences of the University Foundation Juan N Corpas; e-mail: marta.osorio@juanncorpas.edu.co

<sup>3</sup> Degree in Philosophy and History from the Universidad Santo Tomás Colombia, Master in History from the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia UPTC, PhD in Education from the UBC of Mexico, Research Professor and Research Coordinator of the School of Social Sciences (ESECS) of the Fundación Universitaria Juan N Corpas; email: german.vargas@juanncorpas.edu.co

<sup>4</sup> Social Communicator and Journalist at Politécnico Gran colombiano, Specialist in Organizational Communication Politécnico Gran colombiano and Master in Education for Health Fundación Universitaria Juan N Corpas, Academic Coordinator of ESECS at Fundación Universitaria Juan N Corpas; e-mail: martha.sarmiento@juanncorpas.edu.co

<sup>5</sup> Post-doctorate in Science and Narrative, and in Education, Social Sciences and Interculturality), Doctor in Theology, Master in Philosophy and MBA in General Management, CNA Peer Evaluator, Director of the Publications Center and Advisor to the Rector's Office at the Juan N. Corpas University Foundation, Bogotá, author of numerous articles, book chapters and books on spirituality, theology, education, emerging epistemologies and socio-humanistic sciences. Corpas, Bogotá, author of numerous articles, book chapters and books on spirituality, theology, education, emerging epistemologies and socio-humanistic sciences, belongs to the Groups Pedagogy-Science-Spirituality (Categorized in A) and Corpas-Sana (categorized in B) in Colciencias. E-mail: angel777abc@hotmail.com

<sup>6</sup> PhD Candidate at the University of Alicante Spain, Certificate-Diploma of Advanced Studies of the Third Cycle (DEA), University of Granada Spain, Philosopher of the National University. Lecturer at the ESESC of the FUJNC.

territory and its inhabitants of Sanmartinero in the department of Meta have been victims. All this is from its inhabitants' collective strength, organizing themselves as a sustainable community from entrepreneurship, showing the world their artistic and cultural expressions and traditions.

**Conclusions.** *It is necessary to implement strategies that promote protective environments that resignify the sense of security of the inhabitants of San Martin Meta, through artistic and cultural expressions. In addition, the strengthening and confidence of the community will be nurtured by the collaborative and cooperative work through the organization of a cooperative based on the principles of cooperatives and entrepreneurship in order to let the country and the world know that the San Martin territory is a context of peace without forgetting the past so that painful acts of violence are not repeated.*

## Introduction

When referring to peacebuilding, it is undoubtedly necessary to name some conflict since the current problems in peacebuilding are positioned in the constant and lasting commitment that helps to strengthen a structure capable of interfering at all levels of society to ensure that all actions are directed towards peace, and thus strengthen the resources that promote reconciliation, which could be the link in charge of giving transit from conflict to peace (Lederach, 2007).

On the other hand, for Lederach (2007), peace is a dynamic process and therefore requires other construction processes based on investment and materials, coordination of work, strengthening of structures and, in addition, continuous maintenance. If so, the precise formula for automatic peacebuilding would be written, which, according to Lederach, would be "the right plan in mind and the materials, techniques and resources in hand" (2007, p. 57). Thus, the author states that it is important to begin by introducing human dimensions to the equation so that peacebuilding is rooted in subjective and empirical realities that give rise to knowing and responding to the needs and expectations of those who are most immersed in the conflict, for this reason, it was thought of the creation of a cooperative for artisans in the region of San Martin to bring together the different associations and to consolidate the work in this way, and through training and workshops on entrepreneurship and collaborative work.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of the context of San Martin de los Llanos (Meta). In the first instance, it is necessary to understand the territory's social, political, socioeconomic and cultural reality.

The population projection for the municipality of San Martin for 2022 is 26,925 inhabitants, with the majority (72.26%) residing in the urban area, with 19,457 inhabitants and (27.74%) in the rural area, with 7,468 inhabitants. The municipality of San Martin is home to 26,925 inhabitants, of which 50.6% are women, and 49.4% are men (National Planning Department, 2022).

The municipality of San Martin de los Llanos is a vast plain covered by savannah vegetation. It is made up of savannahs, hills and some small meadows; it is located in the central east of the department of Meta at a distance of 66 kilometers from Villavicencio and 154 kilometers from Bogota (Municipal Development Plan of San Martin Meta 2020-2023).

From the above, the municipality of San Martin de Los Llanos is close to major capitals such as Villavicencio, the capital of Meta and Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. It would not have problems related to violence and armed conflict since it has been understood by the history of the conflict that these scourges only affect rural areas, peasant populations, or those with an ethnic influence, but the reality is different. Since long ago, San Martin de Los Llanos has born the stigma of war and violence. Moreover, since the emergence of paramilitary groups in Colombia, it has been unfairly pointed out as a paramilitary town, as noted by the newspaper El Tiempo on June 22, 1999: "The municipality of San Martin has long been accused of being a paramilitary town. Whatever the origin of this stigma, it has involved its inhabitants who are unjustly labeled as informers or helpers of the self-defense group". In this way, according to the newspaper El Tiempo, the people of San Martin have endured such a stigma that it has become dangerous to show their identification card or meet the checkpoints of the armed groups of any side. That is what the comments say that no one dares to reaffirm. That is why for them, who have nothing to do with this or other armed groups, it is risky to say they are from the people they have always been proud of. This has brought fear and caused the town's inhabitants to lose much of what used to be part of their tradition and was shown with special satisfaction. San Martin is no longer the cattle capital of the department, says the Mayor, Alcides Rocha Alférez. The cattle ranchers have left and so have those who worked on the farms, which no longer require as many people as when they were cattle ranches that required 10 or 20 cowboys, adds the Mayor (El Tiempo, 1999).

