



# NEXT GENERATION COLOMBIA

Raising the voices of young people



Universidad del  
**Rosario**



Universidad de  
**los Andes**  
Colombia

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**BRITISH COUNCIL COLOMBIA**

**UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS ANDES**

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**Universidad del  
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los Andes**  
Colombia





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## > PREFACE

Young people have always been at the heart of our work at the British Council. We believe and know that young people play an active role in transforming their own circumstances, that they are instrumental within their communities and societies, and that we should support their desire to change and contribute. Listening to and working with young people is a priority for the British Council, as they not only will be – but already are – the next generation of leaders and influencers in each country.

To achieve this mission, it's important for organisations like ours to produce evidence about the young people's experiences around the world, so we can better understand their perceptions, experiences, desires and challenges. We have been producing the "Next Generation" series since 2009: reports that aim to give a voice to young people in a country at a time of significant historical importance. We already have Next Generation studies in places like Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Ukraine, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya and, more recently Turkey and the UK.

The current situation in Colombia naturally convinced us of the relevance and need to push our study forward in the country. The 2015 referendum results; the Final Agreement signed by the government and the FARC after fifty years of armed conflict; current efforts to make peace with the ELN guerrilla group; the recent presidential elections and the anti-corruption enquiry; all this means that Colombia faces a time of great challenges, but also one of great opportunity. And what better way than to learn, first-hand, about the visions and experiences of the young people who have the difficult task of putting an end to the cycles of violence that have torn the country apart.

We hope that this comprehensive report becomes a tool that helps policymakers, politicians, implementers as well as the young people themselves, to incorporate young Colombian voices in programme planning and implementation.

**Tom Miscioscia –  
Director of British Council Colombia**

# > FOREWORDS

Colombia is being presented with an unparalleled opportunity to build a more inclusive society, with greater solidarity, in which we can discuss and maintain our differences without the need to attack each other. It is therefore inevitable that we think about the future, about the youngest generation as well as those yet to be born, and ask ourselves, what country do they want to live in? What are the barriers to achieving it? How can we help them envisage the life they would like to live, and give them tools to accomplish it? The best way is to ask young people themselves. Next Generation – Colombia does exactly that, and is part of a series of British Council studies in several countries. This work initiates a dialogue between generations who will submit the issues most central to them, their dreams, concerns, barriers and hopes.

In this way, as a result of this dialogue, together we can propose policy options to ensure that the social, economic and political lives of new generations are not determined by where they were born. We all have dreams. If our efforts can help young people, our children, the countryside and the city to fulfil dreams, then we will be taking another step towards building a better country.

**José Manuel Restrepo Abondano**  
– former Rector of Universidad del Rosario and Minister for Commerce, Industry and Tourism

The British Council, through the Next Generation series, is making a significant effort to bring young voices to the ears of public policymakers. This study has been carried out in other countries within the context of major social change. Colombia is the focus of our study this year, as the country is experiencing times that are pivotal in its future. This is a very welcome initiative as it will provide us with important insights for Colombia's development. What happens in Colombia will depend on what we achieve in guaranteeing young people the opportunity to develop, whilst respecting their own interests and meeting their needs. Everyone who is involved in institutions working for and with this country's young people must pay attention to the study's conclusions. They will provide fundamental input for guiding the work we do, to ensure that they seize the national and international opportunities on offer. This study will enable us to understand young people's vision in more detail, in relation to a range of issues such as political participation, education, the people they trust and the problems they face.

**Pablo Navas Sans de Santamaría** –  
Rector of Universidad de los Andes





# > 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Why young people?

Around 12,757,040 young people live in Colombia, representing 26 per cent of the population. These young people are living in historic times. Recent changes that have substantially transformed their living conditions include the reduction of poverty, improvements in educational and working conditions and healthcare coverage rates, along with the signing of the peace treaty which ends the Western Hemisphere's longest internal conflict. Nevertheless, even though these transformations are creating opportunities that could drive substantial improvements in society's wellbeing and advancement, they also bring great challenges for public policy that, if not overcome, could deepen social crises and jeopardise any progress the country has made.

To benefit from the opportunities these changes present, young people must be made a priority in public policy and in the general organisation of society. Until now, the idea that young people play a critical role in Colombia's progress has not figured decisively in the political agenda. However, it is the young people who have the financial, emotional and intellectual resources to make the continued effort needed for Colombia's progress. At the same time, there is a risk that they may also abandon productive activities or even develop harmful ones that put their own development, and Colombia's progress itself, at risk.

## Why this study?

Although we know a lot about young people in Colombia, there are three crucial gaps that stand out in existing literature:

1. a significant proportion of the knowledge about young people's needs, resources and opportunities has been included in the public agenda without considering the opinions of this population group.
2. while multiple sources of high-quality information exist in Colombia, a systematic review of relevant databases suggests that this segment of the population is not represented in any single study and do not adequately represent young people between 14 and 28 years of age.
3. the studies that have taken young people's needs into account have traditionally ignored important areas such as mental health and social resources.

*Next Generation – Colombia* contributes to the academic literature on young Colombians and to the country's public political agenda, focusing on the three gaps identified. A section providing general statistics about the country is followed by a review of existing literature on young people in Colombia. When preparing this section, we carried out an extensive review of literature on areas such as education, health, violence, labour market, time usage, political participation, identity and values among the younger population of Colombia. This review enables us to understand where efforts to generate knowledge of young people's development in the country have been concentrated.



Following this review of existing information, *Next Generation – Colombia* presents the results of the raw data analysis collected by researchers on six central themes. They focus on the opportunities, needs and resources available to young people, based on how they themselves perceive them. A national survey was designed to represent young people from different areas of the country, enquiring about their motivations, desires, fears, prospects and expectations for their present and future. Also, a series of focus groups was developed in four different areas of the country. We initiated semi-structured conversations with young people from different backgrounds to understand their needs, opportunities, aspirations, dreams and vision about the country. These focus groups were comprised of Colombian adolescents and young people. The aim was to understand their day-to-day, their difficulties, struggles and also their surroundings in terms of the adversities and opportunities they are presented with.

### What did we ask?

Next Generation – Colombia is arranged in six chapters, one for each of the selected central themes: trust and social capital; political participation; education, work and free time; violence and mental health; and dreams and expectations. These themes were selected because they reflect the behaviour, skills and opportunities for young people to be part of society and become the change agents of their own lives. The first two – trust, social capital and political participation – provide information about how young people see the society in which they live; they include information on which areas they believe require action and also the scope of influence of their own actions.

The third – education and work – tells us about the intellectual resources they have at their disposal, opportunities to take advantage of the resources and the opportunities they have to change them.

The fourth – emotional health – provides information on the psychological and social resources they have and shows some implications of one of the most significant barriers Colombia's young people have faced: violence. The last chapter – dreams and expectations – reveals what young people want to do with their lives and the barriers they face in fulfilling their dreams.



## What did we find?

### Social trust and social capital

- Young people identify themselves principally as Colombians and are generally very proud of their country
- Young people trust their families and friends most. They also trust teachers, the armed forces and the church. They are highly distrustful of strangers and people who are “different” to themselves – such as people from another region, religion or country – and do not have much confidence in armed groups, political parties or the government.

### Political participation

- Young people show very little interest in current political events or developments in Colombia. However, this does not mean they are indifferent to politics: 79 per cent of young people believe that citizen participation in society helps to build the country.
- They believe it’s better to participate in social organisations as a form of political activity, as opposed to participating in political parties. Yet the majority of them do not take part in this type of organisation; they prefer to be active in church or in sports groups (political groups ranked last).
- A significant number do not intend to exercise their right to vote, because they don’t think it will change anything.





## Education and employment

### Education

- Young people in poorer or rural areas have less access to education.
- 28 per cent of young people from homes in the lowest socio-economic quintile attend school, while 60 per cent of those from homes to the highest quintile do.
- Those living in remote towns are less likely to attend an educational institution in comparison with those who live in close proximity to or in large cities themselves.
- More men attend higher education institutions than women, irrespective of where they live.

All of the aforementioned findings differ from with the way young people view education. A vast majority of the young people interviewed believe in the value of education and the vast majority of young people agree or totally agree that education helps drive change in society.

### Employment

- Most young people who do work carry out informal, unstable activities that offer little personal or professional development.
- There is a perception that working opportunities for young people in Colombia are scarce.
- Young people believe there are few opportunities to develop skills.
- The main objective when looking for work is to solve short-term economic problems.
- Young men are more likely to be in paid employment in comparison to women.
- Young people from the lowest well-being quintile have lower employability than those from the highest well-being quintile.

In general, young people believe it's important to have a job that offers professional development, and that individual effort is crucial to achieve a better life. However, those who have no access to education often also do not have access to work, and vice versa.

## Violence and mental health

Our research into the levels of exposure to violence and high levels of exposure to victimisation generated by an armed conflict, and emotional health levels among Colombian young people and adolescents, paints a disturbing picture:

- This exposure to violence, either directly or indirectly, creates an extra burden on individuals, and becomes a barrier to the positive development process.
- Women and the poorest segment show a higher rate of mental health problems. This particularly highlights the need to consider distinctive care and policies for different population groups.

### Dreams and expectations

- Young people in Colombia share various dreams: the hope of studying, to support their existing family or start a new one and buy their own home.
- To fulfil these dreams, the main barriers identified by young people were the lack of money to cover their basic needs, lack of opportunities to work or study, and early pregnancy.
- Those in rural areas also identified barriers that include the lack of public services, great distances between their homes and educational institutions and transportation issues.
- Young people identified that in some contexts, exposure to violence can also be a barrier to fulfilling the dreams.
- Young people generally claim to be more optimistic in relation to personal matters (finishing high school and graduating from university) than towards the community (the community's future) or the country (peace in Colombia), though young people in remote towns are more optimistic about their community's future in comparison with those in large cities.

### What now.

The aim of *Next Generation – Colombia* is to help youth voices influence public policy, but not to make specific public policy proposals. The intention of the British Council and the authors is to offer information that can be used in different public policy building exercises, and particularly for encouraging engagement with young people themselves. We therefore hope that the content of this study finds its way to youth workgroups and meetings with public policymakers and implementers, to improve existing policies and build new ones that focus on the needs, resources, opportunities and expectations of young people in Colombia.

In the future it will be vital to harness young people's levels of belonging and pride. Equally important is capitalising on the great trust they hold in key institutions, to find strategies that consolidate Colombian social capital and improve levels of trust. Achieving these aims could also help generate greater levels of respect, tolerance and cooperation to help transform Colombian society into a fairer one.

We therefore hope that *Next Generation – Colombia* represents not the end, but the beginning of many conversations, debates and analyses that influence, build and strengthen public policies that really meet young people's needs.

## > 2. ABOUT THE NEXT GENERATION – COLOMBIA STUDY

*The Next Generation – Colombia* study group started work in March 2017. Its first task was to undertake a literature review of over one hundred references to get a clear overview of current information about young people in Colombia. The result is an extensive document which is available to those interested and has been summarised in one of the sections of this report. The team then designed the data collection processes, which aimed to gather the voices of the country's young people and take them to the public policy arena. The first of these processes was the development of a representative survey targeting young people in the country. The second process involved a qualitative transversal study, by way of focus groups in different places and using a semi-structured questionnaire. The objective was to learn about young people's perceptions with regards to their needs, opportunities, aspirations, dreams and vision of the country. Both processes were reviewed and endorsed by the Universidad de los Andes Ethics Committee<sup>1</sup>.

*The Next Generation – Colombia* study approached young people from 14 to 28 years old and covered both urban and rural areas. Thirty-three municipalities in five regions were visited during the study, using a questionnaire developed by the project researchers, and with the support of staff from the National Consulting Centre and the British Council. The multipurpose questionnaire

enquired about subjects such as social capital, collective action and social participation, trust, education, work, aspirations, expectations, concerns, and experience of conflict and violence. In addition, we also included a module about resilience and another about mental health symptoms. Themes were chosen on the basis of our findings from the literature review performed in the first phase of this study. Information derived from other sources was included in the survey, allowing us to correlate the young people's answers with the geographic and social conditions in their places of residence. Annex 2 shows details of the survey characteristics and other basic results of the answers provided by young people themselves.

The target population of the survey and the focus groups was the same: young people from 14 to 28 years old who live in Colombia. These groups were set up in four Colombian cities – Bogotá, Medellín, Turbo and Necoclí – which differed both in terms of their geographical location and also in many of their socio-economic conditions, particularly the opportunities available to the young people that live in them. Focus groups were developed in different areas of the first two, the country's largest cities, in an attempt to gather young people from different parts of the city and with distinct socio-economic conditions. As the populations of Turbo and Necoclí (in the Department of Antioquia) are

considerably lower than that of Medellín, focus groups were set up in both rural and urban sectors (we did not look for young people from rural areas of Bogotá and Medellín as they are primarily urban cities). Annex 3 contains a table showing the number of focus groups carried out in each of these places.









## > 3. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF COLOMBIA

Colombia is located in South America and has land borders with Venezuela, Brazil, Panama, Peru and Ecuador. It is the only South American country with access to two oceans (Atlantic and Pacific) and covers approximately 1,141,748 km<sup>2</sup>. 26 per cent of the whole population are between the ages of 14 and 28.

Our research was conducted in the cities of Bogotá, Medellín, Turbo and Necoclí (the latter three are in the province of Antioquia).

**Bogotá.** This is the capital of Colombia, with a total population of 8,080,734 inhabitants in 2017. Young people (i.e. aged 15 to 29), made up 24 per cent of the total population.

**Medellín.** Medellín had a total population of 2,508,452 inhabitants in 2017, of which 1,180,538 were men and 1,327,914 were women. In this same year, there were 561,624 inhabitants aged 15 to 29, corresponding to 22 per cent of the municipal population.

**Turbo.** Turbo had 167,886 inhabitants in 2017, of which 30 per cent of the population was aged 15 to 29.

**Necoclí.** Necoclí had a total population of 65,663 inhabitants in 2017, of which 19,634 people were aged 15 to 29 (approximately 30 per cent of the total population).

The case study areas were selected to take into account Colombia's extremely diverse geography and socio-economic conditions, to give an in depth perspective of different urban and rural, coastal and central youth populations within the country. It also presents data from four regions at very different proximities from the centre of power in the country, its capital, Bogotá. Whilst the data cannot be generalised to take into account all rural or all urban populations, the different locations are indicative of the diversity of Colombia's cities and regional settlements.





## > 4. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG COLOMBIANS<sup>1</sup>

While Colombia is already in an advanced phase of what could be seen as a demographic bonus<sup>2</sup> with a high youth population, wide disparities persist in educational, healthcare and employment opportunities that put a large proportion of young people in disadvantaged situations. In addition, monetary and multidimensional poverty levels continue to be very high, putting more than 20 per cent of the population in vulnerable conditions<sup>3</sup>. Economic inequality<sup>4</sup> and almost non-existent social mobility<sup>5</sup> prevent some young people from achieving their potential for development. Instead, they find themselves on life trajectories that are neither aligned with their individual progress nor that of the country.

Poverty, exposure to violence as part of armed conflict, and living in rural areas

put young people in vulnerable positions that can compromise their development trajectories<sup>6</sup>. For example, those with the lowest socio-economic status and those who are most exposed to violence in their municipalities are, on average, the ones who have most difficulty accessing education. Teenage pregnancy, the presence of gangs, the need to work and the lack of family support often force them to drop out of the education system<sup>7,8</sup>. The educational infrastructure and its insufficient spaces also negatively affect their opportunities for learning<sup>9</sup>.

At an international level, with regard to the quality of education, Colombia has historically been positioned below the OECD average, even though it has registered considerable advances in recent years<sup>10</sup>.

However, there are enormous disparities within the country in students' learning and achievement. Those who have fewer economic resources, are most exposed to violence and crime, live in rural areas, belong to ethnic groups, and study at state schools find themselves in a disadvantaged position that compromises their entrance to higher education and the labour market<sup>11</sup>. Related to this, findings from the literature and quantitative analyses with representative data for students in secondary education reveal that these risk situations are also associated with lower expectations and aspirations of entering higher education. This may mean a behavioural deterrent from achieving goals that positively affect young people's wellbeing<sup>12</sup>.

1 > An extended version of this section can be accessed via the British Council website ([www.britishcouncil.co/](http://www.britishcouncil.co/)) or directly from the authors ([dmaldonadoc@uniandes.edu.co](mailto:dmaldonadoc@uniandes.edu.co)).

2 > Gutiérrez-Forero, D. & Castro-Escobar, E. (2015). Estado del bono demográfico y efectos en el desarrollo económico y social en Colombia. *Revista Jurídicas*, 12(2): 72–89.

3 > DANE. (2016a). Pobreza monetaria y multidimensional en Colombia 2015. Boletín Técnico, National Administrative Department for Statistics – DANE [Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística – DANE], Colombia. García, S. y Ritterbusch, A. (2015). Child poverty in Colombia: construction of a multidimensional measure using a mixed-method approach. *Child Indicators Research*, 8, 801–823.

4 > Colombia ranks in the top ten percent of global inequality. Source: Figures on income and prosperity at <http://wdi.worldbank.org>.

5 > Ferreira, F. y Meléndez, M. (2014). Desigualdad de resultados y oportunidades en Colombia: 1997–2010. In: A. Montenegro and M. Meléndez, *Equidad y movilidad social*. Ediciones Uniandes.

6 > García, S.; Rodríguez, C.; Sánchez, F. & Bedoya, J. G. (2015). La lotería de la cuna: La movilidad social a través de la educación en los municipios de Colombia. CEDE Documents 013816. Universidad de los Andes-CEDE.

7 > Cortés, D. & Vargas, J. F. (2012). Inequidad regional en Colombia. In: A. Montenegro and M. Meléndez, *Equidad y movilidad social*. Ediciones Uniandes. Sánchez, F.; Velasco, T.; Ayala, M. C. & Pulido, X. (2016). Trayectorias de permanencia, deserción y repotencia en la educación secundaria colombiana y sus factores asociados. Working papers from the Escuela de Gobierno Alberto Lleras Camargo No 36. Universidad de los Andes.

8 > Abud, M. J.; Lorch, S.; Mikula, L. & Rosario, J. (2015). Engaging the future of Colombia's youth: in Ladera, el Retiro and Buenaventura. Report. SIPA and Fundación Carvajal.

9 > Lugo, N.; Hernández, G. & Colmenares, J. (2016). Infraestructura escolar, dimensionamiento y proyección. EGOB working papers, 39. Universidad de los Andes.

10 > ICFES. (2016). Resultados PISA 2015: desempeño, equidad y cobertura. Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education [Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Educación] (ICFES).

11 > García, S.; Maldonado, D. & Rodríguez, C. (2014). Propuestas para el mejoramiento de la calidad de la educación preescolar, básica y media en Colombia. Cuadernos Fedesarrollo 49. Fedesarrollo.

12 > García, S.; Maldonado, D.; Acosta, M.; Castro, N.; Granada, D.; Londoño, E.; Pérez, J.; Rey, C.; Rosales, L. & Villalba, H. (2016). Características de la oferta de la educación media en Colombia. Working papers from the Escuela de Gobierno Alberto Lleras Camargo No 33. Universidad de los Andes.

In spite of significant advances, access to higher education is inconsistent between regions, being more than 60 per cent in the country's main cities but below 10 per cent in isolated and disadvantaged areas like Chocó and Amazonas<sup>14</sup>. Access to higher education also depends largely on young people's wealth; however, there have been significant improvements in access to educational loans and the delivery of information to vulnerable students, which has had a considerable positive impact on access and students continuing in education<sup>15</sup>. With regard to quality of and returns on higher education, there are also discrepancies due to socio-economic status<sup>16</sup>, which sustain the disparities that emerge from an earlier age. However, the literature finds that the rate of return on higher education in Colombia is high<sup>17</sup>, which shows that policies to reduce differences in access can bring important benefits for the population and eventually reduce the income gap and other socio-economic variables.

Entry to the labour market is not easy for young Colombians. While the general unemployment rate in Colombia is below 10 per cent, the rate for the population aged 14 to 28 is 16 per cent (21 per cent for women) – four percentage points higher than the OECD average<sup>18</sup>. 48 per cent of those who enter the labour market obtain informal employment, a figure that reaches 95 per cent and 83 per cent for young people in situations of extreme poverty and poverty, respectively<sup>19</sup>. The difficulties that young people face in securing formal employment may be due to not sufficiently developing the cognitive skills and particularly the social and emotional skills required in the labour market. Employers in the country and the young people themselves confirm problems related to punctuality, self-control, lack of commitment and communication skills, low perseverance, and low tolerance of failure<sup>20</sup>. Although the federal government has created several programmes to counteract these situations, the problem largely originates in the disparities in access to

and quality of the education system. This study explores in detail the type of employment available and accessible to the young people who live under different socio-economic conditions and in different places. It also explores young people's priorities with regard to work and their future in general.

The lack of educational and work opportunities has created results suggesting that, in 2014, 20 per cent of young people in Colombia neither studied nor worked (i.e. NEETs)<sup>21</sup>. That same year, 99 per cent of NEETs were young people in a situation of poverty and vulnerability, which further deepens the social divide and drives young people into activities that incur high individual and social costs<sup>22</sup>.

A pivotal risk factor for young people is exposure to violence and crime. On the one hand, Colombia has suffered one of the longest and most intense armed conflicts in the world. It has claimed approximately 8,100,180 victims, a figure corresponding to more than 15 per cent of the population, primarily affecting

14 > Amelo, L.; Ramos, J. & Hernández, P. (2014). La educación superior en Colombia: situación actual y análisis de eficiencia. Borradores de Economía No 808. Banco de la República.

15 > Melguizo, T.; Sánchez, F. & Velasco, T. (2016). Credit for low-income students and access to and academic performance in higher education in Colombia: a regression discontinuity approach. *World Development*, 80: 61–77.

16 > González-Velosa, C.; Rucci, G.; Sarzosa, M. & Urzúa, S. (2015). Returns to higher education in Chile and Colombia. IDB Working Paper Series, No IDB-WP-587.

17 > García-Suaza, A.; Guataquí, J. C.; Guerra, J. & Maldonado, D. (2014). Beyond the mincer equation: the internal rate of return to higher education in Colombia. *Education Economics*, 22(3): 328–344.

18 > DNP. (2016). Uno de cada 2 desempleados en Colombia es menor de 29 años. Accessed at [www.dnp.gov.co/Paginas/Ranking-de-las-ciudades-con-mayor-desempleo-juvenil.aspx](http://www.dnp.gov.co/Paginas/Ranking-de-las-ciudades-con-mayor-desempleo-juvenil.aspx)

OECD, CEPAL & CAF. (2017). *Perspectivas económicas de América Latina 2017: juventud, competencias y emprendimiento*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

19 > OECD, CEPAL & CAF. (2017). *Perspectivas económicas de América Latina 2017: juventud, competencias y emprendimiento*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

20 > Abud, M. J.; Lurch, S.; Mikula, L. & Rosario, J. (2015). Engaging the future of Colombia's youth: in Ladera, el Retiro and Buenaventura. Report. SIPA and Fundación Carvajal. Flórez, A. & Jayaram, S. (2016). Bridging the skills gap in Latin America and the Caribbean. FHI 360, R4D. Washington, D. C. Ritterbusch, A.; León, S.; Gutiérrez, J. & Maldonado, D. (2016). La visión del sector empresarial de la educación media. EGOB Working Papers, No. 38. Universidad de los Andes.

21 > Hoyos, R.; Rogers, H. & Székely, M. (2016). *Ninis en América Latina: 20 millones de jóvenes en busca de oportunidades*. Washington, D. C.: World Bank.

22 > Hoyos, R.; Rogers, H. & Székely, M. (2016). *Ninis en América Latina: 20 millones de jóvenes en busca de oportunidades*. Washington, D. C.: World Bank.



rural areas<sup>23</sup>. Of those victims, the majority (7,159,144) have been victims of forced displacement and many others have suffered murder, kidnapping, dispossession of land, anti-personnel mines, threats and terrorist acts. According to the Registry of Victims [Registro Único de Víctimas], 30 per cent of the occurrences of victimisation befell the country's youth population<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, young people have been the main victims of forced recruitment and forced disappearances, particularly those living in poverty in rural, isolated and disadvantaged areas<sup>25</sup>. This study explores the correlation between the levels of violence reported by young people and the opportunities, the aspirations and their decisions about their lives and futures.

Armed conflict and violence, particularly forced displacement, have triggered adverse consequences for young people's wellbeing and trajectories, condemning them to situations of chronic poverty and numerous difficulties securing employment and adequate income, and substantially

reducing their levels of consumption<sup>26</sup>. In particular, evidence shows that victims of displacement (who mostly arrive in urban areas) find it difficult to recover the levels of wellbeing that they had before the act of victimisation, mainly because they lose their physical (land and animals), human (knowledge about agricultural work that is not transferable to urban areas) and social capital while facing discrimination and stigma in the cities<sup>27</sup>.

