STRENGTHENING TRUST THROUGH BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS IN COLOMBIA TO FOSTER PARTICIPATION

Capstone Project - Master's Program Conclusion Work
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1. Executive summary

The project *Strengthening Trust through Behavioral Insights in Colombia to Foster Citizen Participation* aims to foster trust between citizens and local governments in Colombia as enhancing institutional trust has been shown to be a game-changer in socioeconomic development and democracy strengthening. Through a multidisciplinary approach that includes a review of relevant literature, insights from focus groups, and consultations with experts, we have identified key factors contributing to the current levels of mistrust in local governance. Drawing from these findings, we propose a set of practical recommendations based on behavioral science, tailored to both Fundación Corona and their support of local government authorities. Our goal is to establish a framework that effectively supports the implementation of these recommendations, evaluating their effectiveness in building a sustainable and trusting relationship between citizens and their local governments in the long term.

2. Introduction

A growing literature considers trust as one of the main determinants of current economic development (Algan & Cahuc, 2010)[1]. Market integration, for example, substantially increases when interactions are based on trust, fairness, and cooperation, since these factors lower transaction costs, raise the frequency of successful transactions, and increase long-term rewards (Henrich et al, 2010). Trust is also connected to civic capital and compliance with rules, which are other important factors in development (Guiso et al. 2011). Weak enforcement of such rules breaks the trust of those who follow them, resulting in a more risk-averse society, leading to lower innovation, delayed investments, and poorer economic outcomes (OECD, 2013).

Despite the benefits of trust, countries all over the world are facing a crisis of citizen trust in public institutions that was deepened with the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has been undermining the effectiveness of governments and policymakers (Pradhan, 2021) and distorting good decision-making (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022). In this context, Latin America faces a particularly dramatic scenario: it is the region in the world with the lowest rates of interpersonal trust with only 9% against 29% of the world's average, and decreasing (Lagos, 2021). In Colombia, only 22% of citizens trust the government, which is half of the OECD average on trust in public institutions (OECD, 2023) and lower than the Latin America and Caribbean average of 38% (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022). The Edelman Trust Barometer (2024) suggests that Colombia is the 4th lowest ranked country in terms of trust in institutions. Presidency, electoral institutions, government, judiciary, congress, and political parties are, in this order, the institutions Colombians trust the least, in opposition to high rates of trust in the church, the military, and the police (Latinobarometro, 2021). This scenario imposes a barrier not only to economic development but also to democracy.

Trust, whether in other people or institutions, is intrinsically related to culture. Culture is intrinsically related to the collectively shared experiences of a population in a certain moment that is carried out through generations. Guiso et al (2006) show that the level of trust of US immigrants is affected by the country of origin of their ancestors and highly correlated with trust in their home countries. Nunn (2008; 2020) presented evidence of deep historical roots of contemporaneous variation in trust among regions of Europe or Africa that impact current levels of development. In this context, exposing citizens in Colombia to new types of experiences that enable cultural shifts towards a more trust-oriented society seems essential to enhance democracy and foster long-lasting development in the country.

Considering the importance of trust to development, in this project we will be providing Fundación Corona with recommendations to enhance trust in local governments. To reach this goal, we will

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[1] See, among others: Banfield (1958), Gambetta (1988), Coleman (1990), Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti (1993), Knack and Keefer (1997), La Porta et al. (1997), Alesina and La Ferrara (2002), Luigi Guiso, Paola Sapienza, and Luigi Zingales (2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009), Tabellini (2008, forthcoming), Algan and Cahuc (2009), Nunn and Wantchekon (2009), Aghion et al. (2010), and Nunn (2020).

first cover the background information about the locations that were part of the research, objectives, and methodology. Then, drawing from information gathered in interviews with experts, focus groups, *in loco* visits and desk research, we will elaborate on insights about potential reasons for the lack of institutional trust in Colombia Finally, we will propose a pool of recommendations and a roadmap derived from behavioral science to enhance trust by improving users' experience in participation forums.

3. Background

3.1 Fundación Corona

Founded in 1963, Fundación Corona is a prominent Colombian non-profit organization established by the Echavarría Olózaga family, known for their industrial ventures in ceramics manufacturing. The foundation's focus is to address inequality by focusing on two main pillars of social policy: (1) Education & Employment; and (2) Citizen Participation. Fundación Corona developed an inclusive employment model to understand the employment relationship of communities who were traditionally excluded from the labor market. This framework aims to identify certain barriers to entry so that marginalized groups can be included in the labor force. On citizen participation, Fundación Corona aims to dismantle barriers, such as the distrust within institutions and actors, which hinder and discourage citizen participation. By targeting these two pillars, Fundación Corona aims to improve social mobility, quality of life, and equity through innovative and sustainable models to foster development in Colombia (Fundación Corona, n.d.).

