

PROYECTO



**El futuro de los
derechos humanos
en la era digital**

Community Advisory Team- CAT
COLOMBIA FIRST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
29th November to 1th December, 2023

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The Future of Human Rights in the Digital Era Project

Selection of the CAT Colombia (Community Advisory Team)

For the implementation of the project 'The Future of Human Rights in the Digital Era' in Colombia, the role played by the Community Advisory Team (CAT Colombia) is indispensable. The CAT-Colombia call for applications attracted 43 individuals, consisting of 62% women and 38% men.. The selection process for CAT members involved an initial review of their resumes and motivational letters, followed by an evaluation by an external examiner, a person with extensive experience in human rights, HIV organizations, and a keen interest in digital matters, had participated in the previous phase of the project. The selection was based on five criteria: community work, belonging to one of the communities targeted by the project, digital interest/experience, social skills, and place of residence.

The selected individuals come from different regions of the country: Bogotá, Medellín (Antioquia), Pasto (Nariño), Palmira (Valle), and Puerto Asís (Putumayo), and fulfill the requirement of having six young people, under 30 and six persons over 30s. This wide-ranging territorial representation will enable an understanding of the diverse realities faced by human rights defenders across different social, political, and geographical contexts.





Colombia: First Meeting with the Community Advisory Team

The First Meeting with the Community Advisory Team, held in Colombia from November 29 to December 1, 2023. It brought together community leaders from diverse sectors such as LGBTQ+, transgender human rights defenders, HIV-positive leaders, sex workers representatives, and other human rights advocates, many intricately linked to the digital world. bilization.

Over the three days, the icebreakers were conducted by different members of the Community Advisory Team. These activities were crucial for energizing the group, connecting participants with the space and the event, and focusing everyone on the day's discussion.

Day 1: Project presentation and Advocacy

The inaugural day of the meeting began with an energizing icebreaker, setting a collaborative tone. Following this, Bernard from the University of Warwick presented the DHRP consortium, outlining the overarching goals and planned activities. Javier then complemented this with a detailed presentation of the project and the overall the research questions. After, the project team presented the roles and activities expected from the Community Advisory Team (CAT) members during the project.



The concept of advocacy was then introduced, sparking a lively debate about its various interpretations in Spanish, and possible to adopt the tone to the local context. Terms like 'Incidencia social', 'Incidencia comunitaria', 'Incidencia política', 'activismo' and others were proposed.



Throughout the day, the Community Advisory Team (CAT) members engaged in group activities. One key activity was the actor mapping exercise where the CAT members identified local, national and regional important individuals, organizations or institutions that are relevant for the advocacy component of the project, as well as organizations that could be not interested at all in this process.

At the end of the day, participants divided into three groups to engage in discussions about their individual experiences in advocating for various causes. These personal stories were subsequently shared with the entire group, offering diverse perspectives and further nurturing a sense of unity and common purpose among all the attendees.





Key points Day 1

- Discussion on Advocacy

Advocacy is a complex concept in Spanish. Terms like 'Incidencia social', 'Incidencia comunitaria', 'Incidencia política', and 'activismo' were proposed to adopt the tone to the local context.

- Actor Mapping Exercise

CAT members participated in an actor mapping exercise, identifying key local, national, and regional individuals, organizations, or institutions relevant to the advocacy component of the project. (Eg. UN, OAS, Dejusticia, Karisma, the congress, Colombia Diversa, and more).

They also identified organizations that might not be interested in the process. (Eg. Police, public organizations, some companies, armed groups, other more).

Day 2: Research

During the day 2 a detailed presentation of the history of the project, results of the previous phase, the relevance of the upcoming phase as well as its objectives and activities was presented. Additionally, research consultations regarding the research questions and methods were held.

The research consultation included a general presentation of the research questions and following, the presentation was divided and presented according to three different areas: Meaningful youth participation; Laws and policies from the ground up; and Digital empowerment. In these activities the CAT members worked in groups to discuss about the questions, the proposed methods, and other general conversations. During this day, participants reflected on the need to create strategies to implement PAR not only at the level of CAT members and consultations. Starting from the selection of the focus communities and groups and adapting research methods to local context. CAT members mentioned ideas such as 'Juntanzas' (get together), 'Círculos de la palabra' (Circles of the word), knitting workshops, or other co-creative methods and to implement in depth interviews not only with experts but with community members.



