



# UNMAS

# EARLY EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

## HUMANICEMOS REINTEGRATION PROJECT



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## HUMANICEMOS REINTEGRATION PROJECT

### 2020-2021

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2020-2021

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Mine Action Service in Colombia (UNMAS Colombia), through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), leads the development of an initiative that promotes the reintegration of former FARC-EP combatants through Mine Action.

With funds from the European Union's Trust Fund for Peace in Colombia, and in coordination with the Office of the High Commission for Peace, Colombia (OACP / by its acronym in Spanish ) as the National Authority of the Mine Action sector, UNMAS Colombia develops the project "Support for the reintegration of women and men ex-combatants through the consolidation of the non-governmental organization, Brigades of Ex-combatants for Peace and Humanitarian Demining (HUMANICEMOS DH by its acronym in Spanish) ". From now on, and for the purpose of identifying the technical assistance project implemented by UNMAS separately from what is HUMANICEMOS DH as a civil organization of the Mine Action sector in Colombia, in this document, reference will be made to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project implemented by UNMAS and funded in its first phase by the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund in Colombia (MPTF), and in its second phase, by the European Union Trust Fund for Peace (EUTF).

In general, the mine action sector has a large amount of descriptive and historical information on operations carried out in the field at a global level. However, this humanitarian sector in Colombia has not yet carried out any significant exercises to analyse lessons learned for the adoption of good practices in operational and organizational areas that will improve the national capacity of the operation as a whole. For this reason, UNMAS Colombia, with the support of the European Union through the European Trust Fund for Peace, identified the need to carry out the Early Effects Assessment of this project.



HUMANICEMOS DH was officially formed as a Humanitarian Demining Civil Organization (OCDH, in Spanish) in May 2017.

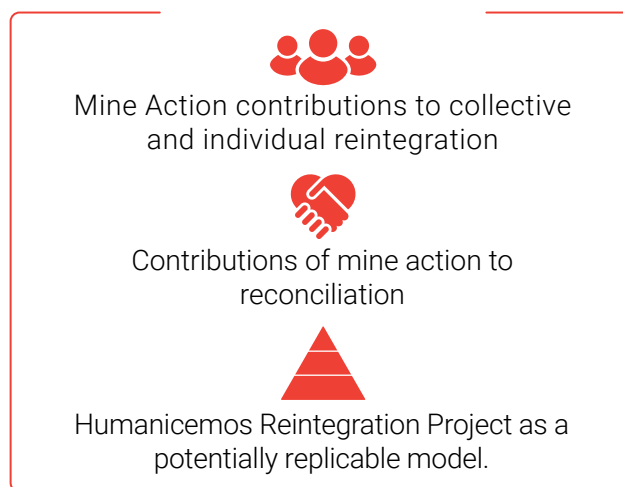
Photo: Javier Taborda / HUMANICEMOS DH.

The main purpose of this assessment is to verify the internal and external changes produced by the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, specifically on its target population (people in the process of reintegration) and the direct beneficiaries (communities) present in the areas assigned to HUMANICEMOS DH for humanitarian demining in the municipality of La Montañita, Caquetá. This is targeted at monitoring achievements in the short and medium term, promoting an organizational culture based on collective learning and fulfilling commitments with donors and other national and territorial strategic partners.

This document collects the findings of the research process undertaken between July 2020 and January 2021. It provides descriptive-analytical results of quantitative data and qualitative information (the result of interviews and focus groups) from which a series of hypotheses are formed concerning the socio-economic reintegration through mine action. The hypotheses are analysed in the light of quantitative and qualitative information, that is, according to the combination of data from different sources and methods.

The first section of the document offers a frame of reference on socio-economic reintegration through mine action in the world and in Colombia. In the second section, a methodological description is made that indicates in detail the process of

access to sources, data collection and information analysis. The third section establishes an overall context of the municipality of La Montañita and of HUMANICEMOS DH, the subject of this research. In the fourth and fifth sections, attention is paid exclusively to the data produced by the baseline and to the analysis according to each of the lines of work and research hypotheses:



Finally, the conclusions, challenges of the process, and perspectives for future impact assessment processes are presented.



Part of the HUMANICEMOS DH personnel trained and certified in Manual Clearance technique. Photo: UNMAS Colombia



# 1. REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

## 1.1 General Information on Mine Action

The term mine action is used to refer to all activities that are associated with mitigating the problem of contamination by anti-personnel mines and other explosive ordnance. The fundamental purpose of mine action is to protect the human right to life and thereby reduce the social, economic and environmental impacts that mines and other explosive ordnance have on victims and affected communities (Horwood 2000; Maspoli, 2020).

Among the identifiable components of the mine action are: Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), humanitarian demining -including Non-Technical Survey (NTS), Technical Survey (TS) and Clearance-, Victim Assistance (VA) and the destruction of stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, as well as lobbying for compliance with the legal frameworks of the Convention on the prohibition of the use, storage, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their existing destruction, also known as the Treaty of Ottawa of 1997 and other instruments of International Humanitarian Law (UNMAS, 2001; Berg and Roberts 2004).

With its origins in the context of explosive weapon use in war, mine action has been integrated on many occasions as part of the security field and with a marked heritage of military doctrine. However, the instruments of International Humanitarian Law have tried to address the problem of anti-personnel mines within the humanitarian field, with a strong emphasis on the protection of civilians and the restitution of rights.

Since the 1990s, the presence of mines has been identified as an obstacle to development, which is why the treatment of this problem gave States

and their institutions additional responsibilities, in order to guarantee access to health services, schools, administrative and justice bodies that help promote rights and assistance to victims (Berg, and Skara, B 2003: 814 and 815).

## 1.2 Socio-Economic Reintegration Through Mine Action in the International Context

In the internal and international conflict resolution processes of countries such as Angola, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mozambique, Myanmar, Peru and Somalia (Shawn and Williams, 1995; Scheu, 2002; Maresca 2008; Peruvian Center for Action Against Anti-personnel Mines of Peru, 2008; UMNG, IEGAP 2015; Fasth and Simon 2015; Simangan and Gidley, 2019) among recent others, mine action has served as a vehicle for dialogue between the parties in the midst of peace negotiation processes. With this, it has become an instrument that promotes reconciliation and fosters mechanisms to heal divisions between the parties, restore trust and peacebuilding (Bolton 2008: 3).

As such, as evidenced by the experiences in Afghanistan, Colombia and Somaliland, ex-combatants in different parts of the world have found opportunities for their reintegration process in demining and other mine action tasks, by contributing their knowledge to the identification of the areas where the mines are located and the deactivation of the different types of explosives that present challenges for their detection (Erthal and Druelle 2018).

HUMANICEMOS DH is the first example in the world of a civil humanitarian demining organization formed and led by ex-combatants who signed the Peace Agreement, between the Colombian State and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC- EP by its acronym in Spanish)

in November 2016, being used as a vehicle to promote their social and economic reintegration to civilian life, with the creation of employment opportunities, literacy and development of renewed community ties through mine action. The Humanicemos Reintegration Project is the first technical assistance initiative focused on the development of organizational and operational capacity of an organization of this nature.



The trainings given by UNMAS to ex-combatant personnel in the process of reintegration are carried out at the HUMANICEMOS DH Regional Base in the municipality of La Montañita, Caquetá.

Photo: UNMAS Colombia.

## 1.3 Mine Action in Colombia

In Colombia, the state armed forces were the only personnel authorized to remove mines until 2013. In this context, from 2004, the first demining operations were carried out in the 35 military bases protected by anti-personnel mines located in Bogotá D.C. and 19 departments of the country (OACP, 2020).

In 2008, 41 soldiers, trained and equipped in the detection and deactivation of anti-personnel mines arrived in the municipality of San Francisco, Antioquia (Seventh Division of the Colombian Army, 2008). Initially there was a single platoon (40 men), later joined by then four platoons to form a company. Then with the creation of two other companies (12 platoons), the Humanitarian Demining Battalion No. 60 Coronel Gabino Gutiérrez (BIDES by its acronym in Spanish) was formally established. Similarly, one of the 12 platoons belonging to the Navy led to the creation of the Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Group (AEDIM by its acronym in Spanish).

Starting in 2013, with the premise of mobilizing more funds and providing simultaneous responses to a wide range of social problems, work started with the support of the National and International Humanitarian Demining Organizations (OCDH by its acronym in Spanish), which work within the same framework of national mine action standards (NMAS) and quality control of the Military Forces (AEDIM and BIDES) (Downs 2009; UMNG IEGAP, 2015: 53).

## 1.4 Mine Action and the 2016 Peace Agreement

In the midst of the peace negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, the joint communiqué of March 7, 2015 was issued in which it was agreed to initiate humanitarian demining with the aim of instilling confidence and increasing the security of the population (Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, 2016).

This is how members of the now extinct guerrilla forces were included in the process of cleaning and decontamination of the territories of anti-personnel mines (APM), improvised explosive devices (IED) and unexploded ordnance (UXO), through carrying out two pilot humanitarian demining projects (called “Gestos de Paz”) in the villages of El Orejón in Antioquia and Santa Helena in Mesetas, Meta (Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, no date; García Baquero, 2017).

The impact of the pilot programs and the importance of including mine action as a reintegration mechanism is reflected in some sections of the Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace<sup>1</sup> (Peace Agreement), in which the mine action approach was oriented towards peacebuilding.

For example, Point 1 of the Agreement on Comprehensive Rural Reform, implicitly links the need for comprehensive land access, land, land reclamation, ownership formalization, and land restitution, with action against mines a prerequisite for achieving these objectives - also reflected by the recognition of the land as a victim by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP by its acronym in Spanish).

In Point 3 of the Agreement, on the side of the FARC-EP and within the framework of its process of laying down arms, they express their commitment to clean and decontaminate the territories affected by APM, IED, or Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in general.

As is also established in Point 4 of the Agreement on the Solution to the Problem of Illicit Drugs, the National Government will launch a demining and cleaning program in the areas of the national territory that have been affected by the location of APM and UXO. This is with a view to guaranteeing the protection of the communities, the right to life and the well-being of the rural population.

In the same logic, in Point 5 on Victims, the FARC-EP, as part of the process of reintegration to civil life will also seek to carry out actions that contribute to the reparation for damages, which may include participation in the programs of cleaning and decontamination of the territories of APM, IED and UXO.

On December 3, 2016 (two weeks after the signing of the Peace Agreement), a meeting was held at the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC) between Rafael Pardo, High Counselor for Post-conflict, Human Rights and safety; UNMAS; and Pastor Alape and Carlos Antonio Lozada<sup>2</sup>, at the time members of the FARC-EP General Staff and participants in the Havana, Cuba negotiations. At this meeting, the possibility of facilitating the creation of an OCDH integrally composed of ex-combatants was discussed for the first time. Also, it was thought at the time that the FARC-EP could provide guidelines to the other mine action organizations and they could individually hire ex-combatants for this purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> Gobierno Nacional de Colombia, FARC-EP y países garantes. Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera. (24 de agosto de 2016). (24 de agosto de 2016). [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Colombia%20Nuevo%20Acuerdo%20Final%2024%20Nov%202016\\_0.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Colombia%20Nuevo%20Acuerdo%20Final%2024%20Nov%202016_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Led the theme of mines at the Havana Negotiations.



For this initiative, the Directorate for Anti-personnel Mine Action (DAICMA by its acronym in Spanish) presented two methodologies to the Commission for Monitoring, Promotion and Verification of Implementation (CSIVI by its acronym in Spanish). However, the second initiative lost feasibility when it was pointed out that the funds from the United States could not benefit ex-combatants of the FARC-EP, as, even post-signature of the final Peace Agreement, it remained an organization included in the State Department's list of terrorist organizations. The United States is the largest donor of funds to the mine action sector and almost all OCDH funding.

It was in this context that the initiative arose to create a humanitarian civil organization for mine action as a vehicle for the socio-economic reintegration of former FARC-EP combatants into civilian life, with social and economic plans tied to individual interests. The role of the international community in promoting this initiative was critical, in particular the European Union, Norway and the United Nations Multi-Partner Fund (MPTF), which offered to finance the two first phases of the project.

## 1.5 Formation of the Brigades of Ex-Combatants for Peace and Humanitarian Demining (HUMANICEMOS DH)

The Colombian Brigades of Ex-Combatants for Peace and Humanitarian Demining Corporation (HUMANICEMOS DH) is a national mine action civil organization that came about as a result of the Peace Agreement signed between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia People's Army (FARC-EP) in 2016.

HUMANICEMOS DH became a legally constituted organization with the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce on May 4, 2017. This followed the March 2017 government request that UNMAS Colombia provide training on issues associated with mine action to a select group of ex-combatants. Some members of this group came from working on the Gestos de Paz (Gestures of Peace) pilot projects for humanitarian demining undertaken in the villages of El Orejón, Briceño, Antioquia and Santa Helena, Mesetas, Meta between



HUMANICEMOS DH has an Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) team that visits communities to share messages about safe behaviors that prevent accidents with anti-personnel mines. Photo: EORE Team HUMANICEMOS DH

2016 and 2017; and with them, the prioritization exercise of the potential work areas for HUMANICEMOS DH was carried out after the visits to the Transitory Village Zones for Normalization (ZVTNs by its acronym in Spanish)<sup>3</sup>, now Territorial Areas for Training and Reintegration (TATR).

By provision of the National Authority in Colombia, mine action organizations must be organizationally **accredited and certify** their personnel individually for the deployment of operations in Non-Technical Study, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Manual Clearance. Given this, and thanks to the support of UNMAS Colombia, HUMANICEMOS DH presented its request for organizational accreditation for humanitarian demining on August 10, 2017, which was approved on August 17, 2017. This organizational accreditation is renewed annually as established in the National Mine Action Standards that govern the sector.

During the second half of 2017, HUMANICEMOS DH had the support of the European Union through the European Trust Fund for Peace and the United Nations Multi-Partner Fund (MPTF) to finance its development of organizational capacities, its training and the operational accreditation of its personnel so that People in the Reintegration Process (PRPs) could carry out humanitarian demining activities, through UNMAS.

At present, the organization is formed and led by personnel in the process of socio-economic reintegration, ex-combatants of the FARC-EP, who have operational capacity duly certified by the National Authority in the country (OACP). HUMANICEMOS DH seeks, through mine action, to contribute to the land release and the peacebuilding in the Colombian territory.

## 1.6 Humanicemos Reintegration Project

With the commitment of the international community, the Humanicemos Reintegration Project arose as a technical assistance project for the development of capacities of HUMANICEMOS DH organization as well as the individual participating ex-combatants. In February 2018, under the coordination of UNMAS Colombia, initially in association with other civil humanitarian demining organizations (OCDH), a training process for HUMANICEMOS DH personnel on issues related to mine action began.

For this reintegration initiative through mine action, three main objectives have been proposed:

- i) strengthen the organizational and operational capacity of HUMANICEMOS DH;
- ii) promote the reintegration of former FARC-EP combatants through technical training and accreditation of HUMANICEMOS DH to carry out mine action activities; and,
- iii) facilitate the land release from suspected contamination by explosive ordnance, in order to prevent the occurrence of accidents and incidents associated with their presence in the municipality of La Montañita, Caquetá (See Map 1), and in in order to create conditions for the restitution of lands and their development.

For the development of these objectives, the Humanicemos Reintegration Project has had two implementation phases managed by and with technical assistance from UNMAS, as described starting page 12.

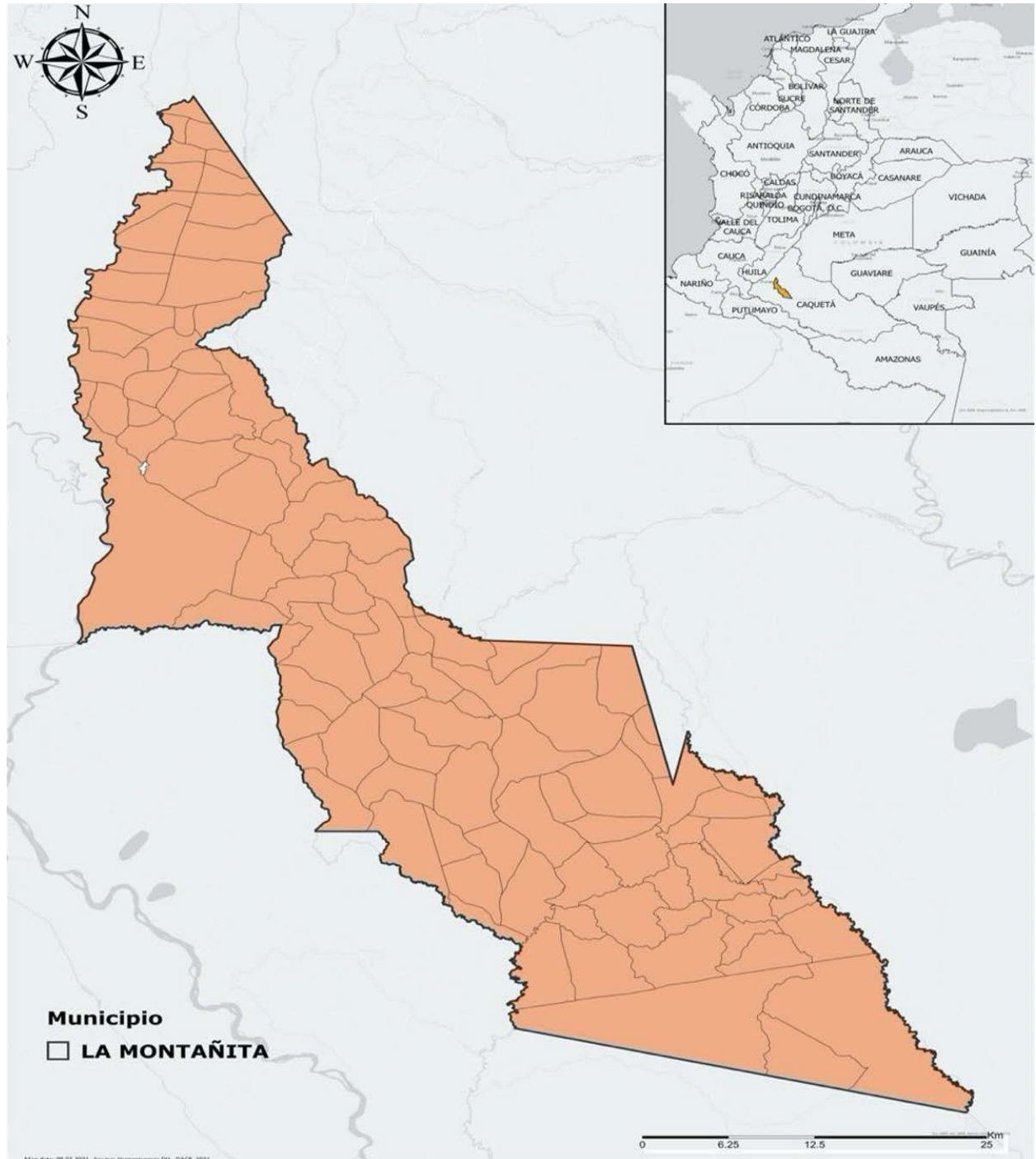
<sup>3</sup> According to the Final Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace (2016: 61), the Transitory Village Zones for Normalization (ZVTN) "aim to guarantee the Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and Hostilities and the Disposal of Arms, and start the process of preparation for the reintegration to civil life of the FARC-EP structures in economic, political and social terms in accordance with their interests, as established in Point 3, sub -point 2 of the General Agreement, and the transition to legality. The ZVTN are territorial, temporary and transitory, defined, delimited and previously agreed between the National Government and the FARC-EP".

<sup>4</sup> In accordance with Decree 1274 of 2017 of the Presidency of the Republic by which the duration of the Transitory Normalization Village Zones (ZVTN) and some Village Normalization Points (PTN) determines in Article 3 that, the ZVTN and the PTNs, once completed, will be transformed into Territorial Areas for Training and Reintegration (TATR), in order to continue the process of reintegration of former FARC-EP members.



## MAP 1

### Division of the Municipality of La Montañita, Caquetá





## 1.6.1 Phase I

The first phase of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project was financed by the MPTF for a period of 23 months beginning on February 5 2018, to develop organizational and operational capacities. At the request of the then UN Resident Coordinator, this Project was assigned for its technical mandate to UNMAS.

During the first phase, the training was provided by UNMAS Colombia with the support of the civil organizations Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), The HALO Trust, and the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM by its acronym in Spanish). In July 2018, HUMANICEMOS DH inaugurated its operations base and training headquarters in the Territorial Areas for Training and Reintegration (TATR)<sup>5</sup> Héctor Ramírez, in the municipality of La Montañita, Caquetá. This was key for deployment in NTS and demining operations. Despite all the logistical preparations, the main delay in the implementation of the project was associated with the individual certification of ex-combatant personnel, subject to the designation of an external monitoring component (CEM by its acronym in Spanish), as established in the National Mine Action Standards.

Initially, and as part of the first phase of the Project, this area was to be developed by the Comprehensive Action Program against Anti-

personnel Mines of the Organization of American States (AICMA-OEA by its acronym in Spanish)<sup>6</sup>, which withdrew from the project due to potential legal risks related to funding from the United States Government in work with former FARC-EP<sup>7</sup> personnel. This situation was created following the first certification process for ex-combatant personnel carried out with The HALO Trust in April 2018<sup>8</sup>. From then, following the National Mine Action Standards, HUMANICEMOS DH and the international community accompanying this process requested that the OACP designate a different organization to assume the External Monitoring Component (CEM) on behalf of the National Authority, in order that ex-combatant personnel could be certified.