The context of the 1980s and 1990s in San Martin seems to be a thing of the past. However, Riveros and Forero in *Rutas de Conflicto* (2021) point out that: "The social extermination of the 1980s returned to San Martin.". Amid threats and displacements are families of victims of the so-called "social cleansin" in the municipality of San Martin (Meta). The report states that in February 2020, a person was found murdered in the municipality of San Martin Meta - located two hours from Villavicencio. Citizens identified him as an alias' memo, a possible armed actor or member of a criminal gang. This generated indignation among the community and especially among the relatives of the murdered young man, a 22-year-old man dedicated to unloading food and other jobs as a day laborer. He was found dead in a pipe in the municipality. According to family members, he had left the day before to work but never returned home.

In this sense, the research focused on understanding the reality of a population that multiple painful stories like this one have stigmatized the phenomenon of violence; in such a way, this situation has permeated the realities of its inhabitants. However, today San Martin de Los Llanos is configured as a municipality full of hope for peace so as not to continue naturalizing violence, violence has been a constant phenomenon that has been naturalized in society. Particularly in Colombia and in Latin American countries, it is marked by various factors, which have to do with the political, socioeconomic, armed conflict, forced displacement in its various forms and multiple social constructions, such as exclusion, social class differentiation, gender problems, social inequality of minorities and uprooting to mention a few; ultimately the phenomenon of dehumanization has become the scaffolding of violence (Vargas Rodríguez, 2018, p. 52).

In this sense, this scourge experienced by the victims of the armed conflict in San Martín Meta, as a daily and stigmatizing fact, is resignified from resilience, understood as a process of human construction that emerges from the interactions with other beings in situations of adversity, which imply new challenges and opportunities to grow emotionally speaking as stated by Castañeda et al. (2019 p.167) and likewise, the ability to cope, from their cultural and artistic expressions to build scenarios of peace and hope for a better tomorrow, based on reconciliation and reparation from forgiveness.

Faced with this reality, the need arose to summon the inhabitants of the region, who stand out as artisans and craftsmen. Therefore, the consolidation of research that would contribute to understanding the armed conflict and the recent history of Colombia from a collective perspective was proposed. Additionally, the research focused on the community of San Martín (Meta), which allowed the implementation of spaces for dialogue, reflection, training and creation around the interpretation of the dynamics of the armed conflict based on the pedagogical practices implemented in the protective environments and the creation of artistic and cultural manifestations with the same population.

In this sense, Lederach (2007), in his book “Building peace, sustainable reconciliation in divided societies” proposes to analyze peacebuilding from the needs and challenges framed in this concept by putting it into practice. The importance of reconciliation lies in the fact that, according to Lederach, it promotes the encounter between a painful past caused by violence and a future independent of such experiences in the long term; it also provides a scenario where truth and mercy are the essential pillars for the recounting of events and, likewise, recognizes the need to give the necessary time to the victims so that they are the ones who dispose of for justice and peace.

On the other hand, it is worth highlighting the importance of the composition of peace, where the most important thing to take into account are the protagonists, the people affected by the conflict and their role in the situation. It is, therefore, important to rethink whether peace should be from the bottom up or vice versa. It is, therefore, essential to review the question of whether peace should be from the bottom up or vice versa since the issue of leadership within the affected population should be reviewed in terms of a pyramid in order to identify sectors with greater or lesser capacity for the consolidation of peace in the territory. Lederach (2007) presents three levels: At the top level are the top leaders, such as political, military, and religious leaders with high influence and other visible societal actors. These are characterized by a peacebuilding approach based on high-level negotiations, ceasefires and other hostilities and are usually headed by a single leader.

At the next level, some mid-level leaders are respected in different sectors. These may include ethnic or religious leaders, academics or intellectuals, and humanitarian leaders. They often focus on peacebuilding through conflict resolution workshops, peace commissions and internal-partial teams.

At the grassroots level are local commissions, indigenous NGO leaders, community advocates, local health officials and refugee camp leaders. Their approach to peacebuilding is through local peace commissions, grassroots training and education, prejudice reduction and psychosocial work on post-war trauma.

This last level is highlighted because the importance of the peacebuilding framework was identified within the population of San Martin. The most important thing is to give visibility to the initiatives proposed locally, highlighting the training based on peace education.

Reviewing the needs for peacebuilding, Lederach (2007) also discusses the issue of resources since it is necessary to know how to invest resources correctly. Otherwise, peace will remain a utopia and not an attainable reality. It should be emphasized that these resources are not simply financial but also include the sociocultural resources of the region in order to highlight the different forms of entrepreneurship present in San Martin and the skills of each of the actors in the conflict.

