



U T S
e P R E S S

Gateways:
International Journal
of Community
Research and
Engagement

Vol. 13, No. 1
May 2020



© 2020 by the author(s). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), allowing third parties to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format and to remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially, provided the original work is properly cited and states its license.

Citation: Lopera-Molano, D., Lopera-Molano, A.M. 2020. Designing communities in peace: Participatory action-research approaches embedded in regional education in Colombia. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, 13:1, Article ID 7167. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v13i1.7167>

ISSN 1836-3393 | Published by UTS ePRESS | <http://ijcre.epress.lib.uts.edu.au>

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Designing communities in peace: Participatory action-research approaches embedded in regional education in Colombia

Daniel Lopera-Molano¹, Angela María Lopera-Molano¹

¹Mysco research group, Universidad de Ibagué, Colombia

Corresponding author: Daniel Lopera-Molano; daniel.lopera@unibague.edu.co

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v13i1.7167>

Article history: Received 27/03/2020; Revised 28/04/2020; Accepted 07/05/2020; Published XX/05/2020.

Abstract

Gaitania is a rural town located in the Andes mountain range, very close to where the Colombian armed conflict with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas began in the mid-1960s. In this context, a situated research and education project was conducted with state, civil and community organisations, including the Agency for the Reincorporation and Normalization of the Colombian Government, coffee producer associations in the south of Tolima, the Nasa Wes'x indigenous community and 150 ex-combatants, as well as teachers and students from the Design Program of the University of Ibagué, Colombia. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how creative (design) work can be organically transformed from the instrumental to the creative, favouring autonomous ways of learning.

This project established collective reflection-action processes that worked in conjunction with four critical learning objectives, as specified by the Bachelor Design Program. Workshops were conducted for the co-creation of a collective brand of coffee that brought together victims and victimisers in a joint process of reconciliation and memory sharing. Through generation of a special coffee brand called The Third Agreement – which is now being commercialised – memory of the territory's autonomous peace processes and the community's self-validation efforts were recovered and developed. Critical skills were also developed in students and communities so that they could understand the implications of producing a design that would capture the market, while also recognising the importance of building transition paths

for participants, especially in the contexts of war and peace. The students' reflections led to the construction of new praxis distinctions, such as *plandisposición* (planning-disposition), *escuchacción* (active-action-listening), honest-synthesis and *sentipensar-actuar* (feeling-thinking-acting), which indicate critical awareness of how design can open possibilities for creating futures in which many worlds co-exist.

Keywords:

action research; design; rehumanisation; education; coffee; peace agreement

Introduction

This paper presents an analysis of and reflection on a participatory research and education project conducted in regional Colombia. It brought together state, civil and community organisations, including the Agency for the Reincorporation and Normalization of the Colombian Government (ARN), coffee producer associations, the Nasa Wes'x indigenous community and 150 ex-combatants, as well as teachers and students from the Design Program of the University of Ibagué, Colombia. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how creative (design) work can be organically transformed from the instrumental to the creative, favouring autonomous ways of learning. Such an approach is based on the understanding that everything designed inaugurates or reproduces a series of ways of being and knowing (Escobar 2017; Willis 2006). Being fully aware of this implies, in the creative practice, being attentive to a participatory process that favours autonomy, as an invaluable principle of peace building.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were the oldest guerrilla organisation in Latin America. This peasant organisation, representing the rural population of Colombia, took a Marxist–Leninist approach to complex situations that were occurring in the mid-20th century in their country, many of them with consequences still prevalent today. Causes of its emergence are attributed to the weak presence of the State in the territories, especially in rural areas, the bipartisan wars between liberal and conservative political stances, which led to arming the civilian population with the purpose of exterminating the adversary, accompanied by a weak democracy and centralism. During this time, the staggered growth of interrelated situations, such as drug trafficking, selective killings, forced displacement, attacks on the civilian population and kidnappings, were a part of the every day. At the same time, attempts to draw up humanitarian agreements and conduct peace dialogues were taking place, sadly followed by non-compliance and escalation of systematic violence. Responsibility for this violence lay not only with the different guerrilla groups, but also with State and pro-State organisations outside the law – the paramilitaries.

During its years of armed struggle, the FARC was considered a terrorist group by various countries. In Colombia, it was not the only guerrilla group, but it was the group with the most power. Their ability to act was evident; they came to have a presence in 24 of the 32 states of Colombia, and at their peak amassed 18 000 armed guerrilla members (Mapping Militant Organizations 2019). These data paved the way for two major political measures: the extermination of the group by the Military Forces and the paramilitaries, and the constant reactivation of the peace talks. The first measure, for which the Colombian population was both for and against, increased violence, stigmatised the other as merciless, and perpetuated murder and death as a form of response. The second measure saw dialogue as the only possible

means of achieving a lasting peace. Colombia's entire population, of almost 50 million people, has been affected, directly or indirectly, by these two forms of response.