In late 2018, the National Government expressed in the Steering Committee its intention that this role would be designated to the United Nations. Through 2019, the steps towards the formalization of a Technical Agreement were initiated that would allow UNMAS to function as an External Monitoring Component (CEM) of HUMANICEMOS DH. The formal ratification of this decision by the National Authority occurred in November 2019, within the framework of the session of the Inter-institutional Instance for Humanitarian Demining.

<sup>5</sup> In the TATR, training and early reintegration activities are carried out with the intent to facilitate the initial phases of adaptation of the members of the FARC-EP to civil life. In the same way, it is intended that these actions can contribute positively to the surrounding communities. civil society organizations, State institutions and international cooperation agencies that work in associative activities and territorial reconciliation (Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization, no date; Valencia, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Commissioned by mandate of the Colombian government to carry out external quality management of all humanitarian demining activities, both military and civil, carried out in Colombia,

<sup>7</sup> "MINE ACTION-OEA cannot accompany the operations of HUMANICEMOS DH since its personnel are ex-combatants of the FARC-EP, an organization that is part of the list of Terrorist Organizations of the United States Department of State. In this way, and taking into account the policies of granting resources in this country, the funds cannot be implemented with a material benefit for ex-combatants". Taken from: El Espectador. "In June, former FARC combatants will begin to lift mines": UN. (March 11, 2020). Drafting Colombia 2020. <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/en-junio-excombatientes-de-las-farc-empezaran-levantar-minas-onu-articulo-908849/>

<sup>8</sup> HALO Trust, based on internal legal advice, decided to exit the project because until the date of this publication, due to legal provisions of the United States, its cooperation funds in Colombia cannot materially benefit FARC-EP ex-combatants (among others , effectively preventing the payment of wages).

Finally, on March 10 2020, the Government of Colombia signed the Technical Agreement with the UN, thereby formalizing the decision and enabling the certification of ex-combatant personnel, allowing the start of humanitarian demining operations by HUMANICEMOS DH (UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund, 2019).

## 1.6.2 Phase II

With the signing of the Technical Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the United Nations for UNMAS to be the External Monitoring Component of HUMANICEMOS DH, the second phase of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project began, implemented by UNMAS with ex-combatant personnel working with HUMANICEMOS DH.

This second phase began on February 5 2020 and has a duration of 25 months. It is financed by the European Fund for Peace of the European Union.

In step with the organizational evolution of HUMANICEMOS DH, three main stages of the project have been undertaken:

### First Stage

Executed between February 5 2020 and January 31 2021; includes organizational and operational technical assistance from UNMAS and includes the training, as well as the evaluation and certification of personnel in the process of reintegration for activities of humanitarian demining.



Phase 2 of the Humanicemos Project is financed by the European Trust Fund for Peace, of the European Union. Photo: UNMAS Colombia

## Second Stage

Implemented from February to June 2021, in which the UNMAS Colombia team is focused on advising and accompanying the deployment of humanitarian demining operations at the regional training and operations base in La Montañita.

It is important to note that the main challenge faced in this second phase stems from the COVID-19 health emergency. The protocols enacted to manage the pandemic have slowed the process. This is reflected in a redefinition of the number of people available for training and deployment. Nevertheless, important milestones have been set for the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, regarding the training and certification of personnel in the reintegration process for NTS and Manual Clearance activities.

From June 29, 2020, UNMAS began the formal training of the first group of 17 ex-combatants for NTS activities, which concluded with their operational evaluation on August 14 and subsequent certification on September 1, 2020. These NTS teams are responsible for the collection of information regarding the location and identification of contaminated areas in La Montañita. As of December 2020, HUMANICEMOS DH personnel have received approval for the operational evaluation of the External Monitoring Component of UNMAS, for 28 ex-combatants in NTS and 19 in Manual Clearance Technique (TDM).

## Third and Final Stage

From July 2021, with funding from UNMAS, HUMANICEMOS DH will continue as an autonomous organization undertaking similar work assigned in a second location.

In June of the same year, monitoring and evaluation processes will cease, with the focus on incorporating collected learnings towards organizational development.

This Early Effects Assessment is carried out simultaneously with the closing of stage 1 of phase II of the project on January 31 2021, and includes the results of the capacity-building process. The methodology, baseline and findings will serve as input for the future and thus help assess the result of the demining process once HUMANICEMOS DH advances the deployment of its operations.

<sup>9</sup> El Espectador. 24 FARC ex-combatants to begin demining work. (14 August 2020). Redacción Colombia 2020. <https://www.elespectador.com/co-lombia2020/pais/certifican-a-24-excombatientes-de-las-farc-para-iniciar-labores-de-desminado/>

<sup>10</sup> Facebook HUMANICEMOS DH. <https://www.facebook.com/HUMANICEMOSDH>



## 2. EARLY EFFECTS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 General Information

In response to the need identified by UNMAS and the European Union, who have supported and contributed to the initiative, the ex-post<sup>11</sup> Early Effects Assessment of the first stage of phase II of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project had an objective to measure and analyse the expected and unexpected changes produced by the project. This evaluation is included as part of the commitments stipulated for the second phase of the project.

As such, this Early Effects Assessment provides the initial baseline for the Project, which in July 2020 began with a series of activities that allowed the collection of data to answer the following research questions:



To what extent does Mine Action contribute to collective and individual reintegration processes at the local level?



How do the humanitarian activities of Mine Action carried out by the population in the process of reintegration contribute to community reconciliation?



How can HUMANICEMOS DH become a potentially replicable model of reintegration through Mine Action?

To ensure the robustness of the study, causal relationships and working hypotheses were formulated (see Table 1) and analysed according to the information provided by an extensive review of the academic and reference literature of 52 texts on the subject (see Annex 1)<sup>12</sup>. This is in addition to perception surveys, structured interviews, focus groups facilitating dialogue with primary information sources as well as the development of the educational component.



A member of UNMAS in the training of HUMANICEMOS DH personnel in December 2020.

Photo: UNMAS Colombia

<sup>11</sup> An early effects assessment makes it possible to measure the changes generated by ongoing interventions or with the completion of a stage of a project.

<sup>12</sup> This process was carried out between July and September 2020. The main topic of consultation was economic and social reintegration through the mine action, HUMANICEMOS DH and the context in which it operates. A consultation product was made from this review (Annex 1).

**TABLE 1**

## Causal Relationships and Hypotheses for the Early Effects Assessment of Humanicemos Reintegration Project

Relación de causalidad		Hipótesis
Mine Action contributions towards collective and individual reintegration	<b>1</b> Mine Action contributes to collective and individual reintegration processes based on coexistence, the development of productive activities and the reconstruction of the social fabric	<b>Organizational strengthening in the mine action sector</b> <b>1.1</b> Ex-combatants who participate in training and organizational strengthening processes related to the mine action sector achieve a successful collective or individual reintegration.
		<b>No recidivism</b> <b>1.2</b> Ex-combatants trained and employed in the Mine Action are less likely to reoffend with illegal armed groups as they have legal capacities, technical tools and resources for the transition to civilian life.
		<b>Decent work and peaceful coexistence</b> <b>1.3</b> Ex-combatants who implement activities associated with Mine Action can create a safe environment to engage in full-time employment under decent work conditions and peaceful coexistence that benefit the local population.
Contribution of the humanitarian activities of Mine Action developed by the population in the process of reintegration in community reconciliation	<b>2</b> In addition to helping to identify, prevent, mitigate and respond to the occurrence of incidents, mine action activities that take into account the needs of the communities and are implemented by ex-combatants contribute to reconciliation with the communities.	<b>Needs of communities affected by the presence of explosive ordnance</b> <b>2.1</b> The needs of the communities affected by the presence of explosive ordnance in terms of peace, security, land release and territorial development are identified, prevented, mitigated and effectively responded to through HUMANICEMOS DH mine action humanitarian activities in the territory.
		<b>Network of social actors and territorial incidence</b> <b>2.2</b> HUMANICEMOS DH works jointly with a wide network of national and territorial social actors (State, business sector, international cooperation and social organizations), for which they are successful and incidents in the mine action and territorial development processes.
		<b>Social dialogue, non-violence and peace building</b> <b>2.3</b> The communities affected by the presence of explosive ordnance perceive benefits from the mine action activities carried out by HUMANICEMOS DH. Consequently, they improve their perception of the ex-combatant population and make possible scenarios of social dialogue, non-violence and peacebuilding.
HUMANICEMOS DH as a potentially replicable model of reintegration through Mine Action	<b>3</b> The monitoring, quality management and systematization mechanisms defined and implemented by organizations such as HUMANICEMOS DH provide a documented, scalable and replicable model in support of the Peace Agreement and the economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants.	<b>Quality management of humanitarian demining</b> <b>3.1</b> Mine action organizations that have an internal - external monitoring component for quality management of humanitarian demining are more likely to be more successful and sustainable over time.
		<b>Assessment, classification, and lessons learned</b> <b>3.2</b> Organizations in the process of reintegration through mine action that collect and organize lessons learned, become potentially replicable economic and social reintegration models.

Source: Original creation from the assessment impact methodology proposal.

## 2.2 Methodological Approach

During the months of August to December 2020 the priority was familiarization with the fields of inquiry. This section explains the quantitative research activities, including perception surveys, and qualitative activities such as interviews, focus groups, and the development of the educational component.

### 2.2.1 Quantitative Approach: Surveys

The survey was the main instrument for collecting quantitative information. From October to December 2020, a total of **181** questionnaires were carried out across three different groups:

**The first group** was the personnel in the reintegration process affiliated to HUMANICEMOS DH, who benefit from the technical assistance activities of UNMAS within the framework of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. For descriptive purposes throughout the document, this group is referred to as the treatment group.

**The second group** is composed of ex-combatants in the process of reintegration not tied to HUMANICEMOS DH and who reside in the Agua Bonita II Population Center. They are defined as the control group.

**The third group** or beneficiary population, is comprised of the communities of the rural areas 3 and 4 of the municipality of La Montaña. Here the resident population is affected by the presence of anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices, and can benefit from the mine action activities carried out by HUMANICEMOS DH (see Map 2).



HUMANICEMOS DH has the security equipment required to carry out humanitarian demining tasks.

Photo: UNMAS Colombia.



## MAP 2

Zones Assigned to HUMANICEMOS DH and Village Centers of La Montañita, Caquetá



The surveys with the first two groups<sup>13</sup> featured a quasi-experimental or counter-factual<sup>14</sup> study, which consists of selecting two working groups to be compared. Comparison of these two groups required the identification of similar characteristics between them. In particular,

the two coincide in that they are made up of ex-combatants in the process of socio-economic reintegration and are linked to a productive organization or project. Regarding the third group<sup>15</sup>, the objective was to understand the community's perception regarding HUMANICEMOS DH.

<sup>13</sup> Through these two groups, relevant information is collected to analyse Hypotheses 1.1 and 1.2.

<sup>14</sup> According to (Campbell and Stanley 1973), a quasi-experimental or counterfactual design seeks to measure the evolution of the experimental group (attributable to the program and other causes) and that of the control group (only attributable to other causes) to calculate the impact of the program as the difference of both measurements. The subjects of both groups are randomly assigned and both are statistically equivalent in the treatment variables. With this information, the impacts attributable to the intervention are observed.

<sup>15</sup> The third group is important for information collection to analyse Hypotheses 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.

The collection of quantitative information from the surveys was done sequentially. It began with the development and validation of the questionnaires, then pilot testing, and ended with the delivery of surveys and the processing of the data for the analysis.

#### a) Design and validation of questionnaires

Three types of questionnaires were designed with the HUMANICEMOS DH EORE team<sup>16</sup> (see Annex 2). The first questionnaire, targeting the treatment group, consisted of 44 questions with the purpose of obtaining data to analyse the contributions of mine action in the reintegration of ex-combatants. The questionnaire was divided into sections that address the sociodemographic characteristics of the Project population, their relationship and track record in HUMANICEMOS DH, as well as aspects of the process of individual and collective economic and social reintegration.

The second questionnaire, addressed to the control group, consisted of 17 questions. It was prepared with reference to the questionnaire carried out for the treatment group. It thus similarly grouped questions for the capture of sociodemographic information and the process of individual and collective economic and social reintegration of this population.

The survey designed for the third group of beneficiaries from the villages of the municipality of La Montañita had seven questions, which inquired about the perception of humanitarian demining and the activities carried out by the Project.

Following their development, the questionnaires were subject to methodological review by the HUMANICEMOS DH directors considering criteria such as:



Relevance of the questions and coherence with the research objective



Logical sequence



Appropriate language and ease of understanding of the questions

It should be noted that the information capture systems used for the application of the surveys were GoogleForms<sup>17</sup> and Survey123<sup>18</sup>. These tools improved data processing effectiveness.

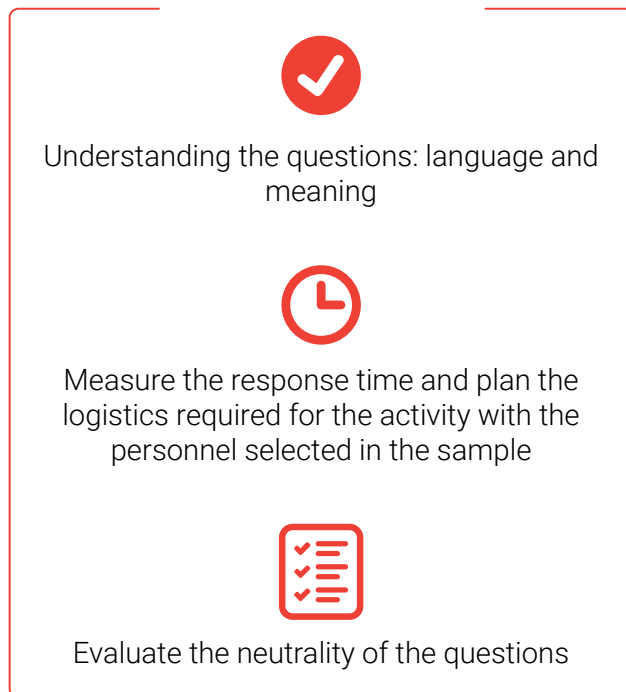
<sup>16</sup> UNMAS thought of an Early Effects Assessment methodology that would allow the Project members to be involved before, during and after the process, with a view to generating installed capacity for their effective incidence in the processes of organizational life and in the decisions derived from the identified findings. For this reason, the EORE team supported the design of the instruments, prepared and led the collection of information, as well as socialized results of the data collected with UNMAS. The participation of the EORE team in this research supports the results and corroborates the effectiveness of including a pedagogical component that strengthens skills in the ex-combatants in matters of social research methodologies, and the design, monitoring and evaluation of social projects (See Item 2.2 .2 b).

<sup>17</sup> Google Forms is survey management software included in Google's free service package.

<sup>18</sup> Survey123 for ArcGIS is part of ESRI's geospatial cloud, a leading company in the provision of Geographic Information Systems services. Survey123 is a form-based tool that allows you to create, share, and analyze surveys.

## b) Piloting the Questionnaires

In September 2020, before conducting the survey with the treatment group, a pilot test was organized with the six members of the HUMANICEMOS DH EORE team to test aspects such as:



At the end of the activity, the participants of the pilot test gave feedback of a methodological nature in which they suggested, for example: changing technical terms to facilitate audience comprehension, coordinating the activity with groups of ten people and considering that the EORE will support during the application of the survey with the reading of the questions.

Pilot tests were not carried out with the control group and the group of beneficiaries of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. However, the EORE team held outreach meetings and telephone calls with the leaders of these communities, with the purpose of presenting the objective of the investigation, the methodology, the details of the information gathering activities and for the evaluation of field work security conditions. Dates were arranged (see Table 2) and the questionnaires were even shared beforehand to guarantee the building of trust between the parties.

**TABLE 2**

Humanicemos Reintegration Project Early Effects Assessment Survey Timeline

Work Group	Group Description	Date	Location	No. of Surveys
First Group Treatment Group	Ex-combatant personnel of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project	13 October, 2020	HUMANICEMOS DH Training Base	73
Second Group Control Group	Ex-combatants living in Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II	9-10 December, 2020	Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II	63
Third Group HUMANICEMOS DH Beneficiaries	Communities in rural subdivisions (veredas) of zones 3 and 4, La Montaña, Caquetá	27 November 2020	Resguardo Indígena Emberá Katio	15
		5 December 2020	Vereda El Porvenir	11
		2 December 2020	Vereda La Unión Cordillera	19
Total Number of Surveys: 181				

Source: Original creation with data from the information gathering process.



### c) Conducting the Surveys

#### First Group: Treatment Group

The first stage of the survey delivery was carried out in October 2020 with the treatment group. The sample was calculated according to the simple random probability sampling technique<sup>19</sup>, based on the 75 records of ex-combatant personnel affiliated to the Project as of September of the same year. Based on normal distribution with a 95% confidence, 3% error and 3% precision, the sample size for the application of the questionnaire was 70 people linked to the Project. These people were selected randomly using random numbers taken from a registration table of personnel linked to the project.

The questionnaire was delivered in person to 67 people at the Humanicemos Reintegration Project training centre. The remaining three people who completed the sample were part of the EORE team, the same people with whom the pilot test was carried out. Considering that during the test there were no substantial changes to the questionnaire, these data were included in the total sample, with a final number of 73 surveys. Therefore, the results are considered representative.

#### Second Group: Control Group

The second stage of the process took place in December 2020 with the population of the control group. A total of 63 surveys were conducted with former combatant population over 18 years old and accredited by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization (ARN by its

acronym is Spanish) in Agua Bonita II<sup>20</sup>, selected according to a non-probability sampling for convenience.

The sampling type was chosen mainly since at the time of methodological formulation it was not possible to accurately access the population universe. Both the authorities of the Community Action Board and other sources consulted, lacked this information.

In this way, the eligibility criteria of the respondents were:



To have similarities with the population object of the investigation, that is, to be part of the population in the process of reintegration.



Ease of access to sources according to the schedule agreed with the authorities.



Willingness of respondents to participate in the activity.

<sup>19</sup> According to (Walpole and Myers 2012), simple random sampling is part of the probabilistic sampling techniques that allow knowing the probability that each individual in the study has to be included in the sample through a random selection.

<sup>20</sup> The EORE team from HUMANICEMOS DH scheduled the visits and the survey timetable according to authorization and questionnaire approval from the Community Action Board of Centro Poblado.

### Third Group: Beneficiaries of HUMANICEMOS DH

45 surveys were conducted in December 2020 in the El Porvenir and Unión Cordillera villages that make up zone 3 and the El Cedrito Indigenous Reservation of the Emberá Katio community, located in zone 4 of La Montañita, Caquetá.

To simplify proceedings, the participants were selected according to non-probability sampling<sup>21</sup>. The two criteria for participation in the activity were: being a head of household and being of legal age.

The coordination and programming of the three activities was led by the EORE team of HUMANICEMOS DH. Respondents included community members and community leaders.

#### d) Data Processing

The information collected was then downloaded for analysis. To verify the information quality, the number of applied surveys and the number of surveys recorded in online formats were compared. Subsequently, the databases were refined, and the results were ordered by each hypothesis and study variable.



Rural area of the municipality of La Montañita, in the department of Caquetá. These are areas assigned to HUMANICEMOS DH to deploy mine action operations.

Photo: UNMAS Colombia

<sup>21</sup> According to (Otzen and Manterola 2017), non-probability sampling for convenience allows selecting those accessible cases that agree to be included. This, based on the convenient accessibility and proximity of the subjects for the researcher.

## 2.2.2 Qualitative Focus: Interviews, Focus Groups and Development of Educational Components.

### a) Interviews and Focus Groups

To collect qualitative information, 22 structured interviews were conducted between October and December 2020, in which four (4) groups of interviewees were reached by telephone and online<sup>22</sup> (see Annex 3).

**First group of interviewees:** Given that one objective of the Project is the development of the organizational capacity of HUMANICEMOS DH, its Board of Directors comprised this first group.

**Second group of interviewees:** To deepen the study, seven ex-combatants, former or phase I participants of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project were contacted. A commonality of this group was that they had taken the decision to withdraw from the process due to new job opportunities or for personal and family reasons (transfer or health); and they are in different areas of the country. They were contacted through the HUMANICEMOS DH Directorate.

**Third group of interviewees:** external territorial, national or international actors that make up the Project's network of alliances. Among them are, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization (ARN), the Government of Caquetá, the Military Brigade of the National Army based in La Montañita and the Fundación Unidos for the Life of Caquetá.

**Fourth group of interviewees:** members of the UNMAS team responsible for technical assistance and organizational development for HUMANICEMOS DH, and for the External Monitoring Component (CEM).

The selection of the interviewees was made by snowball sampling based on the criteria of knowledge of the organization and the availability of specific topical information. The interviews were a tool to support the analysis of the hypotheses associated with the contribution of humanitarian activities to community reconciliation and HUMANICEMOS DH as a potentially replicable reintegration model (see Table 1).

Additionally, two focus groups were conducted with external territorial actors from Caquetá. The first group was composed of participants from the Military Brigade of the National Army based in La Montañita, the mine action group of the Caquetá Government and the Fundación Unidos por la Vida del Caquetá. As a result of this interchange, the Third Mine Action Regional Roundtable was organized, attended by civil humanitarian demining organizations with a presence in Caquetá, as well as international and civil society organizations.