24 per cent of young people have been victims of crime and more than 40 per cent of Colombians claim to feel unsafe in their neighbourhood and claim that their neighbourhoods are more unsafe now when compared with previous months<sup>29</sup>, in spite of significant advances in bringing the conflict to an end, particularly with the signing of the peace treaty with the FARC guerrilla movement.

23 > A National Information Network [Red Nacional de Información] (RNI). (2017). Registro Único de Víctimas, 2017. Accessed at <http://rni.unidadvictimas.gov.co/RUV>

24 > National Information Network [Red Nacional de Información] (RNI). (2017). Registro Único de Víctimas, 2017. Accessed at <http://rni.unidadvictimas.gov.co/RUV>

25 > González, M. (2016). El verdadero fin del conflicto armado: jóvenes vulnerables, educación rural y construcción de la paz en Colombia. Reporte. Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution.

26 > Ibáñez, A. M. (2008). El desplazamiento forzoso en Colombia: Un camino sin retorno hacia la pobreza. Bogotá, Colombia: Ediciones Uniandes.

Ibáñez, A. M. & Moya, A. (2010). Vulnerability of Victims of Civil Conflict: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia. *World Development*, 38(4): 647–663.

27 > Ibáñez, A. M. & Moya, A. (2010). Do Conflicts Create Poverty Traps? Asset Losses and Recovery for Displaced Households in Colombia. In R. Di Tella, S. Edwards & E. Schargrodsky (eds.), *The Economics of Crime*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 137–172.

29 > García Sánchez, M. & Rodríguez, J. C. (n.d.). Barómetro de las Américas, Colombia 2016: Colombia Joven. Presentation prepared by Colombia Joven. Universidad de los Andes. 50.



In addition, there has been an increase in the number of gangs, mainly affecting the most marginal and disadvantaged neighbourhoods and areas<sup>30</sup>. Cases of interpersonal violence between young people have increased substantially, from 49,421 cases reported in 2011 to 64,011 in 2014.

One of the most damaging consequences of exposure to violence and poverty experienced by Colombia's youth population is mental and emotional health problems. In 2016, approximately 30 per cent of adolescents in the country had been exposed to at least one traumatic experience. 7.2 per cent of adolescents suffer from some form of mental illness, with the most common being depression, anxiety, social phobia and the negative side-effects of substance abuse<sup>31</sup>. There is also an increased prevalence of mental illness among young people who live in areas worst hit by the armed conflict, characterised by

feelings of sadness, hopelessness and fear, sleeping disorders, and difficulties relating to others<sup>32</sup>. There is a higher prevalence of mental and emotional illness among the population living in poverty<sup>33</sup>.

Psychological disorders and adverse emotional states have profound long-term consequences on their decision-making and trajectories. Anxiety can hinder students' academic performance<sup>34</sup>. Trauma and psychological consequences of exposure to violence can impose an additional behavioural barrier to individuals performing adequately in different socio-economic aspects<sup>35</sup>. Lastly, some evidence suggests that there is a connection between hopelessness and low expectations – which can be triggered by exposure to violence or poverty – and young people's opportunities for social mobility<sup>36</sup>. Although this evidence is not causal, it does suggest that

30 > Ávila, A. (2014). *Gestión de la seguridad en Bogotá*. Bogotá, Colombia: Aguilar, Altea. Taurus, Alfaguara.

31 > Ministry of Health y Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (Ministerio de Salud y Colciencias). (2016). *Encuesta Nacional de Salud Mental 2015 – Tomo 1*. Colombia.

32 > Gómez-Restrepo, C.; Tamayo, N.; Buitrago, G.; Guarnizo-Herreño, C.; Garzón-Orjuela, N.; Eslava-Schmalbach, J.; De Vries, E.; Rengifo, H.; Rodríguez, A. & Rincón, C. (2016b). Violencia por conflicto armado y prevalencias de trastornos del afecto, ansiedad y problemas mentales en la población adulta colombiana. *Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría*, 45(S1): 147–153.

Torres, Y.; Berbesí, D.; Barreño, J. & Montoya, L. (2010). Situación de la salud mental del adolescente: estudio nacional de salud mental. Colombia. World Health Organization and Ministry of Social Protection.

33 > Quitian, H.; Ruiz-Gaviria, R.; Gómez-Restrepo, C. & Rondón, M. (2016). Pobreza y trastornos mentales en la población colombiana, estudio nacional de salud mental 2015. *Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría*, 45(S1): 31–38.

34 > Reali, F.; Jiménez-Leal, W.; Maldonado-Carreño, C.; Devine, A. & Szűcs, D. (2016). Examining the link between math anxiety and math performance in Colombian students. *Revista Colombiana de Psicología*, 25(2): 369–379.

35 > Cuartas, J. (2017). Neighborhood crime undermines parenting: violence in the vicinity of households as a predictor of aggressive discipline. Working Paper.

Cuartas, J.; Harker, A. & Moya, A. (2016). Parenting, scarcity and violence: theory and evidence for Colombia. CEDE Documents, No. 38. Universidad de los Andes.

Moya, A. & Carter, M. (2014). Violence and the formation of hopelessness and pessimistic prospects of upward mobility in Colombia. NBER Working Paper No. 20463.

36 > Cuartas, J. & Moya, A. (2016). Self-fulfilling prophecies: expectations, psychological distress, and social mobility in Colombia. Universidad de los Andes.

hopelessness can undermine young people's agency, decisions and actions, condemning them to chronic poverty.

Colombia finds itself in a difficult situation inasmuch as its young people do not participate actively in politics nor in social groups, highly distrust other people and institutions, and are pessimistic about the country's present and future<sup>37</sup>. The proportion of young people who support the peace process with FARC and believe that forgiveness and reconciliation with the guerrilla movement is possible is smaller than that of adults<sup>38</sup>. This literature review reiterates the need for investment in both access to and quality of education and improving working conditions for the country's young people. It also highlights the importance of mitigating the effects of violence on young people.

In the remainder of this document we show results on six complementary topics, using qualitative and quantitative data collected specifically for the Next Generation Colombia study. The topics

were chosen for two reasons. First, there is a lack of studies in Colombia that take into account the voices of young people to inform public policy<sup>39</sup>. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are a response to this, presenting how the country's young people view their Findings: Confidence and Social Capital, the methods of political participation that they prefer, and their opportunities for education, work and use of time.

Second, the review shows that studies into young people in Colombia have not paid sufficient attention to the resources young people have to deal with their own problems. Chapter 8 discusses three of these resources and their effectiveness and reviews how violence is related to young people's emotional health and reviews young Colombians' resilience. Chapter 9 then reviews their dreams and expectations.

We move from the relationships that young people have with people and institutions to the relationship they have with themselves. Emphasis on these

resources is crucial because they can determine the ability of young people to benefit from investments that are made with the intention of improving their capabilities. Disparities in these aspects will translate into differences in their ability to take care of themselves in the future. This is also complementary to this study's preliminary report<sup>40</sup>, which focused on different topics and approached them in a different way.

There are lots of questions that remain unanswered. Many of the aspects considered in this study are interlinked. Those links must be considered to understand how to improve conditions for young people and how to align those conditions with a better future for Colombia. But we still know very little about which interventions are best to encourage its young people to take control of their own lives and the country in such a way that their efforts translate into better conditions for both.

37 > Cuartas, J. (2016). ¿Desigualdad y pobreza como determinantes de la confianza generalizada? Análisis con datos panel. *Desarrollo y Sociedad*, 76: 91–121.  
García Sánchez, M.; Montalvo, J. & Seligson, M. (2015). *Cultura política de la democracia en Colombia*, 2015. Observatorio de la Democracia, Universidad de los Andes.

García Sánchez, M. & Rodríguez, J. C. (n.d.). *Barómetro de las Américas, Colombia 2016: Colombia Joven*. Presentation prepared by Colombia Joven. Universidad de los Andes.

38 > García Sánchez, M.; Montalvo, J. & Seligson, M. (2015). *Cultura política de la democracia en Colombia*, 2015. Observatorio de la Democracia, Universidad de los Andes.

39 > Abud, M. J.; Lorch, S.; Mikula, L. & Rosario, J. (2015). *Engaging the future of Colombia's youth: in Ladera, el Retiro and Buenaventura*. Report. SIPA and Fundación Carvajal.

40 > Maldonado, D.; Cortés, D.; Cuartas, J.; García, S.; Molano, A. & Ritterbusch, A. (2017). *Next Generation – Amplificado la voz de los jóvenes en Colombia*. Reporte preliminar. British Council, Universidad de los Andes, Universidad del Rosario. Accessed at [www.britishcouncil.org/next-generation-colombia](http://www.britishcouncil.org/next-generation-colombia)



## > 5. FINDINGS: CONFIDENCE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

### 5.1. Introduction

Identity is the determining factor in many actions taken by young people. It can form the basis of their behaviours – such as how they vote, work, socialize and where they choose to live – and can also affect Colombia's capacity to take advantage of its development opportunities<sup>1</sup>. Young people were asked how they identify themselves, as well as who they identify with.

Social capital – also known as cohesion or social fabric – can be defined as the set of beliefs and values that facilitate cooperation between members of a community<sup>2</sup>, or the propensity of the individuals in a society to cooperate and produce efficient results socially<sup>3</sup>. Social capital is associated with higher levels of social cooperation, lower transaction costs, higher levels of economic growth, better formal institutions and increased access to credit, among others<sup>4</sup>. In evaluating the levels of social capital of young people in Colombia, the analysis considered two traditional measures: trust in people and trust in institutions.

### 5.2. Who do they identify with?

Half of the country's young people identify themselves primarily as Colombians; the other half ranked other alternatives as more important than their nationality. In particular, 31 per cent identified more with their local communities (ethnic group, neighbourhood or rural district, religion or region). Young people living rurally identify more with their rural district than the other options (16 per cent vs. 6 per cent), while young people in urban areas feel more part of the human race than those in rural areas (18 per cent vs. 9 per cent).



“When it comes to identity, I think it's complex to talk about a single identity because one of the things that distinguishes us is that Colombia is a country that is very regionalist... I feel that there is no single identity. That's to say, identities are also built from a local and community level”.

*(Female, 22 years old, Medellín, currently studying)*

1 > FHogg, MA, Terry, DJ & White, KM (1995). A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No 4 (Dec., 1995), pp. 255-269.

Stets, J. E. & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No 3 (Sep., 2000), pp. 224-237.

Stryker, S. & Burke, P. J. (2000). The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No 4, Special Millenium Issue on the State of Social Sociological Psychology (Dec., 2000), pp. 284-297

2 > Guiso, L.; Sapienza, P. & Zingales, L. (2008). Social capital as good culture. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 6 (2-3): 295-320.

3 > La Porta, R.; Lopez-de-Silanes, F.; Shleifer, A. & Vishny, R. W. (1997). Trust in large organisations. *American Economic Review*, 87: 333-338.

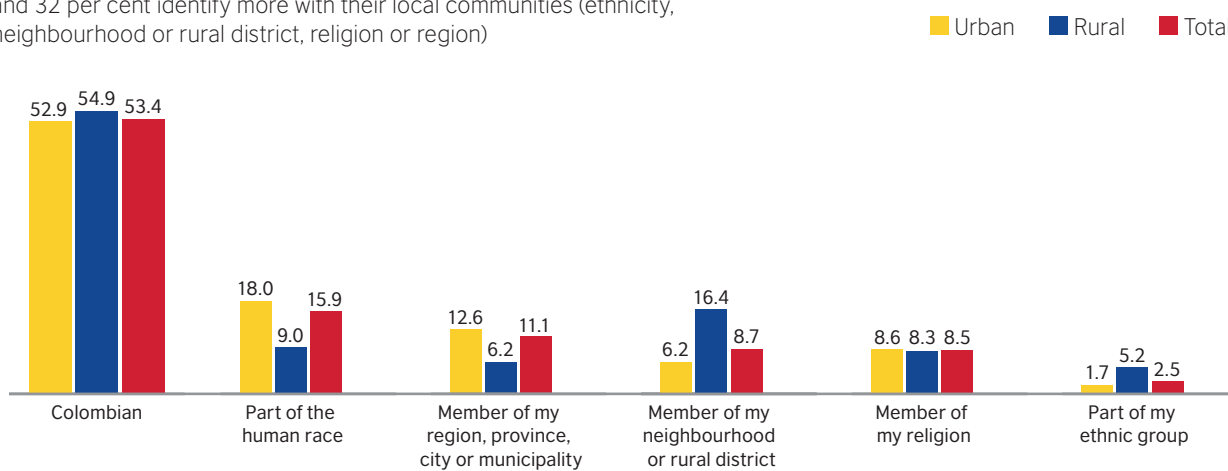
4 > Knack, S. & Keefer, P. (1997). Does social capital have an economic pay-off? A cross-country investigation. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112: 1251-1288.

Horváth, R. (2013). Does trust promote growth? *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 41: 777-788.

Knack, S. (2001). Trust, Associational Life and Economic Performance. In J. Helliwell (ed.), *The Contribution of Human and Social Capital to Sustained Economic Growth and Well-Being: International Symposium Report*. Quebec: Human Resources Development Canada.

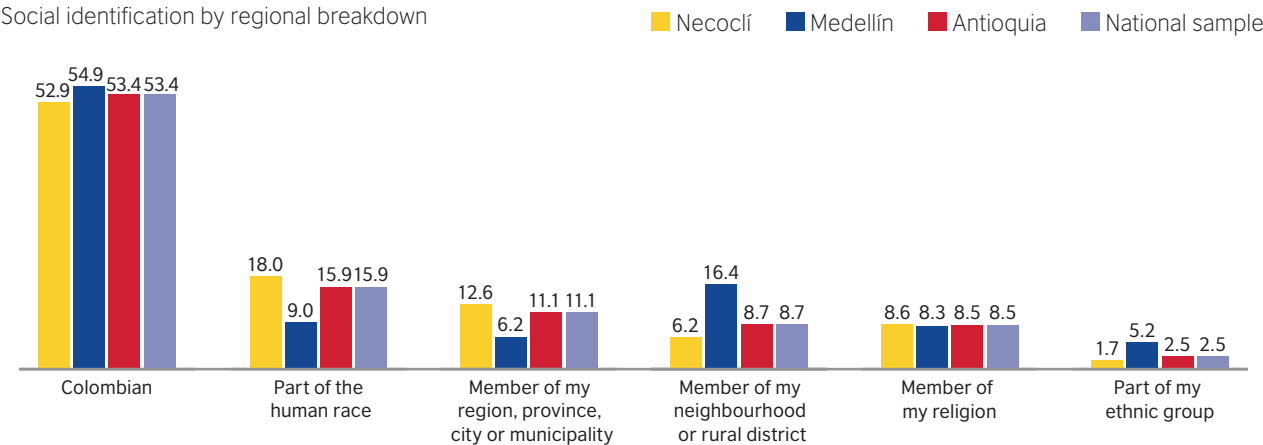
**Figure 5.1**

Half of the young people in the country mainly identify as Colombians and 32 per cent identify more with their local communities (ethnicity, neighbourhood or rural district, religion or region)



**Question:** Of the following options, which do you identify with most? Choose one of the options.

Figure 5.2

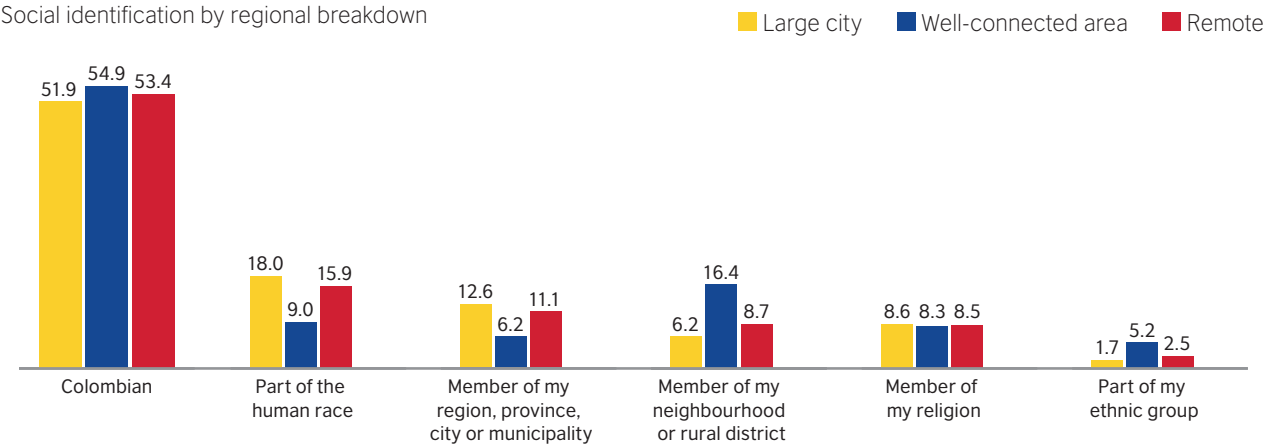


Question: Of the following options, which do you identify with most? Choose one of the options.

A greater proportion (54.2 per cent) of young people in big cities (i.e. with more than 100,000 inhabitants), identified mainly as Colombians compared to those in remote cities (44.9 per cent). Those living in remote cities also

identified themselves primarily as a member of their neighbourhood, rural district or ethnic group (22 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively), more than in large cities (6 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively).

Figure 5.3



Question: Of the following options, which do you identify with most? Choose one of the options.



### 5.3. What generates pride in Colombia?

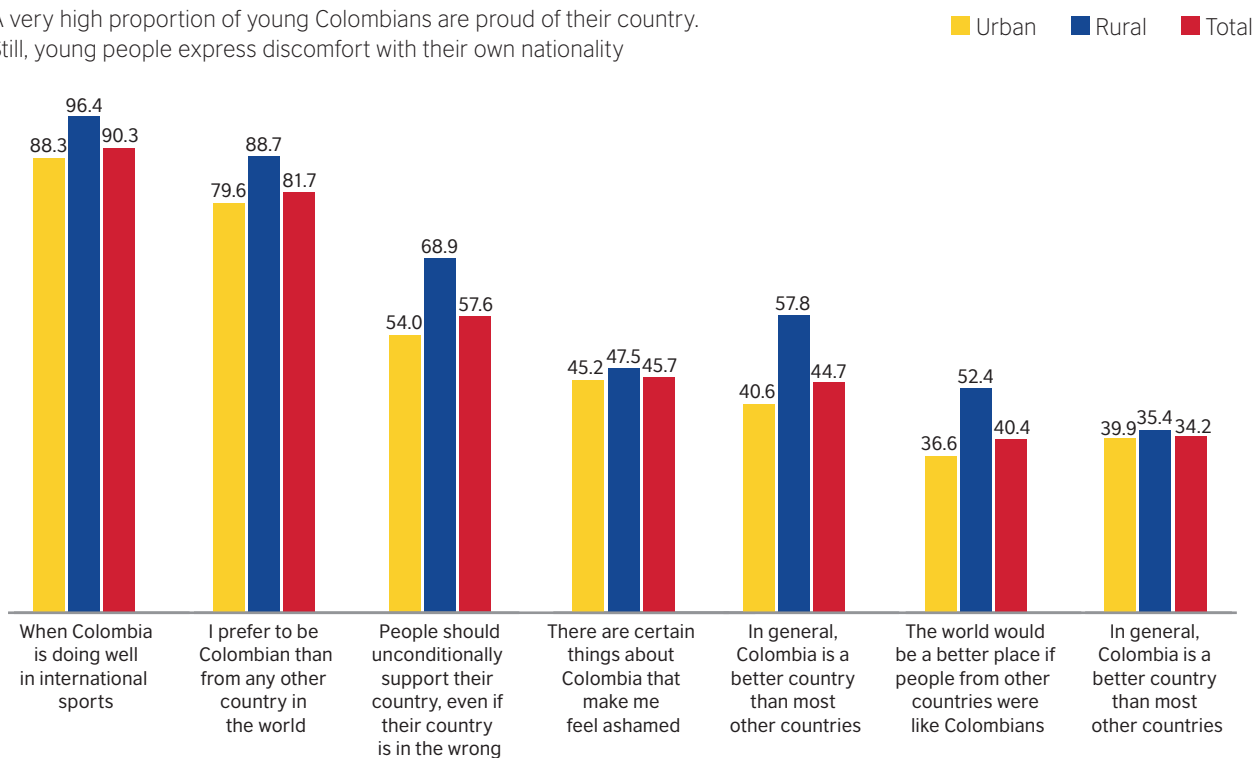
To understand the basis of this identity and the feelings that young people have about Colombia, we asked several direct questions on the subject covering pride in being Colombian, and other feelings related to their nationality and the reasons that may be behind them.

Young people living in rural areas (89 per cent) show a high preference for their nationality compared to those living in urban areas (80 per cent). For rural young people, furthermore, 48 per cent feel ashamed of some of the things happening in the country, 58 per cent think that Colombia is a better country than most others and 52 per cent

consider that the world would be better if people in other countries were more similar to Colombians. These facts seem contradictory and so deserve detailed exploration in future studies to understand the origin of these feelings and the implications for the vision of young people about their role in Colombian society.

**Figure 5.4**

A very high proportion of young Colombians are proud of their country. Still, young people express discomfort with their own nationality



**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means disagree strongly and 5 agree strongly, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

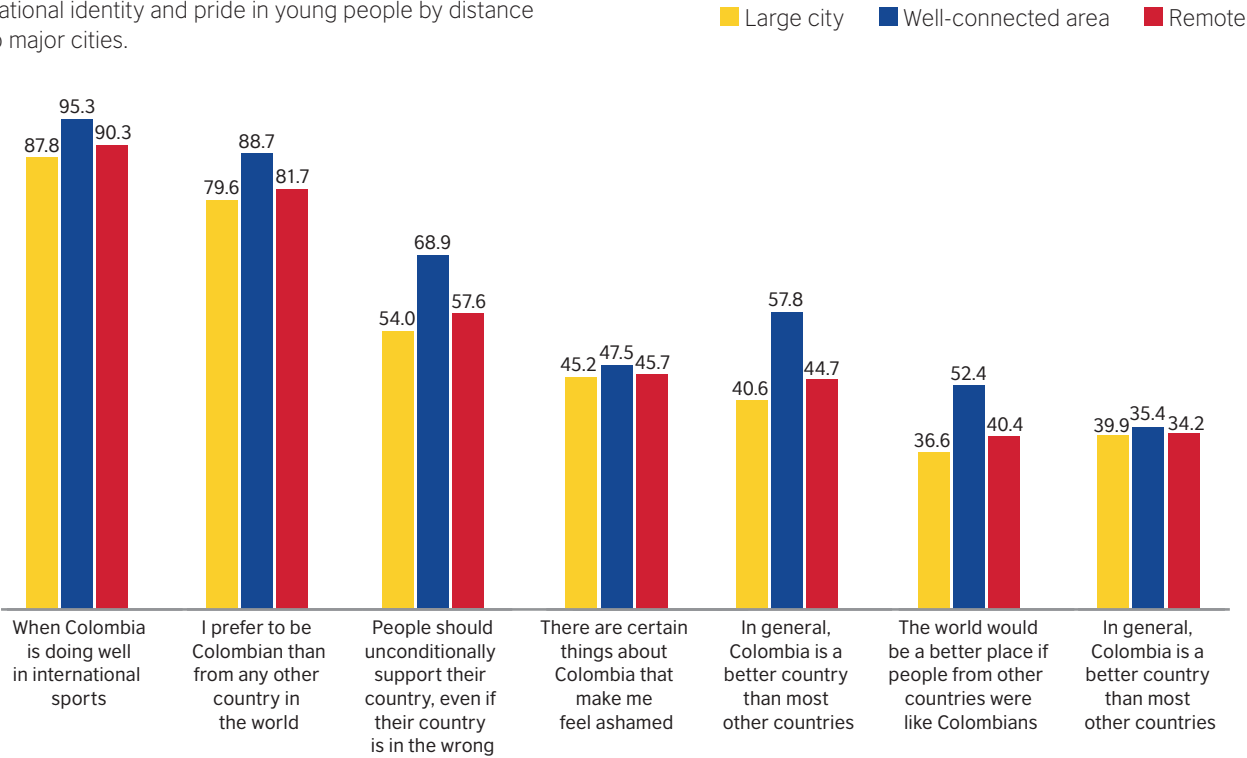
Those from remote areas show greater feelings of pride in the country compared to those from large cities. In addition, a higher proportion of young people in remote and well-connected areas claim that people should unconditionally support their country even if it is in the wrong (60 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively) and that when Colombia is doing well in sports they are proud to be Colombian (94 per cent, 95 per cent), compared to large cities (53 per cent and 88 per cent,

respectively). When we asked about specific aspects of the country that generate pride among young people, achievements in sports (91 per cent), music, arts and literature (90 per cent), science (64 per cent) and in the country's history stand out (78 per cent). Despite a high proportion of young Colombians feeling proud of their country, they also express discomfort with some of the things that happen in the country.

Issues associated with the functioning of democracy, the economy and social policy generated pride for a very low proportion of young people. These three stand out as being the elements that generate the least amount of pride, because they are precisely those that most directly affect the lives of young people.