In 2016 Colombia experienced one of the most important events in its history of armed conflict. The State and the FARC guerrilla representatives signed the Final Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace. This involved, among other things, pursuing a comprehensive agrarian development policy, laying down arms, achieving truth, justice and reparation, and favouring political participation. Concerning the laying down of arms, the so-called *Zonas Veredales* or rural areas were created, which, through the intervention of the United Nations and the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, accredited the ex-combatant population so that they could begin the process of reincorporation into civilian life. In relation to the crimes committed, some of the perpetrators would benefit from the *Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz* – JEP (Special Jurisdiction for Peace) and others from amnesty law. The JEP was created to offer truth and reparation to the victims, focusing on the most serious crimes that ex-FARC combatants had committed.

Once the weapons in the rural areas had been handed in, those areas were renamed *Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación* – ETCR (Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation), and this is where training now takes place in essential agrarian development and generation of profitable and productive activities. As of February 2020, there were 2893 people residing in the country's 24 ETCR.

The Tolima department is located in the central part of the country, with its main city Ibagué about three hours away by car from Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. There are two ETCR in this department, one in Icononzo, and the other in Gaitania within the municipality of Planadas. Gaitania is a rural town located in the Andes mountain range, very close to the historical emergence of the Colombian armed conflict with the FARC guerrillas. Marquetalia, one of the 22 villages of the township of *Gaitania*, is recognised by the guerrilla organisation as the site of its birth more than 50 years ago. This has meant that for a long time Gaitania and its inhabitants have suffered the ravages of war and have had to deal with its consequences, for example, the historical cultivation of poppy along its imposing mountains.

Hard work by the thriving populations of Gaitania and Planadas has resulted in the gradual modification of the prejudices directed towards this municipality by the Colombian population, as well as their transformation into what we now know as the place that produces some of the most special coffee in the world. Not surprisingly, they have twice won the Cup of Excellence in specialty coffee (in 2006 and 2015). Coffee leader, ex-combatant and the Nasa Wes'x indigenous community now converge within this territory, previously being known in a polarising way as victims and victimisers. Paradoxically, they all now work for what, in their own words, means building community life.

In this context, a situated research and education project was developed. The project built several alliances with state, civil and community organisations, such as the Agency for the Reincorporation and Normalization of the Colombian government (ARN), coffee producer associations in the south of Tolima, the Nasa Wes'x indigenous community and 150 ex-combatants belonging to the Territorial Space for Training and Reincorporation, called *Marquetalia, cuna de la resistencia* (cradle of resistance); all of them in collaboration with the Design Program of the University of Ibagué. This process has lasted more than a year, starting in early 2019 with a team of students from the subject, Design and Future. Faced with the enormous challenge of repairing a country – for many years fractured by wars, but now

confronting the unique possibility that was opened up by the 2016 Peace Agreement – the academy has an ethical-political obligation to participate.

Complicating the above, are the increasingly evident manifestations of a country that sadly has not stopped staging war as a hegemonic representation of the relationship between itself and those considered diverse. Concrete manifestations of this are the current regeneration of violent conflict and the reoccupation of territories by elites who remain in power. A consequence associated with the above is the excessive number of murders of social leaders that is bordering on the deplorable: 817 people have been murdered from the signing of the agreements until February 2020 (INDEPAZ, Cumbre Agraria Campesina Étnica y Popular, Coordinación Social y Política Marcha Patriótica e Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz 2020). Those especially targeted are farmers, indigenous leaders, members of community action boards, community leaders, African-descended leaders, among others (INDEPAZ, CIMEP, IEPRI y Comisión Colombiana de Juristas 2017). All of this is linked to the maintenance of power centres, expansion of extractivism and illicit crops, sabotage of peace agreements by right wing politicians, and ecological devastation, supported by neoliberal approaches that obliterate everything in their path. These concerns should not only be at the centre of national attention, but must also be perpetuated in the academy as constant exercises in reflection-action.

This article aims to demonstrate how community creative processes can organically favour autonomous learning – learning that is mobilised by a distinctive design practice that places rehumanisation at the centre of its process. The findings presented here focus primarily on the construction of praxis distinctions applied to designing peaceful communities.

The Theoretical Framework

DEHUMANISATION

This process begins with a shared concern, a concern that links us to a group of other designers, academics, social leaders, students and citizens who observe in the Western world the manifestation of a crisis. One of the manifestations of this crisis lies in the constant domination of market logics over the different ways of being and inhabiting the planet (i.e. indigenous communities, rural communities, social movements, vulnerable populations). The way in which it reproduces in the modern human being is by turning everyone into an object of use (Heidegger 1994), and in this exercise hegemonic design has played a leading role.

The dominant design has been invested with the dishonourable task of imagining and creating everything that can be commercialised and instrumentalised. In this process, it covers itself with the mantles of ‘progress’, ‘innovation’ and ‘development’ to justify its cause. We define it as dehumanisation, in which the human being loses touch with his/her own existence and becomes an object of the market – a merchandise.

One of the main causes of this is not the market itself, but the modern Western values and ways of knowing – instrumentalism, colonialism, patriarchy and dualism – that have created it (Escobar 2017). In other words, they bring other forms of being and knowing and impose their hegemonic logic on communities. However, alternative transitional ways of counteracting this domination could emerge. Transition implies recognising that the current socio-economic support structure of the communities must enter into relations with the global market, but it must dismantle its colonial rationality. In doing so, the values, practices and ways of relating on creative processes would have to be radically different.