1. Meaningful youth participation

A long conversation followed the initial exercise. Initially, CAT members recognize the value of learning from the HIV movement in the world, however there was a mentioned about that not all of people that live with HIV has access to medicines, information and some still face stigma and discrimination. Secondly, CAT members dedicated some time delving into the meaning of “meaningful”, suggesting that the team should have a clear definition about how ‘meaningful’ is going to be understood in this project. Additionally, they noted that it could be possible that ‘meaningful’ might be perceived differently across various parts of the world. Given that this project is a Transnational one, the CAT members argues that it would be beneficial to open the possibility each country define what ‘meaningful’ means in their specific context.

In a third moment, and after a long conversation about methods, the CAT members observed that community and young leaders were not enough represented in the methods. Although these group can engage/participate in digital governance meeting and keep diaries, blogs, discussions and more, additional methods were recommended to strength this area. The CAT members proposed Ethnography, interviews and art-based methods.





2. Laws and policies from the ground up

The CAT members emphasized the significant relevance of these questions to the project, especially within the Colombian context and globally. They highlighted the necessity of tailoring questions to each country's specific situation. In Colombia, the digital divide is already a recognized issue, as previous research has shown. Some CAT members, who were involved in earlier phases, noted that we now understand certain characteristics of these digital divides due to the work made in the previous phase of this project, it would be beneficial if the research expands with other communities. Specific communities were identified as crucial in understanding digital divides: **virtual and street-based sex workers, transgender people, women, migrants and people in rural areas.**

Regarding research methods, the CAT members encouraged the team to consider a variety of approaches. They suggested the use of ethnography, group conversations like 'comadres' and 'mingas,' and art-based methods to engage communities in dialogue. Additionally, they recommended incorporating semi-structured interviews with communities. A recurring suggestion from CAT members concerned their involvement in the research; they proposed that community interviewers or leaders could be beneficial in accessing communities and encouraging participation.

The CAT members underscored its importance in the Colombian context. They proposed studying the 'Estallido Social'* in Colombia as a case study, focusing on recent instances of government surveillance and the use of digital technologies and social media against social movements. This study, they argued, could

*"Estallido Social" in Colombia

The "Estallido Social" in Colombia, which began on April 28, 2021, in response to proposed tax reforms, was a significant event marked by widespread protests and social unrest. The movement was notable for its scale and the intensity of the response it garnered from various sectors of society.

Scale of Participation and Activities: The national strike and related activities were extensive. Between April 28 and July 15, 2021, organizations such as Indepaz, Paisi and others reported a total of 14,175 activities related to the protests. These included 7,415 gatherings, 3,415 blockades, 2,475 marches, 678 mobilizations, and 40 assemblies. The Ministry of Defense also confirmed these figures, noting that the activities spanned 860 municipalities across 32 departments and Bogotá.

Cases of Violence and Police Response: The protests were marked by significant violence. Reports indicated 83 homicides during the protests, with 44 attributed to public forces. Additionally, there were 96 victims of ocular violence, 35 victims of sexual violence by public forces, 56 cases of respiratory issues due to tear gas inhalation, 1,661 victims of physical violence by state agents, and 2,053 arbitrary detentions of protesters.

Digital Tools and Surveillance: Amidst the Estallido Social, digital tools were extensively used for organizing and mobilizing against police brutality and the proposed tax reform. However, this mobilization was met with severe responses, including excessive violence against online journalists, arbitrary detentions, and seizures of protesters' mobile phones. There were also instances of internet connectivity disruptions, particularly in Cali in May 2021, amid the protests. Although there was no evidence of intentional restrictions by government authorities, these disruptions raised concerns about internet freedom and potential control measures during social movements.