However, for Fisas (1998), peace is an ambitious reference for humanity, which requires unmasking the mechanisms of domination. Thus, it should be emphasized that the construction of peace must be aimed at all people with limited freedom and dignity at a personal level.

Regarding peacebuilding from below, Richmond (2011) expresses the need to start looking beyond liberalism, which does not mean ending it but consolidating the relationship with the local context through the social bases.

For this reason arises the need to involve the community in all processes of reflection and training through artistic creation artisans, painters, sculptors, harpists and different art forms. For this reason, this project seeks to meet the needs of reconstructing the past through the actors of the workshop using the voice of the victims of the armed conflict in San Martin in particular and aims to create cultural spaces in which the experiences of the population, who know the history and culture of the people linked to the armed conflict, are made visible.

Based on previous experiences in the region, the leading artists who have worked for a long time in the organization of the most important event in the town, called "Las cuadrillas" were identified. The artistic community with whom we interacted in previous projects is part of the families of these artists, which allowed us to learn about their experiences and interpretations of the community's history.

In other words, San Martin has the possibility of constructing artistic manifestations, as well as remembering and interpreting the experiences of the conflict through theatrical, visual, audiovisual and literary representation, to present all the experiences lived concerning the armed conflict, whose primary purpose is to allow a type of dialogue focused on reconciliation, recognition and symbolic reparation. To that extent, this project seeks to make visible the experiences and cultural production of the victims of the conflict.

Because of these circumstances, education for peace must start from the importance of forming people consistent with the role and commitment to the rest of the world, which brings with it more

representative citizenship in social coexistence where the different forms of education for peace play a very important role. This requires a pedagogical project based on an inclusive methodology that promotes human rights and respect for religious, ideological and cultural diversity (Tuvilla Rayo, 2004, 139-236). Likewise, “through education, individuals can be rationally empowered to transform themselves and the social world in which they live, with criteria of rationality, freedom and justice” (Paz Abril, 2007, 23).

## **Objective**

The objective of the research focused on implementing a space for reflection, training and creation around the interpretation of the dynamics of the armed conflict, based on pedagogical practices with the development of workshops and training on entrepreneurship and cooperativism for the actors and thus projecting a protective environment, from the creation of artistic and cultural manifestations with the same population.

For this reason, the Juan N Corpas University Foundation contributed in some way by training and certifying the circle of artisans of San Martín in the creation of the workshop on entrepreneurship and collaborative work, thus consolidating a culture of peace within this important community.

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## **Theoretical and conceptual approaches**

In order to better understand the phenomenon under study, an assertive dialogue with the sources is pertinent.

### ***Protective Environment***

Protective environments are spaces where the various fundamental rights established for people through international agreements, covenants and legislation in a country are observed, verified and examined. These spaces must be free of all types of violence.

The protection of the NNAJ is addressed through the human security approach, which “promotes the adoption of people-centered, comprehensive, context-appropriate and prevention-oriented measures that seek to reduce the likelihood of conflict, help overcome obstacles to development and promote the human rights of all” (UN, 2012, p. 5). Similarly, this approach focuses on promoting solutions driven by local realities and based on the real needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of governments and people.

As stated by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2015), in environments that have a greater relationship with criminality, there is a greater likelihood that children and adolescents have, through a family member, friend or acquaintance, a close link with illegal group, which facilitates the contact of minors with crime from an early age.

In most cases, this phenomenon is caused by the state’s lack of preventive, forceful actions and neglect. In most cases, this occurs due to the lack of opportunities, discrepancy and transgression of their rights, which are elements that enhance the risk for which they turn out to be risk enhancers for the participation of minors in the conflict.

A protective environment is one in which children and adolescents acquire the best possible tools for constructing their lives, enjoying opportunities to develop their capacity in a safe and conducive environment. To Unicef (2013): “a protective environment is a safe space for participation, expression and development.” All this added to the fact that people are born in an environment in which they have to adapt and learn to live with it and to maintain it over time, thus affirming that the identification of each subject ends up being defined through socialization, this being understood, according to the Canadian sociologist Rocher (1990), as:

The process by which the human person learns and internalizes in the course of his life the sociocultural elements of his environment and integrates them into the structure of his personality under the influence of experiences and significant social agents, and thus adapts to the social environment in whose midst he must live (p.2).

Similarly, Garmezy, Masten and Tellegen (1984) state that:

Protective factors need not necessarily include intrinsically beneficial events; the interest is not so much in factors that make feel good but in processes or mechanisms that protect us from risk. However, in recent years the term “protective factor” has been used to refer to all factors associated with positive outcomes, regardless of whether or not they come from exposure to high-risk situations, with some researchers arguing that protection needs to be referred to as long as it is interacting with risk, and serves to predict an outcome (p. 97 and 111).

Seen in this way, Blasco (2012) states that:

A protective factor is a circumstance, characteristic, condition and attribute that facilitates the comprehensive development of adolescents and their development as individuals and as a group, as well as those traits of people, environments, situations or events that appear to moderate inappropriate behaviors leading to individual risk. Protective factors, if present, favor resilience to risk and promote outcomes characterized by patterns of adaptation and competence. However, the absence of these factors, such as commitment to family, school, religiosity, sports, work, lack of moral and ethical values, problem-solving skills, or the ability to adequately manage emotions, as well as lack of self-esteem, are precursors to delinquency and antisocial behaviors (p. 5 and 6).