DESIGN AND REHUMANISATION

Current design studies talk about the ontological orientation that all creation has, recognising that, when a thing is designed, this thing in turn begins to influence our ways of being and knowing (Willis 2006). For example, many modern apartments are designed with pre-established sections (living room, dining room, kitchen), fragmenting relationships. But a *maloca* (an ancestral house used by indigenous communities of the Amazon), through its design, creates conditions for community interaction. Which is to say that, when we design something, we are also designing practices, ways of relating and ways of knowing.

The function of this design is not only to design new things but to repair, in communities, the forgotten capacity to create their own ways of life. This, as a praxis of design, has been called 'autonomous design' (Escobar 2017). Escobar mentions that every community practises some sort of design of themselves and, in doing so, rebuilds their vital sense and meaning of life. This relates to rehumanisation; to recover the sense and meaning of life (Cañas-Fernández 2010). Rehumanising implies the rearticulation of a community life project, to live with dignity. It is a practical and theoretical approach to re-existence; a vital creative project in which various ways of being and knowing find their way of resisting and coexisting.

Under the lens of this crisis and a potential response, and within the framework of a bachelor design program in a regional institution of higher education, it is essential to ask: how can we educate new designers so that they can contribute to the creation of conditions of possibility for rehumanisation? Note that when we talk about designers, we are not just talking about professional designers but everybody who participates in the designing of the world.

LEARNING IN CONTEXT

Learning is a social process (Freire 2005). Pedagogy is not a pre-established exercise carried out by someone called a teacher to someone called a student. It is a relational process that emerges from our network of recurring relationships as it acquires coherence in the context of experience. Learning that cannot be located cannot be conceived as learning because the repetition of information is indoctrination.

We learn from feeling part of something and recognising it as valuable. The context itself is required, life itself is required to construct meaning for transformation and learning together. Conceiving us as a collective and interdependent, we reframe the fragmented position of the self and recover the conception of interexistence. The territory is not beyond, it also resides in us. It is an ethical-political attitude, not only to respond to the exercise of looting and exclusion of people from their territory (predominant in our towns from physical and epistemic violence) but, above all, to repair the relationship that breaks when the territory is also removed from the people (as described by a Colombian leader from *Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca – ACIN*, quoted by Escobar 2015).

Pedagogies of territory seek to release us from the caged nuances of university cloisters, to favor learning in the very dynamics of the communities and their own ways of responding to the challenges of the present. The pedagogy we are talking about is a pedagogy in transition: transitioning towards the recovery of other worlds, repairing itself from the instrumental vision that has been imposed (Freire 2005). It is also critical in itself and in its own learning objectives. Specifically, the Design Program of the University of Ibagué, in which this central approach is being carried out, has taken Marilyn Frankenstein's (2001) critical learning objectives as a reference point. These are as follows:

-
1. Understanding design for rehumanization: That is to say, the conceptual understanding that when we design we are bringing into presence not only things but ways of being. This is to say, that the way we give meaning and sense to life is indivisible from the way we bring things into existence.
 2. Understanding design for the rehumanization of political knowledge: That is, how design speaks to us of the world it reproduces and the worlds it denies. In other words, such an understanding tells us about the political knowledge that is hidden by the designed world – in this case, the hegemonically designed world. Every design tells us about the world – and about the worlds it denies.
 3. Understanding the politics of design for rehumanization knowledge: That is, what is the political that is hidden in the doing of design. This includes the political agency of design: that by designing something we are also designing ourselves (Willis 2006).
 4. Understanding the politics of knowledge: This refers to the need to reconsider what today counts as valid knowledge of design and open our eyes to other forms of *diseñotrear* – designotherness (tracing the words of Professor Alfredo Gutiérrez-Borrero).

This brief outline of the learning objectives is the theoretical-practical place of enunciation and development of the pedagogical process of the Design Program. Returning to Frankenstein (2001), this requires of the program: dissolve the dichotomy between the ways of learning and the ways of teaching design; understand the cultural framework for design knowledge; and study design focusing on the deep and complex questions of society (i.e. war and peace). All this, with the constant intention of reading the world through design.

The Project

The methodological approach described here is linked to the tradition of participatory action research as well as pedagogical practices of service learning. It implies that reality is conceived as a collective construct that happens through language so that, in this flow of consensual relationships, informed political action is favoured (Ortíz 2016). Likewise, being highly imbued with the previous theoretical proposals, it is a perspective and process oriented not only to the transformation of groups in terms of their manifestations, but also to the conditions of possibility in which these phenomena are made possible. The approach, therefore, is attentive to the way in which the problematic situation is portrayed as a constant exercise of consensus, as well as being attentive to the way in which the situation is responded to.

Responding creatively to something requires the expansion of our frames of perception, as also happens when we communicate (Bohm, 2013).

The project began with the initiation of the recently created Mesa Técnica Cafetera of Gaitania – MTC (Technical Coffee Table), which represents three communities (coffee leaders, the ex-combatant community ETCR Marquetalia, and the indigenous community Nasa Wex's). The University of Ibagué was asked to support the process of creating a collective brand of coffee that would represent the three communities. This brand, according to their voices, should represent the post-conflict process that they are living and be a symbol of collective peace building.