These two focus groups allowed for the observation and inquiry of perceptions related to the HUMANICEMOS DH network of strategic partners, and the needs of the population affected by the presence of explosive ordnance.

### b) Development of the Educational Component with HUMANICEMOS DH

The Early Effects Assessment included an educational component targeted at the HUMANICEMOS DH EORE team, which served

<sup>22</sup> Only four interviews were carried out in person at the HUMANICEMOS DH training center in La Montañita y Florencia, Caquetá.



to set the research method bases on issues associated with the implementation and formulation of projects. UNMAS developed an applied training process to mobilize support for the primary data collection field work. In particular, the delivery of surveys with the control group and the beneficiary population in Montañita (see Annex 4)<sup>23</sup>.

section as its members were identified as having strong community liaison skills, with a network of contacts and a previous history of activity working with communities and leaders in the assigned sectors, which would significantly benefit the process of evaluating impact. Additionally, they have an interest in developing their own project and research capabilities.

The benefits of including this educational component in the project were:



First, to generate collective knowledge, applied and adjusted to the reality of the participants.



Second, to strengthen the capabilities of the teams on specific issues, as part of supporting the capacity-building process during their reintegration process.



And third, to promote decision-making regarding processes related to the Reintegration Project, based on evidence and technical knowledge of social research and project formulation.

It is important to note that the Humanicemos DH EORE team was chosen to participate in this

<sup>23</sup> The educational component was designed through the course "Promotion and development of methodological and investigative capacities for peace", held in the months of September and October 2020.

### 3. CONTEXT OF THE PROCESS

#### 3.1 Municipality of La Montañita, Caquetá

The municipality of La Montañita is in the south-east of Colombia in the department of Caquetá. It has an area of about 43,850 hectares. It borders to the north with the department of Huila, to the south with Cartagena del Chairá, Solano and Milan; to the east with El Paujil and Cartagena del Chairá; and to the west with Florencia.

La Montañita is distributed across an urban area made up of five neighbourhoods, and a rural area made up of 128 villages (veredas) and a total of 11 hamlets (caseríos), which are organized into four police jurisdictions, namely: El Santuario, La Unión Peneya, Mateguadua and El Triunfo. The mountainous area is made up of about 30 villages (veredas) and is characterized by the absence of hamlets (caseríos) and/or populated centres. In turn, the indigenous communities, with collective property titles in the department are found in Coreguaje, Emberá Katio, Emberá Chamí, Nasa, Páez and Uitoto<sup>24</sup>.

Access to Montañita is 27 kilometres from Florencia, or about a 45 minute journey by land through the Troncal del Oriente or Marginal de la Selva. This road connects the municipal seat with other municipalities such as El Doncello, El Paujil and Florencia. The municipality is crossed by the San Pedro, Peneya and Orteguzza rivers, parts of which are navigable, allowing the municipality to communicate with the south of the department<sup>25</sup>.

#### 3.2 Territorial Areas for Training and Reintegration (TATR) Héctor Ramírez, Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

The TATR Héctor Ramírez, is in the village of Agua Bonita II, 14 kilometres from the urban area of the municipality, in the mountainous zone. It has an area of about 53 hectares and 6,700 square meters, and was directly purchased by the FARC collective (Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, 2020).

To get to the urban core of Centro Poblado, one must travel between 30 and 40 minutes, depending on the road conditions, which are currently average given that it is not completely paved.

According to data from the Reintegration Information System (SIR by its acronym is Spanish)<sup>26</sup> of the Reintegration and Normalization Agency, as of September 30, 2020, the Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II has 175 people in the process of reintegration, of which 121 are men, 54 women, 72 are minors, 5 are elderly, and 32 have some type of disability.

Additionally, 174 people are affiliated to the social security system, 88 to the contributory regime and 86 to the subsidized regime. In terms of economic reintegration, the entire population is banked, and 166 people received the monthly allowance in the preceding month<sup>27</sup>. It is important to highlight that the community is made up of people who come from different areas of the country, which makes it a community that is the result of internal migration (Martínez-Moyano et al, 2018: 67).

<sup>24</sup> Agencia Nacional de Tierras. Portal de datos abiertos de la ANT. 2019 <https://data-agenciadetierras.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/resguardos-ind%C3%ADgenas?geometry=-78.319%2C1.027%2C-70.738%2C2.949>

<sup>25</sup> La Montañita Town Hall. Municipal Development Plan 2016 - 2019: Visionary La Montañita: United We Build Solutions. And, Municipal Development Plan 2020-2023: Together for La Montañita.

<sup>26</sup> Agencia para la Reincorporación y Normalización (30 de noviembre 2020). Estos son los 24 AETCR Antiguos Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación. [http://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/reincorporacion/Paginas/ETCRs/AETCR\\_agua\\_bonita.aspx](http://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/reincorporacion/Paginas/ETCRs/AETCR_agua_bonita.aspx)

<sup>27</sup> The monthly allowance benefit is given to those people who have registered at least one attendance at some ARN activity in the previous month.

Agua Bonita II has an infrastructure of 62 building units, 55 of which are for the housing of ex-combatants and six for the HUMANICEMOS DH facilities. The units are equipped with basic public services, among them, a Drinking Water Treatment Plant (PTAP by its acronym in Spanish), electricity from Electrificadora del Caquetá, a sewage system connected to a network of 42 septic tanks, the supply of natural gas and weekly solid waste collection service.

As part of the public infrastructure, there is a public library, a mini-market, a fast food outlet, a general goods store, and a disco (Martínez-Moyano et al, 2018: 69). Also, an area has been designated for the provision of health services. There is insufficient water supply, with resultant community rationing. (Defensoría del Pueblo. 2017: 61).

With regards to employment, utilizing data from the contributory health regime for the month of November 2020 cited by the ARN, they identified 93 people as employed by the Agua Bonita TATR Héctor Ramírez with official residence in Caquetá, 24 are employed with the National

Protection Unit (UNP), 50 people employed as part of HUMANICEMOS DH, one linked to Grupo Empresarial Corpez ZOMAC SAS; and the Corporation for the Promotion of Technical Education.

At an organizational level, the community has the Association of Women Producers of the Essence of Peace (ASMUPROPAZ), the Cooperativa Multiactiva para el Buen Vivir y la Paz de Colombia (COOMBUVIPAC) and the Community Action Board of the Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II, these last two in charge of guaranteeing the administration of resources and activities (Agency for Reintegration and Normalization, 2020).



HUMANICEMOS DH staff training and humanitarian demining operations are monitored by the UNMAS Quality Management team (blue t-shirts), who make up the External Monitoring Component (CEM, in Spanish). Photo: UNMAS Colombia



## 4. BASELINE

This section outlines the data obtained during the information gathering with the personnel currently linked to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project -or treatment group-, and the ex-combatant population residing in the Centre Poblado Agua Bonita II - or control group-.

The purpose is to characterize and identify similarities and differences in the socio-demographic composition and the variables associated with the process of economic and social reintegration such as, time of connection to the productive project, labour connection and income level, educational level, security, and personal or individual dimensions. Based on this information, mine action contributions to economic and social reintegration will be analysed.

### 4.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics

With information as of December 2020 (see Table 3), the distribution by sex of the two reintegrated populations is predominantly male (79% and 57%). Regarding age, the highest frequencies are in the range between 20 and 45 years, both for the Humanicemos Reintegration Project and for the ex-combatants of Agua Bonita II. A similar situation is found in the comparison of ethnic origin, for which in the two groups there is a higher percentage of mestizos, compared to the self-defined population as Indigenous, Afro or ROM (93% and 90%).

When observing the distribution of marital status, similar frequencies were found of common law and single, comparatively with those married, divorced and widowed in the two work groups. Despite this, there is a higher percentage of common law marriages in Agua Bonita II (75%) compared to HUMANICEMOS DH (64%) and a greater number of single people in HUMANICEMOS DH (33%) compared to Agua Bonita II (24%)



Ex-combatant personnel currently hold administrative, operational and strategic positions at HUMANICEMOS DH.

Photo: Javier Taborda / HUMANICEMOS DH.

**TABLE 3**

Baseline variables: Sex, Age, Ethnicity and Marriage Status  
Reintegrated Population in Treatment and Control Groups

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Treatment Group</b> Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	<b>Control Group</b> Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
<b>SEX</b>		
Female	21%	43%
Male	79%	57%
<b>AGE</b>		
20-25 years	8%	11%
26-30	26%	13%
31-35	16%	17%
36-40	21%	33%
41-45	14%	10%
46-50	7%	6%
51-55	4%	6%
56-60	4%	3%
<b>ETHNICITY</b>		
Sí (Indígena, Afro, ROM)	7%	10%
No	93%	90%
<b>MARRIAGE STATUS</b>		
Common-Law	64%	75%
Single	33%	24%
Married	1%	0%
Divorcec	0%	0%
Widowed	1%	2%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

When comparing marital status with sex (see Table 4), it can be seen that, in the ex-combatant population of the two groups, there is a higher proportion of common law marriages in men and women, compared to single men of both sexes. However, there are more men from Agua Bonita II in common law marriage (75%) compared to men from HUMANICEMOS DH (60%), and more single men (36%), married (2%) and widowed (2%) in the latter compared to Agua Bonita II (25%) and where there is no report of married, divorced or widowed individuals.

For their part, the women of HUMANICEMOS DH show a higher percentage of common law unions

(80%) compared to that of Agua Bonita II (74%), although the percentages of single women in the two populations are similar (20% and 22%). Finally, no women from the two groups mentioned being married or widowed, even though 4% of divorced women were reported in Agua Bonita II.

Regarding the number of children, both the treatment group and the control group report similar percentages in the ranges of “no children” (44%), 1 to 3 children (55% and 52%) and four or more children (1% and 3%). In the disaggregation by sex, we see that women in the two populations have more children (60% and 56%) compared to men (53% and 50%).

HUMANICEMOS DH has a gender equity policy to promote the participation of women in the different areas of the organization.

Photo: Javier Taborda / HUMANICEMOS DH.





**TABLE 4**

Baseline variables: Sex, Marriage Status, and Number of Children  
Reintegrated Population in Treatment and Control Groups

Variable	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
<b>SEX AND MARRIAGE STATUS: MEN</b>		
Common-Law	60%	75%
Single	36%	25%
Married	2%	0%
Divorced	0%	0%
Widowed	2%	0%
<b>SEX AND MARRIAGE STATUS: WOMEN</b>		
Common-Law	80%	74%
Single	20%	22%
Married	0%	0%
Divorced	0%	4%
Widowed	0%	0%
<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</b>		
0 (none)	44%	44%
1 to 3	55%	52%
4 or more	1%	3%
<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN: MEN</b>		
0 (none)	33%	24%
1 to 3	1%	0%
4 or more	0%	0%
<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN: WOMEN</b>		
0 (none)	40%	41%
1 to 3	60%	56%
4 or more	0%	4%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

Regarding education attainment (see table 5)<sup>28</sup> across the two groups, the most reported levels are elementary and High School. However, the ex-combatant population of Agua Bonita II shows a higher percentage of respondents with elementary level attainment (25%) compared to HUMANICEMOS DH (19%). In the HUMANICEMOS DH group, the level of High School attainment is higher (73%) than in the Agua Bonita II group (68%) .

With respect to technical and professional level educational attainment, the percentage in the HUMANICEMOS DH group (4% and 3%) exceed those of Agua Bonita (3% and 0%). In the Agua Bonita group there were no people with professional titles. Agua Bonita II had 3% of respondents claiming no education at all, exceeding the 1% claiming similar in the HUMANICEMOS DH group.



The HUMANICEMOS DH personnel comes from various departments in Colombia.

Photo: Javier Taborda / HUMANICEMOS DH.

**TABLE 5**

Baseline variables: Educational Attainment  
Reintegrated population in Treatment and Control Groups

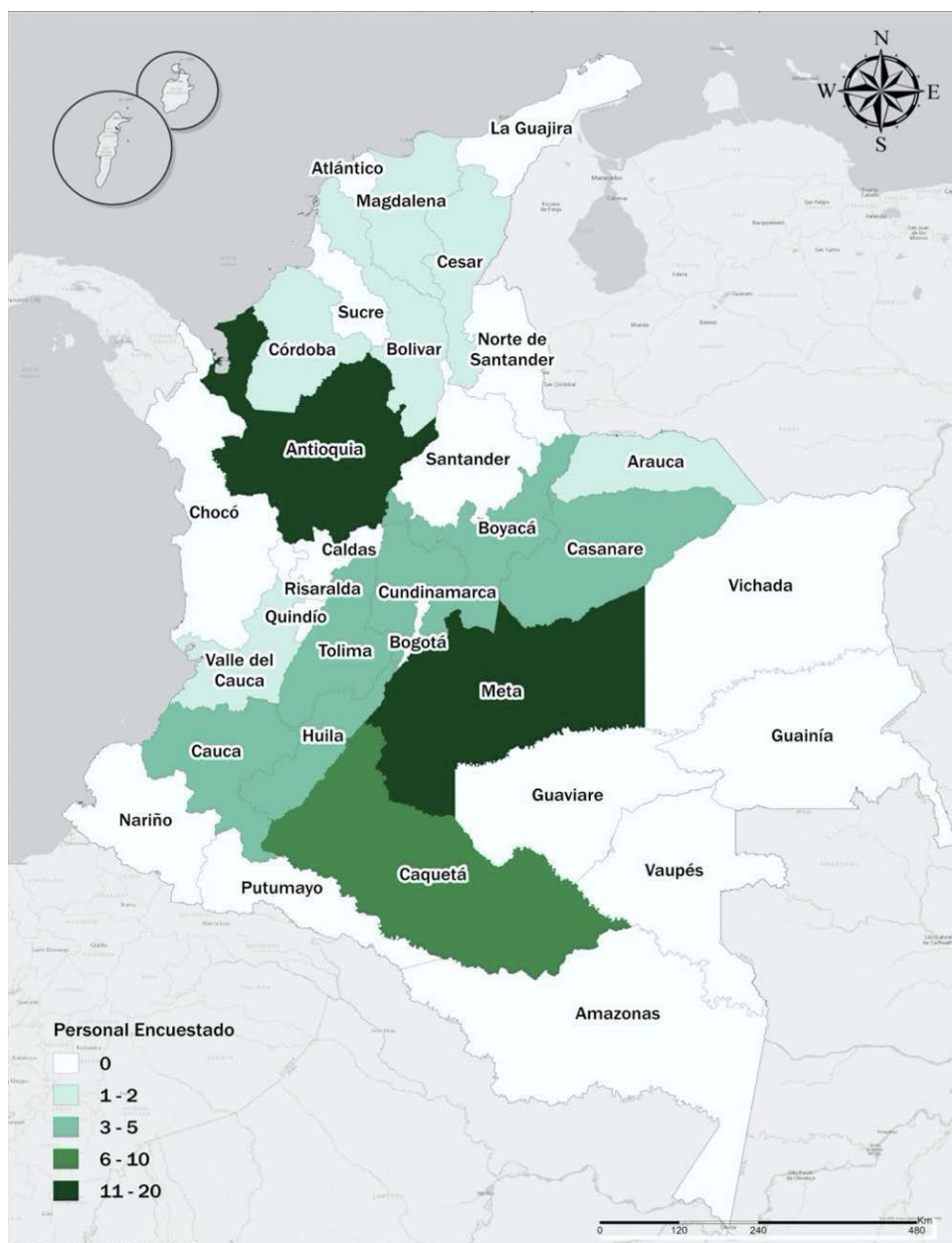
Variable	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
<b>LEVEL OF EDUCATION (completed studies with degree or certification)</b>		
Elementary	60%	75%
High School	36%	25%
Technical	2%	0%
Professional	0%	0%
None	2%	0%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that this question reports the current level of education of the two work groups, but does not inquire about the level of education with which they began their reincorporation process.

### MAP 3

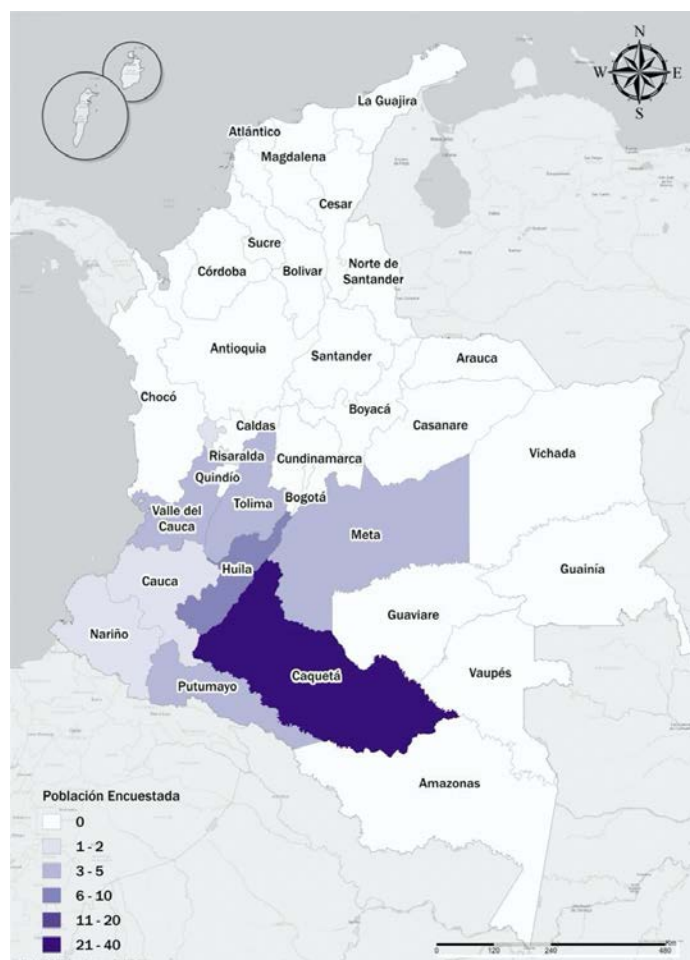
Place of Birth of Surveyed Personnel HUMANICEMOS DH  
(Department)



Regarding the geographical origin or place of birth, the data indicates that 90% of the HUMANICEMOS DH personnel come from areas of the country outside of Caquetá<sup>29</sup>, from the departments of Antioquia (26%), Meta (23%), as well as Arauca (2%), Bolívar (2%), Boyacá (4%), Casanare (4%), Cauca (5%), Cesar (1%), Córdoba (1%), Cundinamarca (7%), Huila (4%), Magdalena (3%), Tolima (7%) and Valle del Cauca (1%) (see Map 3).

<sup>29</sup> Only 10% of the HUMANICEMOS DH personnel interviewed were born in Caquetá.



**MAP 4****Place of Birth of Surveyed Personnel Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II (Department)**

In contrast, the surveyed population of Agua Bonita II comes mainly from Caquetá (60%)<sup>30</sup> (see Map 4). Looking to detailed places of birth in the control group, we see the highest incidence from La Montañita (16%), San Vicente del Caguán (10%) and Puerto Rico (8%), followed by less frequently claimed places such as Cartagena del Chairá (3%), Curillo (2%), Doncello (3%), Florencia (6%), Paujil (5%), Solano (5%), Solita (2%) and Valparaíso (2%).

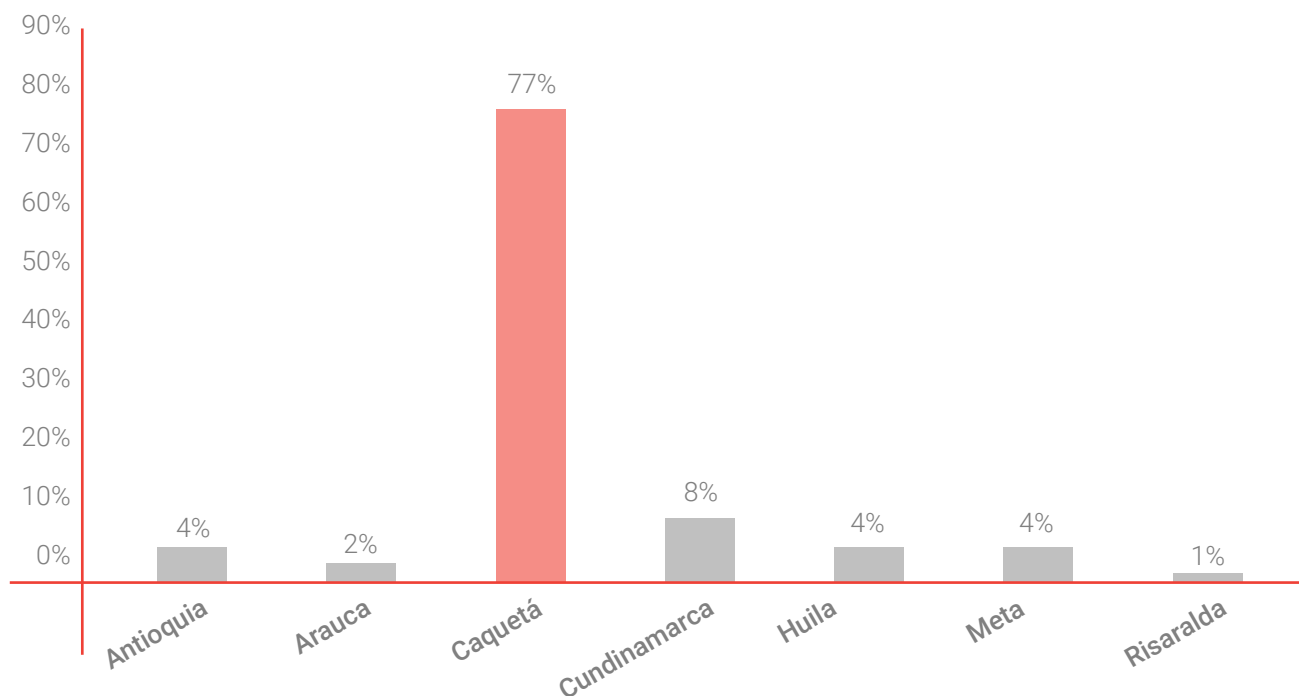
Regarding current place of residence, given that Caquetá is the priority site for humanitarian demining, it corresponds to the place where 77%

of the personnel affiliated with the Humanicemos Reintegration Project currently reside. In other words, there is a direct relationship between the place of residence and the place of work. In contrast, the remaining 27% say they have their permanent residence in other departments such as, Antioquia (4%), Arauca (2%), Cundinamarca (8%), Huila (4%), Meta (4%) and Risaralda (1%). This segment of the population only travels to the La Montañita training base when required for specific training modules and operational deployment. (See Chart 1).