Fundación Corona's interest in trust emerged from their Model of Citizen Involvement (MIC) program. The MIC program seeks to strengthen the relationship between organized citizens and their public institutions by guiding the actions of effective citizen involvement. After implementing the MIC program for six years, Fundación Corona found that the issue of trust has been a key variable in promoting citizen participation. In the Como Vámos Report (Fundación Corona, n.d.) for example, the lack of trust was pointed out as the third most relevant obstacle to citizen participation, only falling behind the lack of information and unawareness of citizens' rights. The MIC program, along with the Fundación Corona's collaborative approach with various partners, including local alliances and international networks to achieve collective goals, underscored the necessity of a deeper understanding of trust dynamics. This realization propelled Fundación Corona to embark on a comprehensive study of trust, including understanding citizen's behavior towards the government, what causes mistrust, and how these pain points can be overcome with effective behavioral change. We sought to explore this by asking what Fundación Corona could feasibly affect in behavioral change, given their self-described role as both an "agitator" and "facilitator" for citizen-oriented policy.

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3.2 Overview of Colombia and Bogotá, Barranquilla and Yumbo

3.2.1 Overview of Colombia

Colombia, with a population of over 52 million, predominantly Christian and largely Roman Catholic (Europa World, n.d.), has experienced notable economic development as a democratic republic. However, the country's recent history, especially in the second half of the 20th Century, has been significantly impacted by armed conflicts happening in rural areas. This turbulent period has left a mark on its socio-economic landscape, contributing to intensifying a deep-seated mistrust in institutions, a challenge that continues to affect the country's progress (U.S. Department of State, n.d.; OECD, 2022).

3.2.3 Overview of Bogotá

Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, is a key cultural, political, and economic center. As the country's largest city, it boasts a vibrant cultural scene and significant urban development. Bogotá's role in Colombia is central, not just in terms of governance but also in cultural and educational aspects, hosting numerous museums, festivals, and a diverse arts scene.

Trust issues in Bogotá's governmental institutions mirror a broader national skepticism towards public officials and their policies. This skepticism is reflected in the citizens' perception of governance, necessitating efforts to enhance transparency and citizen participation to improve trust and effective governance (Bogotá Open database, 2024). Bogotá has been an international reference for initiatives related to trust in local government and the use of behavioral science in public policy since the notorious mayor Antanas Mockus in the year 2000. By using local symbols, humor, and metaphors, he implemented remarkable campaigns that created new types of interactions between citizens and government and enhanced trust in institutions. Some examples are the "thumbs up thumbs down" campaign in which people enhanced prosocial behavior and the "100+10" campaign in which many citizens paid an extra 10% in voluntary taxes as a signal of trust in the mayor (Caballero, 2004). Nowadays, the ideas of Antanas Mockus still resonate in the municipality through General Secretary Liliana Caballero, who has been implementing a plan to build an "Admirable Public Administration"[2] (Caballero, 2009).

3.2.4 Overview of Barranquilla

Barranquilla, the fourth-largest city in Colombia, is the capital of the Atlántico department. Situated near the Caribbean Sea, it is an industrial and commercial hub with the country's largest

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[2] This program for institutional strengthening sought to: 1) foster responsibility amongst civil servants; 2) guarantee a continuity of vision across mayoral administrations; 3) institutionalize shared work, coordination and teamwork; 4) enhance interaction with the citizenry, specifically through the Program of Service to the Citizen; 5) strengthen external accountability; 6) capitalize on lessons from every experience; 7) inspire respect for separation of powers; and 8) promote co-responsibility and self-regulation predicated upon awareness of rights and responsibilities both amongst public servants and the citizenry.

port. Despite budgetary constraints, Barranquilla has made considerable strides in social development, particularly in improving healthcare, education, and public spaces (Pumarejo, 2023). Trust in Barranquilla's government is still challenged regardless of their development success, particularly in the wake of corruption scandals involving the mayor's family. This has affected citizen confidence in local governance, pointing to a need for enhanced government transparency and citizen engagement (Cambio, 2023; Delgans, 2023; Torrado, 2023; Team's interviews, 2024).