THE THIRD AGREEMENT: A REFLECTION-ACTION PROCESS

The project was characterised by mutual learning. Several visits were made to the territory, about six to seven hours from Ibagué, the capital of Tolima. Several pre-established workshops



Beginning of co-creation workshops at ETCR, in Gaitania.

had to be re-thought organically in situ as an exercise in learning and careful listening. The 22 students and the two teachers worked to try and recognise the various roles, but in horizontal dialogue, and to define activities for everyone. In this way, information emerged and was analysed collectively. The instruments for data gathering were field diaries linked to the exercise of design, the systematisation of reflective talks, and their synthesis in a book, *Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo* (Diaries of The Third Agreement) (Lopera-Molano 2020). The information analysis process was carried out in teams. There were three levels of analysis: a first level with the qualitative data obtained from and with the relevant actors; a second level of individual interpretive data; and a third level of consensual interpretation for decision-making, accompanied by meta-reflective exercises that elicited categories. In all these processes, the various actors participated as the central point of the participatory exercise and decision-making. It should be noted that the process developed cyclically and actions were learned from each other, not necessarily from a certain chronological evolution, but rather from an organic awakening that became increasingly meaningful and managed to connect with past issues that had previously been given much relevance.

It is worth mentioning that the students themselves created their own field logs, with some suggestive texts on how to prepare for dialogue, listening and participation. While the co-creation workshops were taking place, it was at the MTC that the most important design decisions were made, respecting the collegiate space and the voices of the different actors. For example, the MTC decided not only the graphic design proposals, but also the design of the message itself, on the collaborative ways of organising themselves and on the way in which they should present themselves as a living example of what they were saying.

The process lasted approximately seven months and required seven trips to Gaitania. Initially, an intensive three-day workshop was held that required all students to move to

Gaitania, where we found accommodation on a coffee farm, sleeping in cabins next to bags of freshly brewed coffee. The students did not want to sleep after hearing the amazing stories of the three communities. Likewise, it should be mentioned that none of them had known an ex-combatant before and had a certain negative idea about them. However, the days were passing and prejudices were changing. Regarding this, we carried out workshops to review 'assumptions' and open ourselves up to different perspectives than those gained from the hegemonic Colombian history.

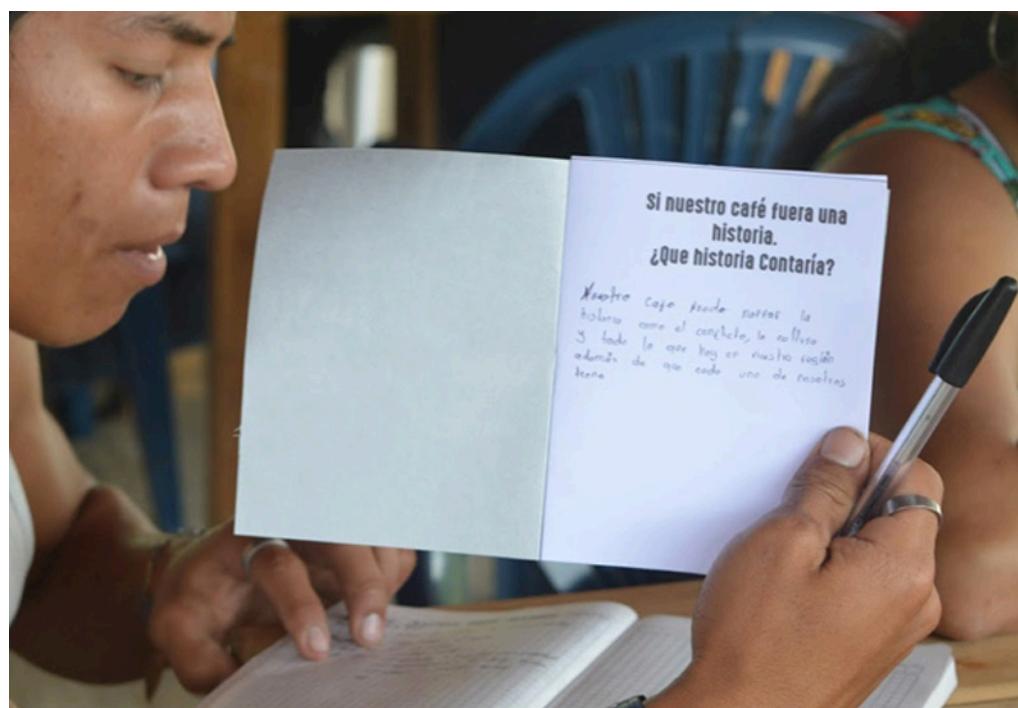
Further, we participated in four decision-making MTCS in Gaitania. The trips from Ibagué to Gaitania were made by small groups of students, always accompanied by the teacher. These were not easy, as they take nearly a full day. The road from Planadas to Gaitania is mostly uncoated and can only be travelled by rented campers.

The students covered the cost of the trips and food, and also dedicated a large part of their weekends and spare time throughout the first semester of 2019 to the project. Their commitment was significant, since the demands of the community grew as they saw progress. For example, several of the students supported the care of children of ex-combatants so that their parents could be involved in the co-creation workshops, and they also supported the development of two murals on peace, one in the ETCR and the other one in Gaitania. The resources for the design proposals were, in part, provided by the students themselves as part of their academic project. Trademark registrations, industrial designs and travelling costs for the teachers were borne by the University.