<sup>30</sup> The remaining 40% as follows: Cauca (2%), Huila (10%), Meta (6%), Nariño (2%), Putumayo (5%), Risaralda (2%), Tolima (8%) and Valle del Cauca (5%)

## CHART 1

### Place of Residence: Treatment Group Population

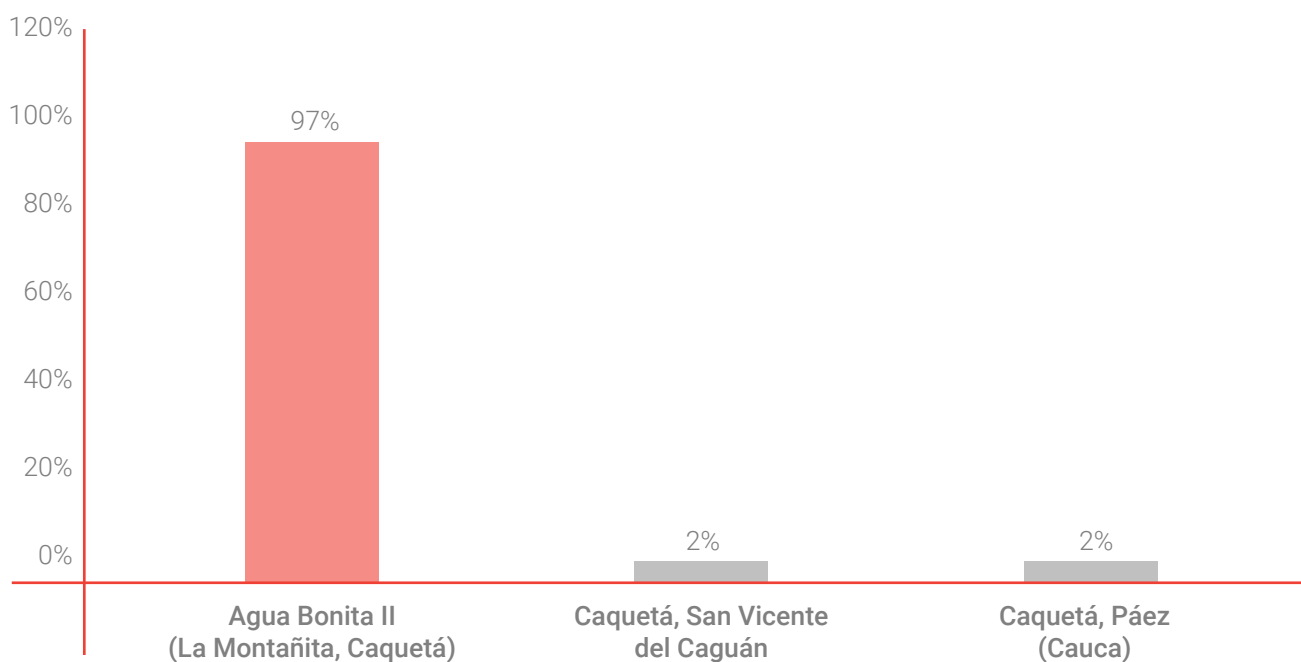


Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH DH

With regards to the Agua Bonita II control group, as shown in Chart 2, 97% of the surveyed population lives in this place and only 4% reside in other places such as Páez, Cauca (2%) and San Vicente del Caguán (2%).

## CHART 2

### Place of Residence: Control Group Population



Source: Original creation with data from interviews at Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

## 4.2 Overview of the Socio-Economic Reintegration Process

To better understand the economic and social reintegration process of the ex-combatants from each of the groups, five areas will be discussed in detail: time of engagement in the reintegration project; employment relationship and income level; education; safety; and life project.

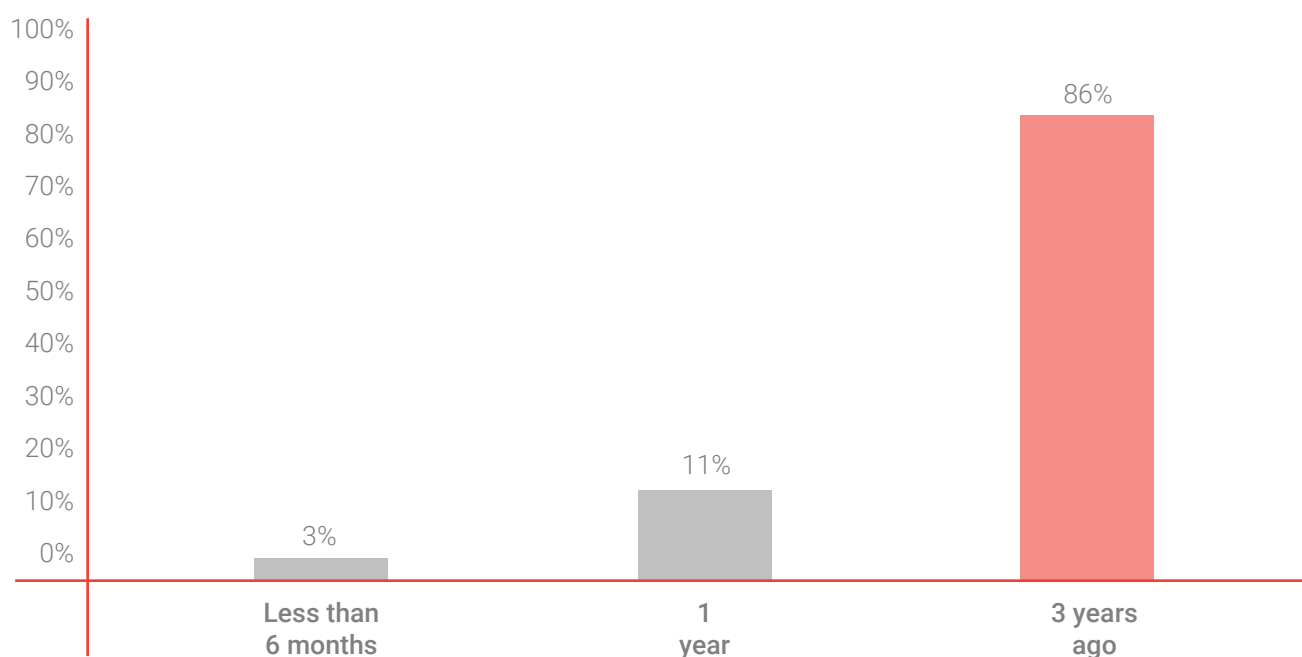
The information on these variables will be presented as a comparison between those of the ex-combatant population of the treatment group and those of the control group. The questions used across the two groups are similar, the only difference being that in one group the particular question concerns the link with the Humanicemos Reintegration Project whilst in the other, the same question concerns ties to the collective and individual projects carried out in Agua Bonita II.

### A) TIME LINKED TO THE REINTEGRATION PROJECT

The surveys of the two groups inquired about their link to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. The results showed that 100% of the ex-combatant population of the treatment group is linked to the Project. Of the total surveyed, 86% of the personnel have been part of the process since its inception (three years ago), 11% for one year and 3% having joined in the last six months (see Chart 3).

#### CHART 3

Time Linked to Humanicemos Reintegration Project  
Treatment Group

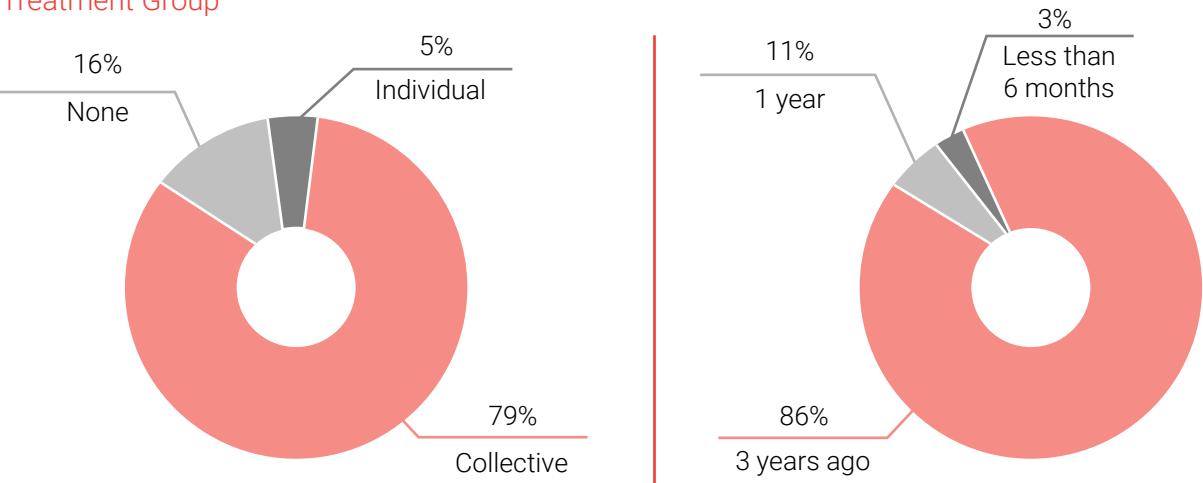


Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH



In the Agua Bonita II group, respondents claimed participation through collective projects (79%) and individual projects (5%), which they joined in the last six months (43%), or a year or more ago (41%). The remaining 16% indicated that they were not part of any productive initiative (see Chart 4).

**CHART 4**  
 Time linked to Humanicemos Reintegration Project  
 Treatment Group



Source: Original creation with data from interviews at Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

## B) EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP AND INCOME LEVEL

When the personnel linked to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project and the population of Agua Bonita II were asked if they have a working relationship with their reintegration project, the data presented two scenarios.

For example, the first group has all of its personnel affiliated through an employment contract and payment of social benefits with different salary scales according to the role they occupy in the organization<sup>31</sup>. Apprenticeship or assistance contracts account for 96% of the payroll that accrue between 1 (52%) and 2 (44%) Current Legal Monthly Minimum Wages (SMMLV by its acronym in Spanish)<sup>32</sup>. The remaining 4% of the staff are in managerial and administrative positions that earn 3, 4 or more SMMLV. It should be noted

that more than half of the Project staff (52%) report their monthly government allowance as an additional source of income. Consequently, a relatively high percentage of satisfaction of basic personal needs and those of the dependent household is observed with the income earned (67%).

In contrast, in the Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II, 86% of the surveyed ex-combatant population mentioned not being formally hired and their income depends entirely on the productive project and / or the government's monthly allowance. Of this 86%, 78% of those surveyed are part of a collective productive project, which by their nature and at least in the initial phases, constitute unpaid work<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> The HUMANICEMOS DH salary scale takes into account the levels: Managerial (I), Adviser (II), Professional (III), Technical (IV) and Assistance (V) defined in the Manual of Labor Functions and Competencies.

<sup>32</sup> Humanicemos DH. Salary Policy. PL-GEO-001. (20 July 2020). Institutional Document.

<sup>33</sup> 4% of the surveyed personnel who are not formally hired are part of individual reincorporation projects and the remaining 18% mentioned that they are not part of any productive project.

In terms of monthly income, we see that the population of the Agua Bonita surveyed control group does not exceed income greater than the SMMLV. In this scenario, only 14% of the surveyed population stated that the income they receive is sufficient to satisfy their basic needs and those of their dependents (see Table 6).

**TABLE 6**

Baseline Employment Status and Income Level | Reintegrated Population – Control and Treatment Groups

Variable	Question	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
Employment Status and Income Level	<b>Are you formally contracted to HDH/ or in your personal project?</b>		
	Yes	100%	14%
	No	0%	86%
	<b>Is your monthly income higher than the legal minimum (\$877.803 pesos)?</b>		
	Yes	48%	22%
	No	52%	78%
	<b>Does the income reviewed from HDH / or your personal Project meet your needs?</b>		
	Yes	67%	14%
	No	33%	71%
	I am not involved in a personal project	N/A	15%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

## C) EDUCATION

When inquiring about access to education in the reintegrated population in the two groups, it was found that 49% of the surveyed population of the Agua Bonita II control group has attended a formal educational institution such as a college, polytechnic, institute or university in the last year, in contrast to the 51% who say they have not done so (see Table 7).

**TABLE 7**

Baseline Education 1 | Reintegrated Population – Control and Treatment Groups

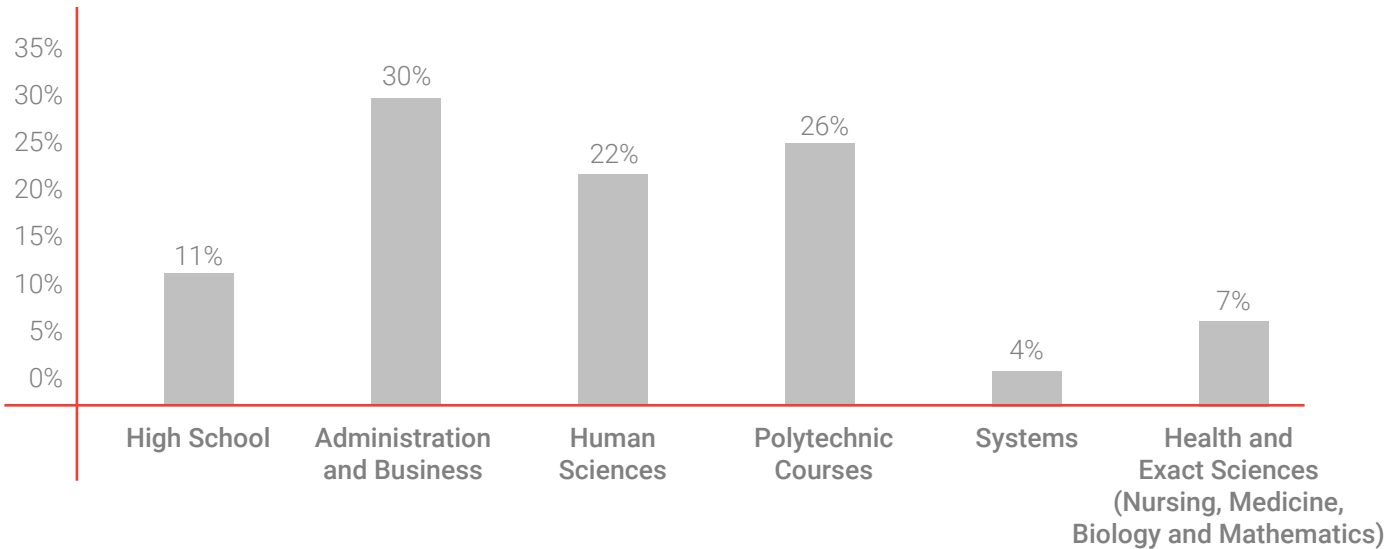
Variable	Question	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
Education	<b>Have you attended an educational institution (university, college, polytechnic, institute, validation course) in the last year?</b>		
	Yes	37%	49%
	No	63%	51%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

Regarding the Humanicemos Reintegration Project staff, 37% of those surveyed mentioned having attended a formal educational institution in the last year. Of this percentage, 11% did it to validate their High School or carry out technical studies in the areas of business administration (30%), human sciences (22%), courses in the major polytechnic (26%), technical systems (4%) and studies in health and / or exact sciences (7%) (see Chart 5). In contrast, 63% stated that they were not studying in a formal educational institution.

### CHART 5

Subject Areas of Formal Education  
Ex-combatant Population – Control and Treatment Groups



Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH



UNMAS has given more than 30 non-certified courses and workshops to HUMANICEMOS DH staff to strengthen the organization's capacities.

Photo: UNMAS Colombia.



Although the percentage of attendance at a formal educational institution is higher in Agua Bonita II (49%) compared to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project Staff (37%), due in part to the ARN<sup>34</sup> cycle education programs; the Humanicemos Reintegration Project shows other comparative advantages.

For example, if one considers the possible relationship between participants desired educational attainment and their Project work as facilitating its achievement, 96% of the respondents of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project consider that their links to the project will help them in the future to achieve their aspiration to be high school graduates (32%) or obtain technological degrees (8%), professional technicians (26%), professional (19%) or postgraduate (14%). In contrast, in Agua Bonita II, only 46% consider that their productive project would help them achieve this personal aspiration (see Table 8).

**TABLE 8**

Baseline Education 2 | Reintegrated Population – Control and Treatment Groups

Variable	Question	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
Education	<b>What level of education do you hope to attain?</b>		
	High School	32%	27%
	Technological	8%	13%
	Technical Professional	26%	14%
	Professional	19%	25%
	Post Graduate (Masters or Doctorate)	14%	2%
	None	1%	19%
	<b>Do you believe that the social and economic reintegration Project will help you to achieve this goal?</b>		
	Yes	96%	46%
	No	4%	54%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

On the other hand, if the percentage of HUMANICEMOS DH personnel who have attended certified informal training cycles is analysed, 93% claim to have participated in these activities during the last six months.

<sup>34</sup> Strategy implemented by the National Open and Distance University (UNAD) through an inter-institutional agreement with the ARN. It is a flexible education proposal for the population to access formal basic and secondary education services through special school cycles in a blended mode.

## D) SAFETY

The population of the working groups was also asked about the perception of security in the territory of the Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II. The Humanicemos Reintegration Project staff mentioned feeling predominantly safe (92%). For their part, the ex-combatants of Agua Bonita II had divided opinions, with 46% who think that this place is safe and 54% who think not, which may be associated with the presence of armed groups or risk of alleged personal revenge<sup>35</sup> (see Table 9).

**TABLE 9**

Security / Safety in the Zone | Reintegrated Population – Control and Treatment

Variable	Question	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
Security / Safety in the zone	What perceptions of the safety / security in the zone (Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II) do you have?		
	Secure	92%	46%
	Insecure	8%	54%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II



In August 2020, a first group of 17 ex-combatants in the process of reintegration, members of HUMANICEMOS DH, were certified to carry out Non-Technical Survey, the first step of humanitarian demining. Photo: UNMAS Colombia.

<sup>35</sup> EORE team HUMANICEMOS DH. Session of methodological reflections on the application of surveys with the ex-combatant population and the beneficiary community. December 11, 2020.

Whether the contribution of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project is evaluated against the improvement of the perception of security in the territory through the mine action activities conducted, 81% of the surveyed population of Agua Bonita II knows HUMANICEMOS DH, its mission and participants have even attended activities organized by them. Of this population segment, 97% believe that this organization would contribute to improving the perception of safety, while helping to prevent incidents and accidents caused by mines (98%) (see Table 10).

This turns out to be a finding of great value because the ex-combatant population of Agua Bonita II considers that the presence of the organization does not constitute a factor that generates potential security risks for the community.

**TABLE 10**

Contributions of HUMANICEMOS DH to the Zone.  
Reintegrated Population – Control and Treatment Groups

Variable	Question	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
Contributions of HUMANICEMOS DH to the zone	<b>Do you know what HUMANICEMOS DH is?</b>		
	Yes	N/A	81%
	No	N/A	19%
	<b>Do you believe that the activities of HUMANICEMOS DH in the zone contribute (or could contribute) favourably to perceptions of security / safety?</b>		
	Yes	100%	97%
	No	0%	3%
	<b>Have the activities of HUMANICEMOS DH contributed (or could contribute) to the prevention of mine-related incidents or accidents in the community of Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II?</b>		
	Yes	N/A	98%
	No	N/A	2%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

## E) INDIVIDUAL LIFE PROJECT

The impact of reintegration on the surveyed ex-combatants was another point of interest to be covered. It is interesting to see in the case of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project that 100% of the personnel surveyed affirmed that this process has impacted positively their life and consider it a safe route to reintegration (95%)<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> The 5% of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project staff who stated that this process has not facilitated their economic and social reincorporation can be explained in various ways. In this group are pregnant women, or mothers who consider MINE ACTION a time demanding activity. There are those reintegrated who consider that mine action is not part of their personal life plans, therefore, their participation in the project is temporary. In turn, those who aspire to study in formal higher education institutions located in other cities and due to their employment relationship with the project cannot do so. Finally, there are those who have their household outside of Caquetá, so they must travel long distances and incur extra expenses to visit them.