Likewise, the family was taken as a protective environment, according to the Colombian psychologist Amar (2013): “The family constitutes the intermediate institution between man and society, being understood as an institution of integration, cooperation and interdependence, united by the mutual effect among its members, with the ultimate purpose of ensuring that society survives” (p.5).

According to the Operational Manual of the Strategy “Building together protective environment” of the management, promotion and prevention for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, written in 2016, the life project of children and adolescents should be understood as a family life project. It is important to analyze the idea of participation in its close connection with the construction of an individual and family life project, seeking, according to Ferullo (2006): “to obtain subjects capable of assuming commitments and responsibilities both concerning personal and social issues [...] a learning process that provides subjects with the possibility of a greater deliberate influence on the course of their personal and community lives” (P. 12).

For all of the above, different protective environments have been created in the community of San Martín, always focused on art. One of them is the Cuadrillas, an oral millenary tradition that suggests that Father Gabino de Balboa popularized and listed the games of the Cuadrillas, and around 1735 he exhibited them before the community of San Martín.

Another version says that the Cuadrillas come from the Spanish equestrian tradition of dances celebrating the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. It is believed that such dances originated as a playful and training space for the warrior when he was not at war.

The Cuadrillas de San Martín (department of Meta) is a series of ten games performed on horseback in which the skill and ability of the San Martín rider are demonstrated. These games are carried out by four “cuadrillas,” each composed of twelve riders and three alternates. Each cuadrilla represents a specific group: Galanes, Moros, Guahibos and Cachaceros. The Cuadrillas has been held annually since 1735 with few interruptions.

The research methodology was based on the qualitative paradigm in order to interpret and understand the complexity of the phenomenon from a hermeneutic epistemological position, where the researchers identified the subjectivities expressed in the stories of the participants in order to unveil the identified problem from the sources, attending to this reflection, from ethical

criteria and with responsibility, to interpret the stories told by the participants, the actions, the intentions, the facts; avoiding assigning value judgments to what arises in the research scenario. This leads to conferring a determining value to the appraisals and ways of seeing the participants' world. In this regard, Castañeda & Rodríguez (2020), citing López and Sandoval (2020), refer to the contributions of the qualitative perspective in research. They specify that a process "of dialogic character is generated in which beliefs, mentalities, myths, prejudices and feelings, among others, are accepted as elements of analysis to produce knowledge about human reality" (p. 34). Having said this, the assumed approach considers that the protagonists of the research are both the researcher and the researched subjects, meaning that they assume an active role in the construction of knowledge.

### Data collection instruments

In order to collect information to learn about the different points of view of the various agents involved in the research and thus triangulate effectively, different data collection instruments were used with various sources of information.

To help identify the problems experienced by more than 3 decades of violence in the region, focus groups were organized with various people from San Martín, who have been leaders in one way or another. The focus groups were made up of 20 people, and then they were interviewed individually to learn firsthand about the problems they had experienced.

Experts validated these two types of instruments before being applied, and a third instrument was the analysis of historical documents where the history and creation of San Martín since the time of the conquest was known.

1. **The structured interview** was conducted with the authorities, as indicated at the beginning of the section, in order to know their opinions about what protective environments mean to them in the municipality of San Martín, and interviews were conducted with the Mayor, the Director of the House of Culture, the Directors of the gangs, and several people from the municipality to learn about the subject under study.
2. **Focus group**, The focus group discussion is defined as a group interview in which the researcher or moderator guides the discussion to examine in detail what these people think about a given topic Johnson & Christensen (2012), it was conducted with Mr. Mayor, the Director of the house of culture, Councilors, members by tradition that have integrated the crews, or other people have held political positions in the municipality, teachers in the main schools of San Martín. They showed the strengths and weaknesses of the political problem of the region, the customs and how tradition has marked a historical milestone during the conflict. The focus group questions were organized, taking into account the pre-established categories and included five questions per category, which were deepened, taking into account the answers given by the interviewees.

This method was used because it was of great relevance since it allowed to know the thoughts of each of the members of the focus group quickly; according to Russi Alzaga (1998), focus groups allow to collect information in the form of discourse. This refers to “the flow of messages that circulate among the members of a group who put their representations of reality in the form of speech, externalizing them in a physical-temporal space” (pg.77). The instrument consisted of 4 open questions. This focus group was made up of the Mayor, the Director of the House of Culture, Councilors, traditional members who have been part of the gangs, or other people who have held political positions in the municipality, teachers in the main schools of San Martin (Annex 1), the role of the researchers in the focus group was that of participant observer, since they are the ones who lead the research process.

3. **Document analysis:** this research starts from the methodological work of analysis of historical documents of the region object of the research in order to contribute to increasing the reliability of the research process, starting from its structure and the indications that must be fulfilled to proceed to unravel the rigor of the documents found that tell the process of conquest and all the social problems that have been presented through several decades about the history in San Martin Meta.

For the application of these three instruments, ethical guidelines were followed to invite the participants to collaborate in the research and to provide the necessary authorization to conduct the interviews, focus groups and document analysis. For this purpose, informed consent forms were signed and filled out by each of the actors involved in the research process.