The Estallido Social in Colombia thus serves as a poignant example of the power of digital mobilization in social movements, as well as the risks and challenges posed by state surveillance and control in the digital age. The use of digital platforms for organizing, while effective, also exposed vulnerabilities related to digital rights and freedoms.



offer valuable insights for public policy design, both in Colombia and other countries. Discussing surveillance, known experiences, and associated risks could be challenging in a focus group setting. In Colombia, ensuring privacy in these discussions is crucial, particularly given that during the 'Estallido Social,' digital tools were employed by the government for targeting individuals, imprisoning leaders, strategizing defamation campaigns against visible leaders, and navigating other complex situations. Hence, some CAT members advised against using focus groups for this specific topic, due to these privacy concerns.

3. Digital empowerment

For the CAT members, this question is crucial for both society at large and the human rights movement in Colombia. To address this, they recommended conducting interviews and/or focus groups with various leaders and community members to understand the specific digital 'empowerment' needs of different communities, acknowledging that these needs vary from one community to another. Furthermore, the CAT members believe that research should also examine how digital 'empowerment' is being presented. They suggested conducting interviews to investigate the efforts of different organizations in Colombia regarding digital education for diverse communities. This is essential to ensure that the content produced will be useful for these communities.

They pointed out that certain mediums like games and video animations may be effective with some groups but not others. Another critical factor is that not all communities have access to high-speed internet or the latest smartphones. Therefore, it's important to consider creating content that can be easily shared and accessed through WhatsApp or similar apps, which are widely used and can display information in an easy-to-read and understandable format.

In summary, they proposed a three-stage approach: 1) Understanding the specific needs of different communities; 2) Analyzing both successful and unsuccessful examples of digital education in these communities; 3) Designing and producing content and implementing the digital 'empowerment' component.

The second day finalized with a creative workshop. The CAT members were encouraged to think and represent in a creative way, what do they consider is the future of human rights in the digital era. One group created an 'exquisite artifact' in the form of a paper boat symbolizing navigation in the digital realm, with phrases about digital rights on it. A second group conducted a body mapping exercise, which incorporated digital rights and aspects relevant to the CAT members within the project framework. Finally, the third group performed a theatrical representation about digital rights, illustrating how they can often be violated and how they hope these rights can be protected in the future.



 **Key points Day 2**

- **Meaningful Youth Participation**
 - Need for a clear, context-specific definition of 'meaningful' in the project's transnational context.
 - Suggestion to incorporate methods like ethnography, interviews, and art-based approaches to better represent community and young leaders.



- **Laws and Policies from the Ground Up**
 - Tailoring research questions to each country's specific context, with a focus on understanding digital divides in communities like street-based and virtual sex workers, transgender people, Cisgender women, migrants, and rural populations.
 - Utilizing ethnography, group conversations, and art-based methods for community engagement.
 - Studying the 'Estallido Social' in Colombia as a case study for public policy design.
 - Advising the complex use of focus groups for discussions on surveillance due to privacy concerns.

- **Digital Empowerment**
 - Conducting interviews and focus groups to understand the specific digital empowerment needs of different communities.
 - Examining digital education efforts and considering diverse mediums like games, video animations, and also consider that not
 - Proposing a three-stage approach: understanding community specific needs, analyzing digital education examples for the same communities, and designing content for digital “empowerment”.

Day 3: Digital Empowerment

The Community Advisory Team (CAT) members engaged in a critical discussion about the concept of "empowerment.". The term "Digital Pedagogy" was proposed as a more appropriate descriptor, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and supporting the inherent strengths and capabilities within communities, rather than implying that power is something externally provided.

The day included conversations that suggested the development of a strategic approach to digital pedagogy, encompassing:

1. **Social Media Information:**

The use of platforms like Instagram and TikTok to disseminate informative content. Explaining people what digital rights is, why is it relevant for everyone, and having specific content for targeted populations.

2. **Virtual Training:**

Covering essential topics such as digital rights, security, risks and benefits and other. Animations, games, interactive strategies in the virtual spaces were proposed, however the CAT members also mentioned that it is important to have



an analog version for the content for those people who has not high-speed access to internet or not fast computers.

3. In-Person Training:

Proposed to be conducted by local organizations, potentially following a train-the-trainer model for broader reach and impact. This could imply and specific content or materials to train organizations.

These strategies were mentioned to provide a holistic and comprehensive approach to educating and “empowering” communities in the digital realm. The discussions of the day highlighted the significance of adapting digital rights and “empowerment” initiatives to be community-centric and collaborative.