In comparison with Agua Bonita II, the results show that the productive project to which this population is linked has contributed little (80%) and nothing (6%) to their life. Likewise, 55% consider that the productive project has made their individual economic and social reintegration more difficult. Meanwhile, only 14% affirm that the individual or collective productive projects developed by them have impacted their life for the better and are a safe route to reintegration (16%) (see Table 11).

**TABLE 11**

Individual Life Plan 1

Reintegrated Population – Control and Treatment Groups

Variable	Question	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
Individual Life Plan	<b>How has your economic and social reintegration plan impacted your life plan?</b>		
	Positively Impacted / Greatly	100%	14%
	Little	0%	80%
	Not at all	0%	6%
	<b>Has belonging to HUMANICEMOS DH, o to a personal productive Project assisted with your social and economic reintegration?</b>		
	I see it as a secure route to reintegration.	95%	16%
	It has not helped. On the contrary it has made it more difficult.	5%	55%
	I do not belong to any productive project.	N/A	29%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

Faced with the reasons that motivate the ex-combatant population to continue in their reintegration project, the results show that, both for Humanicemos staff and for the Agua Bonita II control group, these processes provide them with learning options and / or training (26% and 18%), in addition to job stability to guarantee income for their maintenance (19% and 14%) -despite the above considerations on employment and income level, especially in the population of Agua Bonita II (see Table 12).



However, for the Humanicemos Reintegration Project staff, the respect and social recognition for the work carried out around mine action (30%) is important and acts as a grounding and offers a sense of belonging to the process. In contrast, in Agua Bonita II, continuation in the project is mainly due to personal and family reasons (29%), or participants feel indifferent (21%).

**TABLE 12****Personal Life Plan 2****Reintegrated Population – Control and Treatment Groups**

Variable	Question	Treatment Group Reintegrated Population HUMANICEMOS Reintegration Project	Control Group Reintegrated Population Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II
Personal Life Plan	<b>What are the main factors that motivate you to stay with HDH / personal productive project?</b>		
	My family assists and supports what I am doing.	17%	29%
	I've gained new skills and learnings.	26%	18%
	For job security and income to meet my needs.	19%	14%
	I feel respected and appreciated for the work I am doing.	30%	10%
	My productive Project is my life plan.	8%	8%
	None of the above / indifferent.	0%	21%

Source: Original creation with data from interviews at HUMANICEMOS DH y Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II

## 5. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This section is dedicated to the analysis of the three axes that govern this study: the first relates to the contributions of mine action to the collective and individual reintegration of the ex-combatant population; the second is associated with the contribution of the humanitarian activities to communal reconciliation; the third is connected with monitoring mechanisms, quality control and systemization, defined and implemented by mine action organizations such as HUMANICEMOS DH.

### 5.1 Contributions of Mine Action to Collective and Individual Reintegration

With the data provided by the general baseline, the two groups of ex-combatants studied are similar mainly by being signers of the 2016 Peace Accord, sharing the same place of residence and completing their process of reintegration through an economic project. However, the consolidation of an organization and of a project for the collective and individual reintegration of ex-combatants through mine action shows comparative advantages over other projects of economic and social reintegration.

In particular for, a) the manner in which the reintegrated population participates and remains in the process; b) for the prospects of employability and sustainable income for them and their families; c) for the possibilities of access to education and continuing education courses; d) the insurance of their security; e) supervision on a personal, individual level; and maybe most important of all, f) having incentives for not re-joining illegal armed groups, including job skills, technical tools and lawful resources for survival.

#### a) Duration of Existence

The baseline data regarding the dates that the populations of ex-combatants became involved with their respective reintegration projects reveals two categories of project. Among the first category are the most recently established, which have existed between six months (43%) and one or more years (41%), as is the case of the economic projects in Agua Bonita II. In the second category, we observe projects of greater organizational trajectory that surpass three years, as in the case of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. According to the information gathered by the survey distributed to participants, 86% of participants associated with the project on October 31, 2020 were involved with it since its inception<sup>37</sup>.

Similarly, there are respectable collective and individual initiatives of economic reintegration that launch belatedly on account of delays in the accreditation process and disbursements issued by the ARN to the reintegrated population. By contrast, the Humanicemos Reintegration Project has had, since its inception, the support and backing of its donors and of UNMAS, and even when delays were experienced due to the process of accrediting personnel to initiate the mine action operations, the project never came to a stop.

#### b) Prospects of Employability and Sustainable income

In spite of the fact that the mine action sector in Colombia is relatively new and fulfills an objective sufficiently specific to a particular need, it carries out a fundamental role by providing job opportunities for the ex-combatants who are involved in it. This

<sup>37</sup> The 86% correspond to the participants hired in the second phase of the Project financed by the European Union's European Trust Fund for Colombia. The first phase, which was finalized IN January

is not limited to the salaries received on a monthly basis (between 1 and 4+ SMMLV), but rather to the nature of their contracts, including apprenticeships contracts, that comply with all the national regulations (Law 789 of 2002) and international conventions of the International Labour Organization regarding decent work<sup>38</sup>.

As a mechanism of reintegration, the apprenticeship contracts that first introduce ex-combatants to the mine action sector include pay that helps them to satisfy their basic necessities and those of their immediate dependents (see Table 6). In addition to this, the resources and training courses constitute other benefits of this sector.

As part of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project and in compliance with the prevailing labour regulations, HUMANICEMOS DH provides its participants with training courses, equipment and uniforms, housing, registration in social security, food, and transportation for activities in the field, factors that together make up comprehensive support for inclusion in civilian life (Agency for Reintegration and Normalization. 2019: 3). In this way, the sector permits the inclusion of a workforce with low levels of formal literacy (see Table 5), whose skills acquired in the past relate to combat, thereby creating social spaces for communal reconciliation and causing individual changes in the ex-combatant and their immediate family.

In contrast, the cooperative model adopted by the group of ex-combatants in Agua Bonita II, while offering an alternative way for ex-guerilla collectives to organize for the purpose of rediscovering the productive potentials of the zones where they are grouped (Valencia and Chaverra, 2019), is associated with conditions of underemployment, remuneration less than the SMMLV and no type of bridge into the labour

force—as indicated by the data in the section of characterization of the labour connection and level of income. Many do not have permanent positions or are only able to work part-time (Fandl, 2008: 164). Furthermore, the complexity of their project management rationale as well as the surplus of similar goods and services are clear impediments for them to reach economic stability.

It is worth highlighting that economic reintegration cannot be reduced to subsidizing the completion of an economic project that supports a connection to the economy, as occurs in the experience of Agua Bonita II. This idea has facilitated ex-combatants being viewed as potential entrepreneurs, but without the technical support sufficient for productive sustainability (Velasco, 2020).

Consequently, a project of comprehensive reintegration must include efforts focused on the acquisition of job competencies and technical skills (as is the case of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project), that allows the ex-combatants to gradually develop independent and efficient productive capability (Gómez Meneses, 2007; Tajima, 2009 in Escobar-Espinoza et al. 2018: 125).

### **c) Access to Education and Continuing Education Classes**

Education in any form assists the ex-combatants during their process of reintegration to develop the skills and abilities that help them to find job opportunities as well as social and cultural opportunities (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2013). With this premise, and as evidenced by the data on the education variable (see Tables 7 and 8), in the two groups of ex-combatants there exist

<sup>38</sup> International Labour Organization. Compendio de convenios internacionales sobre regulación del trabajo 1996-2017. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/es/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12000:0::NO::>

personal aspirations on the short and medium term of continuing their studies, earning a certificate and/or obtaining higher levels of education. However, the relation between the academic aspirations of ex-combatants and the possibilities offered to them by their reintegration project are usually not the same for the participants in the two groups of the study.

Although attendance at formal educational institutions during the previous year was greater in the ex-combatant population in Agua Bonita II (49%) compared to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project (37%); the access to educational opportunities enjoyed by the first group was not propelled or was not guided by the reintegration project these ex-combatants were connected to. Therefore, the training topics, objectives and focus of knowledge could be unrelated to the specific needs of the ex-combatants and their economic project.

However, the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, through the technical support of UNMAS during the process, has promoted a training strategy for their participants based on mine action courses, and aims to develop other specific skills and abilities related to leadership, administration, finance or technology (see Table 13). The Project has developed certified training programs, diplomas, courses and workshops with the different classifications of personnel within the organization, which have motivated them to remain in the process of reintegration.

The effect of this environment of continuing education reveals three facts: first, that the personnel of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project have access to a training plan of high quality, which covers a diversity of the subjects

taught by specialized trainers. Second, that the ex-combatant population is interested in going beyond basic and intermediate levels of education, and register in technical and/or professional studies (see Chart 5). And third, that the ex-combatants that do not currently participate in the Project recognize that the knowledge acquired during their time with HUMANICEMOS DH is useful in terms of accessing a technical or academic education<sup>39</sup> and entering into another sector of the labour force<sup>40</sup>.



Edwin is one of the ex-combatants in the reintegration process who is part of HUMANICEMOS DH. Despite his physical disability, he is currently a Non-Technical Survey (NTS) supervisor.

Photo: UNMAS Colombia.

<sup>39</sup> E. M. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 10, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> F. G. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 11, 2020.



**TABLE 13**

## Personal Training Activities | Humanicemos Reintegration Project

Level		Class Name	Description	N° hours per week / Duration (weeks)	Number of participants
EXECUTIVE		Leading High Efficiency Teams	Course	30/4	7
		Fundamentals of Organizational Collaboration	Course	7/4	7
		Management and Strategic Planning	Course	N/A	7
TECHNICAL / ADMINISTRATIVE		Basic fundamentals of administration	Course	30/4	6
		Document Management and File Administration	Diploma Program	30/4	6
		Distribution Logistics	Course	30/4	2
		Environmental Management and Disaster Risk	Diploma Program	30/4	62
		Finances for Non-financial Professionals	Course	30	6
		Environmental Sanitation	Course	30/4	62
OPERATIONS	MEDICAL SUPPORT	Certificate in Pre-hospital Care	Course	30/4	38
		TCCC (Advanced medical support)	External Course	32/1	10
		Psychological first aid	Course	30/4	24
	CLEARANCE, NTS, EORE	Assertive Communication	Course	12/1	20
		Composition and Grammar 1	Course	27/4	38
		Composition and Grammar 2	Course	27/4	38
		Audiovisual Presentations in: Word, PowerPoint and Prezi	Diploma Program	27/4	24
	DRIVING	Defensive Driving and Road Safety	Course	8/1	6

Level		Class Name	Description	N° hours per week / Duration (weeks)	Number of participants
O P E R A T I O N S	DRIVING	Driving Classes	Course		6
		Basic Mechanics	Course	8/1	6
	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	Basic Excel	Course	30/4	70
		Intermediate Excel	Course	30/4	70
		Advanced Excel	Course	30/4	6
		ACCES	Course	27/4	6
		Using ArcGis	Course	30/4	6
	FIELD LEADERS	Leading High Efficiency Teams	Course	30/4	14
	MANAGING KNOWLEDGE AND INTERNAL UPKEEP	Transfer of Knowledge	Course / Workshop	4	8
		System of Comprehensive Quality Management	Course / Workshop	4	70
		Administrative and Managerial Processes	Course / Workshop	2	7
		SG -SST	Course / Workshop	4	70
		Internal Regulation (RIT), Norms and Policies of HUMANICEMOS DH	Course / Workshop	2	70
		Strategic Platform (Mission, Vision, Values and Objectives)	Course / Workshop	2	70

Source: original creation with data from the 2020 HUMANICEMOS DH Annual Training Plan

#### d) Protection of the Ex-Combatants

When discussing the topic of perceived safety, it is important to keep in mind that feeling safe or unsafe influences whether a person experiences satisfaction with the conditions of their particular surroundings (Fraile, 2007). As seen in the baseline data, even among those within the same site, the ex-combatants of the two working groups express varying perceptions of safety.

On one hand, the majority of the participants in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project described Agua Bonita II as a safe territory (92%), while the ex-combatants who lived and worked in economic projects there had divided opinions (44% safe and 56% unsafe), and were inclined to describe it as unsafe. This difference in the perceptions of safety can be explained by the specific characteristics and the particular risks to safety that each group of ex-combatants have according to their reintegration project.

In the case of HUMANICEMOS DH, it is a civil demining organization that is governed by the principles of Humanitarian Action, which is to say that it focuses its actions on the protection of the lives and well-being of human beings, neutrality, impartiality without political or electoral motives, and operational independence<sup>41</sup>. In this sense, their actions seek human benefits through safe and efficient interventions<sup>42</sup>. Although the risk of possible attack on the participants or the infrastructure of HUMANICEMOS by armed groups exists, protection is promoted with informational sessions on security that make up part of a prevention strategy intended for the community and for the members of the Project.

With the community, the strategy aims to function through community ties, forums for cooperation and the application of context analysis that entails overcoming possible stigmas against the population of ex-combatants and establishing a clear purpose for mine action in the territory, as well as identifying its potential benefits. The participants in the Project are protected by the highest level of security that can be provided by the Management of Operations<sup>43</sup> for the reporting, communication and control of activities before, during and after the deployment of operations<sup>44</sup>.

### **e) Accompanying Personal Factors**

Although this study did not delve into the psychosocial characteristics of the ex-combatants,

through field observations it was possible to identify some interesting aspects associated with the attitude that each group has of the process of reintegration.

The ex-combatants of Agua Bonita II have a wide diversity of jobs, education and sustainability of income. Their motivation to stick with the process is limited by their individual self-determination to move forward in their economic project, pushed along by their families or direct dependents (see Table 12). Accordingly, they adopt a less empathetic outlook, and they are reluctant to talk about their reintegration experience and the frustrations caused by the difficulties in developing their economic projects.

In contrast, the participants connected to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project appear to be more willing to express their thoughts and emotions in formal or informal conversations, referring casually to feelings, including experiences of nostalgia or yearning for the past, with a mixture of fond memories and fear. Others mention feelings of regret for what they call “having lost time” or for the damage caused to the community, or express personal pride for the decision that allowed them to come to this stage in their lives.

Within the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, attention has been paid<sup>45</sup> to the individual and psychosocial development of the ex-combatants who belong to the organization, under the assumption

41 General Assembly of the United Nations. Resolution 46/182. [https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/dms/Documents/O-CHA%20on%20Message\\_GAres46182\\_vSP.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/dms/Documents/O-CHA%20on%20Message_GAres46182_vSP.pdf)

42 “From the individual perspectives of the ex-combatants about the demining work, they express that it does not represent a risk to their security. On the contrary, it is an activity that gives them pride.”  
Interview with Edith Girval – Communications Advisor, United Nations Information Centres (UNIC). December 9, 2020.

43 The Manager of Operations in an Humanitarian Demining Civil Organization (OCDH) is the person responsible for: i) directing the planning of training activities and humanitarian demining operations; ii) leading the recruitment of the operative units in a way that is safe and efficient, and in accordance with the Approved Operational Procedures (POA); iii) acts as a technical advisor for all operational aspects; and iv) performs updates, evaluations and continuous improvement of operations, while complying with internal processes and procedures, as well as the guidelines of the National Standards.

44 Interview with Ángela Orrego – Director of HUMANICEMOS DH. December 14, 2020.

45 UNMAS, in collaboration with the UNIC, directed sessions covering dance, yoga, poetry, writing and drawing during the early stages of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. Methodologies of communication or “lessons in public speaking” were developed that functioned at the same time as a way to discuss personal fears and allow the ex-combatants to talk about themselves and their emotions. This psychosocial channelling allowed feelings to emerge and alternative ways of managing emotions to be learned by a population with little experience in these matters.

that their emotional stability is determined by: first, creating a harmonious work environment with smooth group cohesion; second, promoting a project that inspires the personal motivations of the participants and consequently discourages recidivism; and third, initiating a process of internal transformation within the ex-combatants that contributes effectively to the progression of reconciliation and relationship building with the community (Solángel García-Ruíz, 2020).

Consequently, the commitments to remaining in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project create the conditions and the environment that allow the ex-combatants to make personal reflections that the ex-combatants of Agua Bonita II might not have the opportunity to express and work through.

#### **f) Incentives Against Recidivism**

There are many factors that can motivate ex-combatants to relapse into illegal activities. These include economic or job instability, soliciting from armed actors with possible economic offers, stigmatization and discrimination against the ex-combatant population within the community, risks to their personal safety and to that of their immediate, dependent family members, and lack of motivation when faced with the limitations of reintegration (Velasco, 2020: 75). As such, if an ex-combatant finds himself or herself highly exposed to one of these various factors, he or she can be at risk for recidivism.

In accordance with the correlation of all these variables, in the specific case of the ex-combatants

associated with the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, it is shown that there is effectively less risk of recidivism if they are in a program such as HUMANICEMOS DH or have previously participated in one.

For example, in the survey distributed to the participants of the Project, they were asked their reasons for not continuing in the process. Their answers were associated with lacking the funds to ensure the financial sustainability of the operation and of their process of reintegration (86%)<sup>46</sup>, obtaining another legal source of income (8%), family reasons (4%) or dismissal (2%)<sup>47</sup>. Among the 4% who have family reasons are women in a state of gestation or who are mothers, and consider mine action an activity that they can take time away from in order to initiate this new stage of their lives. Similarly, there are the participants that have health problems or family situations that compel them to move to other areas of the country for reasons related to work or study.

In the testimonies of the former participants of the Project, the reasons they give for why they did not continue correspond to academic, work or personal reasons. However, they point out that the contribution the Project made to their lives has motivated them not to relapse:

#### **Testimony 1**

*"Each one has their own way of thinking, but it is not necessary to return to illegal activities when one has a job, with benefits and support. HUMANICEMOS DH is a project that opens doors to continue into other organizations and search out new sources of legal employment."*<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> In the long process of accreditation of the personnel of HUMANICEMOS DH, some of its members drop out in the face of uncertainty and what they see as a process without a clear outcome.

<sup>47</sup> Data from the survey conducted with the reintegrated personnel of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with E.M. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 10, 2020.



## Testimony 2

*"I would not relapse because I am on a path of reintegration through which I have received the support of international organizations. Thanks to reintegration, we have the opportunity to pursue a university program and make a living. [...] This is proof to show the society that stigmatizes us so much that we are human beings with dreams and desires. My greatest wish is to have a career in law, and I am going to achieve it. For now, I have begun virtual studies at the Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia to complete my high school diploma. Next I will ask for a letter of recommendation from HUMANICEMOS DH to be able to start my professional studies."<sup>49</sup>*

*difficult to back out of it, one sticks with the process [...] I have HUMANICEMOS DH as a reference, because when I have conversations where I ask for work or get an offer of employment, I end up talking the whole time about my past with this organization and I continue to be a link to the community, repeating messages like "I go out during the day, I arrive during the day", etc. [...] the dissidents contacted me, but my [armed conflict] has ended. That call was the breaking point, because I still plan to make my story known through my book, which is currently with a Mexican publishing house [...]"<sup>52</sup>*

## Testimony 3

*"HUMANICEMOS DH assists the reintegration of ex-combatants by helping us in finding employment and understanding the dynamics of this world. Relapsing is not an option that I have in mind for myself."<sup>50</sup>*

*"I have confirmed it with various organizations, among them the UN and the ARN. If I am here and we start to embark on a new life, there is no turning back, even though I left HUMANICEMOS for personal reasons related to health complications. The past leaves us with knowledge and experience, but HUMANICEMOS DH taught us how to earn money through our own efforts."<sup>53</sup>*

## Testimony 4

*"I was in HUMANICEMOS DH and now I work for la Radio Nacional de Colombia [...] I don't have the slightest intention of relapsing."<sup>51</sup>*

As shown by the data from the survey and the testimonies, there exist positive and viable options for participants to continue their process of reintegration. The Humanicemos Reintegration Project inhibits recidivism with the opportunities it creates through mine action, specifically the connection to employment with the social and moral dignity of humanitarian work, and the improvement of literacy through continuing education.

## Testimony 5

*"HUMANICEMOS DH supports projects and helps guide the future of its participants undergoing the process of reintegration. It's very*

<sup>49</sup> Interview with G.M. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 10, 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Y.G. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 10, 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with F.G. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 11, 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Y.D. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 11, 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with K.C. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 17, 2020.

Although there is no reliable source that permits us to determine the quantity or frequency of recidivism among the ex-combatants of Agua Bonita II, this group could be more vulnerable to recidivism because of the distinct conditions this group is under: lower economic and work stability, less time spent in the spaces for training and literacy classes, less oversight, and greater risk of threats to their safety and the safety of their families.



Most of the HUMANICEMOS DH staff joined the organization since its formation in 2017. Photo: HUMANICEMOS DH archive.

## 5.2 Contributions of Mine Action to Reconciliation

The previous section showed the comparative advantages that mine action has for the economic and social reintegration of the ex-combatants of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project in respect of other reintegration processes that do not use this method, such as those in Agua Bonita II.

The Humanicemos Reintegration Project is shown to be a sure path to reintegration because it has committed to providing its participants with conditions for decent employment, skills, technical tools and legitimate resources for their transition into civilian life. As such, mine action has positively impacted the process of collective and individual reintegration for these ex-combatants, which can be observed by the fact that they remain in the process and, therefore, do not relapse by joining illegal armed groups.

These points show the impacts that the Project has had on the ex-combatant population that comprise it. Now, what are the needs of the beneficiary communities that the Project responds to? What views do the mine action actors and the communities affected by the presence of explosive ordnance have of the activities carried out by HUMANICEMOS DH? What are the benefits of mine action for the community from the point of view of the ex-combatants? How has the media coverage been of the Project and its impact? These are the questions that will be answered in the following section.