### **Population**

The criteria that were taken into account for the population selection, it was intentional because the members belong to the municipality of San Martin Meta. Secondly, it is a chained process because the people provided information that allowed the formation of subgroups dependent on each other according to age and according to the experiences lived through the armed conflict of more than 50 years in Colombia.

For this research, a representative group with relevant characteristics was used to obtain accurate data for the research development. A purposive sample was used, as defined by Arias (2006). In this type of sample, the sample elements were selected based on certain criteria or judgments pre-established by the researchers. “This type of sampling is characterized by a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including people they know” (Parra, 2003:pg 25).

In this purposive sample, the study selected people familiar with the history of Sint Maarten, who have lived through social and political problems for several decades and are natives of the region. This allowed learning opinions from diverse social perspectives. The sample also included people who ranged in age from 30 to 70 years old.

### **Categories**

For this study, some categories previously established by the researchers were established to facilitate the design and implementation of the data collection instruments. This study took the following categories as the object of the research:

- Armed Conflict
- Protective Environments
- Sustainable Communities
- Reconciliation and Symbolic Reparation

Each of them is defined below:

**Armed Conflict:** Colombia's history over the last sixty years has been marked by armed conflict. The causes of this conflict are the poor distribution of land, giving rise to violence and armed struggle, according to the report of Eduardo Pizarro León Gómez, present in the Report of the Historical Commission of the Conflict and its Victims<sup>7</sup> (2015). This escalated with drug trafficking, narcoterrorism, and the incursion of new political and armed actors in a revolutionary context.

This is how armed groups justify the use of violence as a means to transform society and prevent illegitimate changes, which has led to fractures caused by inequality, the use of violence and the struggle for power from the very moment the Republic was established (19th century) to the present day when Colombia opens a new moment in its history with the current peace processes.

### **Protective Environments**

The protective environment category is given importance and responsibility in this research, as it hints at the main problem because it is recognized that environments are places for free recreation, leisure time, learning and sharing knowledge, which enhance the qualities, skills and abilities of adolescents. In principle, the connotation of authors Vertel and Cuervo (2013):

From the perspective of human development, the term "protective environment" leads to think of the spaces and conditions suitable for the growth and development of children and adolescents, who, from gestation, receive and transmit different messages that are the basis of the first affective bonds, becoming the support for the development of capabilities and potentialities, which favors their recognition as individual, unique, worthy, valuable beings, capable of giving and receiving affection (P.1 & 2).

A protective environment is one in which children and adolescents acquire the best possible tools for building their lives. According to Unicef (2013): "a protective environment is a safe space for

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<sup>7</sup> *La Violencia is a period in Colombia that took place between 1948 and 1958. Its main cause was the struggle of each party, liberal or conservative, to control the State. "Every hegemonic attempt by one side gave rise to a duel to the death to defend its interests and its right to participate in all the advantages that were made effective through the government: privileges, imports, quotas, favors in the tax system, administrative contracts, etc." (Molina, 1977). The denomination of this period with the name "La Violencia", refers to the magnitude and characteristics of the deaths and aggressions: between 180,000 and 300,000 deaths and the use of procedures of intervention in the bodies such as the "flannel cut", the "tie cut" or "ear cut" (Guzmán, Fals Borda, & Umaña Luna, 1962).*

participation, expression and development.” In addition, the fact that every person is born into a world in which he/she has to learn to live and adapt, which exerts on him/her an influence that never ends and will persist over time, thus affirming that the identification of each subject ends up being defined through socialization, this being understood, according to the Canadian sociologist Rocher (1990), as:

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Similarly, Gámez et al. (1984) state that:

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Seen in this way, Blasco (2012) states that:

A protective factor is a circumstance, characteristic, condition and attribute that facilitates the comprehensive development of the adolescent and his or her development as an individual and as a group, as well as those traits of people, environments, situations or events that appear to moderate inappropriate behaviors leading to individual risk. Protective factors, if present, favor resilience to risk and promote outcomes characterized by patterns of adaptation and competence. However, the absence of these factors, such as commitment to family, school, religiosity, sports, work, lack of moral and ethical values, problem-solving skills, or the ability to adequately manage emotions, as well as lack of self-esteem, are precursors to delinquency and antisocial behaviors (p. 5 and 6).

Thus, this research aims to create protective environments following the guidelines of the aforementioned authors, who show the psychological, social and sociological importance of a protective environment in a context of violence where the social actors suffer the inclemencies of war as is the territory of San Martin Meta.

### **Sustainable Communities**

From June 5 to 16, 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in the country of Sweden, named the Stockholm Conference, whose purpose was to inspire and guide the peoples of the world in the preservation and improvement of the human environment, starting from thinking about social and cultural needs on environmental defense, natural resources and on the means to be used internationally to fight against pollution.

In 1984, the U.N. World Commission on Environment and Development met for the first time in 1992 (Rio 92) with the conviction that humanity could build a more prosperous, fairer and safer future, and whose objectives included examining the critical issues of economic development and the environment and formulating realistic proposals in this regard. However, it was not until 1987 that this commission presented its report: “Our Common Future,” also known as the “Brundtland Report,” presented in 1987 by the U.N. World Commission on Environment and Development, in honor of the United Nations Secretary of State at the time, European activist Harlem Brundtland.