Additionally, the day included presentations and discussions regarding possible communities and young people for which this project could be highly relevant and useful. According to the CAT members communities such as Sex Workers (Street and online**), participants of the Estallido Social in Colombia, young people in rural areas, people living with HIV, and migrants are communities that we must have in considerations for this project.

The event concluded with a tour at the Universidad de Los Andes, where CAT members further articulated their engagement preferences in the project. This meeting facilitated a profound exchange of ideas and experiences between the CAT members and the Uniandes team, but also among the CAT members themselves, ensuring deep resonance with the diverse needs and realities of communities in Colombia.

**Online sex work

Colombia has emerged as a significant hub in the global webcamming industry, ranking as the second-largest country in terms of the number of webcam studios, surpassed only by Romania. The industry's growth in Colombia was particularly accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic. The country boasts an estimated 6,000 studios, with Medellín being a major center, accounting for almost half of these studios.

The Colombian webcam model community is substantial, contributing to roughly 30% of the global webcam workforce. This robust participation underscores Colombia's prominent role in the industry. Webcam models in Colombia, and probably in other contexts, whether working from studios or independently, confront issues such as digital safety and privacy, especially given the intimate nature of their work. Moreover, they face potential exploitation and social stigma, making their work environment complex and often precarious.

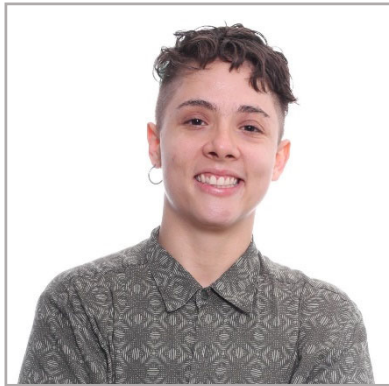


Key points Day 3

- **Concept of Empowerment**
 - Introduction of 'Digital Pedagogy' as a more fitting term, focusing on acknowledging community strengths.
 - Development of a strategic approach to digital pedagogy including social media information dissemination, virtual training, and in-person training.
 - Emphasis on community-centric and collaborative initiatives for digital rights and empowerment.
- **Targeted Communities**
 - Identification of key communities for the project's relevance: Street-based and virtual Sex Workers, participants of the Estallido Social, rural youth, people living with HIV, and migrants.
 - Noting Colombia's significant role in the global webcam industry and the unique challenges faced by webcam models in terms of digital safety and privacy.



Community Advisory Team - CAT members



Fernande Álvarez Molina

Transmasculine individual, lawyer from the University of Antioquia, currently enrolled in a master's program in Education and Human Rights. Consultant for the Sexual Diversity and LGBTI Rights Management at the Vice Presidency of the Republic, working on constructing and consolidating an institutional routes articulation tool to address prejudice-based violence against the LGBTIQ+ population. Member of the Popular Trans Network, an organization of trans individuals from the city of Medellín, and part of the Integral Trans Law Platform already.



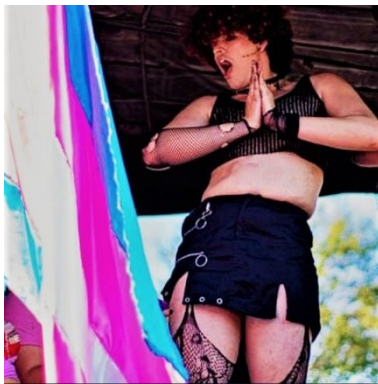
Cindy Marcela Zapata Padierna

Director of the Corporation 'Lazos de Amor Unidos por la Vida' in Medellín, an organization that for 12 years has led comprehensive care processes for women, girls, and adolescents in HIV contexts. Living with HIV for 35 years, she works to contribute to the transformation of realities surrounding HIV/AIDS through a community and gender-based approach. With extensive experience in community leadership focused on HIV, she participated as a founding member of ACOBCS and the ICW (International Community of Women Living with HIV). She has been involved in Antioquia's Intersectoral HIV Committee, where she served as president for the 2019 - 2020 term. Since 2022, she has also been part of the MCPFondo Mundial as a representative of the OBC.