### a) Views of External Actors Towards HUMANICEMOS DH

The mine action network is composed of state

and non-state actors that intervene in the territories affected by the presence of anti-personnel mines. Among the state actors are the public institutions with varying levels of responsibility on the subject. Leadership in the sector, from the national to the territorial level, falls to OACP, the governorships and the municipalities. Among the non-institutional actors, there is also room for the civil humanitarian demining organizations, civil society organizations, victims' organizations, the affected communities, as well as the donors and other multilateral international cooperation organizations that support the sector.

The Humanicemos Reintegration Project has been integrated into this network of actors with which it has established relations of technical or financial cooperation, social dialogue, monitoring and accountability, exchange of information and collaborative work towards common goals on different levels (see Table 14):

**At the international level** with organizations such as the European Union, Norway, the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations Multi-Partner Fund (MPTF), UNMAS and the United Nations Verification Mission.

**At the national level** with OACP, the ARN and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP).

**At the territorial level** is the Battalion of Humanitarian Demining Engineers No. 1 of the National Army (BIDES). Also, there are the Governorship of Caquetá, the mayor's office of the municipality of la Montañita, the local authorities of the Emberá Katío Indigenous Refuge and community leaders representing the Communal Action Groups (JAC by its acronym in Spanish) of the zones where the Project has areas assigned for demining. This group of territorial actors is joined by the Association of Survivors of APM United by Life, and Social Pasturage.

**TABLE 14**

Network of Actors Connected to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project and Types of Relationships

Level	Actor	Type of Relation
International	European Union	Financial cooperation
	OAS	Exchange of information
	MPTF	Financial cooperation
	UNMAS	Technical cooperation and financial monitoring
	United Nations Verification Mission	Exchange of information
National	OACP	Monitoring and accountability Exchange of information
	ARN	Exchange of information
	JEP	Social dialogue
Territorial	BIDES	Collaborative work towards common goals
	DDG	
	Governorship of Caquetá	Monitoring and accountability
	Mayor's Office of the Municipality of la Montañita	Social dialogue
	Emberá Katío Indigenous Refuge	Social dialogue
	JAC Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II	Social dialogue
	United by Life	Social dialogue
	Social Pasturage	Collaborative work towards common goals

Source: original creation with information from interviews



With the aim of getting to know the views of some of these actors towards the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, their opinions were solicited, and are presented here in the section below:

## UNMAS

As an organization that provides technical assistance to the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, UNMAS values mine action as a means to generate trust between the parties to the conflict. Accordingly, humanitarian demining becomes a gesture of peace and an opportunity for the signers of the Peace Accord to show tangible results in the territory<sup>54</sup>.

## National Authority (OACP)

According to the National Authority, the relation with HUMANICEMOS DH has been constructive, harmonious, and open. As with any other operator, they require them to comply with the same obligations under the Ottawa Treaty and the National Mine Action Standards. Regarding the relation with the ex-combatants, they consider that the process constitutes an interesting lesson for learning how to harmonize the experience of leaving behind weapons and delivering results. In this sense, UNMAS has been fundamental in the transfer of competences.

At the same time, they consider that HUMANICEMOS DH has factors in common with most other reintegration projects. However, the point that distinguishes it from the others and makes it especially valuable is that it sticks to humanitarian principles, those which implicate a process of introspection within the individual and the collective.

The National Authority recognizes that HUMANICEMOS DH is a disciplined operator, who's own ex-combatants had to unlearn practices, and now have the flexibility to adopt new techniques and standardized procedures (reflected and confirmed in the quality assurance and control activities of the operations)<sup>55</sup>.

## Governorship of Caquetá

Among the functions of the governorship of Caquetá is that of coordinating the institutional provision of mine action, follow-up with the departmental level and oversee the work of the operators in the territories. In this way, by the relationship that the Governorship has established with HUMANICEMOS DH in inter-institutional spaces of the mine action sector and the recommendation of the community, it considers that this is an operator that has generated confidence through the work it has done. In addition, it reveals the willingness to construct peace in the territory<sup>56</sup>.

## Battalion of Humanitarian Demining Engineers No. 1

BIDES initiated demining operations in the department of Caquetá in 2016. It has a presence in the municipalities of San José del Fragua, Florencia, Paujil, El Doncello, Puerto Rico and San Vicente del Caguán. It works together with Social Pastorage and the Governorship as facilitators that work in the area of EORE. The relationship between BIDES and HUMANICEMOS DH was established through meetings with the Agustín Codazzi Geographical Institute (IGAC by its acronym in Spanish) to identify common areas in the vereda of las Américas in the municipality of El Doncello.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Jan Philip Klever – Programme Manager, UNMAS Colombia. December 3, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Martha Isabel Hurtado Granada – Associate Commissioner for Mine Action. Virtual interview. December 15, 2020.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Luz Dary Oviedo – Support Professional, Secretary of the Government, Governorship of Caquetá. Florencia, Caquetá. October 16, 2020.

In regard to their perspective of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, they mention that their presence in the territory is in itself an achievement, because with the knowledge of their members about the locations of explosive ordnance, they prevent incidents and help to reduce harm to the civilian population. They recognize the effort required to work in compliance with the NMAS, and the fact that they are certified by the National Authority inspires confidence in their allies<sup>57</sup>.

## b) Views of Beneficiary Communities Towards HUMANICEMOS DH

In order to understand the perspectives held by the population affected by the presence of anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices in the veredas of El Porvenir, Unión Cordillera and the Emberá Katío Indigenous Reservation in the municipality of la Montañita concerning HUMANICEMOS DH and humanitarian demining, a survey composed of seven questions was distributed<sup>58</sup>.

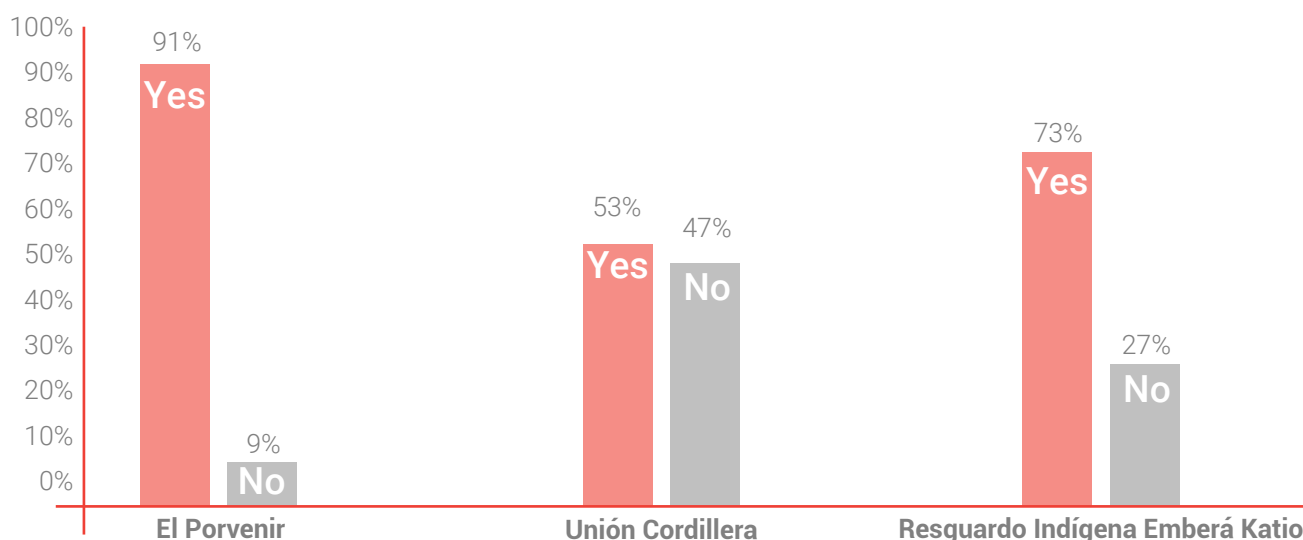
The themes touched on in the questionnaire distributed to representatives of the community were about their knowledge and participation in the programmed activities of HUMANICEMOS DH, perspectives on security, the contributions of HUMANICEMOS DH to the improvement of security and acceptance of humanitarian demining activities being carried out in the veredas.

### Results of the Survey

Regarding the community's awareness of HUMANICEMOS DH as a civil humanitarian demining organization that has a presence in the veredas to conduct mine action activities; as shown in Chart 6, of the three communities consulted, vereda towards the programmed activities of HUMANICEMOS DH, El Porvenir (91%) and the Emberá Katío Indigenous Refuge (73%) said yes, they know about HUMANICEMOS DH. For their part, the community vereda Unión Cordillera is the one that was least aware (53%).

## CHART 6

### Community Awareness of HUMANICEMOS DH



Source: original creation with data from the survey of community perspectives

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Fabio Hernando Díaz – Battalion of Humanitarian Demining No. 1 Caquetá. November 10, 2020; and Interview with Sergeant Víctor Sicacha and Sergeant Alfonso Victoria – Quality Control Battalion of Humanitarian Demining No. 1 Caquetá. Florencia, Caquetá. October 16, 2020.

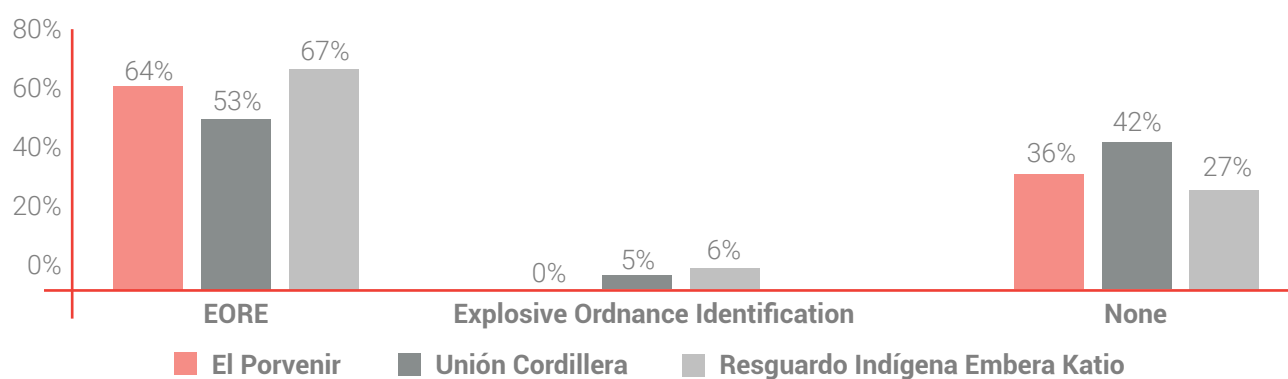
<sup>58</sup> Although by this time (December 2020) HUMANICEMOS still had not conducted any humanitarian demining in the zone, it had organized EORE activities and activities for the identification of explosive devices.

When asking about participation in the programmed activities of HUMANICEMOS DH, the three communities reported predominantly attending the EORE activities (64% in El Porvenir, 53% of Unión Cordillera and 67% of the Indigenous Refuge). Additionally, in the vereda of Unión Cordillera and in the Indigenous Refuge, HUMANICEMOS DH had put forward activities in the community to identify explosive ordnance through NTS, which is evidenced by the respective participation of 5% and 6% of the populations surveyed in the two communities.

Of the population consulted, 36% in the vereda of El Porvenir, 42% in Unión Cordillera and 27% in the Emberá Katío Indigenous Refuge reported not having participated in any activity of HUMANICEMOS DH conducted in these areas (see Chart 7).

## CHART 7

### Community Participation in Activities Programmed by HUMANICEMOS DH

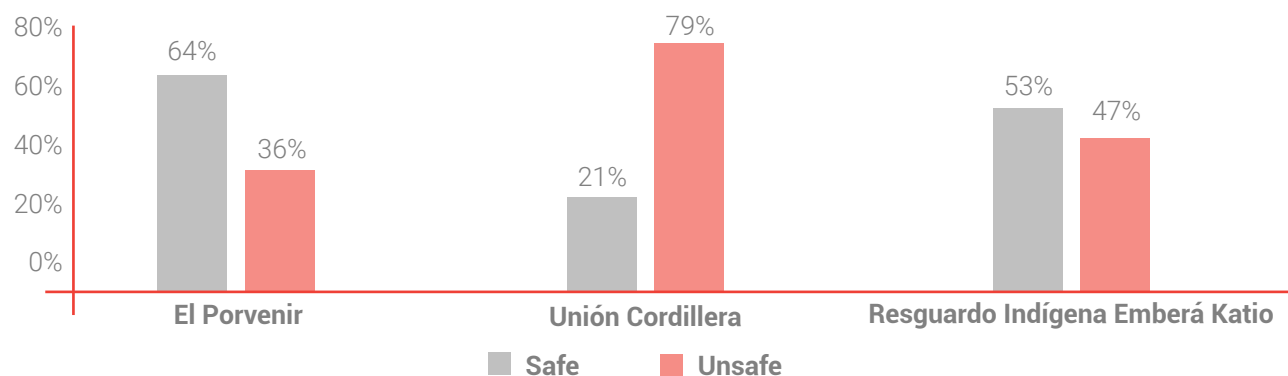


Source: original creation with data from the survey of community perspectives

In relation to the perception of security in the territory, in the vereda El Porvenir and the Refuge, the inhabitants affirm that it is safe (64% and 53%), in contrast to Unión Cordillera, where 79% refer to it as unsafe (see Chart 8). However, in the three populations, the leaders and representatives of the community accept that HUMANICEMOS DH could conduct mine action activities as a mechanism to help improve perceptions of security. Finally, 100% of those surveyed recognize the positive contribution towards reconciliation made by HUMANICEMOS and the ex-combatants.

## CHART 8

### Perception of security in the vereda of El Porvenir, Unión Cordillera and the Emberá Katío Indigenous Refuge



Source: original creation with data from the survey of community perspectives

**c) Community Perceptions of Humanitarian Demining and the Ex-Combatants Connected to Mine Action**

The members of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project that participated in the first phase of the project with the support of civil organizations, namely NPA, CCCM and the HALO Trust, reported having performed EORE work.

From their experience as links to the community and of the process of building trust with the communities affected by the presence of anti-personnel mines and explosive devices, a diversity of reactions were found, especially about humanitarian demining and the fact that this activity was carried out by ex-combatants.

For example, the former participants of the Project identified two perspectives that the community had about humanitarian demining. The first was about the association of humanitarian demining with the arrival of oil companies and/or the launch of large-scale mining economies, as observed in the following testimony:

**Testimony 1**

*"In Algeciras, Huila the most common fears of the community regarding demining are that, after the humanitarian demining organizations the oil companies will come, and that their work is to open the door for them to start the process of mineral extraction in the regions."*<sup>59</sup>

Other perspectives contrast with the lack of knowledge in the community about humanitarian

demining, including the existence of anti-personnel mines in their territory:

**Testimony 2**

*"Many people did not even know about the foreign objects that existed in the territory. Some did not know if there were mines, and fewer knew the precautions that they had to take and how the processes of decontamination is performed."*<sup>60</sup>

Regarding the participation of ex-combatants in the demining activities, the perceptions of the community fluctuate between distrust and acceptance. Distrust because of the acts of the ex-combatants during the armed conflict. In spite of this, the same community recognizes their contribution to locating the mines and clearing land <sup>61</sup>:

**Testimony 3**

*"The community thinks that the ex-combatants know the locations of the mines, and although they don't trust them, believe that they are going to locate and remove them [...] the community can have a mistaken view of us, but also see the positive and that is that, HUMANICEMOS can do its work well for the benefit of the community."* <sup>62</sup>

According to the former participants of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, the change in the community's perceptions of the ex-combatants is always going to depend on their disposition for their community work and on clear information that is exchanged with their leaders before, during and after the intervention:

<sup>59</sup> Interview with F.G. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 11, 2020.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with E.M. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 10, 2020.

<sup>61</sup> According to the Mine Action Technical Norms 6469, clearing land (la liberación de tierras) is defined as the process that permits all reasonable efforts to be applied to identify, define and eliminate contamination from explosive devices through the performance of ENT, Technical Surveys and/or clearance. Clearing land promotes the efficient execution of operations on the part of the ODH.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with F.G. – Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 11, 2020.



### Testimony 4

*"There are places where they knew that someone was an ex-combatant and they welcomed him with kindness, in other places it was the opposite, they shut the doors. There was not 100% support, but this has changed. With the work that we did with EORE and the information shared with the community, now the people know about HUMANICEMOS DH and think it is an organization that has a good future."*<sup>63</sup>

The community links facilitate closeness with the community. Thanks to these and the work of EORE, it is explained that the humanitarian demining is not linked to the presence of any company or any economic interests. Additionally, the benefits of demining are demonstrated and pre-existing distrust is worked through. The community links make up part of the strategy of protecting the safety of the participants in the Project and of the community they're in from any possible risks stemming from the presence of dissidents or other armed actors.

#### **d) Image of the Peace Process and Reintegration in the Views of the Public**

In 2020, HUMANICEMOS DH passed three important milestones in the organization's history. The first was on March 10, when the Government of Colombia and the United Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding to officialise the nomination of UNMAS in Colombia as the External Monitoring Agency for HUMANICEMOS DH. The convention was signed by the High Commissioner for Peace, Miguel Ceballos, and the Resident Representative of the United Nations for Colombia and Director of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Colombia, Jessica Faieta. The signing of this Memorandum authorized

HUMANICEMOS DH to initiate humanitarian demining operations.

The second milestone was passed on June 29 2020, when the participants of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project could formally begin training in ENT with UNMAS Colombia. The training lasted five weeks and upon completion in the first week of August, 17 ex-combatants passed the operational evaluations, and 15 of them could be certified by the National Authority to undertake NTS operations. A third milestone was passed on October 5, when HUMANICEMOS DH deployed its first NTS teams in various communities in the vereda of Unión Cordillera in the municipality of la Montañita, Caquetá.

After an analysis of information about media coverage on the national and international scale with data provided by the monitoring platform *MeltWater*—accessed from the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Colombia—HUMANICEMOS DH recorded, for the period of March 2020, the period from August 1 to September 15, 2020, and the period from November 1 to 10, 2020, the following performance in the media.

In the first period, a total of 10 publications in the media related to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding<sup>64</sup>. In the second period, a total of 123 publications related to the organization and an average of three mentions per day. In the third, a total of 171 publications, November 2 and 4 being the days with the most activity in digital media and on social networks<sup>65</sup>.

*Meltwater* also performed an analysis of the perceptions of the content related to HUMANICEMOS DH. It should be highlighted that,

<sup>63</sup> Interview with K.C.— Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 17, 2020.

<sup>64</sup> UNMAS. Monitoreo de medios: firma del Memorando de Entendimiento Gobierno-ONU Proyecto Humanicemos. (Marzo 2020).

<sup>65</sup> UNMAS. Media monitoring and social networks at the start of operations for HUMANICEMOS DH. (August to September 2020).



HUMANICEMOS DH personnel with an anti-personnel mine victim in the department of Caquetá.

Photo: Javier Taborda / HUMANICEMOS DH.





at the time of the first milestone regarding the Memorandum of Understanding, there were 13% positive perceptions, which surpassed negative perceptions only by 1%. 74% of perceptions were of a neutral tone. In the case of the milestone associated with the certification of the organization, 11% of perceptions were positive while 3% were negative. The remaining 85% was of a neutral tone. For the final milestone, regarding the deployment of NTS teams in the field, neutral perceptions predominated at 68%, followed by negative perceptions at 27% and positive perceptions at 4%<sup>66</sup>.

It is worth mentioning that this scoring was done through the analysis of the words or language used in the publications. Words like “paz” (peace), “reconciliación” (reconciliation), “desminado humanitario” (humanitarian demining) or “buen ejemplo” (good example) were classified as comprising a positive tone. Meanwhile, words like “conflicto” (conflict), “guerra” (war), “muertes” (deaths), “combatientes” (combatants) or similar words were considered negative. This does not imply that the publications about HUMANICEMOS DH were in opposition to the organization or the Project.

Whether the perceptions about the activities of the organization and the Project vary between the positive and the negative will depend on the political context and the public opinion that emerges in these publications. However, it is important to point out that during March 2020, the Project reached an increase of visibility of 592%—passing 0 mentions to 45 in a single day—in the national and international media.

On the other hand, the range of headlines such as “In la Montañita, Caquetá Ex-combatants of FARC begin the demining of territories affected by the conflict”<sup>67</sup> or “Former guerrillas of the extinct FARC start demining rural zones in the department of Caquetá” in previous months place messages of reconciliation with a restorative focus that is being consumed by a public of between 5.7 and 6.8 million people on social networks<sup>68</sup>.

### e) Needs Attended by the Humanicemos Reintegration Project

In accordance with the information provided by the surveys and interviews, the needs that the Humanicemos Reintegration Project responds to are grouped into three categories: the first relates to the land clearance; the second relates to social dialogue and reconciliation with a restorative focus; and the third concerns regional development.

#### Land Release

All of the actors and members of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project agree that the most important objective is to clear the territory from the presence of anti-personnel mines and explosive ordnance. In this sense, they both count on the project and HUMANICEMOS DH as a civil organization of humanitarian demining. Aside from that, however, the perceptions these actors hold towards the Project are positive and they consider that the technical assistance, organizational strengthening and support of UNMAS for the deployment of operations of HUMANICEMOS DH have been essential for building trust.