Figure 5.5

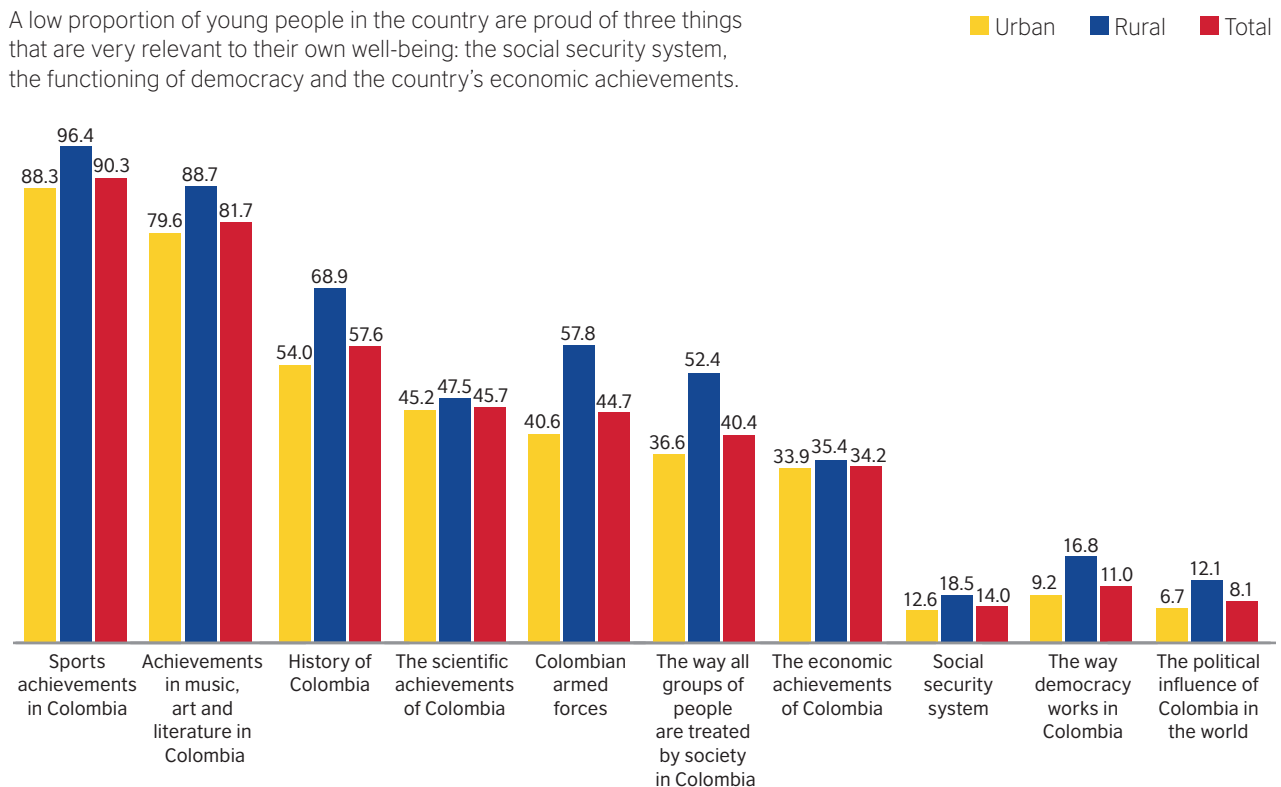
National identity and pride in young people by distance to major cities.



Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means disagree strongly and 5 agree strongly, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**Figure 5.6**

A low proportion of young people in the country are proud of three things that are very relevant to their own well-being: the social security system, the functioning of democracy and the country's economic achievements.



**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means not very proud and 5 very proud, how proud are you of Colombia in each of the following aspects? The graph shows the percentage of people who feel proud (4) or very proud (5) for each aspect.

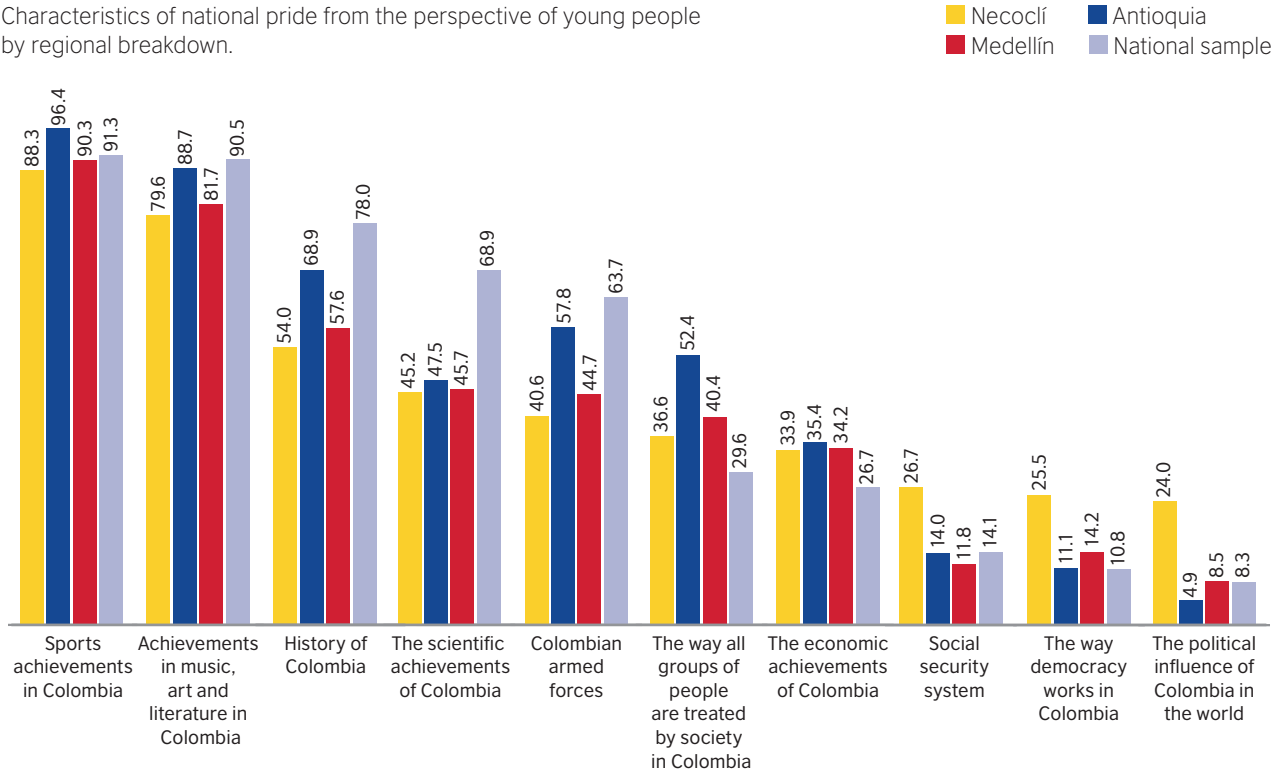
A higher proportion of young people in Necoclí are proud of the functioning of democracy in Colombia, of the political influence of Colombia worldwide, economic achievements, the social

security system, the armed forces, and the way all groups of people are treated in Colombia compared to Medellín, Antioquia and the national sample.



Figure 5.7

Characteristics of national pride from the perspective of young people by regional breakdown.



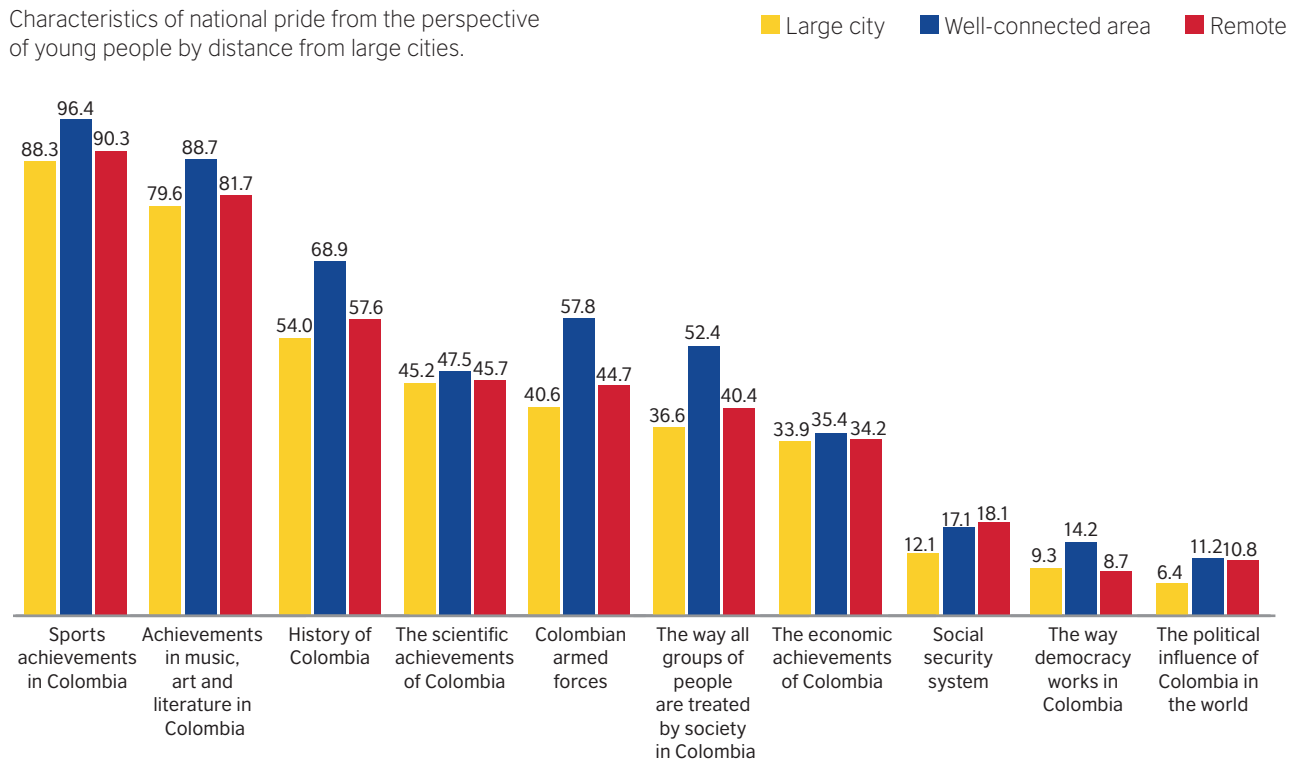
**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means not very proud and 5 very proud, how proud are you of Colombia in each of the following aspects? The graph shows the percentage of people who feel proud (4) or very proud (5) for each aspect.

The proportion of young people claiming to feel pride in the sports achievements of Colombia is greater in remote areas (97 per cent), compared to well-connected areas (96 per cent) and large cities (88 per cent). The proportion of young people who claim to be proud of the political influence of Colombia in the world is higher in remote areas (11 per cent) than in large cities (6 per cent).

Finally, a higher proportion of young people say they feel pride in the way groups of people are treated in Colombian society in remote areas (36 per cent) compared to large cities (26 per cent). Once again, a pattern emerges where levels of pride in the country are different outside large cities compared to within them. This pattern is consistent with observations by regional variation.

**Figure 5.8**

Characteristics of national pride from the perspective of young people by distance from large cities.



**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means not very proud and 5 very proud, how proud are you of Colombia in each of the following aspects? The graph shows the percentage of people who feel proud (4) or very proud (5) for each aspect.



- > “I don’t trust anyone, not friends, nor family because I have been let down many times, I prefer to keep things to myself and not tell anyone.”

*Female, 18 years old, urban Necoclí, student*

- > “No one supports you, the only person who supports you is your mum and no one else.”

*Male, 14 years old, Medellín, not currently studying*

- > “I trust my family, my football coaches, my teammates, who always support me, they are always there to keep me from going astray. They are always there to support my family and my school teachers too.”

*Male, 17 years old, urban Turbo, not currently studying*

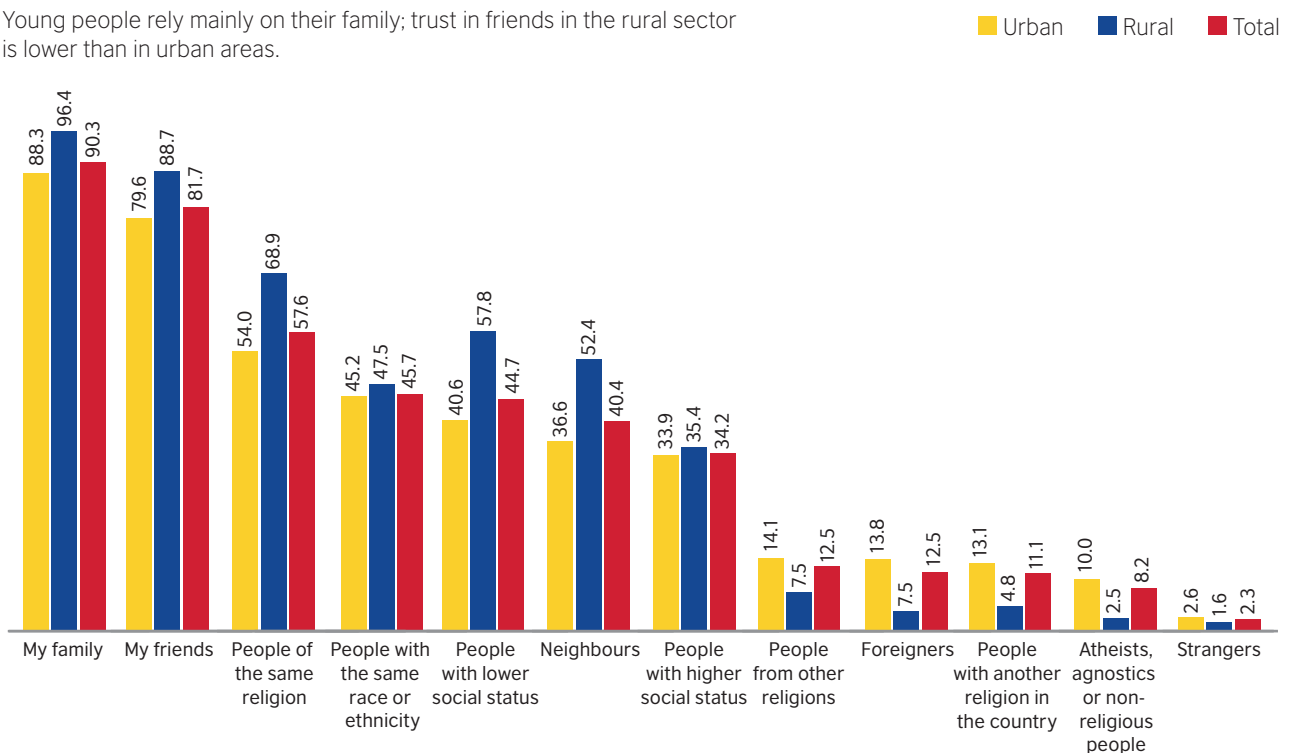
#### 5.4. Who do they trust?

Trust is an emotion that governs the relationship we have with different groups or types of people. The ability to trust people they know, as well as strangers, depends on collaboration with others to different extents and the situations they encounter. During the research, information was collected about the people or groups of people Colombian young people trust, and the institutions they rely on. There were several sets of questions: the first was a question related to trust in groups of people with whom young people interact in their daily lives; the second was about confidence in institutions that affect the world in which young people live.



**Figure 5.9**

Young people rely mainly on their family; trust in friends in the rural sector is lower than in urban areas.



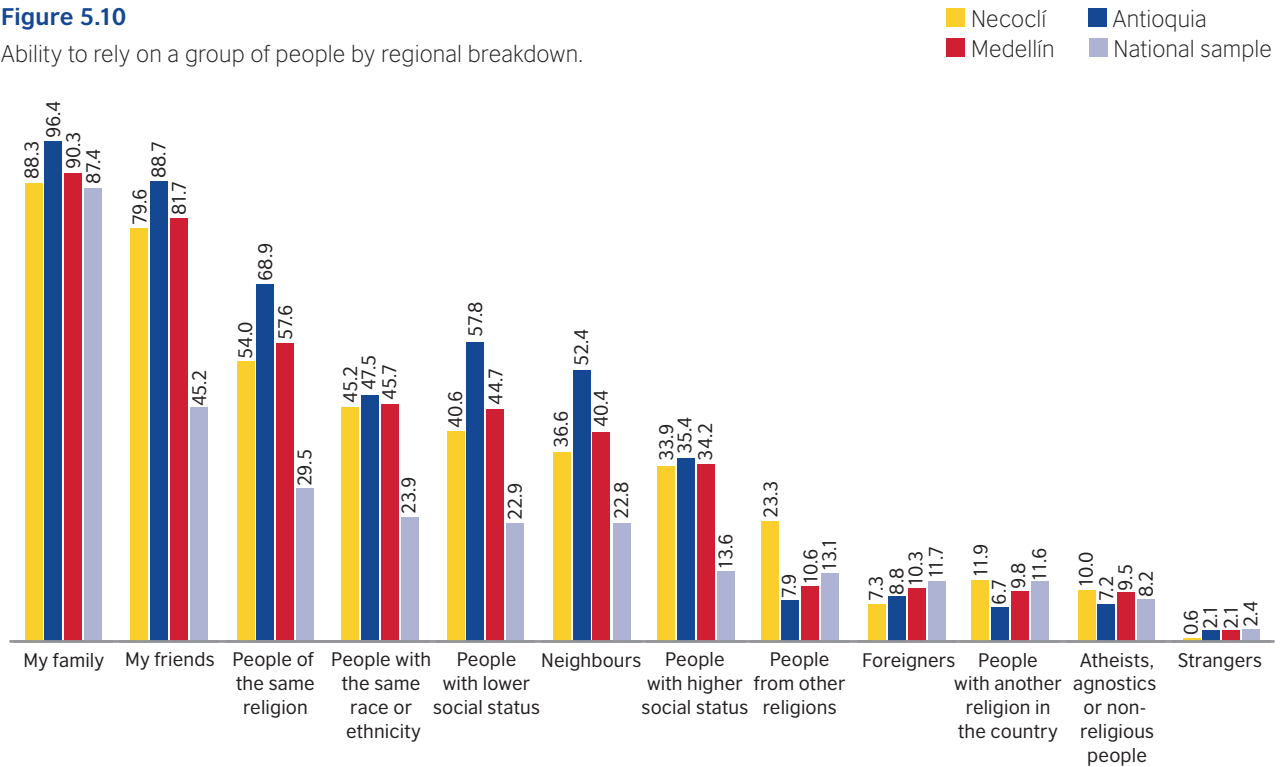
**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means no trust and 5 means high levels of trust, for each of the following groups of people can you tell me how much you trust each of them? The graph shows the percentage of people who replied that they have moderate (4) or high (5) levels of trust for each group.

In general, young people have high levels of trust in their family: 87 per cent claim to have moderate or high levels of trust in their family. This is desirable because it can provide a protective factor against the many risks they face. However, levels of trust in more distant groups are low (including 46 per cent for friends and 23 per cent for neighbours). Young people seem to

rely more on people of their own religion (24 per cent) than on other religions (13 per cent) or atheists, agnostics, or non-religious people (8 per cent). Young people living in rural areas have lower levels of trust in their friends (35 per cent) compared to urban young people (50 per cent), and lower levels of trust in foreigners (4 per cent vs. 14 per cent).

Figure 5.10

Ability to rely on a group of people by regional breakdown.



**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means no trust and 5 means high levels of trust, for each of the following groups of people can you tell me how much you trust each of them? The graph shows the percentage of people who replied that they have moderate (4) or high (5) levels of trust for each group.

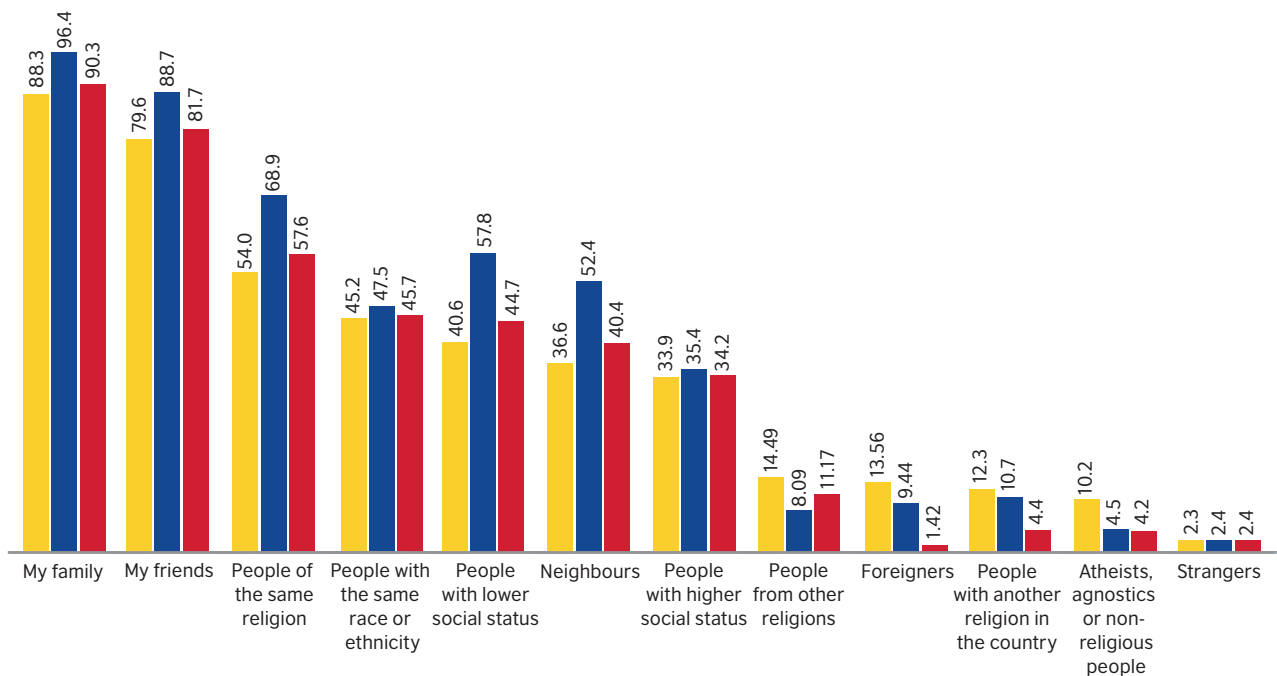
Necoclí generally shows higher levels of trust in people compared to those from other regions. For example, in Necoclí a greater proportion of young people say they trust people of their religion (45 per cent) and people of another religion (23 per cent) compared with Medellín (22 per cent and 11 per cent), Antioquia (18 per cent and 8 per cent) and the national sample (25 per cent and

13 per cent). In addition, a greater proportion of young people say they trust people with a lower social status than themselves and people with another ethnicity or race. The pattern is consistent with the idea that young people from rural and remote areas have a much more local outlook than those in urban and better-connected areas.

Young people in large cities generally rely more on their friends (52 per cent) than people in well-connected areas (37 per cent) and remote locations (33 per cent). In cities a greater proportion of young people trust people from another region of the country, a different social group (higher or lower), another race or ethnic group and foreigners than those from remote areas.

**Figure 5.11**

Ability to trust a group of people by distance from large cities.

■ Large city    ■ Well-connected area    ■ Remote


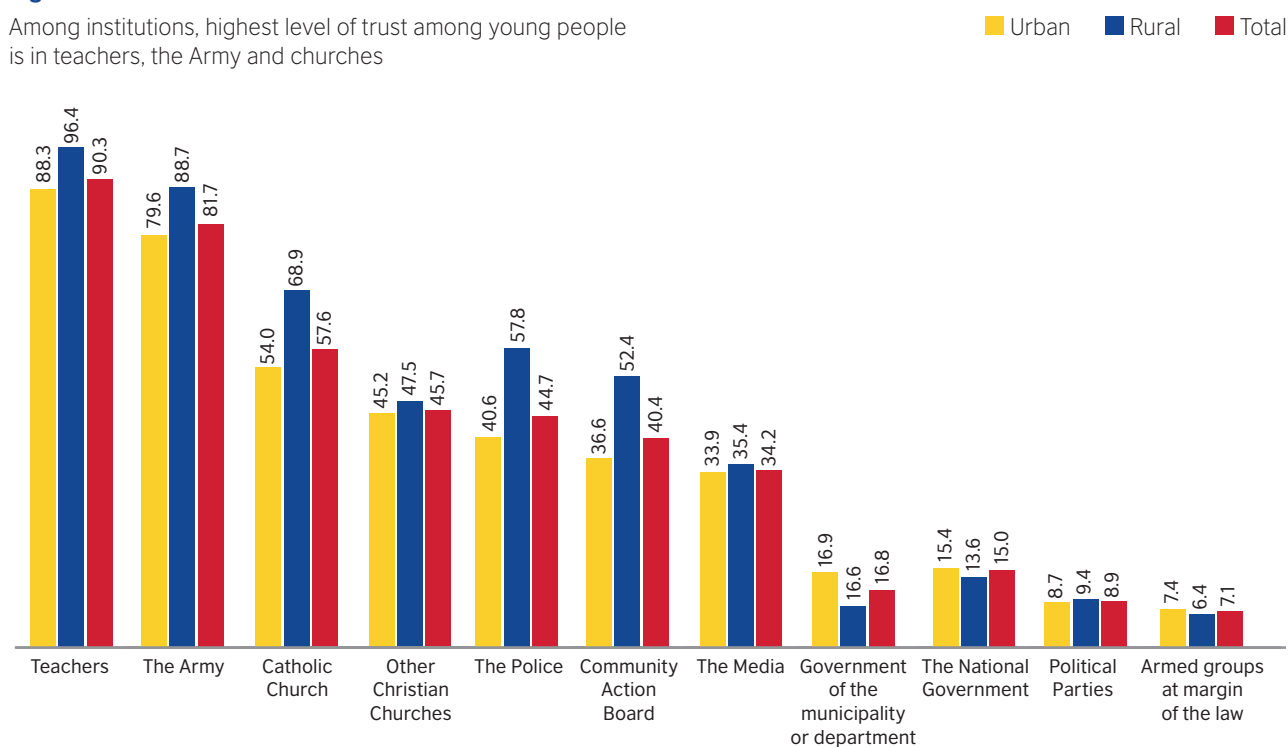
**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means no trust and 5 means high levels of trust, for each of the following groups of people can you tell me how much you trust each of them? The graph shows the percentage of people who replied that they have moderate (4) or high (5) levels of trust in each group.