3.2.5 Overview of Yumbo

Largely seen as the "industrial capital" of Colombia, Yumbo has one of the highest GDP per capita in the country with a large concentration of businesses (Alcaldía Municipal de Yumbo, 2023). Despite this positive data, Yumbo faces one of the highest homicide rates in the country (IDT Yumbo, 2022). Yumbo's recent history is notably marked by political instability and governmental challenges, factors that have significantly eroded public trust in the local administration. It has most recently come into mainstream conversations on politics due to its role in the violent protests from 2020 onwards. The municipality, an important industrial area near Cali in Valle del Cauca, has experienced repeated changes in mayoral leadership, leading to a sense of political uncertainty and skepticism among its citizens. The situation has been further intensified by instances of governmental corruption (IDT Yumbo, 2022). This frequent turnover in government has hindered the development of consistent and effective public policies, exacerbating issues of governance and contributing to public discontent (Yumbo Como Vamos, 2023). These political challenges are central to understanding Yumbo's current landscape and are key considerations in addressing the need for more stable, transparent, and participatory governance.

In 2024 a new mayor came into office. Seen as an outsider and a businessman in a context of high institutional distrust, the population has been nourishing hope for their demands to be heard. The new term has been highlighting citizen participation and active listening to popular demands. A new strategy created a task force to actively identify and involve last-mile populations in decision-making and service provision (Team's interviews, 2024).

4. Objectives and Scope

4.1 Problem Question: How to strengthen trust between citizens and local governments in Colombia using behavioral insights?

This general question was broken down into sub-questions that guide the research's different stages (this structure will be further detailed in the following sections):
- What are the elements that have been shaping a distrust-oriented mental model in Colombia?
- What are the current issues related to the participatory process that are seen as causes of lack of trust?
- How can these issues be addressed?
- Which experiments based on behavioral insights can be incorporated into the participatory process to enhance institutional trust?

4.2 Project Objectives

The primary objective of this capstone project is to provide Fundación Corona with practical recommendations on how to strengthen the trust of citizens toward local governments using behavioral insights. By fostering institutional trust and enhancing citizen participation, we ultimately seek to support socioeconomic development in Colombia.

The aim is to leverage collected behavioral insights to improve the perception of citizens towards the local government in the participatory process. We will present a set of recommendations, each tailored to leverage Fundación Corona's unique position and influence.

The recommendations are actions **primarily to be undertaken by the third sector with Fundación Corona's coordination**. These initiatives would improve the relationship between citizens and government and enhance government policy from the local to national level. They fall under three phases of the participatory process: 1) Pre-participation Phase, before citizens engage with their public servants and politicians; 2) During Participation Phase, to ensure a positive interaction between citizens and government; and 3) a Post-Participation Phase dedicated to follow-up and dissemination, so individuals feel incentivized to participate again in government affairs and involve more people in the future, fostering a positive participation cycle. They help to promote better narratives about the community's important function in government policymaking and emphasize the State's willingness to do better and engage the public.

To surround the three-phased behavioral experiment, supportive **government policy reforms** are required to ensure the government is not "trust washing" but effectively tackling sources of distrust at their source. Fundación Corona's primary role would be to advocate for these reforms as an "agitator" in the context of alliances with other organizations such as NGOs and advocacy groups. The foundation has an established reputation and networks, meaning Fundación Corona would be

a catalyst for dialogues and changes between policymakers and stakeholders to promote the adoption of policies that enhance trust and civic engagement. This advocacy may involve strategic communication, collaboration with government entities, and mobilization of support from other influential organizations and the public.

5. Methodology

5.1 Theoretical framework

This study is significantly based on the theoretical framework developed by Columbia University Professor Karla Hoff's work about the 2nd wave of behavioral economics (also classified as 4th wave by some scholars). Compared to the first wave, which employed paternalistic nudge approaches and saw "irrational" choices as mere consequences of bounded rationality, the second wave focuses on the central role played by culture on individuals' preferences and actions. This is an interdisciplinary approach that draws on insights from sociology, anthropology, psychology, economy, and other scientific fields.

Central concepts in this work are "mental models" and "cultural mental models". In behavior science, mental models are simplified cognitive representations of external reality that people use to interact with the world around them (Jones et al., 2011). They help individuals process information, solve problems, and make decisions by organizing complex information into more manageable mental structures, providing conscious and unconscious guidelines for behavior (Hreha, n.d.). In other words, they not only operate in the "fast thinking" system (Kahneman, 2011), but they also set the basis for rational thinking.

While some mental models result from personal experience, cultural mental models are widely shared among members of a social group. They are collective representations of reality through which culture works; or the "cultural lens" through which individuals experience the world (Hoff, 2023). They assume various formats, including stereotypes, causal narratives, and simple theories of the world (Hoff, 2023). Mental models allow people to simulate the behavior of a system in situations not directly experienced by them by using generalizations and analogies (Gentner, 2001) built on the group's previous experiences. However, these generalizations are not always accurate, and they might end up spreading erroneous understandings of the world (Gentner, 2001).