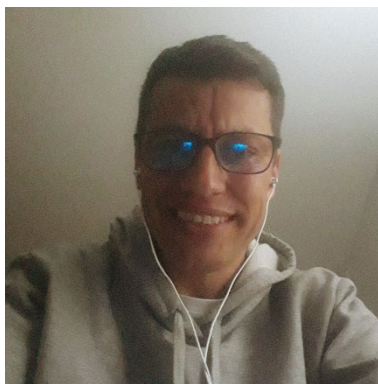
Aáron Josep Zea

Cultural Manager and Specialist in Creativity, with extensive experience in developing social, cultural, and artistic projects related to HIV in Latin America.



Perla Cecilia Marín Guerra

Trans woman freely expressing gender through cross-dressing, from Margarita Island. Spokesperson for the arts committee of the Popular Trans Network, Navigator at the Trans Health League, member of the Integral Trans Law Platform, and honored as a young talent for 2023 in the category of political, social, and community activism.



Alexander Pescador Niño

Bachelor in Humanities and Spanish Language with experience in educational processes and student management. Specialized in project-based pedagogy and structuring didactic units with a research-focused approach in education. Expertise in high school education with emphasis on teaching argumentation, body language, oral and written expression, as well as group management and conflict resolution. Professional theater actor experienced in theater group management and pedagogy, involved in assembling, preparing, and consolidating theatrical groups.



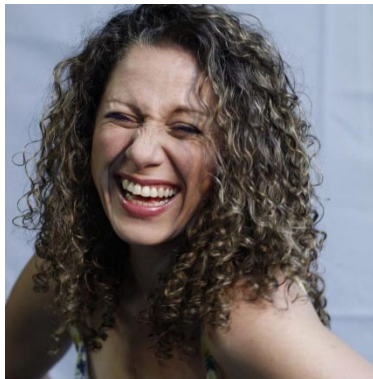
Desirée Santiago David Benjumea

Transgender person working for health rights and social activism, with skills in community psychosocial support. Previously worked as an advisor at the Red de Apoyo Social de Antioquia (RASA) Foundation. Currently serving as the coordinator for the Red de Jóvenes Positivos de Colombia (J+COL) and the Colectiva Parceros y Parceras in Medellín.



Andrés Camilo Restrepo Mora

Occupational Therapist from the National University of Colombia, specializing in research on armed conflict, peacebuilding, gender, and memory in the Amazon. Hailing from the village of Santana in the municipality of Puerto Asís in Bajo Putumayo, where he co-leads the LGBTIQ+ Association 'Así-Somos: Diversidad sin fronteras,' working towards defending human rights, creating spaces free from violence, and community empowerment by mitigating stigmas, discrimination, and prejudice against the LGBTIQ+ population. He has actively engaged in youth organizational processes at municipal and departmental levels, advocating for territory and rights as part of the young LGBTIQ+ community.



Magda Meneses

Master of Arts in Drama from the University of Antioquia with 20 years of experience in theater, specializing in acting and performing arts education in Medellín. An actress at La Casa del Teatro in Medellín for 17 years. She has worked as an educator both in institutional and community settings, using theater as a pedagogical tool and a political device to advocate for rights, protection, and support for women, children, and diverse and non-conforming populations. She designs and implements artistic, educational, and research projects focusing on popular education, gender, theater, feminisms, and transfeminism. She is the founder of the #NoMeCallo Movement, which since 2020 has supported reports of sexual and gender-based violence by women artists in Medellín.



Yoko Ruíz

Sex worker, human rights defender, activist for Trans rights. Focused on advocating for the rights of individuals engaged in sex work, with 8 years of experience in grassroots social work with trans women in vulnerable contexts (sex work, substance use, homelessness).



Bicky Bohórquez Bastidas

Black trans woman born in Palmira Valle, studying Social Work and Social Communication. Navigator at the Trans Health League; her work focuses on social and cultural processes.



Santiago Urdanivia

Psychology student in Medellín, activist for trans masculinities in the department of Nariño, his hometown. Co-director and founder of the organization FTM Galeras, dedicated to raising awareness about trans masculinities and diverse ways of embodying masculinity, fostering spaces for youth to express their emotions through photography and art.