Regarding trust in formal institutions, the highest levels of trust are in teachers (54 per cent), the army (48 per cent), the Catholic Church (45 per cent) and other Christian churches (34 per cent). Political parties and groups on the fringes of the law generate low levels of trust.



**Figure 5.12**

Among institutions, highest level of trust among young people is in teachers, the Army and churches

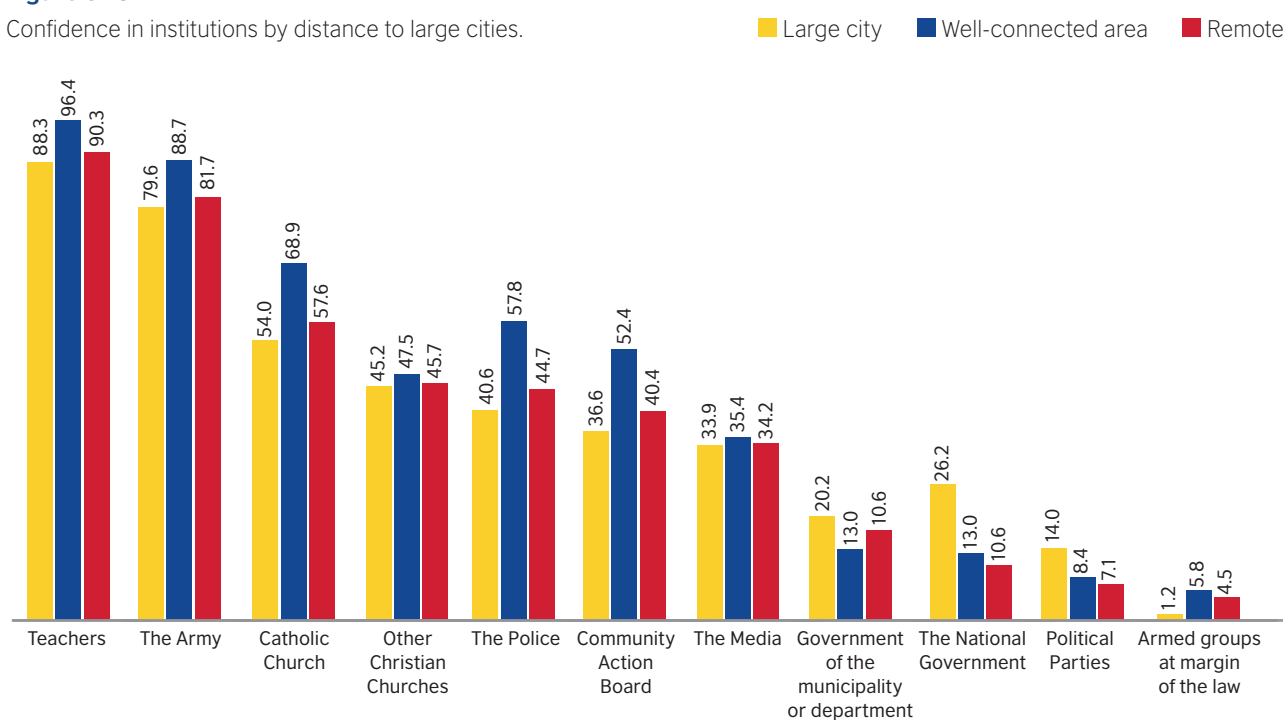


**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means no trust and 5 means high levels of trust, for each of the following groups of people can you tell me how much you trust each of them? The graph shows the percentage of people who replied that they have moderate (4) or high (5) levels of trust for each group.

In large cities, a greater proportion of young people (57 per cent) trust teachers than in remote areas (49 per cent). Apart from this, no statistically significant differences were identified by distance, in the levels of trust in the Police, Community Action Board, local and national governments, the Army, political parties, the media, churches, or armed groups.

**Figure 5.13**

Confidence in institutions by distance to large cities.



**Question:** On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means no trust and 5 means high levels of trust, for each of the following groups of people can you tell me how much you trust each of them? The graph shows the percentage of people who replied that they have moderate (4) or high (5) levels of trust in each group.

## 5.5. Conclusion

Identity and social capital are fundamental determinants of behaviour, beliefs, opportunities and the paths taken by young people. In Colombia, young people identify themselves mainly as Colombians and feel, in general, a great pride in their country and its achievements in music, art and literature, and history. The study also shows that young people mainly rely on their families and friends, while exhibiting very high levels of mistrust

in strangers and people 'different' to them. In addition, young people mainly rely on teachers, the army, and the churches, while they show very low trust levels toward armed groups, politicians and the Government. Considerable heterogeneity was found in the identity and trust levels across regions, depending on the size of the city of residence and their distance from a large city, which shows the great diversity that exists in the country.

In the future, undoubtedly, it will be essential to leverage levels of belonging and pride in young people, to build on their high levels of trust in key institutions to find strategies that allow the consolidation of social capital in Colombia, to improve levels of confidence and, ultimately, to generate higher levels of respect, tolerance and cooperation enabling the transformation of Colombian society for good.





## > 6. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

### 6.1. Introduction

Previous studies on young Colombians' political engagement show that they dislike traditional politics and are looking for new ways to participate<sup>1</sup>. This chapter shows that their political engagement goes beyond protests. The first section analyses their thoughts on citizen participation and the best way to get involved; the second looks at what qualities young people value in their leaders and what they want from political parties. The third examines the reasons why they vote in elections (or why they don't), and the fourth presents the social groups in which they choose to participate. The last section draws conclusions.

### 6.2. Citizen participation: significance, interest and activities

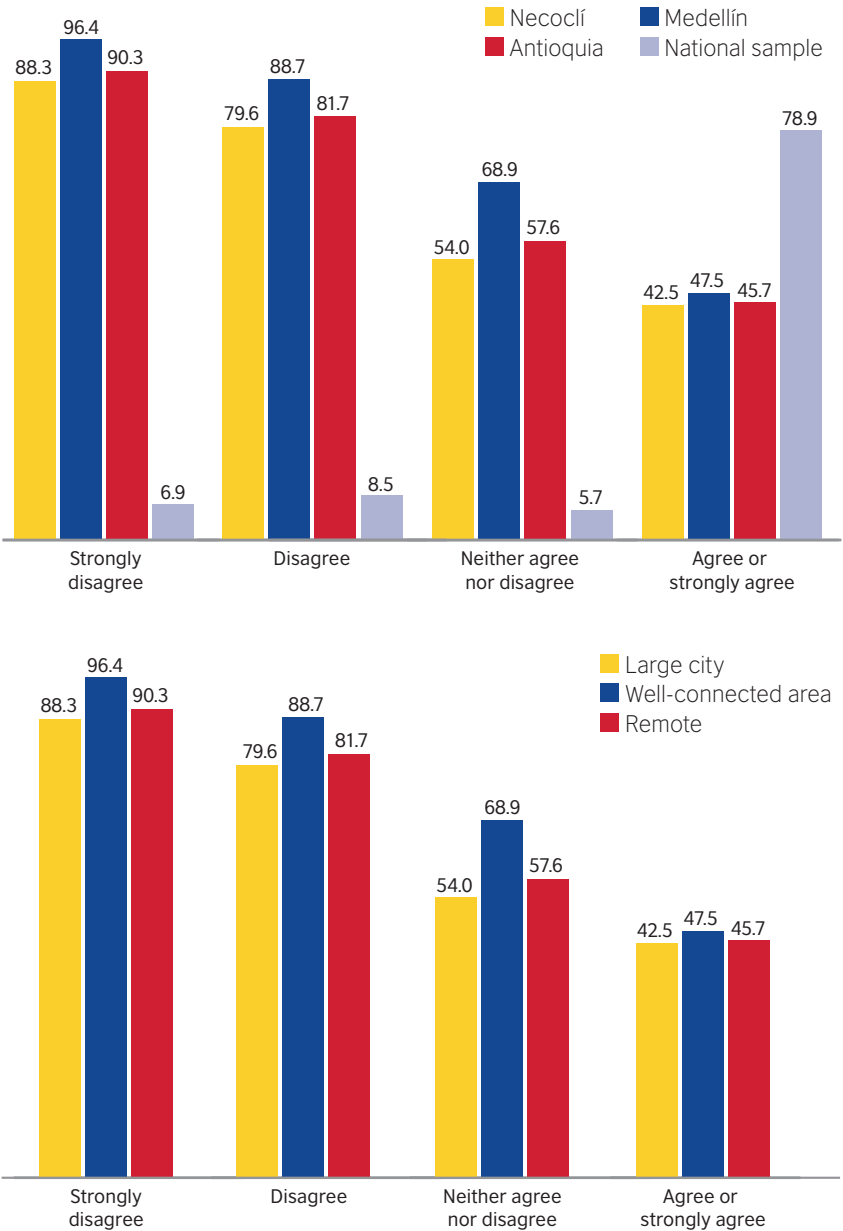
The majority of young people in Colombia believe that citizen participation is fundamental to improving the country. 79 per cent of the nation's young people agree or strongly agree that it helps the country's development, an opinion more strongly held in smaller cities.

> “I believe today's young people absolutely need to take charge and get involved in areas of political engagement and decision-making.”

*Male, aged 18-24,  
Medellín, student*

**Figure 6.1**

Citizen participation of young people disaggregated by region and distance from large cities.



Although they believe that citizen participation is important, young people are nevertheless not interested in events, political or otherwise, currently taking place in Colombia. Only 39 per cent are interested or very interested.

> “Seeing as everything is getting worse and... we [young people] don’t have the chance to weigh in, to get involved in the political narrative ourselves... I’d rather make a difference for myself and go to school, study and get ahead.”

*Female, aged 18-24,  
Bogotá, student*

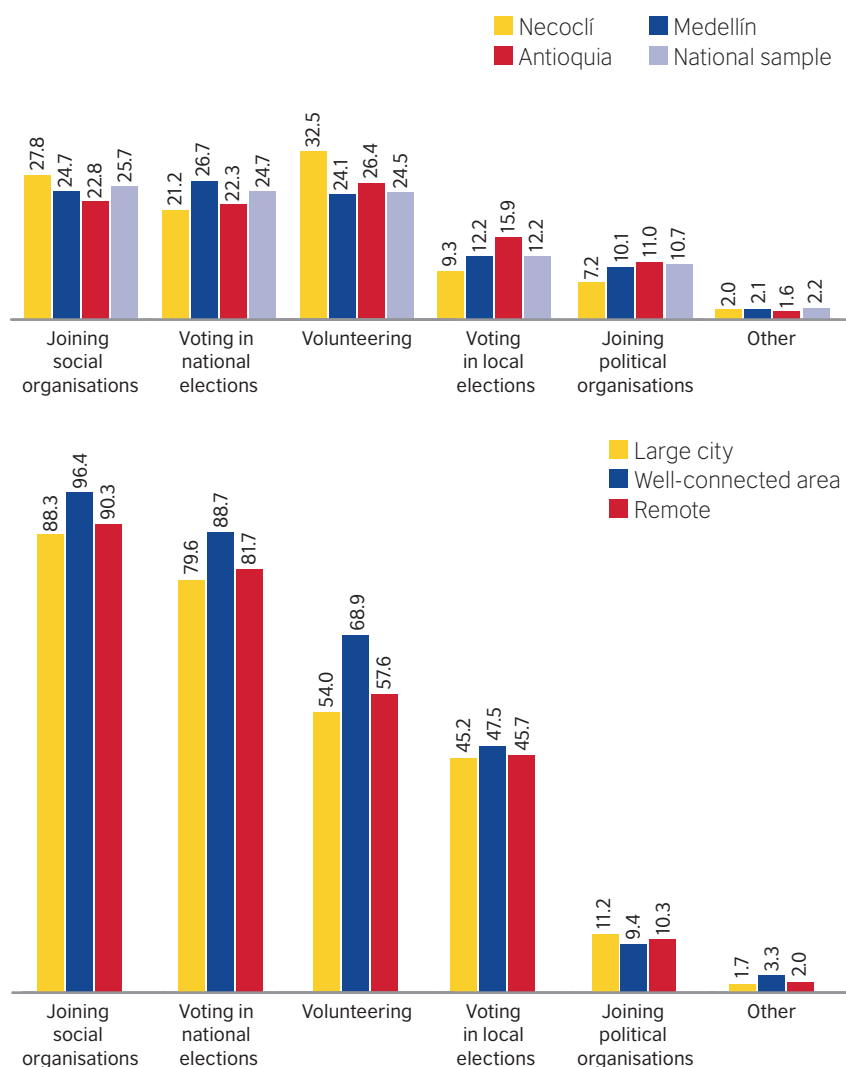
**Question:** Does greater citizen participation in society help the country’s development?

When asked about the best way to get involved, 25.5 per cent of young people think that the best way is by means of social organisations, 24.8 per cent with national elections, and 24.5 per cent with volunteer work.

Young people living in large cities place more importance on national elections (26.2 per cent), while local elections matter more to young people who live far away from large cities (19.6 per cent).

**Figure 6.2**

Methods of citizen participation disaggregated by region and distance from large cities.



**Question:** In your opinion, what is the best way for citizens to get involved?

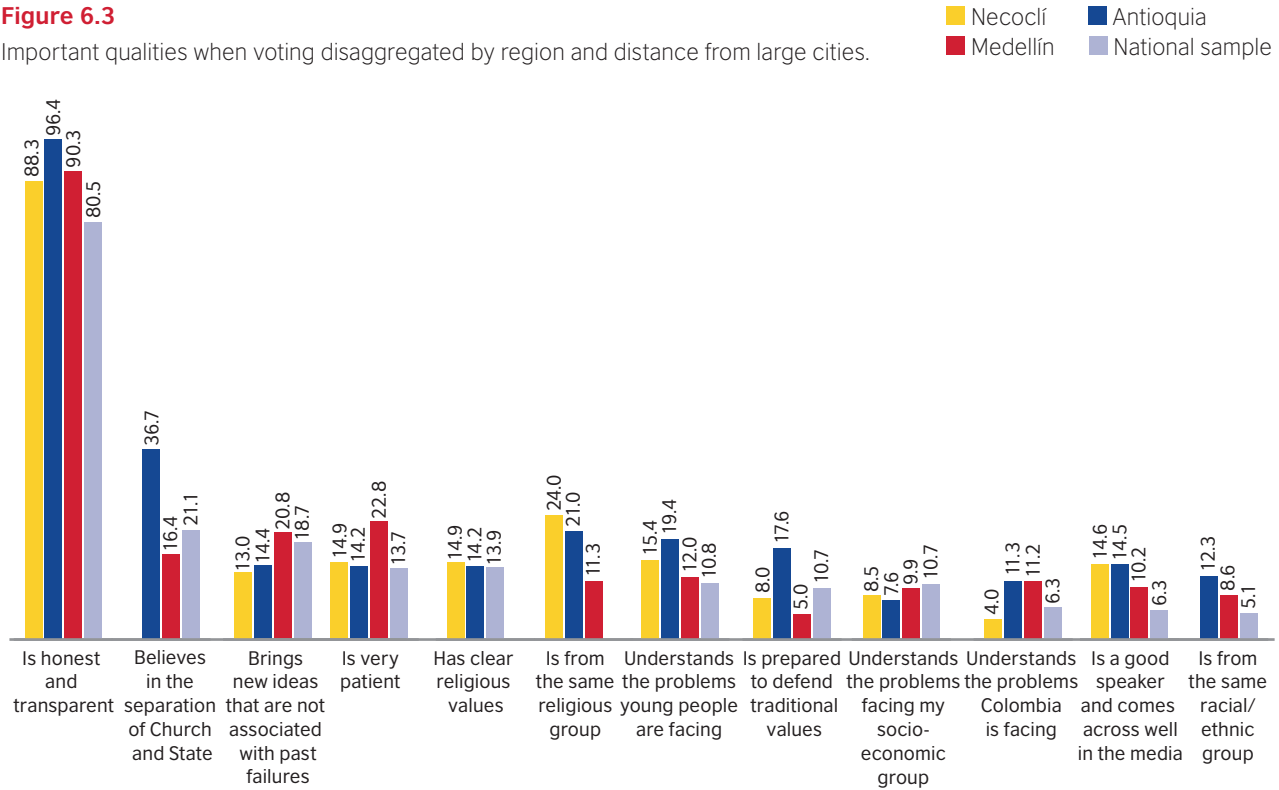


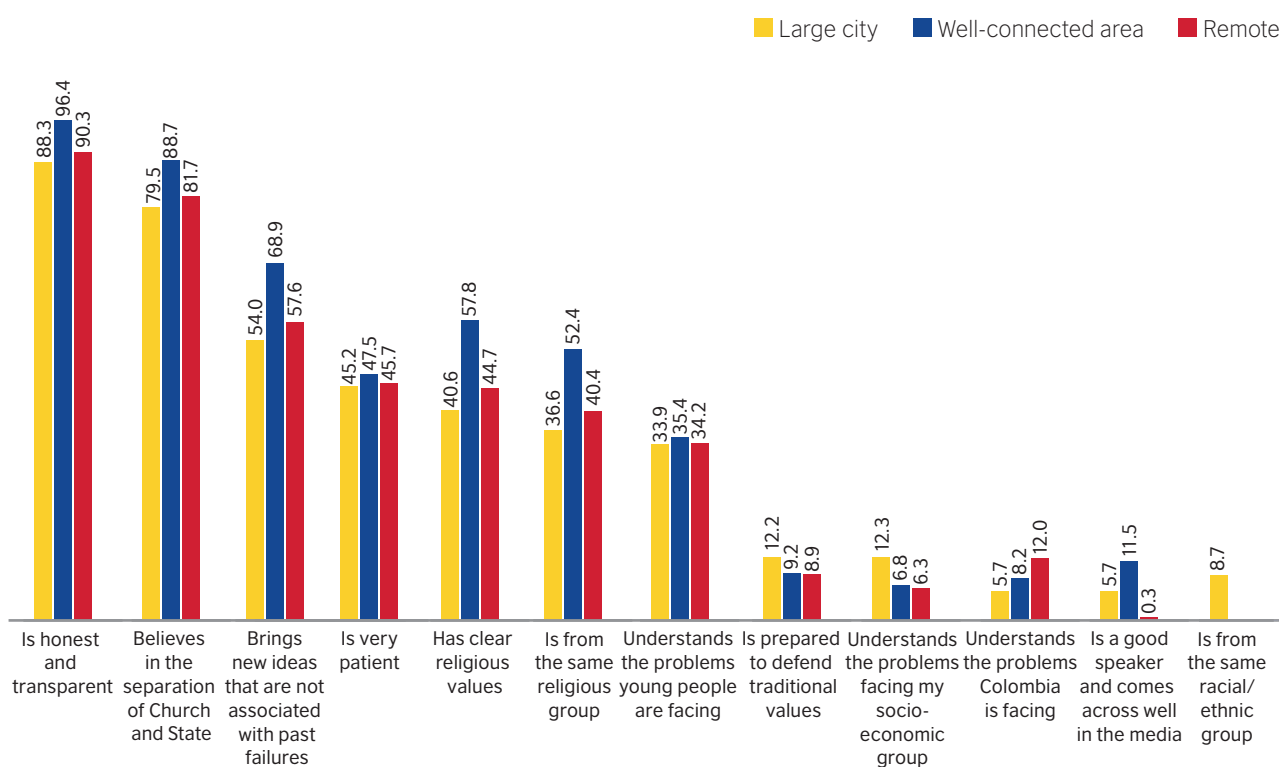
6.3. Politics and leaders in Colombia (voting age respondents only)

For young people of legal voting age , the most important qualities in political leaders are by far are honesty and transparency (80.2 per cent), followed by separation of church and state (22.4 per cent) and having new ideas that are not associated with past failures (18.4 per cent).

Figure 6.3

Important qualities when voting disaggregated by region and distance from large cities.





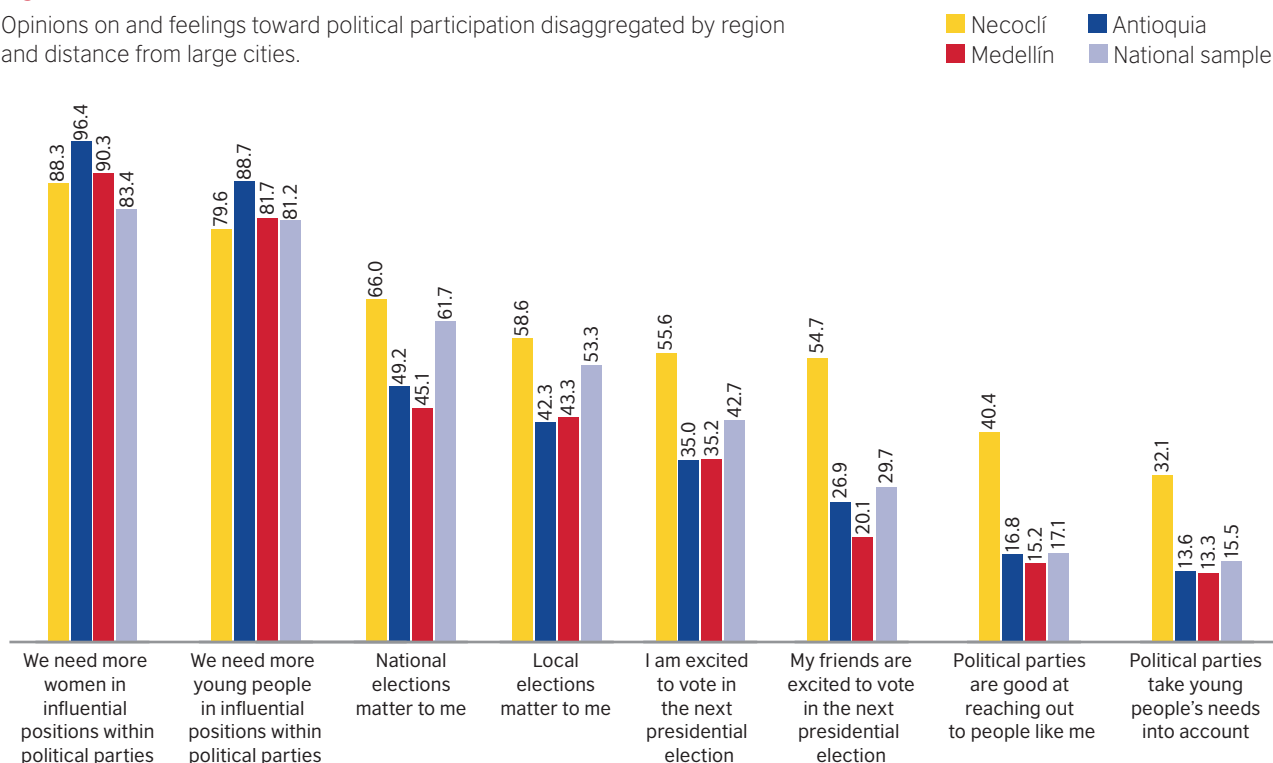
**Question:** What do you consider to be the three most important qualities when voting for a leader in Colombia?  
 The chart shows the number of people who selected each option as the most important

The importance of certain qualities varies with city size. In small cities such as Necoclí, the second most important quality in a politician is that they understand the problems young people are facing (15.4 per cent).

Whereas in cities like Medellín, it is important to young people that the candidate has a lot of political experience (22.8 per cent).

**Figure 6.4**

Opinions on and feelings toward political participation disaggregated by region and distance from large cities.



“...really, we’re tired of the politicians, of political parties, of anything that has anything to do with politics because they tell you, ‘if you support us, we’ll help fix up the school or we’ll pave the streets’, and in the end, when they’re elected, they dust off their hands and it’s goodbye. If I saw you, I don’t know you, and if I saw you, I don’t remember. So it’s tough because they’re always lying to you.”