During the process, training was necessary. We did not advance a specific graphic design until we had built an appropriate dialogue between us all. On several occasions, we had to slow down progress to take up issues of respect for other voices and to responsibly assume our tasks. This is how the made-up word, *chancunchan*, emerged. The students created a list of agreements around respect and shared responsibility, and we needed a term that sounded funny and that we could use to remind ourselves, in moments of disrespect between us, of the ethical agreements we had reached. We are still using this word in our conversations and pedagogical training with the students. It seems that, while we were building these pedagogical forms in the MTC, our community partners were remembering similar ideas related to their own 'agreements'.

To understand the importance of the above, it must be noted that sometimes Nasa Wex's indigenous community participation was reliant on only a few members being able to represent it, so the presence at the beginning of one of them was of such significance for the project that it helped to give it meaning and value. Don Ovidio Paya, an indigenous Nasa Wes'x, participated more than 20 years ago in what they call the first peace agreement. This agreement remains in force, is respectful of diversity and was built autonomously, without state mediation. Fresh awareness of this first agreement arose when, in one of the project meetings, we mentioned the Peace Agreement, referring to that of Havana, and Don Ovidio Paya challenged us, saying that for him it was not the only or the first agreement. We are aware that in Colombia there have been countless attempts at peace, several based on collective agreements and pacts. However, for this territory and its memory, two agreements are recognised. The Nasa Wes'x agreement with the FARC in 1996 and the Havana Agreement in 2016. This second agreement, although highly criticised by the ex-combatants themselves, is, however, still the one that creates the conditions for being able to speak with the ETCR and respond to the urgent need for collective work towards profitable productive projects and relational respect for diversity.

The result is that, during this process of creating peace, a collective brand was designed in recognition of the three communities and three agreements on territory. The last of them is The Third Agreement. This agreement was born from the pressing need to learn from the collective memory of the three communities and to prevent it from being lost. There is a risk that it may be lost (again) in the reproduction of commercial dynamics and in the urgency of training to produce or generate a business. Policies that seem to have a higher priority on the government's agenda.



If our coffee were a story, what story would it recount?

The collective memory of the peace processes that these communities have lived through is significant as it helps them to learn from the mistakes of the past. To forget these peace processes would imply that they have missed an opportunity to learn from the teachings of each peace exercise. When we talk about these three communities, we are talking about a great diversity of people who are grouped together and who, in the dynamics of modern development, may lose their own ways of being and knowing. Ways of recognising each others' differences are fundamental to fulfilling an agreement, in the context of building a stable and, most of all, lasting peace. For example, the story of what it is like to live in the mountains and subsist as a guerrilla, the life lessons learned, and the particular ways of living in an organisation outside the law have much to teach us about nomadic life, mutual care, and concepts like comradeship and subsistence. The story of Nasa Wes'x leading the 1996 peace agreement revealed what didn't work and what did, and why. The story of the resilience of the coffee leaders who refused to leave their territory at the cost of their own lives. These stories are still alive because of the teaching they bring. What one chooses to remember is also part of the ongoing negotiations and debates about the way in which these three communities structure the design of their future. They have chosen to structure it on the basis of remembering, from different perspectives, from what happened in their previous peace agreements, and as a critical exercise in reading themselves and their own ways of creating

change. Importantly, it is the ethical-political decision that these communities have made not to repeat war on their territory.

Designing a Third Agreement with people who did not want to repeat their years of war, while recognising the structural causes still in force, was a huge task. It required working from the current socioeconomic structure and, from it, considering other values and forms of relationship. In this sense, coffee, as the current occupation of the territory, was the reason for this group to create conditions of peace. It was an opportunity to develop other forms of relationships that were also productively profitable but whose focus did not lie in the economic good *per se*, but in the construction of a society which recognised difference and also valued care of the land and development of products that would deter extractive industries and other forms of devastation.

The inscription on the label of The Third Agreement coffee was co-created by the participants and featured their voices, especially that of a former combatant. It reads:

In the same lands that today see one of the most special coffees in the world being born, more than 20 years ago the Nasa Indigenous Community and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia independently celebrated what they called their first peace agreement.

The second peace agreement, recognized by these communities, is signed between the Government of Colombia and the leaders of the guerrilla organization. In it, they agree to end the armed conflict throughout the nation.

In a complementary way, a group of coffee leaders, ex-combatants and indigenous people have been building a Third Agreement, located, particular and required for their own needs and the characteristics of the territory they inhabit and love. This Third Agreement reminds us day by day that peace is built from the human warmth of each community. It involves an autonomous historical reconciliation exercise that, thanks to the diversity and high quality of its coffee, manages to cultivate in them a new hope for the future.

En las mismas tierras que hoy ven nacer uno de los cafés más especiales del mundo, hace más de 20 años la Comunidad Indígena Nasa y las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia celebraron, de manera autónoma, lo que denominaron su primer acuerdo de paz.

El siguiente acuerdo de paz, reconocido por estas comunidades, se firma entre el Gobierno de Colombia y los líderes de la organización guerrillera. En éste, pactan la terminación del conflicto armado en toda la nación.