Addressing maleficious mental models is crucial to generating cultural change and sustained transformation in collective behavior over time. In this work's case, the distrust-oriented cultural mental model, despite emerging as an intuitive result of the nation's past experiences, is currently imposing barriers to development in Colombia. To propose recommendations on this matter, the team observed the 4 guideline questions illustrated in Section 4.1 in the following structure:
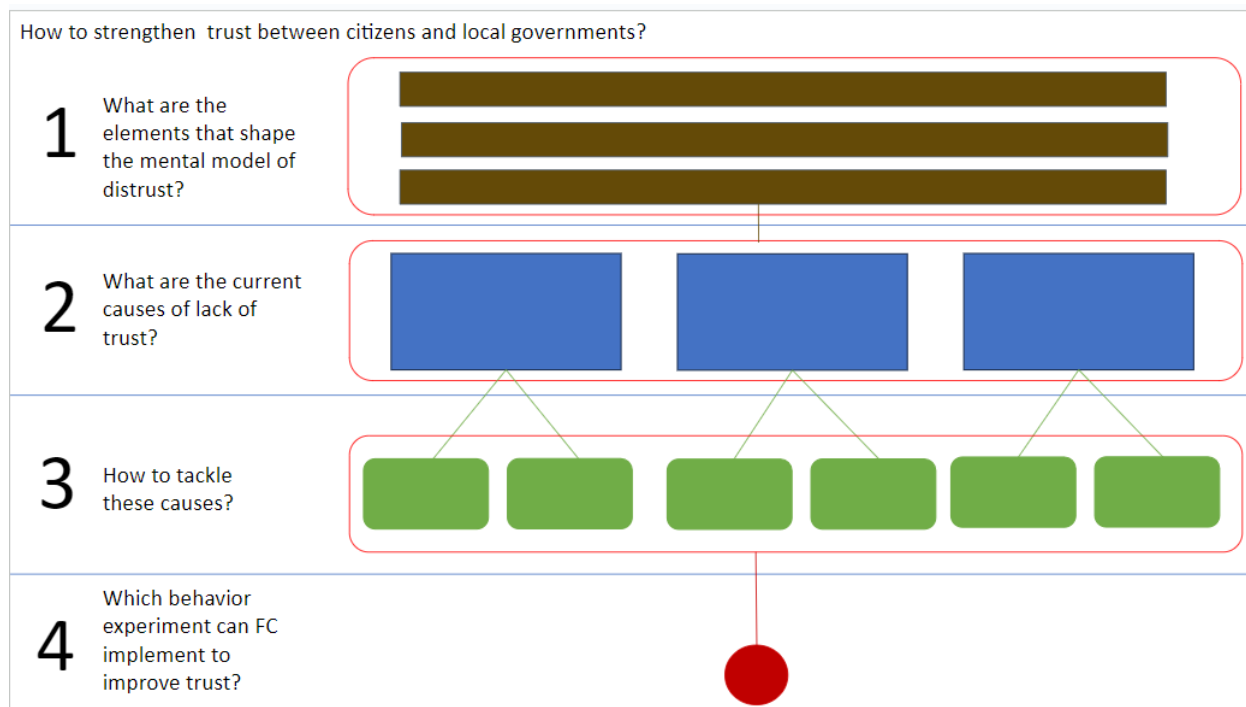
Figure 1: Project stages and overarching question for each stage

The first stage aimed to understand the elements that have been historically responsible for creating a distrust-oriented mental model in Colombia also called the "brown boxes". These are cultural, historical, social, and economic factors that are intimately related to the construction of systemic institutional distrust and still today play a major role in influencing people's behavior. They are abstract high-level elements that cannot be directly addressed, but that help us understand the roots behind the current observed behavior.

The second stage aimed to identify the current sources of lack of trust (also called "blue boxes") that constantly reinforce the distrust-oriented collective mental model. They are influenced by the brown boxes, but they are more tangible pain points felt by citizens that hinder them from changing their attitude towards local governments to a more positive one. The pain points were organized into three categories: service provision, participation, and biased perception of public staff (detailed further on in the report). Since participation is the focus of this project, the other two boxes were analyzed through the lenses of participation.