*Male, aged 24-28, urban Necoclí*

In response to several questions about political parties, young people conclude that parties do not consider their needs (only 15.2 per cent disagree) and that they are not good at reaching out to people like them (only 16.8 per cent think they are). Young people want political parties to have more leaders who are women (82.9 per cent) and young (80.9 per cent). These desires are felt more strongly in small cities like Necoclí and in towns located far from big cities.

When asked about the 2018 presidential election, 41.7 per cent of young people of voting age said they were excited or very excited about it. Young people from remote cities are more enthusiastic than those from large cities (50 per cent and 39 per cent respectively).



“I also understand the dominant power that men have within political parties and that they can oppress women, but I think that by requiring that so many in the party be women and so many be young people, we’re not developing socially.”

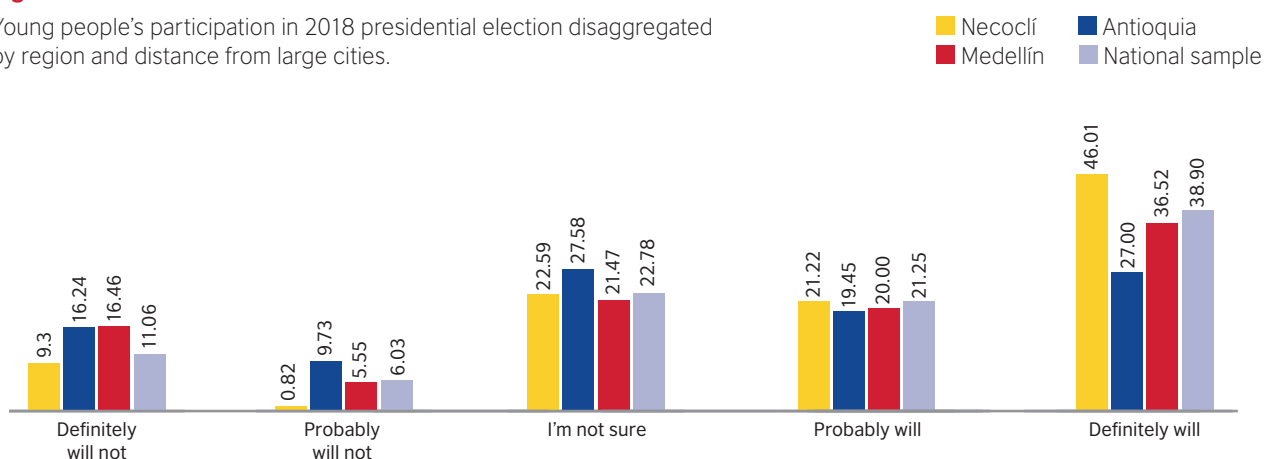
*Female, aged 18-24, Medellín, student*

#### 6.4. Reasons to participate (or not participate) in elections

Respondents answered questions about their participation in elections (the survey was done in 2017, less than a year before the 2018 presidential election). Those who said they intended to vote (58.8 per cent) were asked why, as were those who said they definitively would not (around 18 per cent).

**Figure 6.5**

Young people’s participation in 2018 presidential election disaggregated by region and distance from large cities.



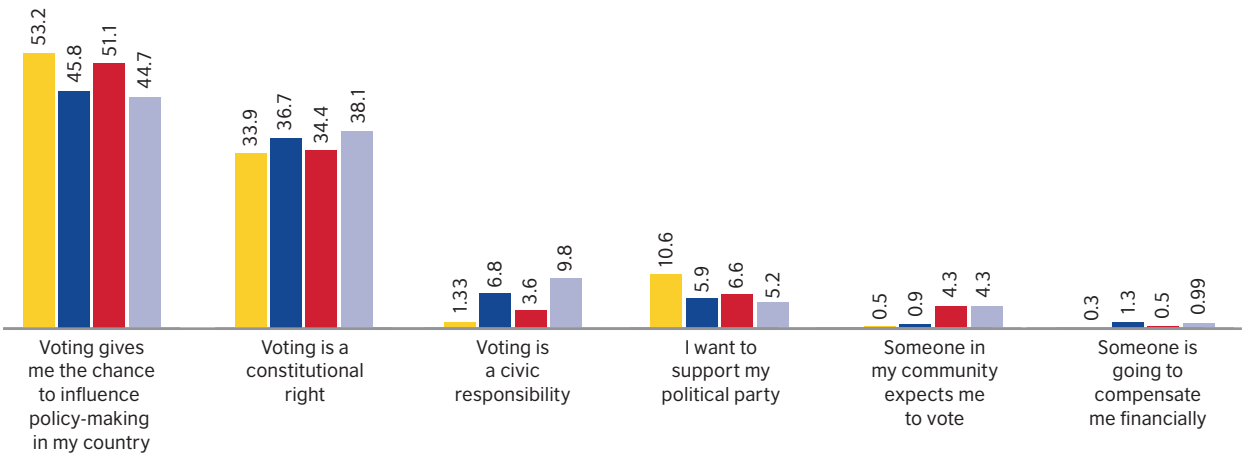
**Question:** How certain are you that you will vote in the next presidential election?



Figure 6.6

Reasons to vote disaggregated by region and distance from large cities.

Necoclí    Antioquia  
Medellín    National sample



Question: What is the most important reason to vote in the next presidential election? Question only for individuals who declared their intention to vote in the next election?

> “I would be interested in voting. Voting is the voice of the people. It’s how we show what we want, we let in a good person, someone who wants to improve the country or someone who just wants to benefit themselves.”

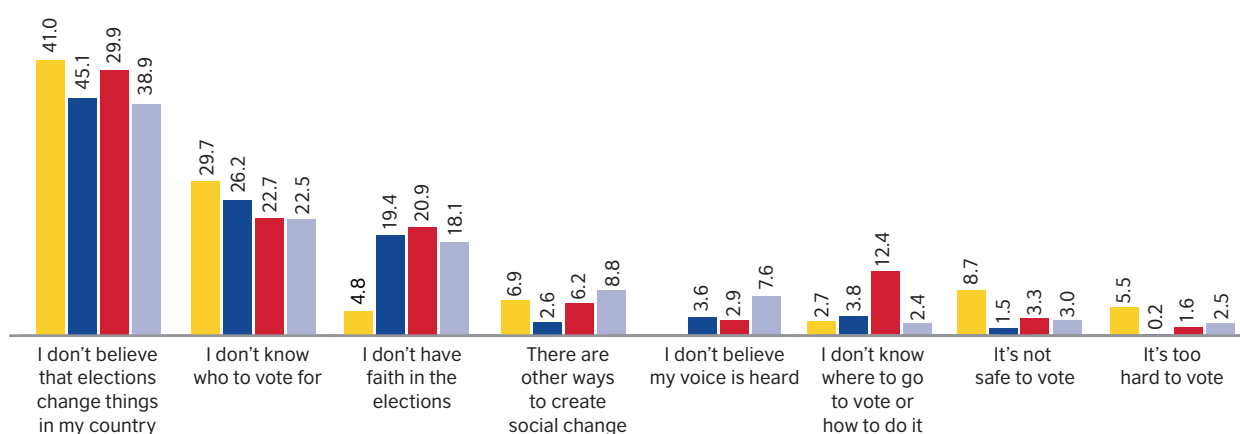
Female, aged 14-17, rural Turbo, student

Young people want to vote because they believe it gives them the chance to influence policy-making in the country (45 per cent) and because they consider it a constitutional right (37.9 per cent).

**Figure 6.7**

Reasons not to vote disaggregated by region and distance from large cities.

■ Necoclí   ■ Antioquia  
 ■ Medellín   ■ National sample



**Question:** What is the most significant reason not to vote in the next presidential election?

Young people who said they didn't want to vote believe that elections do not change anything in Colombia (36.7 per cent). They also reported that they didn't know who to vote for (21.5 per cent) or that they didn't have faith in the elections (17.2 per cent).



“I don't care at all because you vote and it's like you didn't. They remember you during their elections, but then they forget you, they forget the people, they forget the whole world. They don't think about anyone else except themselves.”

*Male, aged 14-17, rural Necoclí, student*

6.5. Social groups

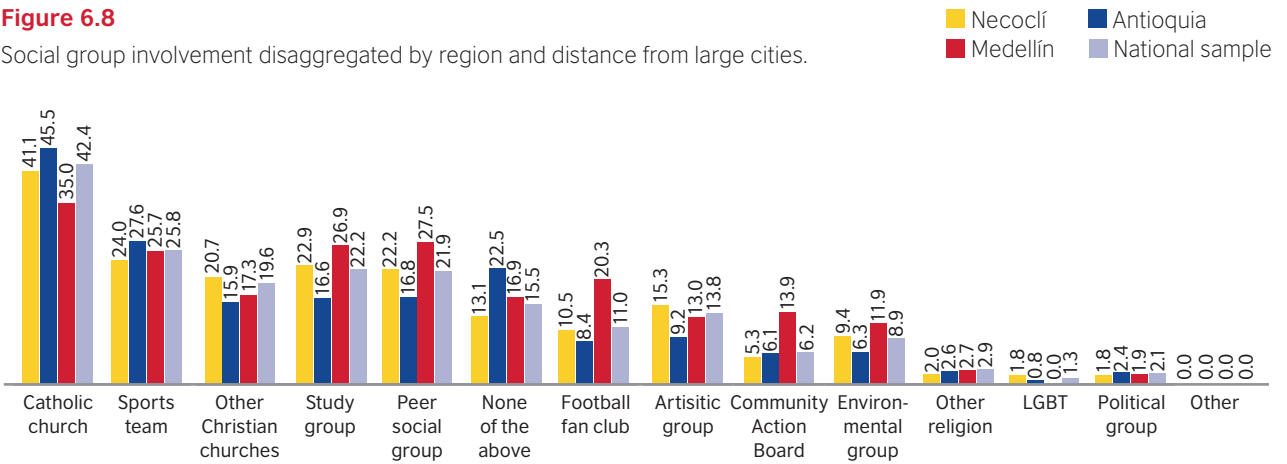
Participation in social groups is an important part of building social relationships and support groups for young people. When asked if they were members of any organisation listed, 16 per cent of respondents said that they didn't belong to any group, and of the

remainder, the majority cited participation in the Catholic Church (41.7 per cent), a sports team (25 per cent), or another Christian church (19.2 per cent). Although the Catholic Church is the organisation with the most youth participation overall, this is not the case

in Necoclí. Only 9 per cent of young people there are involved in the Church; the rest belong to sports teams (33.2 per cent) and to other Christian churches (30.1 per cent). Very few are involved in peer social groups (6.5 per cent) or football fan clubs (4.7 per cent).

Figure 6.8

Social group involvement disaggregated by region and distance from large cities.



Question: Please indicate whether you have been a member of the following organisations during the last 12 months.



## 6.6. Conclusion

Young people would like to see greater participation by youth and women in political parties, and they value honesty and transparency in their political leaders. But rather than aligning themselves with any political party, they believe it is better to engage in political activity by means of social organisations. Most young people, however, prefer to be active in church groups and sports groups and are not members of political social groups. A significant number do not intend to exercise their right to vote, because they don't think it will change anything.

Nearly 70 per cent of young people in Necoclí reported that they wanted to vote in the 2018 presidential election. In Medellín, 55 per cent did. However, voter participation was just 36 per cent in Necoclí and 63 per cent in Medellín. In Necoclí it would seem that there were more reasons for young people not to vote or obstacles blocking those who wanted to.

Voter participation in the 2014 presidential election was 30.26 per cent in Necoclí and 49.57 per cent in Medellín. This increase also occurred at the national level, suggesting that peace, among other issues, drove increased participation in the 2018 presidential election. But the challenge of increasing voter turnout among young people and creating other spaces for political participation remains.



## > 7. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND FREE TIME

### 7.1. Introduction

Time is the greatest asset that young people have. How they spend it will have a significant impact on their wellbeing for the rest of their lives, and that of their families. Conventional wisdom says that young people should dedicate their time to studying and, from a certain age, to working. The freedom to choose between the two, or to opt for a combination of work and study, is important. Economic and social inequalities faced by young people during childhood and adolescence should not be the factors which determine their choice.

Many young people do not have paid jobs but fulfil important roles within their families or society. However, in a society like Colombia's, these positions generally do not allow him or her to live a constructive and enriching life.

This chapter takes a comprehensive approach in covering the education, employment, and use of "free" time of young people. It examines their access to the education system, as well as the problems they encounter. It also examines their employment situation, focusing on those who neither study nor work. Activities that fall outside of studying or working are also examined.

The chapter is divided into results relating to young people and education, employment and their use of time, as well as their perceptions of education and employment. This chapter (as well as others in this report) also addresses the gaps which exist between dimensions of gender, socio-economic welfare and geographical location (urban vs. rural areas, large vs. remote cities), all of which continue to contribute to inequality in the twenty-first century.

### 7.2. Education, employment and use of time

#### 7.2.1. Education

In Colombia, like in other countries, the government has recognised the need to provide opportunities for all young people to access quality education<sup>2</sup>. In recent decades, it has made significant efforts to invest more resources in the education system and to adapt schemes which provide education to improve young people's level of learning<sup>3</sup>. These efforts respond to the idea that without a quality education system which is available to everyone, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve a high level of social and economic development.

> "The main thing I want is economic, emotional and educational stability. I want to study. Five years from now I see myself with an education."

*Female, 17 years old,  
town of Necoclí, uneducated*

> "In my case, I'm now stuck because I can't work or pay for a university degree."

*Focus group 14–17,  
female, Bogotá*

2 > ADNP. (2014). Bases of the National Development Plan 2014–2018. Bogotá: National Department of Planning.

3 > See chapter four of this document and the quotes in it relating to changes in the education system.

Both the quality of education and the number of years spent in it are linked to salary earned in adulthood and quality of life. Beyond its instrumental value for generating income, innovation and economic development, education also plays a fundamental role in shaping citizens<sup>5</sup>.

87 per cent of young people between 14 and 17 years old and 42 per cent of young people between 18 and 28 years old are enrolled in basic, secondary or tertiary education (see Figure 7.1). Attending a lower secondary, upper secondary or tertiary level educational institution is significantly more common among the top quintile of the socio-economic class (70 per cent) in comparison with young people in the lowest quintile (43 per cent)<sup>6</sup>.

While 89 per cent of the young people between 14 and 17 years old in urban areas are studying, only 80 per cent of the young people between 14 and 17 years old in rural areas are doing so. The gap in school attendance for young people between 18 and 28 years old is even greater: 46 per cent in urban areas, compared to 30 per cent in rural areas – below 50 per cent in both geographical locations.

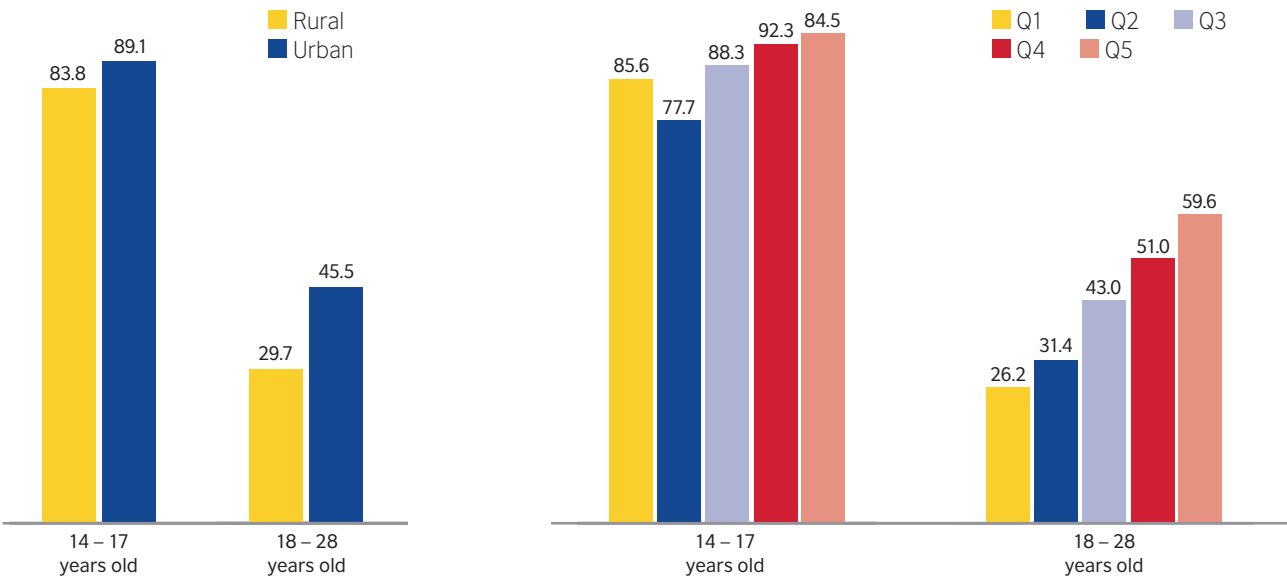
5 > See for example: Bandura, A. (1995) Exercise of personal and collective efficacy in changing societies. In: Self-efficacy in changing societies (edited by Albert Bandura). Cambridge University Press; and Zimmerman, B. J. (1995). Self-efficacy and educational development. In: Self-efficacy in changing societies (edited by Albert Bandura). Cambridge University Press.

6 > The socio-economic classes of young people's homes are formed from an index of physical characteristics relating to housing, possession of assets and overcrowding. The young people surveyed were divided into five groups (quintiles) of equal size in accordance with this index. Quintile one is comprised of young people in the worst socio-economic conditions, and quintile five is the young people in the best socio-economic conditions.



Figure 7.1

The young people who are poorest and in rural areas have less access to education. Different levels of access between young people in different socio-economic classification quintiles is more significant for young people aged 18 to 28 years old than for those aged 14 to 17 years old.



**Question:** Are you currently enrolled in an educational institution? The chart shows the proportion of people who responded in the affirmative.

School attendance is the product of two factors: firstly, the individual's decision to study and, secondly, whether or not an opportunity to receive an education is available to the individual.

Attendance rates are consistently higher among men than women according to national data sets. The gap increases the more rural or disconnected their place of residence is: the gap in school attendance among men and women between 14 and 17 years old increased from 1.4 percentage points in large cities to 10.9 percentage points in remote cities. Although the data

collected does not provide us with information to explain the magnitude of these gaps, evidence from household surveys indicates that women face different barriers to accessing education than men do, and among these the most important is having to deal with household tasks<sup>8</sup>.

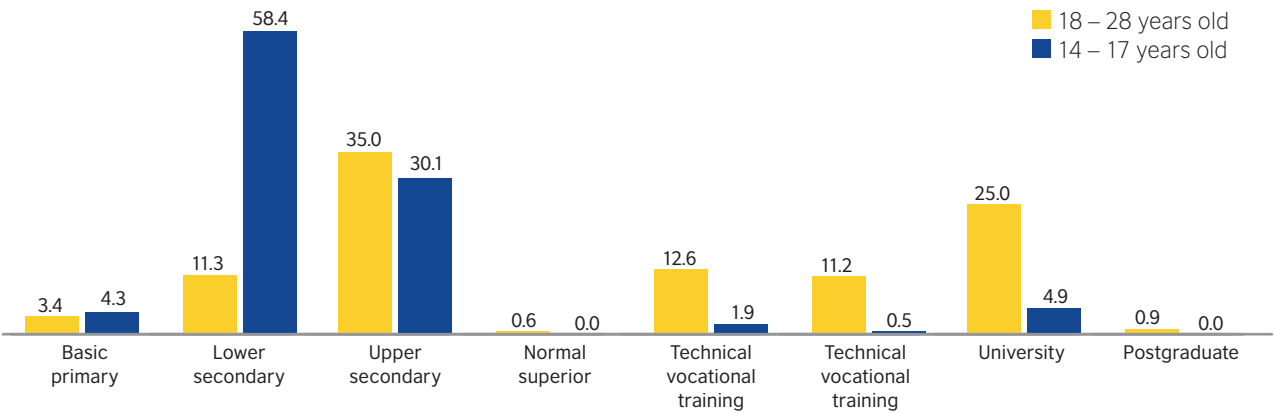
According to data sets held by the University of Los Andes (2016), among 18 to 28 year olds, 42 per cent of young people between 18 and 28 years old are enrolled in a basic, secondary or tertiary educational institution: 51 per cent of them are enrolled in university

education, 18 per cent in technical professional training, 15 per cent in technical vocational training and 15 per cent in upper secondary education. The fact that more than half of them (58 per cent) are not enrolled in the education system would not necessarily be a problem if they had already achieved a high level of education. However, only one third of young people in this age range report having reached third level education: postgraduate (one per cent), university (25 per cent) or technical professional training (11 per cent).

8 > García, S., Maldonado, D., & Jaramillo, L. E. (2016). Graduating from Secondary Education, Attendance and Non-Attendance of Secondary Education EG0B (School of Government at University of Los Andes) Documents. Number 34. Bogotá: University of Los Andes.

Figure 7.2

One in four young people aged between 18 and 28 years old have a university degree. The maximum grade reached by the majority of young people aged between 14 and 17 years is year 10.



**Question:** What is the highest level of education you have achieved and the last year or grade passed at this level? The chart shows the proportion of people in each level of education by age group.

Young people who are in the most isolated places are found to be at a great disadvantage. For example, while 31.8 per cent of young people in large cities have achieved some level of university education, only 14.2 per cent in nearby cities and 5.9 per cent in remote cities have done the same. Similarly, whilst 13 per cent of young people in large cities have achieved some level of technical professional training, only 8.6 per cent in nearby cities and 6.7 per cent in remote cities have done so.



Table 7.1

Level of educational by age group and types of cities.

Young people aged between 14 and 17 years old							
Level of education achieved	National sample	Medellín	Antioquia sample	Necoclí	Remote	Nearby	Large city
Basic primary	4.4%	5.3%	3.0%	7.6%	7.2%	5.8%	3.2%
Lower secondary	56.5%	72.5%	72.1%	64.1%	67.8%	70.5%	51.9%
Upper secondary	31.4%	20.1%	21.1%	25.1%	24.2%	17.1%	36.4%
Technical vocational training	1.9%	0.0%	2.1%	3.3%	0.1%	1.5%	2.3%
Technical professional training	0.5%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.3%
University	5.4%	0.9%	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%	4.0%	5.9%

Young people aged between 14 and 17 years old							
Level of education achieved	National sample	Medellín	Antioquia sample	Necoclí	Remote	Nearby	Large city
No level	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Basic primary	3.1%	2.6%	6.5%	5.7%	8.5%	3.5%	2.7%
Lower secondary	10.5%	9.2%	20.5%	28.7%	14.1%	16.7%	8.8%
Upper secondary	34.7%	35.4%	37.3%	43.0%	57.9%	42.2%	29.1%
Normal superior	0.4%	3.1%	1.5%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.8%
Technical vocational training	12.6%	16.9%	10.6%	14.5%	6.6%	13.3%	12.9%
Technical professional training	11.2%	11.8%	10.9%	5.9%	6.7%	8.6%	12.9%
University	16.5%	20.4%	12.8	1.8%	5.9%	14.2%	31.8%
Postgraduate	1.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.9%	1.1%

The participants in the focus groups mentioned negative aspects, such as shortcomings in the physical infrastructure and a lack of resources and materials. They also mentioned positive aspects such as good teaching staff:

> “The teachers are excellent teachers. Perhaps we’re asking too much, but the conditions we are studying in... there is no projector, no computers, that is, there are not physical materials... the opportunities are there, but not fully, it’s not as it should be.”

*Female, aged 18 – 24,  
urban Turbo, currently studying*

The problems most frequently reported by young people who are enrolled in tertiary educational institutions are late arrival (36 per cent) and non-attendance of students (20 per cent), followed by alcohol (19 per cent) and drug use (14 per cent) among students. For young people enrolled in lower and upper secondary education, late arrival (33 per cent) and non-attendance of students (28 per cent) stand out as frequent problems, followed by a lack of interest in studying (23 per cent). In addition, 26 per cent of students in lower and upper secondary education (years 7 to 12) stated that teenage pregnancies are a frequent problem, and 23 per cent indicated violence among students. Robberies carried out by students and students carrying weapons, as well as the presence of gangs, are problems that appear to be more common in lower and upper secondary educational institutions, rather than in tertiary educational institutions (see Figure 7.4).

Problems are more frequently reported in urban areas than in rural areas (see Table 7.3).

**Figure 7.3**

Non-attendance and late arrival of students to classes are common problems in secondary and tertiary education. Teenage pregnancy and violence among students are also common problems in secondary education.