De manera complementaria, un colectivo de líderes cafeteros, excombatientes e indígenas vienen construyendo un Tercer Acuerdo localizado, particular y requerido para sus propias necesidades y las características del territorio que habitan y aman. Este Tercer Acuerdo les recuerda día a día que la paz se construye desde el calor humano de cada comunidad. Les implica un ejercicio de reconciliación histórica autónoma que, gracias a la diversidad y alta calidad de su café, logra cultivar en ellos una nueva esperanza de futuro.

In addition, the students designed a stand to present not only the special coffee but, essentially, the peace proposal it represented. This presentation was initially held at the University of Ibagué and was attended by leaders of the new FARC political organisation (Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común), members of the UN and the ARN, business people from the region and university executives. One former combatant, in particular, who participated in the whole process, co-presented together with the students. After this pre-launch, the official launch of the brand occurred at ExpoPlanadas on 26 July 2019, the same

date on which, 23 years ago (26 July 1996), the first peace agreement in the territory was achieved. Involved in this presentation were ex-combatants themselves, especially those now trained as coffee tasters and baristas.

Promotional materials were developed by the students who wanted to draw attention to The Third Agreement and who recognised the need to communicate and market the project appropriately and widely. The members of the mtc agreed with this, but, this time, at a distance, as they did not see it as relevant to their daily life. The University will take this project into the territory when the students complete their social semester on 'Peace & Region' in 2020B, which officially occurs at the end of all University of Ibagué programs.

Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo: Proposals for Praxis

This section explores the process of analysis undertaken by the students and teachers. It can be summarised as a process of interpretation, metareflection and synthesis into categories, as described in the book, *Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo*, written by the students. In it, they have collected their experiences and reflections on them within a framework of a rehumanising design project. The following categories emerged, anchored to the practical processes carried out:

- *plandisposición* (planning-disposition)
- *escuchación* (active-action-listening)
- honest-synthesis
- *sentipensar-actuar* (feeling-thinking-acting).

Plandisposición (planning-disposition): Commonly, teachers say that we must 'plan the class', planning that is loaded with learning objectives, competencies, didactics, activities, among other things, that arise as expectations to be developed with students. It is clear to us that this planning exercise must be carried out, but it cannot be the only one, otherwise an instrumental imposition of planning is generated to the exclusion of what happens in the here-and-now of the class. The same thing happened to us in the co-creation processes. It was not possible to build in and for autonomy if we operated merely from what was planned. That is the epistemic and political burden of a preconceived methodology.

Generally, design prejudices are framed within highly mercantile conceptions (brand design, advertising design, product design, clothing, etc.). These prejudices play a preponderant role in the way in which others conceive of what we do and arrange the spaces and their expectations for it. We, who are trained in design, also fall into thinking that a creative community process can be strictly planned. However, we also realise that creative processes happen, and it is up to us to be aware of the conditions of possibility that make them emerge.

Plandisposición is a recognition of the need to be available in the present moment and that everything can change radically, except the essential understanding of what makes the event possible. The students demonstrate this when they write, 'we have been learning from the organic, to navigate among the dynamics of the community' (*Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo* 2020, p. 103). We call these organic methodologies and they correspond to a recognition of what does not fit into planning and what needs to be released to open ourselves to dialogue, collective creation and uncertainty. Max-Neef (1991) has expressed this as navigating in uncertainty while maintaining a state of maximum alertness.

In accordance with the above, students made a series of 14 cards called 'Practical Knowledge Cards' for organic methodologies (Colectivo Diseño de Futuros U.I. 2019). Each

card featured a process and description of collective creation and community creativity. The cards are evidence of everyone's openness to each others' ways of learning. Below, we present two examples from the cards: *Teji-tejiendo* and *El mamarracho*.

1. *Teji-tejiendo* (Weaving us)

Meaning: Opening worlds requires developing careful listening.

With this card we propose that you build a weaving based on your experience, on the written and graphic resources you have and from the information that you can provide to your colleagues. Take into account the sense in which you are building: what did you expect to happen? How did it discourage you? In what context does the situation unfold? There may be unforeseen events, but that makes the experience richer, and the best thing is that it can be transformed organically.

Once you build a comprehensive understanding (a weaving) of the situation, the *oportunicuerdo* (opportunities/memories/agreements) can emerge. This makes it possible to recreate a model of the situation in order to make decisions according to what happened. Therefore, in order for this weaving to promote *oportunicuerdos*, it is essential that it include all the voices of the relevant actors (including your assumptions, reflections and feelings).

Note: So that the recreation of the situation is recorded in the best possible way, we suggest using a field diary, recordings, photos, blogs with drawings, phrases and any tool that you consider valuable for collecting information (Colectivo Diseño y Futuro 2019, p. 5).

2. *The mamarracho* (ugly drawing)

Meaning: Opening worlds requires treasuring sincere expressions of creation.

You will encounter various ideas when posing a solution and some may be more understandable than others at first glance. The important thing is that they are clear to the group and to the person who is posing them. If you come across a *mamarracho*, we advise you to treasure it; it is a sincere expression of creation. Remember that we are working with people who were born in a world that has indicated that only some draw well and others poorly. The *mamarracho* can be a valuable opportunity to recover the ability to draw, create and think that we all can build valid and coherent proposals. The important thing is to ask yourself: what does the *mamarracho* want to tell us?

Note: Be willing to offer everyone the same importance and not be selective (Colectivo Diseño y Futuro 2019, p. 17).