It is in this book that the concept under consideration gains recognition at the international level, clarifying that “[...] it is in the hands of humanity to make development sustainable, that is, to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” U.N., (1987, p. 29).

In April 1990, in the city of Washington D.C., the annual conference on economic development of the World Bank was held, where the Dutch economist Peter Nijkamp presented a paper entitled “Regional sustainable development and natural resources us,” where he synthesizes the concept of sustainability, graphically symbolizing the relationship between economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability to give rise to sustainable development, the central area of the so-called Nijkamp triangle.

Analyzing all these theories and times where humanity has been attentive to seek strategies on how to take care of the environment and how it contributes to environmental sustainability, being San Martin a place with a lot of exotic vegetation and large meadows for the care of livestock and thick forests with lots of animal and plant species that are part of the lungs of the world, we want during this armed conflict to reach an awareness of the San Martinenses to take care of their environment and likewise from the environment contribute to the care of sustainable communities.

The project has worked with leaders of the region to teach them to be proactive towards the environment, that is to say, to take care of their landscape and to create sources of tourism and through conferences on the main benefits of the association through non-profit cooperatives, but not only for the tourism sector but also for the hotel sector, the gastronomic sector, the coleo, the colonial heritage gangs of great name in the world. This research led to the creation of a cooperative among all the members of the society of San Martin involved in this research.

### **Reconciliation and Symbolic Reparation**

In this qualitative research, it is important to begin a historical review of the term reparation to understand the voice of the actors involved in the armed conflict and who our main actors are in this research process.

The Code of Hammurabi (17th century B.C.) is analyzed how the notions of civil and criminal liability are defined, sometimes confusing one with the other. This code is a clear historical antecedent of today's tables (Velásquez, 2009).

The Code of Hammurabi established the Law of Talion, but it contemplated the possibility of compensation in money for damages to others against the person since, traditionally, the damage to the person was considered irreversible (Koteich, 2006). In Hebrew law, the book of Exodus includes, in addition to the Decalogue, laws that set out how damages were compensated at the time.

However, it is important to define reconciliation and forgiveness have been studied as mechanisms linked to peacebuilding in post-conflict countries such as Ireland, Russia, Rwanda, and South Africa, among others (Bakke, O'Loughlin and Ward 2009; Cairns *et al.* 2007; Kadima and Vinsonneau 2001; Noor, Brown and Prentice 2008; Staub 2007). In Colombia, it has also been found that forgiveness and reconciliation are central to ideas, emotions and practices about peace, as such devices are not only convenient for the victim-victimizer deal but also to mend the certainty of torn fabrics and repair coexistence in community and society, Alzate and Denham *et al.* 2007; Rettberg and Ugarriza (2015) (Staub, 2007).

Forgiveness is defined as a matter where the victim voluntarily highlights negative emotions, thoughts and behaviors toward the perpetrator by replacing them with positive ones Coop, (2007); Freedman, Enright and Knutson, 2007;

It is possible that the perspective towards the perpetrator is modified and the situation is accepted or resignified (De Waal and Polorny 2007; Sandage and Williamson 2007), generating a change in the understanding of the victimizing event, without this implying forgetting it, Uprimny, Sanchez and Sanchez 2014.

## PHASES OF THE RESEARCH

This research has been conducted in several phases, each with different qualitative research instruments.

### *First Phase*

This group is made up of people who suffered the scourge of war or have held positions within the government of the municipality of San Martín, an average of 20 people. Again, the theoretical purposive sampling method was used.

The second phase is the preparation and application of surveys, the characteristics of which are detailed in the following section.

Third phase: quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data; guidelines were defined for the formulation of interviews through the focus group, made up of various people such as the Mayor, the Director of the House of Culture, councilors, members by tradition who have integrated the crews, or other people who have held political positions in the municipality, teachers in the main schools of San Martin.

Fourth phase: Analysis of all the data and preparation of the respective reports on the results obtained in the interview and focus group process. With this data, a video will be made that will include part of the history of the conflict and the justification for creating a protective environment.

**PROCESS FOR DATA ANALYSIS.** The results obtained from the interviews and the focus group made it possible to characterize the categories of analysis by transcribing and classifying the interviewees' responses and those of the focus group participants, as explained by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This made it possible to conceptualize and understand the purpose proposed in the research.

From the beginning of the research, the causes of the armed conflict and its consequences for the inhabitants of San Martín Meta could be identified. In correspondence with the postulates of qualitative research, processes of confrontation, comparison, and confirmation of the information collected were carried out (Cerdeña and Gutiérrez, 1999): According to the reliability, the study considered several principles of consistency proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for qualitative research of hermeneutic approach that will allow showing the results not only from the written but also from the visual through a video that will be delivered to the municipality with photographic evidence of the subject matter of the research.

### **Coding**

The coding process was divided into two parts. The first part was the formation of two focus groups, for which alpha-numeric codes were assigned to the interviewees to tabulate the results, which were analyzed to answer the main research question and the objectives set out in the research.

Each focus group was assigned a number and an example letter (GF1) corresponding to each member of the focus group, e.g., R1, the Director of the House of Culture, and thus to each of the members of the focus group, R2, the Mayor, etc.