	Lower and upper secondary	Tertiary
Students arrive late	88.30%	96.40%
Teenage pregnancies	79.60%	88.70%
Students do not attend classes	54.00%	68.90%
Students' lack of interest in studying	45.20%	47.50%
Violence or physical or verbal aggression among students	40.60%	57.80%
Insecurity in the area	36.60%	52.40%
Consumption of drugs among students	33.90%	35.40%
Consumption of alcohol among students	8%	20%
Robberies within the institution	9%	5%
Teachers arrive late	7%	8%
Teachers do not attend classes	6%	5%
Students carrying weapons	7%	3%
Presence of gangs	8%	4%
Threats to teachers from students	6%	3%
Violence or physical or verbal aggression towards students by teachers	4%	1%

**Question:** How often do the following situations occur in the educational institution where you currently study? \*Question only for people who are studying. Only people who are in lower and upper secondary education were asked about the teenage pregnancy option. The chart shows the proportion of people stating that the situation occurs frequently (4) or very frequently (5).

**Table 7.2**

Situations that occur in educational institutions.

Situations	Area		City size			
	Rural	Urban	National sample	Medellín	Antioquia Sample	Necoclí
Insecurity in the area	9.6%	14.2%	13.4%	12.9%	11.0%	7.3%
Robberies within the institution	5.6%	8.6%	7.8%	8.1%	8.1%	8.1%
Threats to teachers from students	4.4%	5.1%	5.0%	6.2%	3.6%	2.4%
Violence or physical or verbal aggression among students	13.0%	16.3%	15.6%	14.9%	14.4%	13.1%
Violence or physical or verbal aggression towards students by teachers	3.2%	2.8%	3.0%	2.6%	2.0%	1.0%
Students carrying weapons	3.6%	5.9%	5.3%	5.7%	5.7%	7.3%
Presence of gangs	3.5%	7.3%	6.4%	8.3%	5.4%	5.4%
Teenage pregnancies	22.0%	27.5%	25.1%	31.5%	29.5%	26.8%
Students do not attend classes	20.7%	26.8%	24.7%	33.0%	27.7%	19.4%
Teachers do not attend classes	7.6%	6.2%	6.6%	7.5%	5.8%	3.2%
Students arrive late	24.1%	36.8%	33.3%	39.2%	35.5%	25.5%
Teachers arrive late	6.2%	7.5%	7.3%	7.2%	6.2%	4.0%
Consumption of alcohol among students	6.4%	13.9%	12.3%	10.2%	11.6%	3.0%
Consumption of drugs among students	8.1%	14.3%	11.9%	19.6%	18.2%	5.3%
Students' lack of interest in studying	15.2%	20.1%	18.0%	25.2%	24.7%	15.8%



In general, young people have fewer educational opportunities in more isolated areas but those who study in these areas are exposed to less risks associated with aggression, substance abuse or belonging to gangs. That is to say, the “disconnect” denies young people opportunities but at the same time “protects” them from certain risks.

However, those living in large cities, such as Medellín and Bogotá, have greater access to higher university

education compared to those living in more remote or smaller towns such as Necoclí. Several participants in the focus groups in Bogotá and Medellín mentioned on several occasions that they were able to access universities due to certain grants or opportunities, and also noted that they perceive it to be more difficult for young people in more remote locations to access universities.

Lack of financial resources, an insufficient number of available seats, difficulties in passing the entrance exams and personal circumstances such as pregnancies all rank as barriers to higher education. In rural areas, distance is also an issue: the universities are far away from where the students live, which means they have to pay for transport or live in another city to be able to study, both of which entail significant costs.

> “...I mean, there are no universities nearby. For example, people have their life here, and to move away, which involves spending money, buying tickets... all of that takes money. If they are going to study for five years, money is going out that whole time, that is, that’s what prevents a young person from studying or that is why it is so difficult.”

*Focus group 18 – 23, female, rural Necoclí*

> “For example, here in Necoclí, I’m talking about us, in the town of Necoclí, us young people do not have the opportunity to suddenly advance in our professional careers. We have to choose a technical or technological college because there are no universities here which give us opportunities and so we would have to go to Montería or Medellín, which are the closest.”

*Focus group 18 – 23, female, rural Necoclí*



> “The entrance examinations are surprisingly difficult. No-one passes an entrance exam. In private universities the cost per semester is super expensive.”

*Focus group 24 – 28,  
male, rural Turbo*

> “...there are countless things missing, so many. It is a completely unequal country, without a doubt. On the day of the National University examination, you’ll see tons of expectant faces there, going into the university and knowing that only 20 per cent will be chosen. So many dreams will end there.”

*Focus group 18 – 24, male, Medellín*

> “For example, in my generation, there are many people who want to be professionals, but are not given the opportunity. They never achieve the grades to go to university...in the process, many of them have had children, many of them have to go to work, many of them have to start giving money to their parents, from a very young age.”

*Focus group 18 – 24, male, Medellín*

### 7.2.2. Attitudes toward education: reasons to study

The young people who participated in the focus groups believe it is important to have the opportunity to study. In general, all of the young people agree on this.

When presented with the statement: “There is no reason to study, studying is a waste of time”, 92.5 per cent of the young people disagreed or completely disagreed. A higher number of young people in urban areas completely disagree with this idea (60 per cent) compared to young people in rural areas (40 per cent)."

> “If you don’t study, you have no future. That’s it.”

*Female, 14 years old, Medellín, currently studying*

> “It seems very important to me to study, to work towards stability. It’s terrible when people don’t study. Nowadays, people who don’t study are nobodies. So, yeah, it’s very important to prepare yourself, it’s very important to be a professional who contributes to society, because it’s not just a personal thing, well, obviously it is personal, but it’s also about contributing to society, knowing that you fulfil a need within a community, within society.”

*Female, 17 years old, urban Necoclí, student*

> “For me, it’s important to study because our future and dreams depend on it. If we don’t prepare ourselves as people, we cannot move forward.”

*Male, 17 years old, urban Turbo, not currently studying*

We asked young people the reasons why they study or would like to study. On a scale of one to five – where one is not important at all and five is very important – the most important reasons for studying reported by the young people are those linked with learning (4.37) and improving one’s social standing (4.30). Those which are perceived as less important are parental insistence (2.73) or not having anything else to do (2.06).

On average, young men who live in rural areas and those with a lower welfare index place more importance on parental insistence and “having nothing else to do” as reasons for studying (see Table 7.8). This may be linked to the fact that this group has less access to public sectors outside their place of residence and, consequently, they have less social resources to help them make decisions about their future.









**Table 7.3**

Reasons for studying (single average of importance young people place on each reason).

	Reasons related to learning <sup>b</sup>	Improve social standing	Parental insistence	Having nothing else to do
All young people	4.37	4.30	2.73	2.06
<b>By gender</b>				
Men	4.36	4.28	2.84	2.14
Women	4.37	4.31	2.62	1.98
<b>By area</b>				
Urban	4.38	4.29	2.70	2.00
Rural	4.31	4.33	2.83	2.27
<b>Welfare quintiles</b>				
1	4.26	4.33	2.96	2.38
2	4.36	4.33	2.75	2.18
3	4.41	4.33	2.69	2.00
4	4.36	4.21	2.66	2.03
5	4.43	4.28	2.60	1.71

The vast majority (94 per cent) of young people agree or completely agree that education is the key to achieving goals in life, and we did not find differences in this due to gender, welfare quintile or place of residence (Table 7.9). 96 per cent also agree or completely agree that education helps to propel change within society.

In contrast to the previous result, which had relative consensus, 58 per cent agree of young people agree that personal connections are more important than educational achievements when it comes to being successful. 20 per cent disagree or completely disagree, and 22 per cent do not have a strong opinion on this issue.

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$  (statistical significance of the difference between the most favourable urban category, welfare quintile five, violence quintile one and vulnerability quintile one).

a > On a scale of one to five, where one is not important at all and five is very important.

b > Index of the items relating to learning (understanding the world, learning to be a good citizen, learning practical skills for gaining employment, learning social values such as tolerance and cooperation, learning to think critically, learning to be creative). Calculated as a single average of items (where one is not important at all and five is very important). Cronbach=0.82.

**Table 7.4**

Young people's beliefs regarding the role education plays in their lives and in society (percentage).

	Percentage of those surveyed			
	14 – 17 years		18 – 28 years	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Currently studying	89	86	44	40
Employed	12	11	58	35
Household as main work	5	8	5	19
NEET (household not seen as work)	17	10	18	36
NEET (household seen as work)	4	5	18	20

> “It seems to me that the lack of employment is one of the more underlying problems that we face today as young people. Even the mere fact of being a young person is impeding the university process... it is also difficult to get a job because of work experience, I mean, we are not being consistent with this issue because how can you demand that a young person who has recently graduated have one- or two-years’ experience; so it seems to me that there needs to be more flexibility to allow young people to access employment opportunities.”

*Focus group 18 – 23, male, Medellín*

## Education – Conclusion

Significant gaps were found in school level and higher education access, attendance and completion across the country. School attendance depending on geographical location; young people in rural areas and remote cities are less likely to attend an educational institution in comparison to those in urban areas or nearby and large cities. In higher education, the gap for young people in more remote locations is very significant: while 31.8 per cent in large cities have achieved some university level education, only 14.2 per cent in nearby cities and 5.9 per cent in remote cities have achieved this. There are also significant gender gaps as, regardless of place of residence, more men are attending educational institutions than women.

This contrasts with the importance that young people place on education. The vast majority of those surveyed believe that studying has value and there do not seem to be gaps in gender, area or welfare index when it comes to attitudes towards education; namely, the importance placed on learning and improving one's social standing as reasons for studying. We also found that the vast majority of the young people (96 per cent) are in agreement, or total agreement, that education is a way to propel change within society. In general, the quantitative results are in line with the young people's perceptions, resulting in the qualitative work.

### 7.3.1. Employment

To analyse the employment situation of young people, we are focusing on the young adult population, between 18 and 28 years old. The responses demonstrate significant inequalities in area or type of city and gender inequalities. Whilst 55 per cent of men carry out some kind of paid activity, only 32 per cent of women do the same. On the other hand, a very high number of women in this age group are committed to household activities (19 per cent), while the proportion of men doing so is very low (one per cent). Several of the women who participated stated that they dedicate themselves to their families, especially to their children. They also said they spent quite a lot of their free time completing "household tasks".

> “I have a seven-year-old daughter who I drop off to school in the morning. My husband goes to work and I only have time for the baby, the household tasks and that's it.”

*Female, 22 years old, rural Necoclí, not currently studying*

> “Well, at the moment, [I'm focusing] on my baby and I work from home. I don't earn much, but I work from home for little things for my daughter.”

*Female, 27 years old, Bogotá*

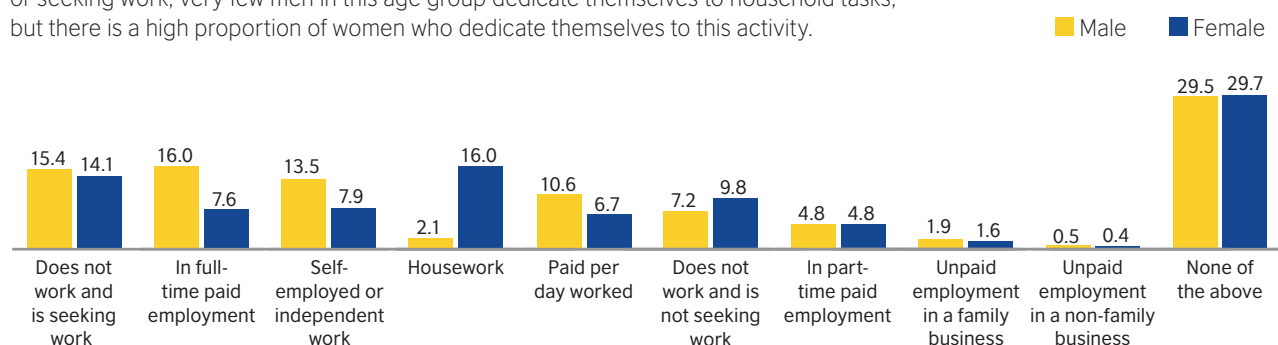
Less than half of employed young people consider themselves to be have paid, full-time work (ten per cent for women and 20 per cent for men); the highest proportion of young people are those who do not work and who are not seeking work (27 per cent for women

and 24 per cent for men). They are inactive in terms of employment, which represents a missed opportunity for growth and development in the country. However, 23 per cent of men who are not working or seeking work are studying; for women, this figure sits

at 27 per cent. There are also high numbers of young people who are not working but who are seeking work (17 per cent of women and 20 per cent of men) (see Figure 7.5).

**Figure 7.3**

About a quarter of young people aged between 18 and 28 years old are not working or seeking work; very few men in this age group dedicate themselves to household tasks, but there is a high proportion of women who dedicate themselves to this activity.



**Question:** What is your main employment situation? One answer only.

Those working in rural areas are twice as likely to be paid per day, be self-employed<sup>9</sup> or committed to household work. In urban areas, twice as many young people were not working or seeking work than in rural areas, but large cities had more young people with full-time paid employment than remote ones (18.2 per cent vs. 11.5 per cent) (see Figure 7.7).

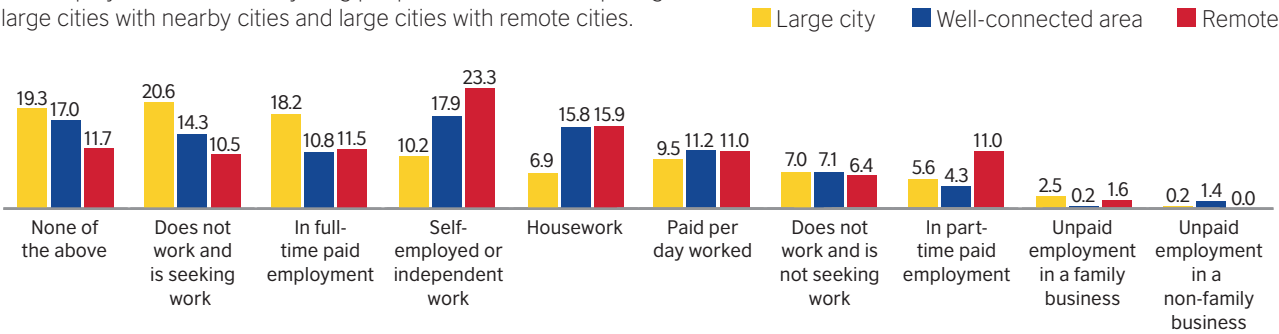
The data shows little employment stability and security for young people in Colombia, the majority of whom are in highly volatile employment situations with little in the way of future plans. Young people in urban areas and large cities are at a greater risk of being unemployed or in a situation of having neither employment or an education, whilst young people in rural areas tend to be busier but in informal employment.

<sup>9</sup> > Self-employment or independent work: this includes jobs such as consultancy work or independent professionals like doctors or dentists, but also includes jobs in informal businesses like street trading, motorbike taxi drivers, etc.



Figure 7.4

The employment situation of young people in Colombia comparing large cities with nearby cities and large cities with remote cities.



**Question:** What is your main employment situation? One answer only. The graph shows the percentage of people who chose each option.

Young people’s perception of their employment opportunities, obtained from the results of the qualitative data, presents an uncertain outlook with few opportunities for development of skills and competencies or options going beyond solving short-term financial problems.

Working in the public sector is not exclusive to large cities (Medellín and Bogotá) or to the urban sector. Young people who participated in the focus groups do not seem to have access to formal employment unless it is in the governmental or public sector.

But the majority of the qualitative participants work in very informal and unstable jobs with few learning opportunities. Some of the work 18 year olds mentioned included washing boats or motorbikes and, in some cases, in the banana plantations too. The majority of women had independent “businesses” or worked from home, in some cases to be able to look after their children.

> “There are times that you have to go into the scorching sun and throw a machete around because... for one thing, you’re given a couple of pesos to buy stuff, food, that is, to buy what you need, so you put up with the sun.”

Male, 16 years old, urban Turbo, not currently studying

> “We don’t see any way to move forward, we don’t see options being given to us, we say that the State... that someone can do something, I mean, some type of work, because the truth is that many of the jobs in our town are already taken up, they are full, and so the majority of young people are doing nothing, they’re unemployed, you could say.”

Male, 18 years old, urban Turbo, not currently studying

### 7.3.2. How do they perceive the world of work?

> “In ten years, I do not see myself here in Colombia. I think I will have already finished something and I will already be working in the field I studied; so I will have already started to achieve my dreams.”

*Focus group 18 – 23, female, Bogotá*

We investigated young people's perception of work with regard to: gender equity, employment opportunities and being an entrepreneur vs. employee, among others – things that motivate the decisions young people make when entering the job market.

Regardless of gender or whether they live in an urban or rural area, young people generally agree that it is important to have a job which provides them with professional development opportunities, as well as the importance of personal effort to have a better life. Less than half believe there are many,

varied employment opportunities in Colombia, but this belief is more popular for young people in rural areas (55 per cent) than for those in urban areas (38 per cent). But young people have a marked preference for being entrepreneurs rather than working for a company and they want to have a stable job or move (to a new city or country) to find a better job; the desire to migrate within Colombia is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas. In the focus groups, many of the young people we spoke with were working out of necessity – they did not have a vocation, nor were they doing work because they enjoyed it.

The majority of young people aged 18 years old or under are currently studying (80 per cent). However, one in five young people in this age group are not studying, and almost one in ten (11 per cent) do not study or work (see Table 7.5). The situation is more critical for young people over the age of 18. In this age group, 39 per cent study, 49 per cent work, and 28 per cent do not study or work (they are NEETs<sup>10</sup>). For various reasons, women require different options from men to be able to reconnect with the education or employment market.

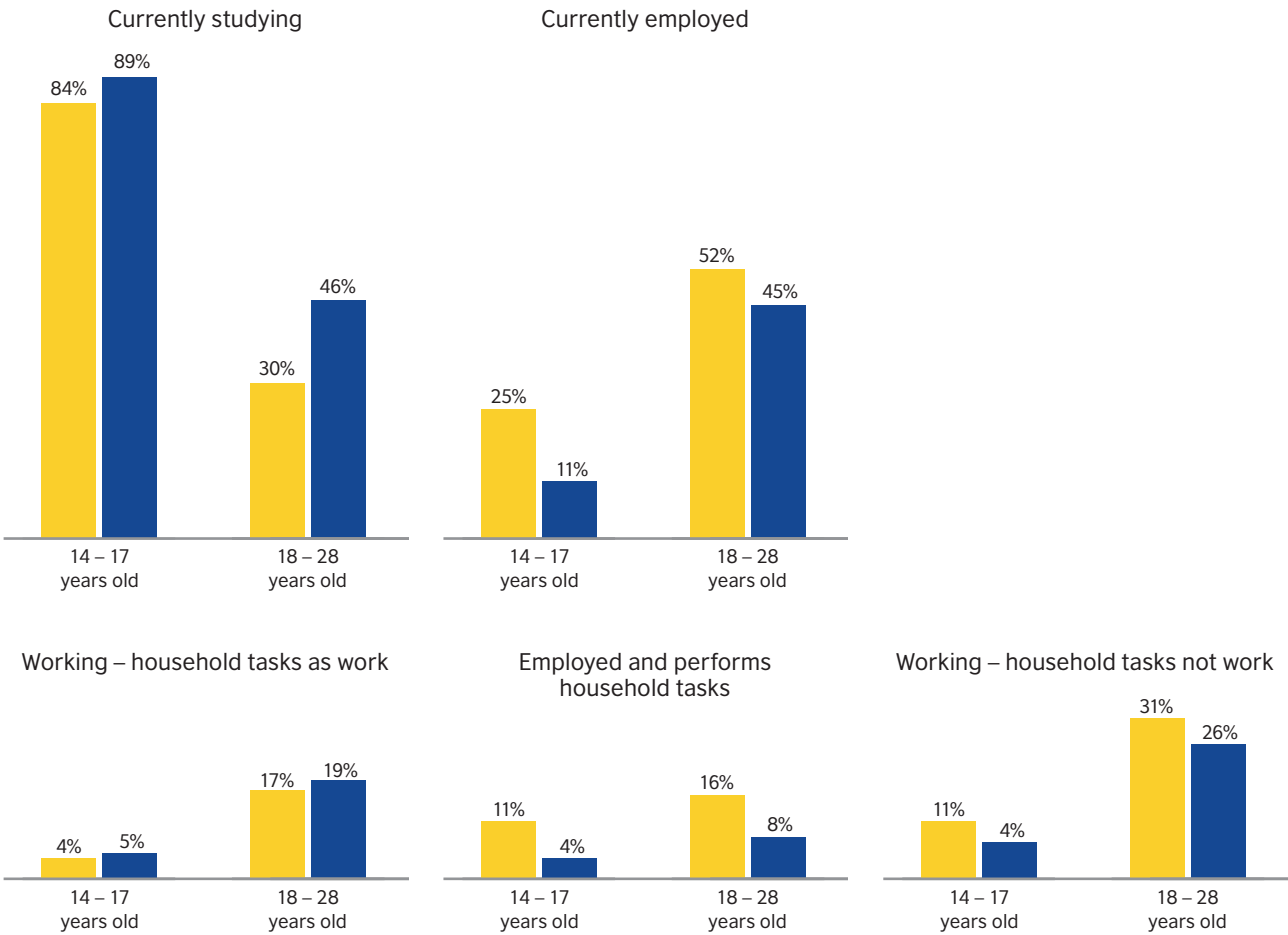
**Table 7.5**  
Main activity of young people by age group.

	Age	
	18 years old or under	Over 18 years old
Studies	79.9	39.3
He or she works	19.4	49.2
Employed in the home	6.4	10.5
NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training, household tasks are not considered a job)	11.1	28
NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training, household tasks are considered a job)	8	18.8
<b>Number of observations</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>1633</b>

Table 7.6

Young people studying and working by age group and area.

Urban Rural



Attending an educational institution is strongly linked to socio-economic features of the home and surroundings, particularly for young people aged over 18 years old. As shown in data sets addressing youth employment against economic income (income quartiles), young people who are in rural areas and within the lowest welfare quintile are less likely to study than their counterparts who are in urban areas and within the

highest welfare quintile. These differences are particularly significant among young people aged over 18 years old. For example, while 61 per cent of young people who are aged over 18 years old belong to the highest welfare quintile study, only 22 per cent in the lowest quintile do so. For the most vulnerable, going to school does not necessarily guarantee

employment. On the contrary, young people in the lowest welfare quintile have a lower level of employability (37 per cent) than young people in the highest welfare quintile (56.1 per cent). When analysing the differences by area or city, we find that young people in rural areas are more likely to work than those in urban areas, particularly young people aged 14 to 17 years old.



Table 7.7

Word cloud for the needs of young people.

## Male dreams



More investment in education, granting more scholarships for higher education studies, offering appealing additional classes for young people and supporting sport are some of the main recommendations made by young people for opportunities to help them achieve their dreams.



“I would say more investment in education, more investment in public policies, to be able to create a new type of youth, a diverse youth.”

Female, 18 years old,  
Medellín, currently studying

## Female dreams



“For the state or government to support education more and encourage the importance of learning.”

Female, 16 years old,  
urban Necoclí, student

> “Sport, athletic scholarships, university scholarships, half scholarships, you know, things that motivate people, which give us opportunities.”

*Female, 17 years old, urban Necoclí, student*

Among the needs the participants mentioned were encouraging sport, art and culture through initiatives which get young people involved and off the street. These suggestions were mostly made by young people who were not in the education system and who spend a lot of their time on the streets:

> “Because football is not just important for fans, but for yourself, because football helps break bad habits; if you’re smoking you won’t be able to go and play, because people who smoke won’t be able to smoke a cig because they’re concentrating on something else. So it’s a good distraction for children, because they’re not thinking about going out to some street corner, or about their friends in the neighbourhood, about getting cigarettes. They are actually thinking more about a good future for themselves.”

*Male, 14 years, Medellín, not currently studying*

Young people aged under 18 years old, mainly women, also talked about the need to create psychosocial support programmes through chatting, conferences and other forms of interaction. According to them, this type of activity could help young people to realise the problems that can be caused by taking drugs, joining gangs or having unprotected sex.

Young people from urban areas also identified opportunities which primarily focused on increasing the number of

places in courses and classes that they can access, whilst those in rural areas suggested creating libraries or schools which are closer to where they live, where they can receive an education to prepare them for the local and regional job market.

In conclusion, young people identified education, psychosocial support and using sport and culture as being able to help them to achieve their dreams, distance them from their problems and provide them with other opportunities.



#### 7.4 Conclusion – Employment

There is a need to increase opportunities for how young people can spend their time. A high proportion of them do not mention exercising, which could have significant implications for their health in the medium- and long-term. They also engage more in individual activities than directly social ones, which could imply a risk of isolation for some young people. The most vulnerable young people (in rural areas, in remote cities or within the most impoverished groups) also have less access to reading and cultural activities, which could contribute to an increase in socio-economic gaps in education and future welfare for those aged 14 to 17 years old.

With regards to employment, it could be said that the majority of young

people work in informal, unstable jobs with little personal or professional development. From the focus group exercises, we found there is a perception that a lack of employment opportunities exists for young people in Colombia. The participants mention few opportunities for developing skills and they seek work to solve short-term financial problems. Similar to the education analysis results, when looking at job market experiences, we found differences between men and women, as well as differences depending on place of residence and socio-economic class. We found that it is more likely for young men to have a paid job than women, whilst the proportion of women who work on household tasks is significantly higher than the number of men (this was evident in both the quantitative and qualitative results).