<sup>66</sup> UNMAS. Media monitoring and social networks at the start of operations for HUMANICEMOS DH. (November 2020).

<sup>67</sup> El Espectador. En la Montañita, Caquetá Excombatientes de Farc empiezan a desminar territorios afectados por el conflicto. (02 de noviembre 2020). País. <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/exfarc-empiezan-a-desminar-territorios-afectados-por-el-conflicto/>

<sup>68</sup> Europapress. Antiguos guerrilleros de las extintas FARC comienzan a desminar zonas rurales del departamento del Caquetá. (03 de noviembre 2020). Internacional. <https://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-antiguos-guerrilleros-extintas-farc-comienzan-desminar-zonas-rurales-departamento-caqueta-20201103165817.html>

In respect of the impact of the ex-combatants on the Mine Action sector, the responses are similar. The partners of the Project consider it positive that the ex-combatants can carry out humanitarian demining as a means of giving reparations to the community affected by the armed conflict and as a gesture of peace. Accordingly, as long as the operation complies with the NMAS, adopts good financial, corporate, communication and reputational practices that demonstrate that the participants are prepared to be part of the collective issues of the sector, HUMANICEMOS DH will be considered a legitimate and competent actor.

### Social Dialogue and Reconciliation with a Restorative Focus

From the data presented in the survey distributed in the towns in sectors 3 and 4 of the municipality of la Montañita, it is worth noting that even though when all the members of the community do not know about HUMANICEMOS DH (see Chart 6) and have not previously participated in any of the programmed activities (see Chart 7), 100% of the communities of the three towns accept that this organization could carry out mine action activities. Consequently, 100% of the community surveyed recognizes the positive contribution towards reconciliation of HUMANICEMOS DH and the ex-combatants.

To the beneficiary communities, Humanitarian demining conducted by ex-combatants represents an authentic display of willingness to construct peace, accept the new legal norms and demonstrate that the personal and collective change is real<sup>69</sup>. It is because of this that the teams of HUMANICEMOS DH have developed a

solid strategy for training in and management of media relations. The first is focused on community links, responsible for the collection of information, the analysis of security conditions and EORE workshops with those in charge of making decisions in the assigned zones<sup>70</sup>. The second is oriented to prepare the participants and their directors on the themes of effective communication with the media due to the increase of the visibility of the Project as an influencer of public opinion about the Peace Accord and reintegration.

Although the ex-combatants can be exposed to controversial environments and there still exist some risks of possible reprisals or rejection, the role of community links and media communications has facilitated the Humanicemos Reintegration Project to build alongside them spaces of trust and reconciliation through social dialogue<sup>71</sup>.

### Territorial Development

When reference is made to the beneficiary communities of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project, we also speak of the Centro Poblado Agua Bonita II, the site where the Regional Base of Training and Operations is located and where the participants carry out their work.

Agua Bonita II acts as a receptor of an organization of humanitarian demining and of the economic, social and organizational dynamics that come with it. This is illustrated by the buying and selling of provisions in the mini-markets of Agua Bonita II to meet the needs of the participants, the two-way provision of public services and the constant flow of participants between the training base and the Centro Poblado to reach their homes or visit family members.

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with María Janeth Brand – President of Fundación Unidos por la Vida. Florencia, Caquetá. October 16, 2020.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Ángela Orrego – Director of HUMANICEMOS DH. December 14, 2020.

<sup>71</sup> EORE team, HUMANICEMOS DH - Session of methodological reflections on the application of instruments with the ex-combatant population and the beneficiary community. December 11, 2020.



## 5.3 Evaluation of the Process: the Humanicemos DH Model

After touching on the contributions of mine action to the individual and collective reintegration of ex-combatants, and the contributions of humanitarian activities to reconciliation in the territories, the following section aims to analyse the follow-up mechanisms, quality control and systemization implemented by HUMANICEMOS DH.

With this, we would like to illustrate the good practices that assure quality of operation and the rationale behind practices that supports the idea that this Project is unique, with the potential to become a replicable model of reintegration through the mine action.

### 5.3.1 Quality Control in Humanitarian Demining

The main objective of quality control is to ensure that the humanitarian demining process is accomplished through the implementation of a system of oversight, revision and control during each step. In this manner, compliance with quality requirements is assured by the activities carried out and in the resulting products of the regulatory framework of the National Mine Clearance Standards (Office of the High Commission for Peace, 2017: 3).

The monitoring and quality control activities are based on the systematic collection of data related

to specific indicators with the aim of providing information concerning the progress of the work of the organization and compliance with procedures and policies<sup>72</sup>.

There exists a direct relation between a humanitarian demining organization that achieves good results on its system of internal quality control and the satisfaction and trust generated in the affected communities, the State, the donors and the rest of the actors involved. In other words, an operation that is regulated by the National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) is an operation that is safe and efficient, and therefore reliable<sup>73</sup>. The work of the External Monitoring Component (CEM) of UNMAS is to verify that all of this is accomplished.

In the case of HUMANICEMOS DH, the CEM of UNMAS has carried out the combination of procedures related to the national standards at the strategic level for the quality control of humanitarian demining<sup>74</sup> (monitoring and oversight of the training, quality control, follow-up with those not in compliance, records of events and recommendations), for which there exist rigorous records, measuring and analysis of information produced during the performance of the monitoring and production of results reports before the National Authority. In this way, unattained goals or possible defects, and plans for the reduction of repeated non-compliance are effectively identified.

<sup>72</sup> In agreement with the National Standards (Office of the High Commission for Peace, 2017), once the operation is reported by the operator or organization of humanitarian demining, the external monitoring component conducts the external quality control of the field operation and verifies compliance with the standards. As a result of these activities, two outcomes can occur: it passes the external quality control and the operation is approved, or it does not pass and non-compliance is reported, in way that the operation report must be verified and corrected for the process to start again.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Lina María Castillo – Quality Control Coordinator, UNMAS Colombia. December 3, 2020; and Interview with Nathalie Ochoa – Former Training Coordinator, UNMAS Colombia. December 7, 2020.

<sup>74</sup> OACP / National Mine Action Standards. 2017. Versión 2. [http://www.accioncontraminas.gov.co/Documents/170320%20MINE\\_ACTION\\_E-standar%20Nacional%20Gestion%20de%20Calidad.pdf](http://www.accioncontraminas.gov.co/Documents/170320%20MINE_ACTION_E-standar%20Nacional%20Gestion%20de%20Calidad.pdf)

### a) Monitoring and Supervised Field Training

The CEM of UNMAS reports a high level of satisfaction with the training packages due to the quality of the design of the proposed contents, the plans and programs implemented and the skills attained by the trained teams.

Thanks to the assistance of UNMAS, HUMANICEMOS DH currently provides:

**Training Packages:** which incorporate tools, presentations, concepts, teaching aids and standardized methods of evaluation. The material prepared for the student's training sessions or books functions as a notebook in its contents, timelines and themes, that guides the trainers in the teaching process. In effect, it increases the quality of the content transmitted and reduces improvisation<sup>75</sup>.



HUMANICEMOS DH operations are monitored by the External Monitoring Component (CEM) of UNMAS. The results of the evaluations are reported to the National Mine Action Centre: OACP-Descontamina Colombia. Photo: UNMAS Colombia.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Elena Gómez and Miguel Herrera – Quality and Monitoring Assistants, UNMAS Colombia. February 18, 2021.

**Methodologies:** combine the technical experience of the instructors, the pertinence of the contents and the adaptation of the lesson plans to the needs of the client. As a result, the training proposals are formulated based on compliance with the Standards, and, furthermore, take into account factors associated with the literacy level of the participant in the organization, knowledge of the explosive ordnance originating from the Colombian conflict, the climate and the context of the zone, as well as the idiosyncratic characteristics of reintegrated persons originating from different regions of the country.<sup>76</sup>

**Intensive training courses:** in the training monitoring reports, compliance is demonstrated in relation to class time and the duration of the training. The courses are more complete and longer in terms of hours and weeks than those of other humanitarian demining operators<sup>77</sup>. There is emphasis on the classes in NTS, Clearing and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD 1) with modules of 4 to 5 weeks, and a medical course of 18 days with additional hours and days per module<sup>78</sup>.

**Relation between instructors and students in the classroom:** following the guide of the International Mine Action Standards

(IMAS) for the management of training<sup>79</sup>, instructors supply the needs of the students in a ratio of one instructor per 10 to 15 students in the classroom, and the training is adapted to meet the needs of the target audience<sup>80</sup>.

**Uniformity of knowledge and quality:** from a quality perspective, teams internalize the same, uniform knowledge. As an example, participants have succeeded to follow the procedure for the disposal of devices in an almost identical manner, which has become a standardized operation<sup>81</sup>.

## b) Planning of Field Operations

UNMAS has concentrated on strengthening operational efficiency as a criterion for the planning of the deployment of field operations. In this way, Management of Operations sends the teams to work in groups corresponding to rural subdivisions (veredas). HUMANICEMOS DH has implemented this practice for reasons of quality and efficiency, since it permits the project to address a greater number of areas suspected to be contaminated in less time, and therefore reduces the costs of the operations<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Lina María Castillo – Quality Control Coordinator, UNMAS Colombia. December 3, 2020; Interview with Nathalie Ochoa – Former Ops and Training Officer, UNMAS Colombia. December 7, 2020; and Interview with Carlos Díaz – Senior Operations and Training Assistant, UNMAS Colombia. February 16, 2021.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Nathalie Ochoa – Former Ops and Training Officer, UNMAS Colombia. December 7, 2020; and Interview with Carlos Díaz – Senior Operations and Training Assistant, UNMAS Colombia. February 16, 2021.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Carlos Díaz – Senior Assistant of Operations and Training, UNMAS Colombia. February 16, 2021; and Interview with Nicolás Meléndez – Operations and Technical Assistant, UNMAS Colombia. February 17, 2021.

<sup>79</sup> Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Standards and technical notes: Management of training version ED.1, Amendment 3. 2018. [https://www.mineactionstandards.org/en/standards/document-detail/?tx\\_imas\\_document%5Bdocument%5D=74&tx\\_imas\\_document%5Baction%5D=show&tx\\_imas\\_document%5Bcontroller%5D=Document&cHash=18d7cd2628e1a53a4f37dde591302bda](https://www.mineactionstandards.org/en/standards/document-detail/?tx_imas_document%5Bdocument%5D=74&tx_imas_document%5Baction%5D=show&tx_imas_document%5Bcontroller%5D=Document&cHash=18d7cd2628e1a53a4f37dde591302bda)

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Lina María Castillo – Quality Control Coordinator, UNMAS Colombia. December 3, 2020.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Lina María Castillo – Quality Control Coordinator, UNMAS Colombia. December 3, 2020.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Carlos Díaz – Senior Operations and Training Assistant, UNMAS Colombia. February 16, 2021.



### c) **Non-Technical Survey and Clearance**

The NTS operation provides an analysis of evidence that permits the calculation and planning of zones for Clearance. Good evidence on the NTS results in reduced areas of portions of land, which leads to a reduction in the time and costs needed for the Clearance. In other words, performing NTS with calculations of very large areas means more time in the field and higher logistical and operational costs for the organization.

UNMAS and the Management of Operations for HUMANICEMOS DH have been concerned with adopting the calculation of reduced areas or minimum areas for the purpose of operational efficiency, through the training modules in NTS and Clearance. The CEM considers that this practice will be very useful in the Clearance operations that will take place in the field soon.<sup>83</sup>

### d) **External Quality Management**

External quality management for the process of land release for all the humanitarian demining operators includes monitoring of their work after its quality has been assured. This process is supported by the recording, documenting and systemizing of information in real time, with the goal that the organization and the National Authority, as the leader and coordinator of the sector, are able to make decisions in a timely manner.

For this reason, the Colombian system of monitoring and external quality management has been designed to detect contraventions<sup>84</sup>. As such, if no contraventions are reported for an organization, there exists a high level of trust. In contrast, the more contraventions reported, the lower the level of trust in the operation.

The CEM of UNMAS has recorded findings and observations for the improvement of the quality of training, medical procedures, NTS, Manual Clearance and EOD performed by HUMANICEMOS DH from the time of its accreditation. With a frequency defined by the planning of activities, the quality management teams carry out visits, revise documents and make observations regarding aspects of the work.

Over the course of tracking HUMANICEMOS DH between July 3 and December 16, 2020, according to data from the system of quality management and the database of CEM of UNMAS, 38 monitoring reports were performed (see Table 15). Of these, 28 reports revealed compliance with the requirements established by the Standards, 6 reports identified areas for improvement and 4 reports revealed that the requirements were not complied with.

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with Elena Gómez and Miguel Herrera – Quality and Monitoring Assistants, UNMAS Colombia. February 18, 2021.

<sup>84</sup> In accordance with the National Mine Action Standards (Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, 2017: 18), "a contravention refers to procedures or results found that do not comply with the established requirements of the national standards, the POA and/or the approved intervention plans. The observations are not contraventions, but the inspector could determine there is a contravention if he or she observes some matter that is not specifically aligned with the provisions of the regulatory framework and where the ODH can take steps for improvement. Contraventions can be differentially characterized depending on their severity (level of impact on the safety and efficiency of the work of humanitarian demining), progress (potential or actual) or some other aspect of the process it relates to (categories). The variance in these aspects facilitates the analysis of causality, the specificity for the development of corrective or preventive Action Plans, and the identification of areas for improvement in a more precise way."



**TABLE 15**

## Monthly monitoring reports for HUMANICEMOS DH

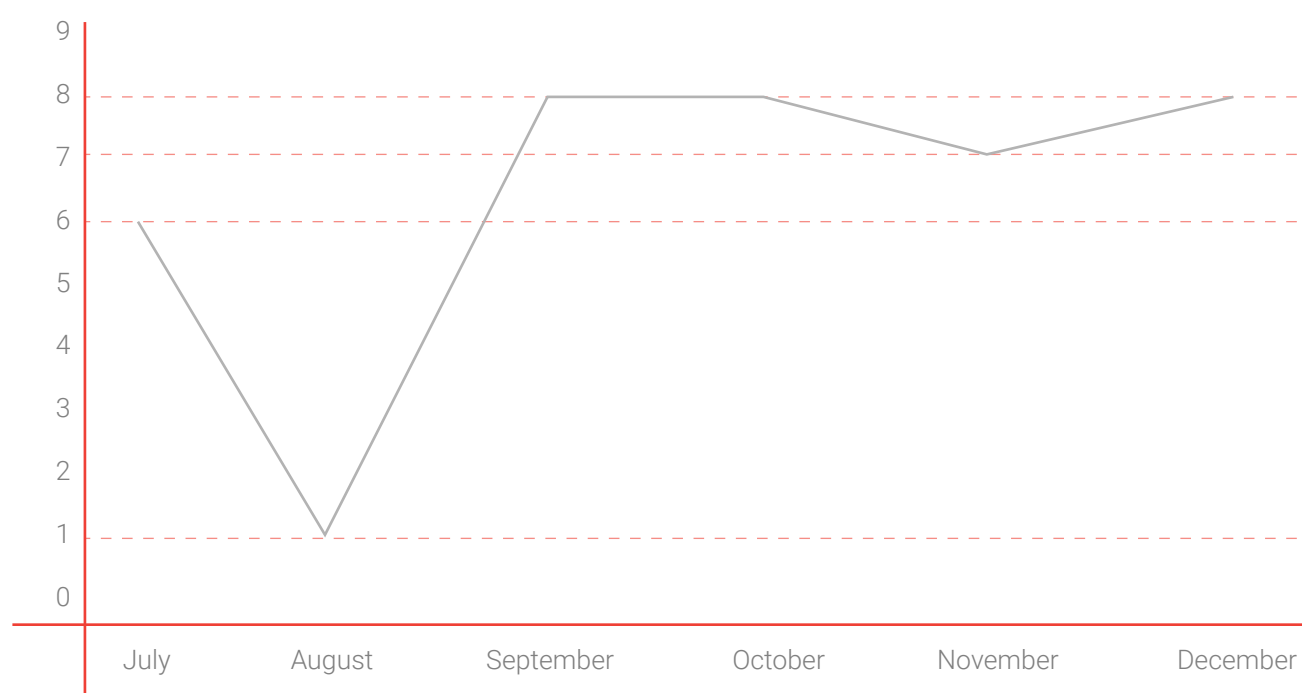
Month	Number of Reports	Compliance	Areas for Improvement	Non-Compliance
July	6	4	1	1
August	1	1	0	0
September	8	7	1	0
October	8	6	2	0
November	7	4	0	3
December	8	6	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: original creation with data from the system of quality control of ECM de UNMAS

In respect to the monitoring activities in July and August, there were 7 reports about HUMANICEMOS DH that focused on the work of documentation and modifications for field work recruitment. From September to December, reporting activities increased due to the start of training and grading (28) and from November to December, due to quality control of NTS activities (9) (see Chart 9).

**CHART 9**

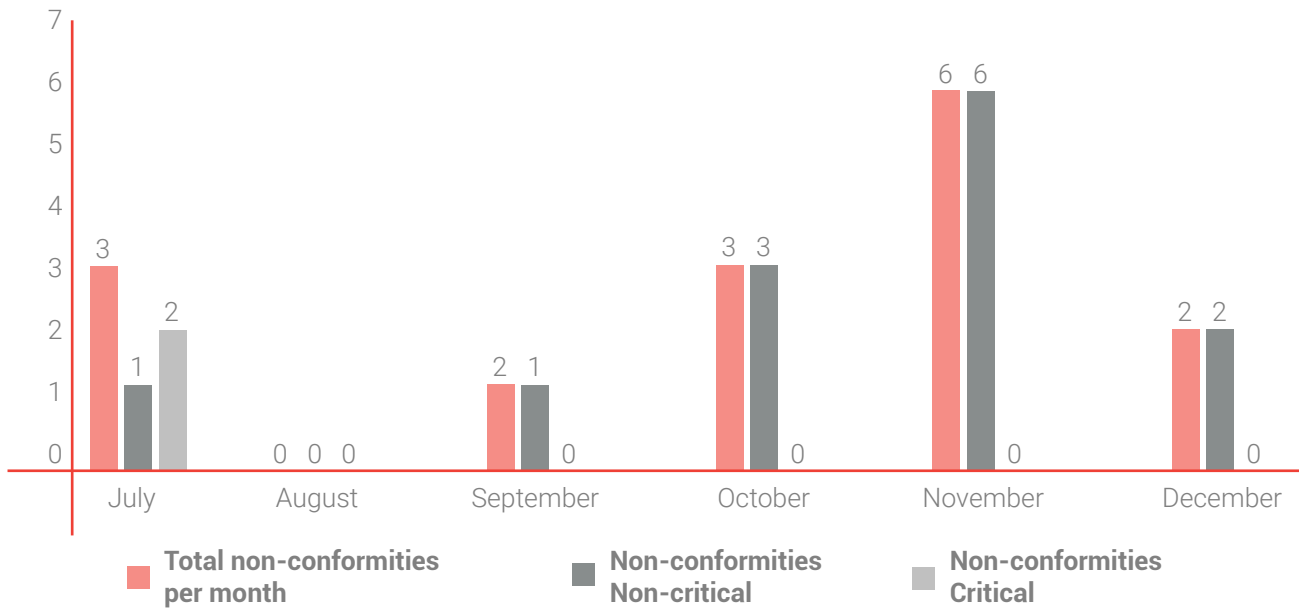
## Monitoring reports for HUMANICEMOS DH | July to December 2020



Source: original creation with data from the system of quality control of CEM de UNMAS

To disaggregate the number of contraventions identified between July and December 2020, of the 38 monitoring reports, 15 contraventions were identified, 13 of which were non-critical and 2 of which were critical (see Chart 10). The general themes of the contraventions were associated with the quality control of the medical support personnel, vehicles and site specific evacuation procedures, improvement of the occupational health plan, and profiles for the leaders of NTS.

**CHART 10**  
HUMANICEMOS DH Contraventions Identified by CEM



Source: original creation with data from the system of quality management by CEM of UNMAS

Since it is the first time that HUMANICEMOS DH conducts training on this theme, the revealed flaws make up part of the learning process, and consequently it is normal that contraventions exist. These errors are corrected in a timely manner.

### e) Reporting the Results of Monitoring

In accordance with the National Standards, the reporting route for the monitoring results begins with presenting the results of CEM of UNMAS to those responsible for the operations in the area<sup>85</sup>, continues with the application of corrective actions, and ends with the signing and copying of the outcomes of the contraventions and agreements with those responsible from the organization.

Through carrying out these steps, the relationship between CEM of UNMAS and HUMANICEMOS DH has functioned to strengthen oversight and contribute solutions that help to resolve contraventions. This focus on monitoring creates a constructive relationship between the teams and the management of operations, who are relied on for the establishment of timelines and the assignment of personnel responsible for the improvement of operations to avoid repeat contraventions.

<sup>85</sup> The information presented is based on evidence from a system of organized data, photographs that show the findings of the report and observations that the identified contraventions are being worked on. Although this system of recording events is designed to identify critical issues—as proposed under the National Mine Action Standards—one of the main innovations has been to adapt the reports to have areas for comments about good practices that reinforce positive behaviour within the operation and the possibility of making effective decisions within HUMANICEMOS DH.

The final results of this oversight are known by the National Authority, who, in addition to serving as a storehouse of information relevant to the operations of all the humanitarian demining operators in the country, contributes to plan, evaluate and improve the management system of each one of them.