<b>DESCRIPTION AND CODING OF THE FOCUS GROUPS</b>	
<b>MEMBERS OF INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN MARTIN</b>	
<b>GFRI</b>	<b>GUIDING QUESTIONS ON RISKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES.</b>

<p><b>Members of public and private institutions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What risks, threats and vulnerabilities are community members exposed to as a result of the conflict?</li> <li>2. What makes them feel unprotected?</li> <li>3. What makes them feel threatened?</li> <li>4. Identify the places of risk, vulnerability and threat. Also, express in the cards, the type of risk, vulnerability and threat that is perceived in these places</li> <li>5. Do you know of situations in which children, women and men have had their rights violated? Are they related to the places identified?</li> <li>6. What situations lead to children, women and men, being exposed to dangerous situations?</li> <li>7. What situations lead the community to be exposed to dangerous situations? Who is more exposed to risks, boys/girls, women, men, women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and why do you think this is so?</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GUIDING QUESTIONS ON PROTECTIVE PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can children, women, men, people with disabilities and the elderly be protected from the risks, threats and vulnerabilities identified above?</li> <li>2. What can the family do to protect its members from the risks, threats and vulnerabilities identified above?</li> <li>3. What can the community do to protect its members from the risks, threats and vulnerabilities identified above?</li> <li>4. What can institutions do to protect their members from the risks, threats and vulnerabilities identified above?</li> <li>5. What institutions do you know of in your municipality or village that contribute to the promotion of protective environments?</li> <li>6. Do they participate in public spaces, make decisions, and feel that they are taken into account?</li> <li>7. Do they participate in public spaces, make decisions, and feel that they are taken into account?</li> <li>8. What can these institutions do to protect them from dangers, and to ensure that these dangers do not exist?</li> <li>9. What type of initiative (artistic and/or cultural) do they propose to turn it into a protective environment with the purpose of turning it into an entrepreneurial idea and be sustainable over time.</li> </ol>
<p><b>GFR2</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GUIDING QUESTIONS ON RISKS, THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES.</b></p>

<p><b>Members of the community (artists and artisans)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What risks, threats and vulnerabilities are community members exposed to as a result of the conflict?</li><li>2. What makes them feel unprotected?</li><li>3. What makes them feel threatened?</li><li>4. Identify the places of risk, vulnerability and threat. Also, express in the cards, the type of risk, vulnerability and threat perceived in these places.</li><li>5. Do you know of situations in which children, women and men have had their rights violated? Are they related to the places identified?</li><li>6. What situations lead children, women and men, to be exposed to dangerous situations?</li><li>7. What situations lead the community to be exposed to dangerous situations? Who is more exposed to risks, boys/girls, women, men, women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and why do you think this is the case?</li></ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GUIDING QUESTIONS ON PROTECTIVE PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How can children, women, men, people with disabilities and the elderly be protected from the risks, threats and vulnerabilities identified above?</li><li>2. What can the family do to protect its members from the risks, threats and vulnerabilities identified above?</li><li>3. What can the community do to protect its members from the risks, threats and vulnerabilities identified above?</li><li>4. What can institutions do to protect their members from the risks, threats and vulnerabilities identified above?</li><li>5. What institutions do you know of in your municipality or village that contribute to the promotion of protective environments?</li><li>6. Do they participate in public spaces, make decisions, and feel that they are taken into account?</li><li>7. Do they participate in public spaces, make decisions, and feel that they are taken into account?</li><li>8. What can these institutions do to protect them from dangers, and to ensure that these dangers do not exist?</li><li>9. What kind of initiative (artistic and/or cultural) do you propose to turn it into a protective environment with the purpose of turning it into an entrepreneurial idea and be sustainable over time?</li></ol>
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Interviews were conducted with the Mayor, the Director of the house of culture, councilors, traditional members of the gangs, other people who have held political positions in the municipality, and teachers in the main schools of San Martin. They were recorded and then transcribed, as stated by Straus and Corbin (1990).

The table shows in the left column the digits of the code assigned to the interviewee and each of his or her answers; in the second column, the categories proposed in this research appear, and in the third column, the answers given by each of the interviewees are transcribed.

<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE CODING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE</b>		
<b>DIGIT</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF SOME PARTICIPANTS</b>
1	<b>Armed conflict</b>  Regarding risk factors, hazards and vulnerabilities	1.1. The fear of the community is the appearance of new Organized Armed Groups (GAO) in the territory or the revival of past violence, a risk that could threaten the tranquility with which they live today and the dream of lasting peace.
	<b>Armed conflict</b>  Regarding risk factors, hazards and vulnerabilities	1.2. War in territories between two parties where the civilian population is involved. Lack of opportunities leads community members to feel pressured by armed actors.  Poverty stands out as a vulnerability factor, since the participants express constant concern that children and youth may voluntarily join the OAGs, either due to lack of employment or educational opportunities.
	<b>Armed conflict</b>  Regarding risk factors, hazards and vulnerabilities	1.3 Children and older adults with disabilities and women are most at risk. Unfortunately, one of the community's mottos is to be silent in order to live.  The lack of opportunities for decent work, entrepreneurship programs or programs related to productivity aimed at the inhabitants of the territory places them in a condition of vulnerability,