On the other hand, young people within the lowest welfare quintile have a lower level of employability than those in the highest welfare quintile.

Finally, regardless of gender or whether they live in an urban or rural area, the young people agree on the importance of having a job which provides them with opportunities for professional development, as well as the importance of personal effort to have a better life.

Judging by the discoveries made regarding the employment situation of young people and within the framework of their own perceptions of the importance of work, it can be concluded that the job market is not contributing to helping close the gaps linked with the socio-economic and geographical situations of Colombia's young people.

## Summary

In this chapter, we characterised the ways in which young Colombian people spend their time into three main categories: education, employment and use of free time. Time is the most important asset that young people have, and how they spend it and the conditions under which they spend it will determine their future welfare as well as, eventually, that of their children. We objectively queried them on how they spend their time and their perceptions of education and employment, as well as their perceptions of what is necessary to improve their skills.

Young people who are the most impoverished and who live in rural areas have the least amount of access; the difference between young people from different socio-economic welfare quintiles is more pronounced for young people aged 18 to 28 years old than for those aged 14 to 17 years old. Young people in rural areas and remote cities are also less likely to attend an educational institution in comparison to those in urban areas or nearby, large cities. In higher education, 31.8 per cent in large cities have achieved some university-level education, whereas only 14.2 per cent in surrounding cities and 5.9 per cent in remote cities have achieved this. There are also significant gender gaps as, regardless of place of residence, more men are attending educational institutions than women.

The vast majority of those surveyed believe that studying has value, with importance placed on learning and improving one's social standing as reasons for studying. The vast majority (96 per cent) are also in agreement, or total agreement, that education is a way to propel change within society.

The majority of young people work in informal, unstable jobs with little personal or professional development. From the focus group exercises, we found there is a perception that a lack of employment opportunities exists for young people in Colombia. The participants mention few opportunities for developing skills and they seek work to solve short-term financial problems. We also found that it is more likely for young men to have a paid job than women, whilst the proportion of women who work on household tasks is significantly higher than the number of men. Lastly young people within the lowest welfare quintile have a lower level of employability than those in the highest welfare quintile.

Regardless of gender or whether they live in an urban or rural area, young people consider it to be important to have a job which provides opportunities for professional development, and that personal effort is fundamental for them to have a better life. However, a low proportion of them believe that the employment opportunities in Colombia are numerous and varied.

In the future, the situation of young people with restricted access to education or employment may not be as concerning if the young people who do not have access to education did have access to employment, and those who aren't working were studying. However, analysis of young people who are NEET shows that this is not currently the case. Our findings show that 11 per cent of young people aged 18 or under and 28 per cent of those over 18 years old are not studying or working. Furthermore, young people in rural areas, women and young people who belong to the lowest welfare quintiles are more likely to be

NEET. Thus it would appear that the job market is not contributing to helping close the gaps linked with the socio-economic and geographical situations of Colombia's young people.

With regards to how young people spend their free time, sedentary activities and those with little direct social interaction take precedence. In contrast, just over half of the young people mentioned exercising. There is a need for improved access to and promotion of sports and recreational activities for young people as a way to prevent chronic illnesses in the future. In addition, less than 60 per cent of young people mentioned activities which involve direct interaction with other people (such as spending time with friends or relatives). This also highlights the need to encourage a significant number of young people to take part in activities where they can interact with other people, as a way of contributing towards their social and emotional development.

In general there are more cultural opportunities available in urban areas. The differences are also evidence of the need to improve access to these opportunities (such as libraries or cultural centres) for those living in rural areas.



## > 8. VIOLENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

> “I think violence [is the biggest problem in my neighbourhood]... I lived five minutes from the school, but we still had to use transportation because we couldn’t walk from one neighbourhood to another. This is a problem with violence too – it keeps us from getting around easily.”

*Focus group, 14 – 17, male, Medellín*

> “There’s a lot of drug addiction, fights, theft, everything.”

*Focus group, 14 – 17, male, Bogotá*

### 8.1 Are young people affected by violence?

A central focus of our work is examining young people’s perceptions of the social and community risks they face in their daily lives. We asked about how often they face various risks in their communities, their sense of safety, and the degree to which they and their close friends and family have been directly victimized. Although Colombia recently signed a peace agreement ending multiple episodes of political violence, urban and community security may become a significant threat in the transition to lasting peace<sup>1</sup>. Alongside this information, we present an analysis of the beliefs, attitudes and feelings that young people themselves use to explain the presence of these violent incidences in their communities. We also explore the possible consequences of such

levels of exposure with a comprehensive mental health indicator used in our research.

The most striking finding comes from self-reports of exposure to violence. According to our results, shown in Figure 8.1, 38 per cent of young people interviewed report that they have been the victim of an ordinary crime (such as theft or mugging) at some point in their lives. The percentage is much higher in urban settings (43 per cent), in comparison to those in rural regions (22 per cent). The rate of exposure to violence perpetrated by an armed group (8 per cent) or to family violence (8 per cent) is much lower than ordinary crime, but this estimate is still high when compared internationally.

> “There’s a gang at my school and they fight in the park with the gang from [the other school]<sup>2</sup>, one of those up by the museum and then they fight each other. Whenever they fight, the police come. They always show up. It’s crazy. They don’t care if the police come; they keep fighting.”

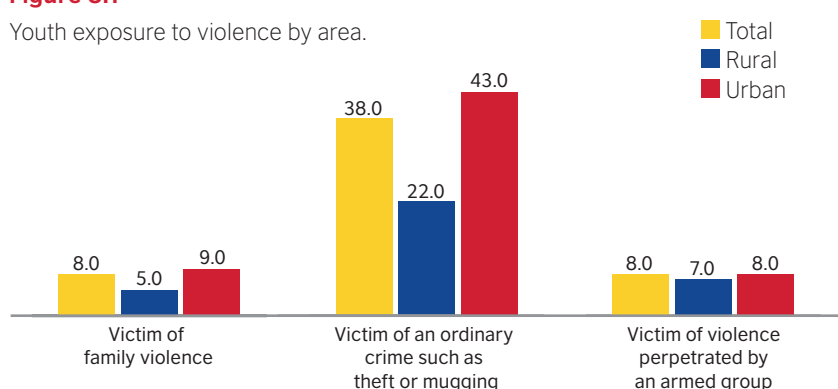
*Focus group, 14 – 17, male, Bogotá*

1 > Moser, C.O.N. & McIlwaine, C. (2006). Latin American Urban Violence as a Development Concern: Towards a Framework for Violence Reduction. World Development, 34: 89-112.

2 > The name of the school has been omitted to protect privacy.

**Figure 8.1**

Youth exposure to violence by area.



“[It happened to me] at home... but it’s because it’s next to, there are like, borders that you have to get used to, you can’t go to that park because you can’t, or the other because it belongs to another gang.”

*Focus group, 14 – 17, male, Medellín*

**Question:** Please tell if you have been the victim of any of the following at any point in your life.

The results are even more striking when we look beyond direct victimisation and take into account violent acts directed at close friends and family (see Table 8.1) Young people report that 61 per cent of their friends and 57 per cent

of family members have been direct victims of a crime such as theft or mugging at some point in their lives. A substantial number of young people report that their families and friends have been victims of violence

perpetrated by armed groups. In both urban and rural contexts, roughly one in every four respondents says that close friends or family members have been victimized by these groups at least once in their lives.



**Table 8.1**

Reported exposure to violence via friends and family.

Exposure to events	Total	Urban	Rural	Masculine	Feminine
Ordinary crime (theft and mugging)	61%	68%	39%	64%	58%
Violence by an armed group	20%	23%	12%	21%	19%
Family members' exposure to violence					
Ordinary crime (theft and mugging)	57%	63%	39%	61%	53%
Violence perpetuated by an armed group	24%	24%	24%	26%	22%

## 8.2 What problems do you see in your neighbourhood or village?

We supplemented this unsettling information by studying young people's reports of how frequently certain problems occur in their neighbourhoods or villages. At the top of the list, shown in Figure 8.2, are reports of excessive alcohol consumption (42 per cent) and use of psychoactive substances (36 per cent), adolescent pregnancies (40 per cent) and lack of safety (24 per cent).

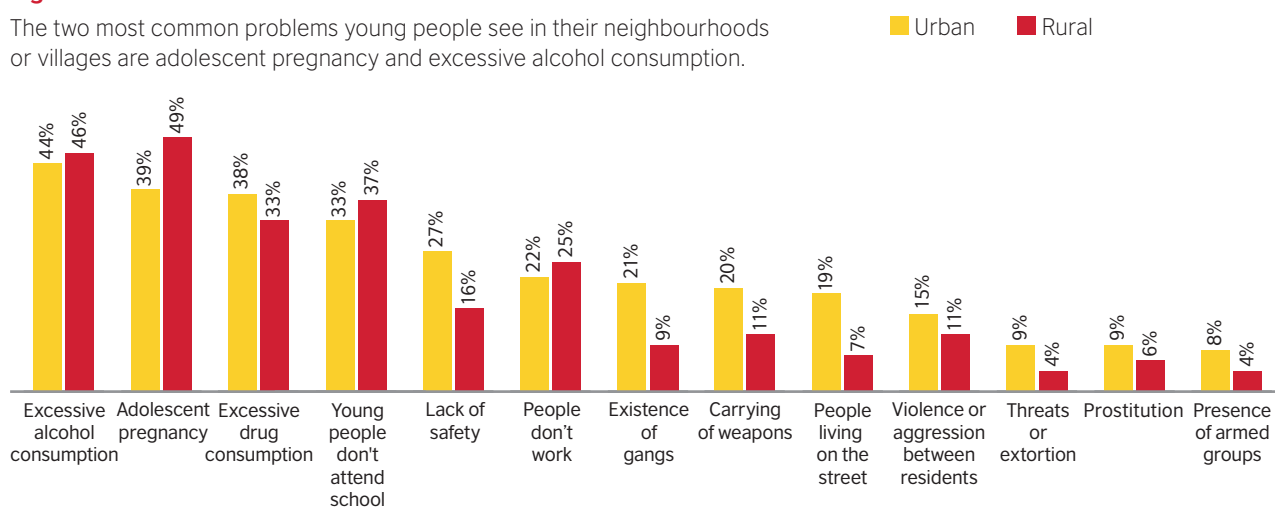
In urban settings, there are additional concerns about the existence of gangs (20 per cent) and carrying of weapons by community members (20 per cent).

These are also reported in rural areas, but at significantly lower rates. Three problems that occur more often in rural settings than urban ones are adolescent pregnancy (45 per cent rural vs. 38 per cent urban), young people not attending

school (37 per cent rural vs. 32 per cent urban) and young people not working (26 per cent rural vs. 21 per cent urban). The greatest difference between men and women is in reported concern over adolescent pregnancy (47 per cent women vs. 33 per cent men) and excessive drug use (40 per cent women vs. 32 per cent men).

**Figure 8.2**

The two most common problems young people see in their neighbourhoods or villages are adolescent pregnancy and excessive alcohol consumption.



**Question:** On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is never and 5 is often, how often do the following problems occur in your neighbourhood or village? The chart shows the number of people who say that these problems occur often (4) or very often (5) in their neighbourhood or village.



Young people offered various explanations for why people in Colombia would engage in violence: the pursuit of money (57 per cent), the need to escape poverty (42 per cent) and upbringing (37 per cent) were the most common reasons. Between 20 and 30 per cent of participants cited motives related to the pursuit of power and revenge and the desire to defend their dignity. 20 per cent of cited peer pressure, while five per cent mentioned pressure from family members. Only two per cent said that pressure from political and religious reasons was a possible motive.

With regards to consequences of exposure to those problems, young people in both urban and rural settings say they have coping strategies for dealing with violent incidents, including avoiding thinking about their exposure to these episodes, and avoiding certain places, people and activities (23 per cent nationally). However, around 13 per cent of respondents say that they have lost interest in activities they used to

enjoy, 11 per cent say they have isolated themselves or withdrawn from other people, and around 10 per cent report having difficulty feeling love or affection for others. 12 per cent report that they become agitated by everyday noises after having experienced one of these violent incidents, whether directly or indirectly. Observing or being a direct victim of violence also increases the likelihood that an individual will use similar strategies in future social interactions.

For many young people, these symptoms are expressed externally (they manifest by means of their behaviour, relationship patterns and possibly even criminal conduct); for many others, symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression may create an internal burden that is hard to see from their actions alone. They may manifest internally, potentially changing young people's behaviour and how they interact in their communities, while also affecting their development<sup>5</sup>.



5 > Fowler, P. J.; Tompsett, C. J.; Braciszewski, J. M.; Jacques-Tiura, A. J. & Baltes, B. B. (2009). Community violence: A meta-analysis on the effect of exposure and mental health outcomes of children and adolescents. *Development and Psychopathology*, 21(01): 227. doi: 10.1017/s0954579409000145.



### 8.3 Conclusions

Our initial investigation of levels of exposure to violence, feelings about these acts and levels of emotional health among Colombian adolescents and young people presents a troubling picture. Colombian society has experienced high levels of victimisation due to armed conflict, and it is still healing. One of the possible overlooked consequences is the nation's mental health.

In a country like Colombia, where nearly 8.3 million civilians have been victims of violence since 1985<sup>14</sup>, the prevalence of emotional symptoms among Colombia's young people is significant, and attention must be brought to the potential effects of this victimisation on the population's emotional health.

This exposure to violence, whether direct or indirect, creates an additional burden for individuals and inhibits the process of positive growth<sup>15</sup> we want to see in our people. Although Colombia has taken significant steps to reduce future generations' likelihood of exposure, we must still discuss how to meet the emotional needs of those who have already been exposed.

National and international research claims that social and emotional reactions to exposure to violence, though non-fatal<sup>3</sup>, can have serious consequences for mental health, the development of human capital and the well-being of an entire populace<sup>4</sup>.

14 > Registro Nacional de Víctimas, agosto 2018 [National Victim Registry, August 2018].

15 > Moya, A. (2018). Violence, psychological trauma, and risk attitudes: Evidence from victims of violence in Colombia. *Journal of Developmental Economics*, 131: 15-27. Molano, A.; Harker, A. & Cristancho, J. C. (2018). Effects of Indirect Exposure to Homicide Events on Children's Mental Health: Evidence from Urban Settings in Colombia. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0876-8>.

3 > McCoy, D. C.; Roy, A. L. & Raver, C. C. (2015). Neighbourhood crime as a predictor of individual differences in emotional processing and regulation. *Developmental Science*, 19(1): 164-174. doi:10.1111/desc.12287.

4 > Molano, A.; Harker, A. & Cristancho, J. C. (2017). Ecological Factors Associated to Social and Emotional Skill Development: Chronic exposure to violence in the context of the Colombian Civil Conflict. Accessed at: [<https://egob.uniandes.edu.co/index.php/es/me-publicaciones/notas-de-politica/12-documentos-de-trabajo/124-ecologi-cal-factors-associated-to-social-and-emotional-skill-development-chronic-exposure-to-violence-in-the-context-of-the-colombian-civil-conflict>].





## 9. DREAMS AND EXPECTATIONS

We bring this document to a close with an overview of the project's results in relation to the dreams the young people involved have for their future – what they want from their lives and the barriers that they feel could prevent them from fulfilling their dreams, as well as their concerns about their own future and that of their country.

### Dreams Map 1

Created by participants in focus groups in Medellín and Turbo.



### 9.1. The dreams of young people in Colombia

Young people in Colombia have dreams, goals and aspirations linked to their professional, academic, personal and family lives. The results of this research reveal similarities and differences between the dreams of young people in Colombia depending on their gender (male or female), the place where they live (urban or rural areas) and between young people aged under 18 who are attending school and those who are not.

In Chapter 7, we saw that education and work are an essential part of young people's vision of the future; we also highlighted that young people are aware of many of the problems documented in the literature and detailed in Chapter 4. There are differences in important aspects of young people's perspectives on the problems that arise, but in general they have much in common. In any case, it is important to recognise the awareness they have of the problems they face.

> “...I want to graduate and, when I do, I want to study at a university; get good grades; be a professional in the field of psychology; help people with their problems; and things like that.”

*Female, 16 years old, urban Necoclí*





The quantitative analysis of the information gathered from the sample – which is a representative sample of young people in Colombia – does not provide an exhaustive view of their dreams and expectations. The topics that come up in conversation with them cover a much broader range than can be discussed in a survey. But the main dream shared by young people in Colombia is to study or continue studying. They also placed importance on providing support for their families and, in some cases, having a family of

their own. Another frequently mentioned dream shared by both sexes is being able to provide support to their mothers and having their own home.

Dreams linked to a future professional career, to resolving problems such as housing for the family, and family stability are dominant among the young people in all of the different places we visited. That said, there are differences across the range of demographic categories: sex, age, educational situation, and so on.

> “Well, one of my dreams is to really prepare myself to achieve each of the goals that I have set down for myself there. That is, to have a house; to buy a house here for my parents, who want to live here; to have my home and my family; and for them to be proud of me; and to work.”

*Female, 17 years old, rural Necoclí, currently in education*

> “My personal life project is based above all on my family. I dream of giving a lovely life to my mum, repaying her for everything that she has invested in me, and making her happy.”

*Male, 16 years old, Medellín, currently in education*

### 9.1.1. The dreams of young Colombian men and women (aged 14 to 28 years)

There are differences between the dreams mentioned by the men and women who took part in the focus groups. For example, in relation to what they dream of studying, women more frequently referred to taking postgraduate courses, working as

teachers or wanting to contribute to the country through voluntary work in nursing homes or foundations. Men are more likely to want to study degrees in engineering or become football players. In the case of women, a great deal of importance is placed

on family in two ways: they mention marriage as part of their dreams, and they also prioritise ensuring better economic conditions for their children.

We also found that women tend to have dreams related to making a contribution to the lives of others:

> “... I would like to make it possible for children and young people to have other options in their lives [...] to work in culture, theatre, dance, all with a focus on territorial development.”

*Female, 23 years old, Medellín, currently in education*

> “... I’d like to try to start a micro-enterprise or a work agency here in our town to benefit young people, because today young people are very excluded from work, from projects, from educational initiatives. So I would like to start this micro-enterprise – not for me, but so that the majority of the young people in my town can benefit from it.”

*Female, adult aged 25 – 30, urban Necoclí*

Men do not voice aspirations of this kind; in contrast, they offered statements related to more personal employment and self-fulfilment, such as the following:

> “[My dream is] to go to university and study business administration or, if I can’t do that, to be a football player.”

*Male, 15 years old, rural Necoclí, currently in education*

The women we spoke to also tended to more frequently mention marriage as one of their dreams:

> “I see myself at home, with my family: I want to have a daughter with my husband, get married, walk down the aisle. I see myself in a peaceful old age, by the sea, with my own home and my dog. Yes, that is like my dream I want to make come true.”

*Female, 26 years old, urban Necoclí*



61.7 per cent of the women interviewed for the survey think that education is very important for learning social values such as tolerance and cooperation, while the proportion of men placing importance on these aspects stood at 50.8 per cent. In general, men have expectations associated with a financial and professional role, while women have expectations related to serving society and their family.

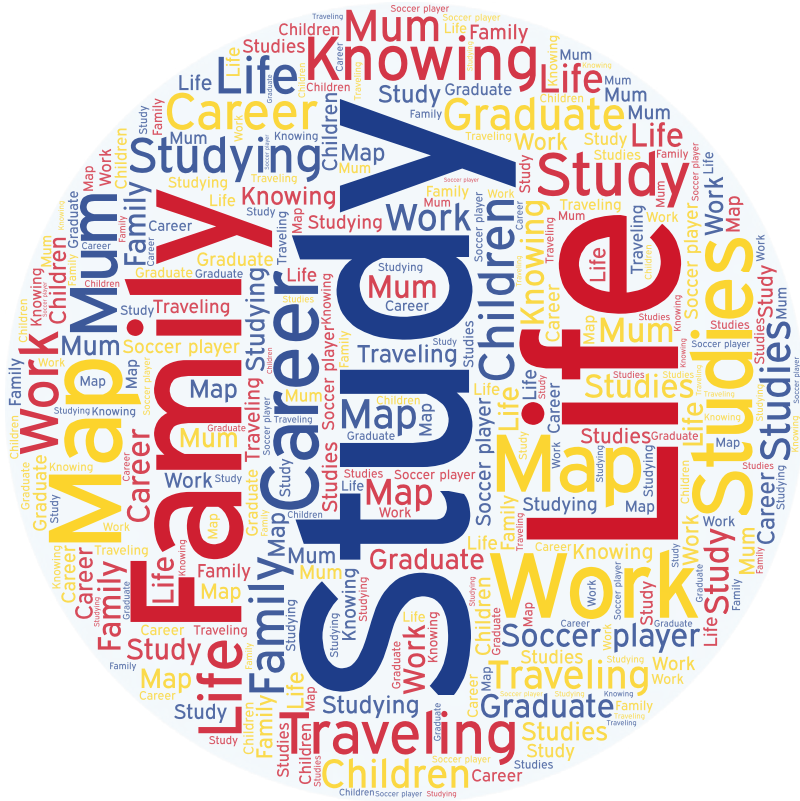


### 9.1.2. The dreams of Colombian young people living in urban areas and those living in rural areas



There are few differences between the dreams of Colombian young people living in urban areas and those living in rural areas. In general, the young people mentioned dreams connected to a professional career, and family. Young people in urban areas have more dreams associated with travelling or with living outside Colombia than those in rural areas, who have more professional dreams linked to work in the countryside.

In both rural and urban areas young people referred to their dream of wanting to study. The dreams mentioned by urban young people included studying subjects such as medicine, law, music, psychology or sociology. Young people in rural areas dream of studying veterinary sciences, agriculture or gastronomy. Notwithstanding the above, there were similarities between the educational aspirations of all the young people; for example, in the focus groups in both segments (rural and urban) young people mentioned wanting to study civil engineering, public accounting, business administration and nursing.



> “In a year’s time I have this idea that I want to travel to Argentina with my friend Linda. I’d like to live there, study... Do that: study as much as possible and travel, and from there travel the world and continue studying, of course. I plan to study languages in Argentina, foreign languages and that.”

*Male, 18 years old, Bogotá, currently in education*

> “In five years’ time I dream of doing my master’s degree in Barcelona.”

*Female, 21 years old, Medellín, currently in education*

> “Right now, I’d say... I’d like to go to the city, but right now I’d like to get to know – to have the opportunity... Yes, I’d like to travel around Colombia because if I said “the world” I’d be exaggerating. Yes, I’d like to get to know the cities of our country, but right now I probably wouldn’t go to live there yet.”

*Female, 28 years old, rural Necoclí*

### 9.1.3. The dreams of young people aged under 18 and in education and the dreams of young people under 18 not in education

School attendance among young people aged under 18 is one of the problems that has plagued Colombia for decades. In our research, we explicitly sought to speak to young people not currently attending school or college, and we identified that in general all of them voiced their desire to enrol again, and that their aim is to leave school with their baccalaureate (certificate of advanced secondary education).

38 per cent of the young people not in education think that education is very important to understanding the world better, while 57 per cent consider education fundamental to acquiring practical skills for work. However, we found a significant difference between the dreams of young people that attend school and those that do not attend school: the former have more specific aspirations than the latter as to what they want to study. The following extracts highlight this difference.

We identified other differences between the statements made by young people in education and young people not in education, as can be seen from Table 9.3. The differences between the perceptions of young people include the prevalence of the word *futbolista* ('football player'), which is mentioned by both groups of young people. But while it is the fourth most common word among young people not in education, among young people that are in education it is only the eighth most frequent word.

> “So I would like to be a lawyer; to study a legal degree, law: that is my plan. I see myself in five years’ time, or in the future, being a lawyer – and one of the best lawyers in Colombia.”

*Female, under 18, urban Turbo, currently in education*

> “The most important thing is studying, and knowing how to read, and do sums properly, and stuff like that...”

*Male, under 18, urban Turbo, not currently in education*

A final difference worth mentioning between young people aged under 18 is that those not in education mentioned wanting to enter the military, while those in education did not refer to that topic. Aspirations that tend to exist in Columbia's young people regardless of their gender, age, whether they are in education, or the area where they live (urban or rural) – are as follows: the dream of studying, of being able to support their current family or build a new family, and obtaining their own home. Meanwhile, differences tend to be as follows: the different qualifications or professions that young people would like to have; the level of importance that they give to seeking employment; the desire to travel and get to know other places; and supporting their mothers or the family, and so on.

**Table 9.1**

Frequency of words in the dreams of young people aged under 18 in education/ not in education.

Young people aged under 18 in education		Young people aged under 18 not in education	
Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
Study	30	Study	19
Family	23	Family	16
Travel	17	Studies	10
Life	12	Footballer	7
University	11	Mum	7
Draw	10	Children	6
Company	10	Football	5
Footballer	10	Achieve	5
Engineer	10	Military	5
To live	10	Professional	5
Future	9	To live	5
Children	9	To know	4
World	9	Future	4
Degree	8	Daughter	4
To know	8	Son	4






**Table 9.2**

Frequency of words describing the barriers to fulfilling their dreams encountered by young people.