As mentioned earlier, due to the relation between UNMAS and HUMANICEMOS DH, the management of operations has been receptive to monitoring via external quality management. With the experience that the current Manager has in the sector as a former member of the National Army Battalion of Humanitarian Demining No. 60<sup>86</sup>, the follow-up and corrective actions have been performed in the required timelines and in alignment with the technical and administrative teams. However, it is important to continually improve with the adoption of recommendations for when the teams are conducting Mine Clearance.

In a coordinated way that is in compliance with the norms, CEM of UNMAS has certified the operation. However, the National Authority has great expectations that HUMANICEMOS DH will maintain its low record of identified contraventions, considering that up until now it has only had one field operation.

### 5.3.2 Lessons learned from Mine Action

This section presents the lessons learned from the Humanicemos Reintegration Project in reference to its contribution to the consolidation of the organization, HUMANICEMOS DH; the development of organizational capabilities and the most significant corporate changes adopted during the first and second phases of the Project. Finally, in the sections for the follow-up of the results process and the impact analysis, new insights and areas for improvement are also identified.

#### a) Contributions of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project

The Humanicemos Reintegration Project has led to the consolidation of the HUMANICEMOS DH civil organization of humanitarian demining by means of establishing and consolidating the only possible vehicle for reintegration through humanitarian mine action that presently exists in Colombia.

At this time, other mine action organizations cannot hire ex-combatants to work in the sector,



Personnel specialized in manual clearance technique and medical support of HUMANICEMOS DH, trained in December 2020. Photo: UNMAS Colombia.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Manager of Operations, HUMANICEMOS DH. December 9, 2020.

given that the OAS cannot provide the quality control services for the participants in the process of reintegration from the FARC-EP. If HUMANICEMOS DH does not exist as an independent organization, composed of and led by ex-combatants, united under the decision of the National Authority to authorize two external monitoring components for the quality management of the organizations in the sector (UNMAS and OAS), the initiative to reintegrate ex-combatants through mine clearance would not have been feasible.

The Project has allowed the reintegration of ex-combatants by means of an organization created specifically for this goal, providing a solid organizational base with the capacity to grow and improve to accomplish operative and financial independence, and also bolstered the capacity of the mine action sector.

#### **b) Promotion of the Development of Internal Capabilities**

The development of capabilities is as much a process as an outcome that is concerned with specific abilities, knowledge and technical tasks, as well as human resources, institutional work and strengthening of collective values of the organizational type (Barlow and Ressler, 2007).

In the mine action sector, many of the efforts directed at the development of capabilities are related with the identification of mines and the transfer of technical skills. For this reason, the initial phases of the projects usually give more weight to the operative and technical aspects in respect of the process of building capabilities in the organizational field. This unbalance can be the main cause of delays for the completion and/or blockages of outcomes and goals in the short and medium term of the projects, with high costs during the process of internal training within the organizations.

In the case of HUMANICEMOS DH, this was not the situation. On the contrary, since its inception in 2017 and particularly during the first phase of the Project, personnel worked arduously to construct an organization with all the requirements that would allow it to operate within the established rules. At the same time, they developed an organizational structure which ensured its financial, administrative and operational functioning. Even the delays on the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding to officialise the CEM of UNMAS became a window of opportunity that permitted efforts to be focused on the development of the organizational component in a more sustainable way over time.

As a part of this strategy, UNMAS dedicated technical and organizational assistance to support:

**The creation** of 134 processes and procedures to direct administration, finance, human resources and logistics.

**The opening** of bank accounts for the members of the organization.

**The development** of training courses on the topic of obligations and rights associated with the organization's corporate governance entities: assembly, directorate, legal representation and the mechanisms of corresponding decisions, as well as the delegation of authority.

**The transfer** of knowledge for the management of projects, including the creation of estimates, presentation of narrative and financial reports, review of legal agreements, and asset management, among other things.

**The introduction** of management practices and resource mobilization: tenders and development of proposals.



**The hiring** of a Manager of Operations who will ensure that the organization complies with the requirements of the National Standards.

**The hiring** of professionals on the part of HUMANICEMOS DH to occupy managerial posts that will permit organizational accreditation and meet the requirements of subsidy management. This process requires time so that the ex-combatant participants accept these professionals into the organization with the payment of salaries that are competitive in the labour market and surpass the salary scale of the ex-combatant participants.

**The logical** establishment of the training base, with a view to starting the training courses and subsequent certification of operations.

**The promotion** and training of women leaders in the organization, in respect of both management and the EORE teams. By including consideration of the different needs of women from a unique focus on gender equality, this will bring new skills and practices that are advantageous in a sector predominated by men. For example, access to workplace rights and training equal to that of men, the right to maternity leave, participation in the decisions of the organization, and with that, policies against violence and discrimination.

With the basic structure ready for operation and conscious of what every project fulfills with its implementation phase, from 2019 and in the framework of the second phase of the Project, UNMAS drove the development of training that was adapted to the new requirements. Consequently, strategic planning helped to transfer knowledge for the creation and implementation of annual operative plans, the formulation of a budgetary tracking strategy and indicators for monitoring and evaluation<sup>87</sup>, improvement of leadership in the framework of corporate governance, sophistication in the area of human resources, risk management and funding<sup>88</sup>.

## **b) Corporate Changes**

Corporate changes make up part of the process of innovation that takes place within organizations as solutions are sought to respond to new demands. The resistance or adaptation to change depends on the history of its members, with which there could exist a strong disposition to adopt new solutions or else use solutions similar to those that have already been tried in the past (Cohen & Levinhtan, 1990; Aguilar, 2005: 96).

It is evident that HUMANICEMOS DH finds itself, at least over the last year, in a metamorphosis as an organization, parallel to the process of reintegration of each one of the ex-combatants linked to the managerial and support positions. New routines and procedures are proof of the major variations between the ex-combatants that launched HUMANICEMOS DH in 2017 and the organizational structure in 2021.

<sup>87</sup> Humanicemos Reintegration Project. HUMANICEMOS DH Strategic Plan - Vision 2020-2023.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Sonia Morales and Jaime Zuluaga – Humanicemos Reintegration Project Team, UNMAS Colombia. December 4, 2020.

From the experience of UNMAS providing technical and organizational assistance to HUMANICEMOS DH, various ways that these changes make sense have been identified:

**Systemization and organizational memory:** HUMANICEMOS DH moved from informal management practices to organizational memory management practices. Now teams conduct periodic meetings, develop policies that are systematized, and request and authenticate budgets according to titles assigned to each activity.

**Compliance with new rules and regulations in civilian life:** the participants of HUMANICEMOS DH moved from complying with the so-called rules of the conflict established by the armed group, to abide by the regulations or statutes of the organization that combine workplace norms, their roles and the organizational chart according to the technical skills acquired through mine action.

**Soft skills:** on the topic of empathic abilities, strategic thinking and psychosocial assistance of friendly partners of the Project helped the ex-combatants to channel and regulate their personal histories of radicalization, reactivity and violence through new mechanisms of conflict resolution and processing of the differences within the organization. UNMAS has insisted that this knowledge is useful for the organization and the completeness of their individual and collective reintegration.

**Strategic vision:** on the topic of empathic abilities, strategic thinking and psychosocial assistance of friendly partners of the Project helped the ex-combatants to channel and

regulate their personal histories of radicalization, reactivity and violence through new mechanisms of conflict resolution and processing of the differences within the organization. UNMAS has insisted that this knowledge is useful for the organization and the completeness of their individual and collective reintegration.

**Value offered:** on the other hand, and perhaps the factor most relevant, is the transition of methods of funding to the revenue associated with outputs as a fundamental step for the continuation of the organization. It was of key importance for UNMAS to make the Board of Directors and the participants in general understand that, to procure more support and resources from the international community, the realization of its organizational project is only achieved through the project's results<sup>89</sup>.

In conclusion, the change and innovation in HUMANICEMOS DH came about through the drive to adopt new routines, where priority was given to empathic capabilities, compliance with the rules and the project's value offered as a part of the process of internal organizational development (Suárez, 1999).

#### **d) Synthesis: Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Improvement of the Project**

In the Early Effects Assessment of the Project directed by UNMAS, lessons learned were identified, which were considered as positive elements that reaffirmed its potential. At the same time, opportunities for internal improvement and recommendations for future processes were reported.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Sonia Morales and Jaime Zuluaga – Humanicemos Reintegration Project Team, UNMAS Colombia. December 4, 2020.

## Lessons Learned

- This is the first mine action organization composed of and led by ex-combatants undergoing the process of economic and social reintegration that comes as a result of a Peace Agreement.
- It integrates the interests of a Government that is willing to support the reintegration of the ex-combatant population that signed the Agreement and chose the mine action sector as a path to reintegration, supporting the process of land release suspected to contain anti-personnel mines.
- It demonstrates and shares the benefits of mine action in its triple nexus: the humanitarian side by responding to the needs of the communities affected by the conflict; the side of peace building by making possible the economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants with a focus on reparation and reconciliation; and the side of development because it involves the land release for productive and social uses for the direct and indirect benefit of rural communities.
- It works with a focus on reparation and reconciliation in order to tear down the existing prejudices against the ex-combatant population in a way that reveals the humanity that exists within them, in spite of their actions in the past, creating narratives for reconciliation and the construction of peace in the territories.
- It puts a positive light on the commitment of the ex-combatants to work in favour of the communities and compensate for damages done in the past.
- It shows that it is critical to have the support of international cooperation, including donors interested in investing in the peacebuilding in Colombia, in order to sustain this type of initiative over the long term.
- It contributes to the strengthening of the mine action sector in Colombia because it has improved the national capacity to achieve compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Treaty, through the creation of a national organization of mine action. This mainly occurs as an increase of the personnel linked to the sector who have the technical capacity to implement safe and efficient procedures based on the National Standards.
- The Project is an example of how international actors like UNMAS have fostered local initiatives, through the means of the technical assistance of HUMANICEMOS DH and serving as a bridge for the mobilization of resources.
- It is an organization under female leadership within a sector dominated by men. Of the seven<sup>90</sup> humanitarian demining actors recognized and accredited in Colombia, HUMANICEMOS is the only organization that has a woman director. This represents an opportunity to bolster gender equality in the field of mine action in Colombia, and strengthen skills and practices that are beneficial against violence and discrimination.
- It enhances decent employment in compliance with the salary and benefits conditions of the law that covers the deminers of each humanitarian demining operator.

<sup>90</sup> As of December 2020, the seven humanitarian demining actors present in Colombia are: Battalion of Humanitarian Demining Engineers No. 1 of the General Command of the National Army of Colombia (BIDES), Marine Infantry Explosives Recovery and Demining (AEDIM), Danish Demining Group (DDG), Humanity Inclusion (HI), The HALO Trust, CCCM, and HUMANICEMOS DH.

## Opportunities for Improvement

According to the experience of the Project, a process with these characteristics must be designed with at least two phases before the organization can be strong enough to work autonomously. A first phase of creation and consolidation of the organization, during which the participants receive a basic training package for the operation; a second phase of deployment, during which the organization conducts operations with technical oversight to reinforce its procedures by means of a process of continuous improvement. Much will depend on the organizational strategy, but this is not a short-term intervention (multi-annual) and, therefore, requires an investment of time to:

- Strengthen the managerial structure of the new organization. It is fundamental to define the structures of organization and governance, as well as the capabilities and competencies available in the ex-combatant population before assigning positions to personnel.
- At the same time, begin the training for the development of skills related to the operative, administrative, logistical and technical matters

related to comprehensive mine action, after having constructed a base of organizational capacity.

- In its final stage, direct and strengthen the organizational capacity directed at self-management and the mobilization of resources. The hiring of professionals who are experts in the procurement of funds from international organizations is an option to be considered to ensure the financial sustainability of previous stages of the Project.
- In the process of knowledge transfer, it is important to request support from mine action organizations with a presence in the country and to seek, in their previous experience, exchanges for guided learning in relation to the operation and leadership in the field. This learning methodology based on the exchange of experiences would help to strengthen the decision-making process of the personnel.

At the end of these two initial phases, the organization should have acquired the necessary capabilities to continue autonomously like any other mine action organization in the sector.



UNMAS staff have provided technical assistance to HUMANICEMOS DH at all levels of the organization. Photo: Javier Taborda / HUMANICEMOS DH.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The Humanicemos Reincorporation Project is a unique initiative that arises from the Peace Accord, but also transcends it through the addition of mine action as a vehicle of reintegration and peacebuilding. This is the first time that an organization is established, staffed and run by ex-combatants to carry out humanitarian demining in a post-conflict setting. HUMANICEMOS DH as an organization has made reintegration possible through mine action in Colombia and as a consequence, it is expected that there will be effective actions of reparation with the communities affected by the armed conflict.

The Humanicemos Reintegration Project shows that the main contribution of mine action to effective collective and individual reintegration is the professional and personal work-related development of the ex-combatants. The Project has fostered decent employment with reasonable salaries and benefits, formal and informal training courses, and, to a lesser extent, treatment of the psychosocial issues of ex-combatants, from a holistic approach. In this way, the ex-combatants currently linked to the Project as well as those ex-participants that were previously trained and employed in the sector have been discouraged from re-joining armed groups by relying on the skills, technical tools and legitimate resources in their transition and continuance in civilian life.

The complexity of establishing a process of economic and social reintegration through mine action was overcome through innovative solutions that gradually reinforced the process. At the same time that the Memorandum of Understanding for the CEM became effective, UNMAS assisted HUMANICEMOS DH to define the organizational structure, training was conducted for the participants in different organizational and

technical themes, and assistance was provided to ensure internal quality management of the operation so that in the short term it would align with the external system of quality. In conclusion, the extra time was used to prepare the participants of the Project for shaping a solid organization, driving effective reintegration and promoting efficiency and security in the humanitarian demining operations.

The humanitarian action has made it possible for the communities to get to know other facets of the ex-combatants, their more human part, in spite of their actions in the past, and their more technical part through the humanitarian demining with an approach oriented towards reconciliation. Consequently, the community has known the benefits of these actions and for this reason HUMANICEMOS DH has been permitted to conduct them at la Montaña, Caquetá. Furthermore, the trust created with the ex-combatants has spread to other actors of the National Government, other humanitarian demining organizations, the international community and, to some extent, Colombian society in general.

As observed through the testimonies and the personal experiences of the ex-combatants, the needs of the communities affected by the presence of explosive ordnance are associated with regional development, the clearing of lands contaminated with mines and other explosive ordnance and reconciliation. Addressing and mitigating these needs has been done, thanks to the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education and Non-Technical Survey teams, the directors and the other participants in the Project, who have reinforced their community relations strategy to strengthen the trust between ex-combatants and beneficiary communities. In this way, social dialogue is encouraged between them through greater and better channels of communication that help to reduce the possible security risks and pre-existing prejudices.

The present Early Effects Assessment reveals the success of this process of reintegration from the personal point of view of the ex-combatants who experienced it, the web of strategic allies of the mine action sector on each of its levels, the beneficiary communities and the teams of the Project, and the organizational component and quality control management from UNMAS. HUMANICEMOS DH has managed to achieve the established triple nexus that includes humanitarian action (Mine Action), the peacebuilding (effective reintegration of ex-combatants, reconciliation with the communities affected by the conflict and restitution for the damage caused), and sustainable development (making socioeconomic gains through the use of the territories cleared of explosive devices), constituting a replicable model for other locations.

For all these reasons and perhaps most importantly, HUMANICEMOS DH as an organization and project for reintegration is evidence of the commitment made by the signers of the Peace Accord to remain lawful and peacebuilding in the territory.

## Vision for the Future

To begin with, here are three points related to the obstacles facing the Project.

1) Precisely because of the presence of illegal armed groups, HUMANICEMOS DH is not free from having to confront security problems that affect its participants and its operation, or cause incidents in the territories. For as long as security is maintained, a latent risk remains, as shown by the increase of massacres and the number of ex-combatants assassinated that have occurred in different zones of the country. For this reason, the organization's internal policy for maintaining security cannot be compromised for flexibility or improvisation.

2) During its immediate future as an independent organization, HUMANICEMOS DH will have the challenge of continuing to replicate the lessons learned and best practices adopted during the delivery of technical and organizational assistance from UNMAS. HUMANICEMOS DH is ready to move forward as an independent organization without the ongoing guidance of UNMAS and has accumulated sufficient organizational knowledge to remain legitimate and up-to-date.

3) Finally, concerning financial sustainability, HUMANICEMOS DH faces the challenge of producing the yields from the Humanicemos Reintegration Project expected from the evidence from the quantitative and qualitative data gathered through this evaluation. The experience of the project shows that the return on investment, quantified by the benefits of access to social and workplace rights for the ex-combatants, as well as reconciliation and reduction of recidivism, in addition to the impact of the mine action that results in the land release, is worth all the efforts and initial investments.

This evaluation exercise reaffirms the importance of continuing to quantify the economic and social impacts of reintegration through mine action, but takes into account that this is only the initial analysis of one moment in the history of the project. The impacts identified are worth being monitored to analyse the variations of the results of this first exercise and contrast them with those arising from future phases of the Project.

For the purposes of continuing with the tracking of the information and indicators of the baseline, it is suggested that there be an update to the process of collecting information, with the same methodological approach and instruments, such as the surveys and interviews (see point 2), after

completing the second stage of phase II of the Project. The suggested start date for the next impact evaluation would be in January 2022.

The data could be contrasted according to the same research questions and corroboration of proposed working hypotheses. At best, to save the costs of hiring external personnel to take charge of the process, it is recommended that the transferred knowledge from the pedagogical component of this first evaluation be applied and that the shared methods and methodologies be replicated.

Now, in addition to following up with the impacts of the Project, allied partners and the interested academic community are invited to carry out ex-post evaluations that touch on themes like:

- i) the costs and benefits of mine action implemented by HUMANICEMOS DH;
- ii) the changes caused by HUMANICEMOS DH in the beneficiary communities in reference to the access and use of the land for productive ends; or

iii) quantify the addition to the national capacity for humanitarian demining contributed by HUMANICEMOS DH.

From these measurements, HUMANICEMOS DH and its donors will have the information to make better decisions regarding financial cooperation and technical support for perpetuating the Project and securing its sustainability over time.

HUMANICEMOS DH is a driver for peace that deserves to be recognized as successful, viable and in possession of all the credentials to be protected and supported by the national and international communities.



Women represent more than 20% of the ex-combatant personnel in the process of reintegration hired by HUMANICEMOS DH. Photo: Javier Taborda / HUMANICEMOS DH.

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## Interviews

G.A. - Ex-logistics Coordinator, HUMANICEMOS DH. La Montañita, Caquetá. October 15, 2020.

Luz Dary Oviedo – Support Professional, Secretary of the Government, Governorship of Caquetá. Florencia, Caquetá. October 16, 2020.

Personnel of the Quality Management Battalion of Humanitarian Demining No. 1 Caquetá. Florencia, Caquetá. October 16, 2020.

María Janeth Brand – President of Fundación Unidos por la Vida. Florencia, Caquetá. October 16, 2020.

Member of Battalion of Humanitarian Demining No. 1 Caquetá. Phone interview. November 10, 2020.

G.M. - Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. November 10, 2020.

Y.G. Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. Phone interview. November 10, 2020.

E.M. Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. Phone interview. November 10, 2020.

Y.D. - Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. Phone interview. November 11, 2020.

F.G. - Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. Phone interview. November 11, 2020.

Third meeting of actors of Mine Action of Caquetá. Virtual event. November 11, 2020.

K.C. - Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. Phone interview. November 17, 2020.

A.R. - Ex-combatant in the process of reintegration and former participant in the Humanicemos Reintegration Project. Phone interview. November 18, 2020.

Pablo Parra – Deputy Programme Manager, UNMAS Colombia. Virtual interview. December 1, 2020.

Jan Philip Klever – Programme Manager, UNMAS Colombia. Virtual interview. December 3, 2020.

Lina María Castillo – Quality Management Coordinator, UNMAS Colombia. Virtual interview. December 3, 2020.

Sonia Morales and Jaime Zuluaga – Humanicemos Reintegration Project Team, UNMAS Colombia. Virtual interview. December 4, 2020.

Nathalie Ochoa – Former Ops and Training Officer, UNMAS Colombia. Virtual interview. December 7, 2020.

F.L. - Manager of Operations, HUMANICEMOS DH. Telephone interview. December 9, 2020.

Edith Girval – Communications Advisor, United Nations Information Centres (UNIC). Virtual interview. December 9, 2020.

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Martha Isabel Hurtado Granada – Associate Commissioner for Mine Action. Virtual interview. December 15, 2020.

Carlos Díaz – Senior Operations and Training Assistant, UNMAS Colombia. Phone interview. February 16, 2021.

Nicolás Meléndez – Operations and Technical Assistance Assistant, UNMAS Colombia. Virtual interview. February 17, 2021.

Elena Gómez and Miguel Herrera – Quality and Monitoring Assistants, UNMAS Colombia. Virtual interview. February 18, 2021.

## 9. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Literature review of international and national mine action.

Annex 2. Instruments: surveys for the collection of quantitative information – Early Effects Assessment of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project.

Annex 3. Instruments: surveys for the collection of qualitative information – Early Effects Assessment of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project.

Annex 4. Pedagogical component of the methodology: Development course of methodological and investigative capacities for peace – Early Effects Assessment of the Humanicemos Reintegration Project.





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