María Camila Moreno Gil

Anthropologist and content creator with a focus on social and community issues on social media @laamicamilagil. Digital activist and member of the Youth Network for Peace Builders at the Mi Sangre Foundation. Involved in community processes using creative and horizontal pedagogies in neighborhood initiatives.

Members of the Uniandes Team



Catalina González-Uribe

Leading researcher in Colombia

Associate Professor in the Public Health area of the Faculty of Medicine. She leads the development of postgraduate programs in epidemiology. Her research focuses on social inequalities in sexual health, reproductive health, and vector-borne diseases. She led the contraception, fertility preferences, and maternal health components of a national survey in Colombia (the ENDS 2015). She is passionate about interdisciplinary work, developing social indicators, and advising health evaluations with an intercultural focus. She is a member of the urban health network in Latin America and the Caribbean. She holds degrees in Anthropology and Psychology, a Master's in Anthropology from Universidad de los Andes, and a Master's in Social Epidemiology and a Ph.D. in Epidemiology and Public Health from University College London.



Javier Guerrero-C

RESEARCH AREA COORDINATOR

Ph.D. in Social Studies of Science and Technology from the University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom), and a master's degree in Science and Technology Studies from the University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom). Interested in understanding the dynamics of participation and interactions in online social networks, the processes of datafication, and the consequences of digital infrastructures, platforms, and algorithms.



Sebastián León-Giraldo

ADVOCACY AREA COORDINATOR

Visual artist and human rights defender who combines his professional and personal interests, backed by a diverse academic background and a passion for art. Since 2014, Sebastián has gained experience in Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects, using research as a tool for local and national advocacy strategies. At Universidad de los Andes, for the past 9 years, he has worked on various projects related to human rights, public health, and peacebuilding, contributing his knowledge at the intersection of art, project management, and human rights advocacy. Focused on exploring the impact of art on society and quality of life, he founded NGO The Power of Arts for conducting research and make visible the social influence of art.



Juli Salamanca-Cortés

RESEARCH PROFESSIONAL

Social communicator and journalist from Javeriana University, transfeminist, human rights defender, and activist for the rights of trans people. Passionate about defending the rights of sex workers. Since 2015, Juli has been involved in Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects, serving as a researcher and as an advocacy and communication coordinator in NGOs. She is an expert in communication for social change and justice. Author of the research 'The State doesn't take care of me, my friends do: Care practices created by trans people in the absence of the state.'



Mauricio Cortés-Cely

PROJECT MANAGER

Medical Surgeon Dentist from Tecnológico de Monterrey, Monterrey campus. Studies in Leadership for Social Development, a Master's in Educational Technology, a Specialization in Epidemiology, and a Master's in Public Health at Universidad de los Andes. Ph.D. candidate in Medical, Dental, and Health Sciences at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. He has been linked to the Faculty of Medicine at Universidad de los Andes since 2016 as a Graduate Assistant, Project Professional, and Academic Project Coordinator. He is currently the Project Manager of the SEP Group and leads the technical-administrative processes of research and consulting projects for the work team. He participates in research activities on public health, oral public health, health systems, health service delivery, and environment and health.



Denís Toledo Nieto

DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONAL

Industrial Designer from the National University of Colombia, specialist in Development and Learning Processes from Universidad del Rosario, and a master's student in Communication Education at the District University. With more than 20 years of professional experience, designing products for communication, education, play, and development in different graphic, object, digital, and spatial formats. Advising, developing, and directing projects in visual communication and pedagogy for knowledge dissemination with added value, for entities in the public, private sectors, and NGOs that address various themes with diverse sectors and populations.



Carol Buitrago Chavez

PROJECT ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Public accountant with 25 years of professional experience. Her role as an administrative assistant is achievement-oriented, based on organization and adherence to timelines, coupled with a solid and continuous academic background. She maintains a high degree of confidentiality, ensuring the integrity and privacy of information. Carol possesses interpersonal skills for achieving team objectives and optimizing processes to foster a positive work environment and empathy for a deep understanding of the needs and concerns of projects and their collaborators.

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