Barriers to fulfilling their dreams	
Word	Frequency
Money	23
Study	23
Work	16
Pregnant	13
Study	11
Mum	11
Girls	11
Support	10

> “I think that [young people] are missing out on a lot of support, because a young person who wants to get ahead needs somebody; they need someone who can help them.”

*Focus group, 14 – 17, male, Bogotá*

> “I don’t think it’s about resources so much as a lack of care and support.”

*Focus group, 14 – 17, female, Bogotá*

### 9.3. The concerns of young people in Colombia

Young people do not see a clear path ahead of them when it comes to achieving their dreams. They are aware of many of the difficulties that they face, as detailed in Chapter 4. The aim of the final section is to contextualise the concerns expressed by young people in Colombia from their own perspective.

#### 9.3.1 Concerns related to the country’s situation

Knowing the concerns, aspirations and dreams of young people is fundamental. It helps us to understand their needs, formulate public policy and assess the direction that the country will possibly take.

**Table 9.3**

The main concerns that young people expressed about their country are associated with unemployment and high costs of living.

	Urban	Rural
Corruption	56%	59%
Criminal gangs	14%	26%
Drug trafficking and illegal crops	27%	9%
Common delinquency/crime	6%	13%
Climate change	16%	9%
Implementing the agreements with the FARC	22%	7%
Inequality between rich and poor	16%	17%
Inequality or discrimination between men and women	21%	15%
Political polarisation in Colombia	17%	16%
Quality and coverage of healthcare	28%	23%
Quality and coverage of education	29%	27%
Signing of the peace agreement with the ELN	44%	49%
Unemployment	56%	62%
High costs of living	56%	59%

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**Question:** What are the three public problems that should be resolved as a priority? Select in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 3 the least important.

The three problems facing the country that most worry Colombian young people are: unemployment (57 per cent); high costs of living (56 per cent); and the signing of a peace agreement with the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN) (43 per cent), although these options were chosen more often among young people in urban areas than rural areas. These responses were followed by a high level of concern about corruption in urban areas (33 per cent) and the quality and coverage of healthcare (28

per cent) and education (28 per cent) at the national level. There are important differences between urban and rural areas when it comes to a variety of topics. For example, those living in urban areas are very worried about drug trafficking (27 per cent) and the implementation of the agreements with the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) (24 per cent), while those living in rural areas were more worried about criminal gangs (20 per cent).

Unemployment continues to be one of the main concerns of young people in Necoclí (69 per cent), Medellín (49 per cent), the rest of Antioquia (63 per cent) and the rest of the national territory (56 per cent). In remote cities, unemployment is the second most important concern (58 per cent) among the concerns voiced by young people, after the political polarisation of the country (65 per cent). Political polarisation is not among the main concerns either in major cities (19 per cent) or nearby cities (11 per cent).

**Table 9.4**

Differences between the concerns of young people according to city type.

	National sample	Medellín	Antioquia sample	Necoclí
Unemployment	58%	48%	64%	70%
High costs of living	56%	64%	64%	65%
Signing peace agreement with the ELN	44%	42%	43%	25%
Corruption	30%	36%	27%	24%
Health care quality and coverage	30%	26%	21%	18%
Education quality and coverage	28%	25%	36%	24%
Drug trafficking and illicit crops	22%	15%	18%	20%
Inequality or discrimination between males and females	20%	16%	15%	18%
Political polarisation in Colombia	19%	15%	15%	4%
Implementation of peace agreements with FARC	20%	17%	10%	30%
Lack of opportunities	19%	26%	22%	23%
Inequality between rich and poor	15%	18%	20%	23%
Criminal gangs	15%	18%	16%	17%
Political change	16%	24%	2%	15%
Common crime	14%	18%	9%	11%

**Question:** What are the three public problems that should be resolved as a priority? Select in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 3 the least important.

Corruption is a far greater worry for young people in large cities than in remote cities (35 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively); meanwhile, political change is a bigger worry for young people in remote cities than in large cities (38 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively) (see Table 9.4).









### 9.3.2. Concerns about their future

81 per cent of Colombia's young people are very worried about not being able to give their children a quality education, while 77 per cent worry that they will not be able to fulfil their dreams and aspirations (see Table 9.5). Equally, a significant number of young people are worried that they will not be able to study what they like (70 per cent), that they will not be able to achieve a professional or technical education (69 per cent), that they will not have the opportunity to express themselves (67 per cent), or that they will not be able to be financially independent (66 per cent). The feeling of a lack of support poses a barrier to achieving their dreams and aspirations, in particular in more vulnerable areas.<sup>2</sup> This lack of support is associated with high levels of mental disorders and emotional suffering among the country's youth population.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 9.5**

At an individual level, the main concerns of Colombia's young people are not being able to give their children a quality education, and not being able to fulfil their dreams and aspirations.

Concerns	Percentage
Not being able to maintain good physical health	55.0
Having to face violence in your life	55.0
Having a partner that you are not compatible with	52.0
Not being able to form a family	39.0
Having to live alone in your old age	50.0
Not being financially independent	66.0
Not being able to give your children a good education	81.0
Not being able to study what you want	70.0
Not being able to gain or consider higher education	70.0
Not being able to fulfil your dreams and aspirations	77.0
A lack of opportunities to get your voice heard	67.0
A lack of opportunities for living and working abroad	49.0
A lack of opportunities to move to the city	38.0
Other	36.0

**Question:** What are the three public problems that should be resolved as a priority? Select in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 3 the least important.

In relation to the things that young people were – proportionally – ‘quite’ or ‘very’ concerned about, given the list of items available, the results showed that ‘not being able to form a family’

and ‘not having the opportunity to move to another city’ were not among the main concerns of the majority of the young people.

2 > Abud, M. J.; Lorch, S.; Mikula, L. and Rosario, J. (2015). Engaging the Future of Colombia's Youth: In Ladera, El Retiro and Buenaventura. Report. SIPA and Fundación Carvajal.

3 > Gómez-Restrepo, C.; Bohórquez, A.; Tamayo, N.; Rondón, M.; Bautista, N.; Rengifo, H. and Medina, M. (2016). ‘Trastornos depresivos y de ansiedad y factores asociados en la población de adolescentes colombianos, Encuesta Nacional de Salud Mental 2015’. Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría, 45(S1): 50-57.

9.3.3. Are the young people optimistic about their future overall

Despite their concerns, Colombia's young people do dream of better things and have an optimistic view of their own future and that of the country. For example, they believe that they will be able to live independently from their

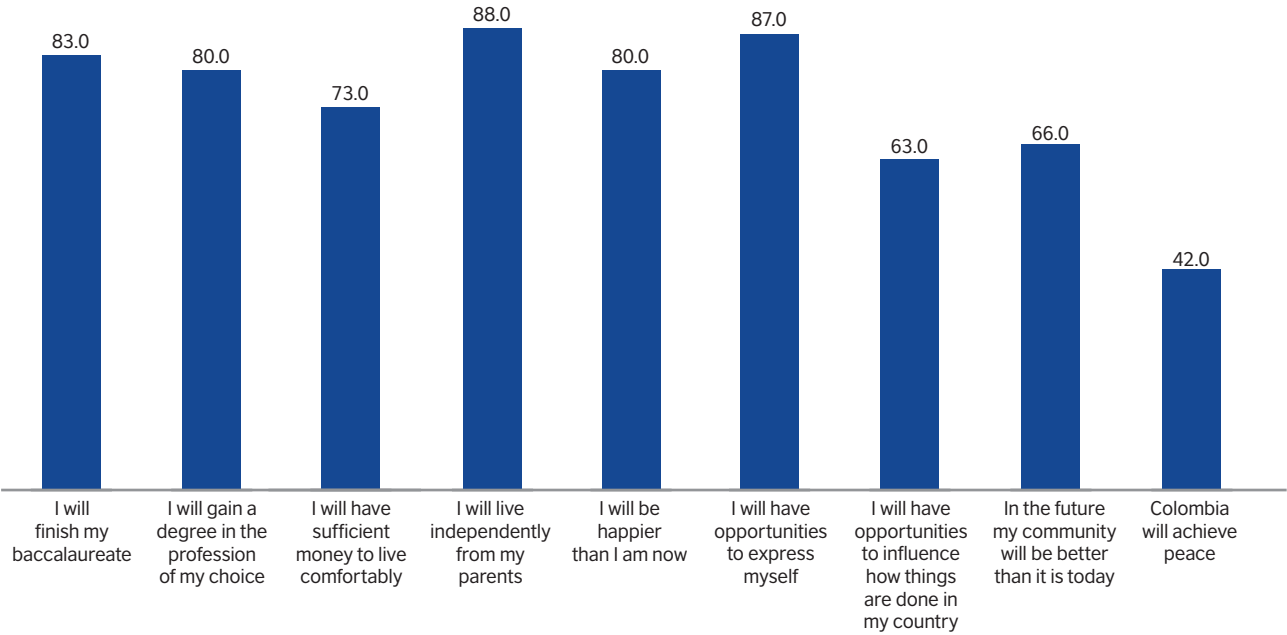
parents (88 per cent), that they will have more opportunities to express themselves (87 per cent), and that they will be happier than they are today (80 per cent) (see Table 9.6).

Moreover, a significant number believe that they will have sufficient money to live comfortably (73 per cent), that their

community will be better in the future (66 per cent), and that they will have opportunities to influence how things are done in the country (63 per cent). This optimism is found across the country in both rural and urban areas, and in the highest and lowest socio-economic strata.

Table 9.6

At an individual level, the main concerns of Colombia's young people are not being able to give their children a quality education, and not being able to fulfil their dreams and aspirations.



**Question:** On a scale from 1 to 5, in which 1 is 'very pessimistic' and 5 is 'very optimistic', how do you feel about the following statements? The diagram shows the percentage of people that said they felt optimistic (4) or very optimistic (5) about each of the statements.



Nevertheless, only 42 per cent believe that Colombia will achieve peace; this generalized pessimism may be based on the enormous social, economic and psychological consequences of more than 50 years of conflict, as well as the political and social polarisation of the country.

Meanwhile, it is worth highlighting that 61 per cent of young people believe that their generation will be capable of making Colombia a better country.

At this time of change, in which the transition to peace offers opportunities and challenges alike, this optimism is a special motivation for overcoming difficulties, leaving the pain of war behind and constructing an inclusive nation that offers opportunities for everyone.

> “Well, I feel proud of how the Colombian people have wanted to support peace so much; unfortunately, they didn’t win but I feel very proud that they tried to bring about peace, although it wasn’t possible.”

*Female, 24 years old, Medellín, not currently in education*

> “They make peace with the guerrillas but there are still armed groups and thieves and people in the streets, and all of that; they are never going to achieve peace.”

*Male, aged 16, rural Turbo, not currently in education*

> “I would say that we are [on the right path] because young people are the future of Colombia; that is, if we begin to be good, leaving all that evil and crime behind, maybe Colombia can be a better place.”

*Male, 15 years old, rural Necoclí, currently in education*



# > ANNEX 1: DATA SHEET FROM THE NEXT GENERATION COLOMBIA STUDY

Name of the study	Next Generation Colombia Attitudes and aspirations of young Colombians.
Carried out by:	National Centre for Consulting S.A.
Universe	Young people who, given their social and economic conditions, describe their attitudes and future aspirations, as well as how policies and conditions shape them into creative, satisfied and active citizens
Sample unit	Young people between 14 and 28 years old, resident in Colombia and who live in either rural or urban areas
Date created	August 2017
Length	2 months
Methodology	Face-to-face at home
Coverage area	Colombia
Sample	2,582 interviewees
Data collection technique	Structured, face-to-face interviews
Purpose of the study	Understand the attitudes and aspirations of young people
Support the political policies relating to young people	Raising the voices of young people
Number of questions	Eighty two (82)
Type of questions asked	Closed
Measurement scale used	Binary and semantic differential
Areas interviewed	Bogotá, D.C. (15.3%), Malambo-Atlántico (8.3%), Manizales-Caldas (7.5%), Pitalito-Huila (5.9%), Mompós-Bolívar (5.6%), Pasto-Nariño (5.4%), Cali-Valle del Cauca (4.7%), Ciénaga de Oro-Córdoba (4.5%), Medellín-Antioquia (4.3%), Pueblo Rico-Risaralda (3.6%), La Mesa-Cundinamarca (3.4%), Acacías-Meta (2.9%), Candelaria-Valle del Cauca (2.7%), Piendamó-Cauca (2.7%), Tunja-Boyacá (2.5%), Puerto Boyacá-Boyacá (2.7%), Barranquilla-Atlántico (2.4%), Los Patios-Norte de Santander (2.4%), Cartagena-Bolívar (2%), Mosquera-Nariño (1.7%), Bello-Antioquia (1.6%), Itagüí-Antioquia (1.4%), Envigado-Antioquia (1.3%), Bucaramanga-Santander (1%), Caucasia-Antioquia (0.9%), Abejorral-Antioquia (0.7%), Entreríos-Antioquia (0.7%), Barbosa-Antioquia (0.6%), Frontino-Antioquia (0.6%), Andes-Antioquia (0.5%), Turbo-Antioquia (0.4%), Necoclí-Antioquia (0.2%)

Source for questions	<p>Coming up with the interview questions involved a review of questionnaires from research that had previously been carried out by researchers working on this project. The questions were then revised and adapted. The sources used were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires used in Next-Generation projects carried out by the British Council in other countries.</li> <li>• Centres for Disease Control and Prevention – CDC. 2015 National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey Questionnaire. Youth Risk Behaviour Surveillance System- YRBSS (pp. 19-20)</li> <li>• Daza, Patricia &amp; M. Novy, Diane &amp; A. Stanley, Melinda &amp; Averill, Patricia. (2002). The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21: Spanish Translation and Validation with a Hispanic Sample. <i>Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment</i>. 24. 195-205. 10.1023/A:1016014818163.</li> <li>• Panter Brick, C., Hadfield, K., Dajani, R., Eggerman, M., Ager, A., &amp; Ungar, M. (2017). Resilience in Context: A Brief and Culturally Grounded Measure for Syrian refugee and Jordanian Host Community Adolescents. <i>Child Development</i>.</li> <li>• Demographic and Health Survey by Profamilia.</li> <li>• Large Integrated Home Survey by DANE.</li> <li>• Fundación Antonio Restrepo Barco (2011). Measurement of social capital in Colombia. Form No. 21, Barcas.</li> <li>• Socio-demographic questionnaire accompanying the ICFES, Colombia Saber 11 test.</li> <li>• Beusenbergh, M, Orley, John H &amp; World Health Organisation. Division of Mental Health. (1994) A Users' guide to the selfreporting questionnaire (SRQ / compiled by M. Beusenbergh and J. Orley).</li> </ul>
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## > ANNEX 2: NEXT GENERATION COLOMBIA STUDY

*The Next Generation – Colombia* study approached young people from 14 to 28 years old and covered both urban and rural areas. It involved visiting 33 cities in five regions of the country, using a questionnaire developed by the project researchers with the support of officials from the National Consulting Centre and the British Council. The questionnaire was multi-purpose and it investigated issues such as social capital, collective action and social participation, work, aspirations, expectations, concerns, experience with conflict and violence. As well as this, a section was included on resilience and another on mental health symptoms. The issues were chosen from the results of reviewing the literature from the first part of the study.

A significant proportion of the questions comes from questionnaires used in Colombia or outside the country for different purposes; these are therefore questions which have already been tested and validated in various contexts and have the guarantee of different academic communities. In some cases, new questions were introduced, which were designed by the project researchers<sup>61</sup>. Tables 1 and 2 show some statistics from the survey, and the technical data sheet is also presented. Some indexes, such as the those for welfare, resilience or mental health, are explained in detail in the following chapters.

In *The Next Generation – Colombia* survey, of the 2,582 people surveyed, 76 per cent live in urban areas of the country, and 24 per cent in rural areas or villages. With regards to the genders of the survey participants, there are slightly more men (51 per cent) than women (49 per cent). The ages of the participants ranged between 14 and 28 years old, with the highest number of participants aged 18, 19 and 21 years old. The majority of the young people interviewed stated that the maximum level of education reached was upper secondary school (28 per cent), although, from the questions, a large inequity was also shown in the education system, as 17 per cent stated having only completed primary education, and another 17 per cent had not completed it.

The sources used for the questionnaire are as follows: questionnaire from the British Council with questions from other Next Generation studies; national surveys: Large Integrated Home Survey by the National Administrative Department of Statistics – Colombia and the National Demographic and Health Survey by Profamilia; Survey on Sexual Behaviour of Adolescents – University del Rosario; Survey for the Study on Secondary Education in Colombia – National Department of Education, University de los Andes, Universidad Externado de Colombia and Universidad

Nacional de Colombia. In addition, the following studies were consulted:

- Daza, P.; Novy, D.; Stanley, M. & Averill, P. (2002). The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21: Spanish Translation and Validation with a Hispanic Sample. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*. 195-205. 10.1023/A:1016014818163.
- Fox, A. (2008). An Examination Of Risk And Protective Factors, Drug Use, And Delinquency In Trinidad And Tobago. Thesis for the Degree Masters of Science. Arizona State University. Accessed at <http://rni.unidadvictimas.gov.co/RUV>
- Katz, C. & Fox, A. (2010). Risk and protective factors associated with gang-involved youth in Trinidad and Tobago. *Revista Panamericana de Salud Pública*, 27(3): 187-202.
- Panter – Brick, C.; Hadfield, K.; Dajani, R.; Eggerman, M.; Ager, A. & Ungar, M. (2017). Resilience in Context: A Brief and Culturally Grounded Measure for Syrian Refugee and Jordanian Host – Community Adolescents. *Child Development*.

**Table 2.1**

Descriptive statistics from the Next Generation Colombia study.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Area	Urban	1,958.7	76%
	Rural	623.3	24%
Sex	Men	1,318.5	51%
	Women	1,263.5	49%
Age	14	159.6	6%
	15	149.3	6%
	16	161.0	6%
	17	223.7	9%
	18	251.5	10%
	19	250.6	10%
	20	162.4	6%
	21	253.5	10%
	22	173.6	7%
	23	177.0	7%
	24	140.6	5%
	25	156.1	6%
	26	114.7	4%
	27	97.3	4%
	28	111.2	4%
Maternal education	Did not complete primary	436.0	17%
	Completed primary	429.1	17%
	Did not complete secondary school	344.3	13%
	Completed secondary school	713.2	28%
	Did not complete higher education	212.4	8%
	Graduated from higher education	338.1	13%



**Table 2.1 continued**

Descriptive statistics from the Next Generation Colombia study.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Prosperity index	Average	0.036	
	Standard deviation	1.338	
	Quintile 1	524.6	20.3%
	Quintile 2	512.4	19.8%
	Quintile 3	540.6	20.9%
	Quintile 4	524.3	20.3%
	Quintile 5	480.1	18.6%
City size	Necoclí	250	9.7%
	Antioquia sample	540	20.9%
	Medellín	400	15.5%
	Rest of the country	1,392	53.9%
Distance from large cities	Large cities	1,858	72.0%
	Neighbouring cities	330	12.8%
	Remote cities	394	15.3%

**1 > Note:** The results are calculated using expansion factors, which each of the selected elements in the sample were multiplied by in order to obtain a country-wide estimate. As a result, some frequencies are expressed as decimals. Large cities are cities with 10,000 inhabitants or more.

With regards to their opinion on their expectations and concerns, on average, the young people stated they were optimistic (3.9 on a scale where one is very pessimistic, two is pessimistic, three is neither pessimistic or optimistic, four is optimistic and five is very optimistic) about their future when they were asked about individual values. As for their concerns, on average, the young people were neither pessimistic or optimistic with regards to national situations of political or economic interest.

For the study of work and attitudes towards this, two types of NEET indicators were established in order to look specifically at the impact of mothers who work on household tasks and thus appreciate their scope on a national level: one which considers household tasks to be a job, and one which considers them not to be a job. This analysis shows that, on average, 21.7 per cent of the young people do not study or work, if household tasks are not considered to be a job. However, when they are considered to be a job, the number of young people without an education or job decreases to 14.8 per cent; a decrease of seven percentage points.

Statistics are also presented which describe the rates of violence and vulnerability in the neighbourhoods, created to calculate the levels of

physical aggression and behaviours which are considered high-risk for those who live together in the neighbourhoods which were analysed. In this way, it can be observed that, on average, neighbourhoods in Colombia have an average level of perceived violence (11 points on a scale from zero to 25) and a slightly raised level of vulnerability (16.6 on a scale from two to 30).

Another two indexes were created for resilience and mental health. These will be explained in greater detail in later chapters. A description of the statistics is presented as a reference for reading those chapters. With regards to the mental health indexes, four indicators were formed: Rates of stress, anxiety, depression and a comprehensive indicator of emotional health.

The analysis of this report will focus on three dimensions of the gaps between the young people in Colombia: gender, socioeconomic status and region. For the difference between genders, we refer to the differences in accordance with the biological gender reported by the young people themselves at the time of carrying out the survey. For the socio-economic status dimension, a rate was established using the responses from the young people regarding assets they have in their home to divide the population into quintiles.

For the regional dimension, three different indicators were used: (i) the area (rural or urban) where the person lives; (ii) an indicator of how far their city of residence is from the closest "large" city; and (iii) results were reported for Antioquia, Medellín and Necoclí.

A "large city" is considered to be any city with more than 100,000 inhabitants; these are usually cities where there is a higher concentration of available public services and more economic activity. We therefore classify the cities as: large cities, cities which are neighbouring large cities (those which are 59 kilometres or less from a large city) and cities which are remote from large cities (those which are over 59 kilometres from a large city)<sup>62</sup>. Considering the results for Antioquia, Medellín and Necoclí, it should be made clear that the survey sampling was done in such a way so that these reports were possible (see table one). Therefore, to consider examples from places with different contexts but with some shared cultural and administrative features, the following were chosen: a province (Antioquia), its capital (Medellín) and a small city within this same province (Necoclí).

62 > Our data shows that the average distance from a large city is 59 kilometres.

**Table 2.2**Descriptive statistics from *The Next Generation – Colombia* study.

	Average	Stan. deviation	Max.	Min.
Resilience index	-0.0049	0.341	-2.637	0.716
Individuality index	-0.0064	0.386	-2.953	0.733
Relation index	-0.0033	0.299	-1.999	0.677
Contextual index	-0.0047	0.351	-2.689	0.718
Level of neighbourhood violence	11.068	4.499	0	25
Level of neighbourhood vulnerability	16.644	5.495	2	30
Reasons for study: understand skills/values	4.366	0.505	1.333	5
Future expectations: individual values	3.965	0.6502	1	5
Concerns index	3.5961	0.8004	1	5
NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)	0.2177	0.4128	0	1
Not in Education, Employment, or Training	0.1488	0.3559	0	1
Exposure to conflict	0.3440	0.4751	0	1
Exposure to crime	0.74118	0.4381	0	1
Young victim of domestic violence	0.0802	0.2717	0	1
Murder rate x 100,000 inhabitants in 2017 (1st January until 30th November)	18.3569	11.1234	3.9535	59.3942
Stress index	1.7263	0.6229	1	4
Anxiety index	1.5615	0.5387	1	3.75
Depression index	1.5134	0.5374	1	4
Emotional wellbeing index (21 items)	1.6009	0.5137	1	3.75
Rurality index in the district (CEDE Panel)	0.2229	0.2499	0.0021	0.7524
Distance from regional capital (CEDE panel)	41.1781	60.9689	0	263.691
Distance to the closest main market (CEDE panel)	79.2184	90.94232	0	270.6582
Distance to Bogotá (CEDE panel)	311.8247	225.4408	0	735.6858

**Note:** The results are calculated using expansion factors, which each of the selected elements in the sample were multiplied by in order to obtain a country-wide estimate

## > ANNEX 3: NEXT GENERATION – COLOMBIA FOCUS GROUPS

The target population of the focus groups was the same as the survey: young people living in Colombia aged between 14 and 28 years old. These groups were set up in four Colombian cities which differed both in terms of their geographical location and also in many of their socio-economic conditions, and particularly the opportunities available to the young people that live in them: Bogotá, Medellín, Turbo and Necoclí. In the first two, the largest in the country, focus groups took place in different locations, in an attempt to have young people from different parts of the cities and who had different socio-economic backgrounds.

As the populations of Turbo and Necoclí, in the Department of Antioquia, are considerably lower than that of Medellín, focus groups were set up in both rural and urban sectors (we did not look for young people from rural areas of Bogotá and Medellín as they are primarily urban cities). Table 3 shows the list of focus groups carried out.

For the development of the focus groups, a semi-guided tool was used to look into aspects such as young people's perception of Colombia, their identity, their activities (studying, working and free time), their hopes and dreams, and their needs and problems.

**Table 2.3**

List of focus groups carried out.

Location	Number of groups	Number of participants
Bogotá	5	24
Medellín	5	33
Necoclí – rural	4	21
Necoclí – urban	5	31
Turbo – rural	5	26
Turbo – urban	5	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>162</b>





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