Key concepts are framed by the need for a designing-in-time for transition. This implies understanding that, in the design process, in its methodology, we can be denying worlds; that is, the agency of what is designed is the reproduction of authority. On the other hand, experiential learning broadens the reading of how important it is to recover time and conscious disposition in creative methodologies. The fact that design is understood not as an outcome but as a conscious political process increases the capacity for communities to re-articulate their life project and create conditions for autonomy. The students understood that dignity also lies in how we create something, not only in what we are going to create.

Escuchación (active-action-listening): This arises from understanding in territory, in which listening (*escuchar*) is not merely a passive exercise of paying attention to what another says. It is an exercise in action and acting in the way in which that world, which another is trying to narrate to us, appears from dialoguing.

The students mention it forcefully more than once: 'you have to learn to listen to people' (Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo 2020, p. 43); 'above all [else] is to design listening to the territory'

and its people' (p. 124); '[it] is to understand that design designs, the important thing is how we approach the other and we really open ourselves to listening' (p. 29). They indicate that it is a 'constant quality that must be had, to not try to understand people, but to listen to them' (p. 84). Listening opens you in an active-action, it enacts you, it is acquired in action and it opens you for action; therefore, it is called *escuchacción*.

The honest-synthesis: This category emerged when we tried to understand what we were referring to as design objects or graphic designs. One of the students argued that the purpose of the object is to synthesise diverse voices with an honesty that should characterise any exercise in peace-building, and from there all subsequent reflection grew. For example: 'we constantly mentioned that we should make an honest synthesis for the brand and in that search, little by little, we began to recognize that really doing something conscientiously with a community can make changes in ourselves' (Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo 2020, p. 102). This suggests that how you do something, and the ethical-political positions you assume, start to design you as well. The honest-synthesis, as a design posture, also emerges as a referent of rehumanisation through its connection with restorative justice; restorative of the vital weaving of the communities that are still connected to it. Thus, honesty, as a premise of the synthesis in design, translates into the recovery of the creative capacity of the communities, as only they can make sense of it. Our role is to accompany that process, while being honest about how far we can go in understanding it. In doing so, we are also being honest with ourselves. In other words, we are recovering a relational sense towards our life.

Being aware of this is highly relevant to the exercise of world design. If the students have understood the idea of the categories presented above, it is because they have connected their practice with an ethical-political project. They have managed to recognise in the designed its ontological character for the creation of a rehumanising world. In this, they approach a conscious emancipation from design making, resulting in a design that rearticulates its meaning with that of the same communities with which it creates. This is essential in a context of peace, because, as one student mentioned, the 'conflict has occurred [also] because a large population of our country has wanted to have the freedom to create and choose their own future and has not been allowed [...], this can also be the root of peace' (Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo 2020, p. 120). Keeping a memory of what was done and constantly remembering the value of reconciliation are what makes The Third Agreement something much greater than a brand, and it is what makes the design process something much more than an ideation exercise. Taking advantage of this productive project opportunity as an apprehensible memory of the first and second agreements and a living memory of The Third Agreement, and as an exercise of reconciliation between ex-combatants and victims was, for the participants in this project, to also recover a sense of meaning in life.

Sentipensar-actuar (feeling-thinking-acting): Obviously, this concept can be related to other proposals from the Global South and clearly is consistent and resonates with Participatory Action Research and popular narratives of our countries. Precisely, *sentipensar* arises from the popular jargon of Colombian fishermen and has been taken by Fals-Borda (2015) as a key basis for his Latin American sociology. As one student noted, 'it is gratifying how a whole group of students are willing to create a change for themselves and for others through design, not just any design, but one that thinks, feels and acts preserving that communication and coherence with life' (Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo 2020, p. 152). This implies that *sentipensamiento* (feeling-thinking) acts in you and is a coherent enacting with what you think. It seems, then, that the third leg of the triad was born: acting in coherence with what I feel and think reflects not only an exercise of interconnected emotion and reason but, above all,

of praxis. What is the design of the world but a political praxis? Hopefully, as the students mentioned, we wish to be an example of a *corazonante* (heart-reason) praxis.

Concluding Thoughts

The above categories show us a reflection-action process in context, pointing to essential issues such as decoloniality, the future, design of the South, peace, the history of the conflict and epistemologies of the South, among much more besides. These are approaches that later connect with increasingly profound readings of the world, but which are always anchored to territory. These are critical awakenings of an epoch of possible rehumanisation. In this sense, these categories link us, above all, with the first and second critical learning objectives as proposed by Frankenstein (2001). Students managed to position concepts to understand the world politically and in turn build new concepts. This novelty in construction brings us closer to the fourth learning objective that involves talking about otherness: that which is not easily perceived, what hegemonic design denies.

The pedagogical and solidarity processes used in this project allowed the students to acquire meaning and transform these otherwise theoretical concepts. These transformations are evidenced in the wealth of new concepts and frameworks co-created or incorporated by the students and teachers themselves to nurture the project. The concepts appear interwoven with the practice itself and not as isolated matters to tick off on a checklist.

The third learning objective listed above is manifested forcefully in the proposals of honest-synthesis and transitional objects. Students were conscious designers of the political agency of design, not only in the field of materiality but in the ways of being that are designed from what we create (Fry 1999). It is in this act of critical and transforming consciousness that rehumanisation acquires a possible path that allows it to counter the dominant design.