2.	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS</b></p> <p>Personal, institutional and family level:</p>	<p>2.1 Self-care: Practicing sports, dances, singing and expressions of their folklore. Likewise, the participants mention the precaution that should be taken when traveling far from their community and on the same route to the municipality of San Martin.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS</b></p> <p>Personal, institutional and family level:</p>	<p>2.2 In general, participants report that they are treated well in their families and mention the home and their close relatives as places and people that provide them with security. However, some participants report that their opinions are not respected at home and that their parents do not take care of them in many cases. In the meetings with the institutions, teachers, for example, stated that parents should pay attention to their children through open and assertive communication (without hiding information from their children) and that they should listen to each other so that children and adolescents are empowered and can face situations of adversity.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS</b></p> <p>Personal, institutional and family level:</p>	<p>2.3 Co-responsibility: Reference was made to the need for the community and the school to improve the channels of communication and trust, which would provide greater protection to the children and youth. The presence of state institutions other than the Mayor's office, the school and the church in the territory is necessary to offer greater conditions, opportunities and security with social programs that support the life projects of the children and youth. Some participants state that artistic expressions are an opportunity for communities to organize and express their artistic culture to protect the use of children and youth's free time.</p>
3.	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>RECONCILIATION AND SYMBOLIC REPARATION</b></p>	<p>3.1. The participants refer to the community's tradition of belonging to the Cuadrillas, since it symbolically represents for their communities the symbolic reparation of a</p>

		conflict that does not correspond to them, but they feel proud to be Sanmartinenses.
	<b>RECONCILIATION AND SYMBOLIC REPARATION</b>	3.2 The NNAJ and the community see an opportunity in culture, art and folklore as a symbolic expression that allows them to reconcile with life so that violence does not strike them again.
	<b>RECONCILIATION AND SYMBOLIC REPARATION</b>	3.3. Families are traditionally linked to the cuadrillas, the Sanmartineros feel a strong attachment to them as a celebration and memory of their people and a symbolic expression of peace.
4.	<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES</b>	4.1 see necessary the cooperative organization of all the actors that express the folklore of the plains through dance, song, and gastronomy, but demand training opportunities so that their culture is known throughout the world as well as the traditional Cuadrillas, their most emblematic festivity.
	<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES</b>	4.2 They express that the geographic location of the municipality is an opportunity to receive tourists and make them aware of its artistic, cultural and gastronomic expressions, but at the same time, they recognize the lack of union to solidify as a community that is sustainable over time through its cultural vocation.
	<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES</b>	4.3 They express that advantage should be taken of the tradition of their festivities around the Cuadrillas that are celebrated every year since it is an intangible and immaterial heritage of their community; they find in their artistic traditions an opportunity to turn them into a permanent offer for tourists and thus be visited more frequently so that this generates opportunities for development, employment and sustainability over time.

## Conclusions

It is considered that the artistic and cultural expressions are reconfigured as a protective environment from the cooperative and collaborative organization of the community to project San Martin (Meta) as a sustainable and thriving municipality in time and that through “*las Cuadrilla*” as the maximum expression of its llanero folklore, it is positioned as one of the most visited municipalities in Colombia when its festivities are celebrated in November each year.

The resilience of the inhabitants of San Martin is configured as a strength since, through expressions of reconciliation and symbolic reparation, they can resignify the stigma of violence in the territory as a context that works for the construction of cultures of peace from their artistic, folkloric, gastronomic, handicraft expressions among others, allowing to understand the reality of their municipality, which has been debated in time in unfortunate situations as a result of the armed conflict. This is how the importance of recognizing the need for unity, recognition and legitimization of others can emerge and thus become a strong community that faces uncertainty and adversity so as not to allow the repetition of painful events due to the armed conflict.

The groups of artisans, artists, and artists of the region plan to consolidate themselves as a sustainable community over time through the maxim “unity is strength” organized in human collectives, working together for the common good to project the municipality through enterprises, based on its traditions and resources, thus contributing to a greater understanding of the armed conflict in the perspective of building cultures of peace-oriented to individual and community progress of San Martin (Meta).

It can implement spaces for reflection, training and artistic creation around the interpretation of the dynamics of the armed conflict, based on the pedagogical practices implemented from the training and workshops on protective environments, entrepreneurship from the creation and artistic and cultural manifestations with the same population.

Good artistic and cultural expression practices are significant in building alternatives beyond individualism and can be transformed into teamwork innovation. In this sense, there is a need for artists and cultural practitioners to make their experiences known, from the construction and strengthening of entrepreneurship, with practical and sustainable strategies over time to prevent and relapse into future violence.

To build strategies from good artistic and cultural practices, one must start from the recognition of the personal resources of those who express affinity with art and culture, especially the support of government institutions, private institutions, parents and all members of the community is important to motivate and support children, adolescents and young people as future hotbeds of art to project the future around the construction of cultures of peace and thus promote protective environments and safe support networks, It is especially important to support government

institutions, private institutions, parents and all members of the community to motivate and support children, adolescents and young people as future seedbeds of art to project the future around the construction of cultures of peace and thus promote protective environments and safe support networks and that early warnings are directed to the competent body (ICBF, Mayor's office, Mayor's office, NGOs, among others, when there are signs of risk, threat and vulnerability for the inhabitants, especially the weakest and most unprotected people, thus avoiding being a focus for organized armed groups.

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