Rehumanisation, in this case, is perceived not as a goal but as a conscious exercise in the here-and-now that drives both the *how* and the *why* and *for what*. That is why rehumanisation happens in processes that are attentive to cultivating it, from their own ways of approach, dialogue, respect for voices and listening, among others. The creation of conditions of possibility for rehumanisation is modifying us as humans, as we weave from care to openness. Not surprisingly, it is mentioned that *sentipensar-actuar* is a whole anchored to the particular context of the development, making society more sensitive and becoming more sensitive to the concerns of each community to co-build autonomy.

Finally, we consider that the project presented here is an initial reference for rehumanisation processes in terms of:

- The ethical-political training of students and teachers who managed to relate their practices to four critical learning objectives, allowing for autonomous developments and the emergence of new concepts in the face of the exhaustion of hegemony
- The active construction of initial possibilities for autonomy in communities with histories of violence in their territories, possibilities that dignify their practices and their purposes and that value the exercise of dialogue for creation, imagination and heartfelt criticism
- The pedagogical design proposal that honestly engages with its own forms and acts as an ethical-political reference for the transformation of design practice and of designers facing the challenges of our South

- The understanding of design in contexts of war and peace, highlighting the relevance of reorienting it to make it relevant to our own southern Latin American realities. Here, there is quite a challenge for the imagination of re-existence.

We also recognise that the challenge continues to expand. Although the process of The Third Agreement is already productive, market dynamics have become the most relevant aspects of recent talks because of the amount of work that this process requires. Presumably, by putting aside the social exercise of collective memory. This represents a challenge on which we must continue working.

Acknowledgements

A heartfelt tribute to all the designers who, with or without a title, participated in this collective creative project. It is your imagination that has allowed us to understand that there are still opportunities to build senses of another life. To the coffee leaders of *Gaitania*, to the Nasa Wes'x indigenous community, to the ex-combatants the ETCR-El Oso, to the ARN, and to the vigorous and hard-working people of Planadas, Tolima: we recognise in the Colombian people, in those who are building this country from the territories, their dedication and staunch faith in believing that it is possible, like us, to *sentipensar-actuar* a Colombia in peace.

References

- Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización (ARN) 2019, 'Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera', Gobierno Nacional de Colombia.
- Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización (ARN) 2020, 'arn En Cifras corte febrero 2020'. www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/agencia/Documentos%20de%20ARN%20en%20Cifras/ARN%20en%20cifras%20corte%20febrero%202020.pdf
- Bohm, D. (2013). *On dialogue*. Routledge.
- Colectivo Diseño de Futuros 2019, 'Tarjetas para metodologías orgánicas: Saberes prácticos surgidos desde nuestras experiencias en los procesos de Diseño', Universidad de Ibagué. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t8-LPNZzJbSiRO79ezG8I4bJZYdJzAbE/view?usp=sharing>
- Escobar, A 2015, Autonomía y diseño: Pensamiento, comunidad, y territorio *IV Tramas y Mingas para el Buen Vivir*, Universidad del Cauca, Popayán, Colombia.
- Escobar, A 2017, *Autonomía y diseño: La realización de lo comunal*, Tinta Limón, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Fals-Borda, O 2015, *Una sociología sentipensante para América Latina*, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Frankenstein, M 2001, *Reading the world with math: Goals for a critical mathematical literacy curriculum*, The Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc., Adelaide, no. 53.
- Freire, P 2005, *Pedagogía del Oprimido*, Siglo, México, p. xxi.
- Fry, T 1999, *A new design philosophy: An introduction to defuturing*, UNSW Press, Sydney.
- Heidegger, M 1994, 'La pregunta por la técnica', in *Conferencias y Artículos*, Ediciones del Serbal, Barcelona, Spain, pp. 9–37.

INDEPAZ, Cumbre Agraria Campesina Étnica y Popular, Coordinación Social y Política Marcha Patriótica e Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz 2020, 'Informe parcial', 26 July 2019. www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Informe-parcial-Julio-26-2019.pdf

INDEPAZ, CIMEP, IEPRI y Comisión Colombiana de Juristas 2017, Resumen ejecutivo: Panorama de violaciones al derecho a la vida, libertad e integridad de líderes sociales y defensores de derechos humanos en 2016 y primer semestre de 2017. www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/RESUMEN-EJECUTIVO-WEB.pdf

Lopera-Molano, D (ed.) 2020, *Diarios del Tercer Acuerdo*, Ediciones Unibagué, Ibagué, Colombia. <https://doi.org/10.35707/9789587543315>

Mapping Militant Organizations, 'Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia', Stanford University, July 2019. <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/revolutionary-armed-forces-colombia-farc>

Max-Neef, M 1991, *El acto creativo*, Universidad Santo Tomás, Bogotá, Colombia.

Ortíz, A 2016, *La investigación según Humberto maturana, el amor y la autopoesis como epistemología y métodos de investigación*, Magisterio Editorial, Bogotá, Colombia.

Willis, A-M 2006, 'Ontological designing', *Design Philosophy Papers*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 69–92. <https://doi.org/10.2752/144871306x13966268131514>