The third stage aimed to propose actions - both behavioral and policy-based - that can help address the pain points identified under the blue boxes, particularly in the participatory process. They consist of the list of recommendations that will be directed to Fundación Corona considering the organization's dual role: as "orchestrator" of on-the-ground non-profit organizations and as "agitator" of public policies in local governments. As mentioned before, the recommendations consider behavioral insights to improve the participation process, but also policies that should be implemented by local governments to avoid "trust washing".

Lastly, in the fourth stage, we picked one of the recommendations and broke it down into a roadmap. The idea is to offer Fundación Corona a step-by-step guide to implement the action. The chosen recommendation was an informational campaign to enhance participation spaces using behavioral insights.

The group "filled" the boxes using insights from the literature review, interviews with experts, focus groups, and in-loco visits that will be further elaborated below. The final framework with the conclusions to each question is represented below:
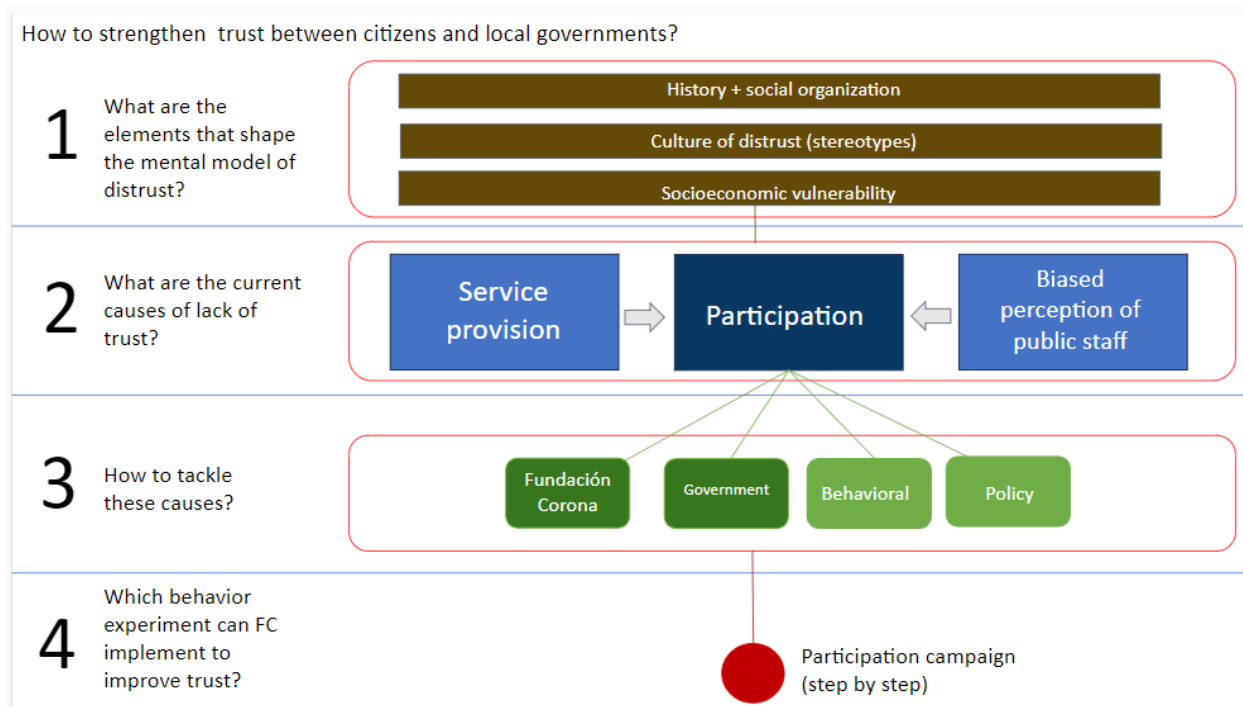

Figure 2: Project stages and overarching question for each stage (specified)

5.2 Methodology Overview

To develop the present work, the group went through 3 main phases that will be detailed below: (1) the scoping phase, (2) the triangulation phase, and (3) the testing phase. As sources, we used literature review, interviews with experts, in-loco visits, and focus groups.

5.3 Scoping phase

We started the project by constructing the framework above to guide us through the questions we needed to answer. Then, we focused on desk background research about Colombia, and our three cities Bogotá, Barranquilla, and Yumbo as a locus of investigation. We delved into civil society reports, and multilateral insights on trust, alongside a detailed examination of experiments and initiatives by Fundación Corona and its partners. We were looking to understand key concepts, best practices in measuring and fostering trust in government, behavioral science concepts, and the

cultural context in Colombia. This allowed the team to gain expertise in the subject matter and build analytical capabilities to assess the organization's behavioral science-based experiments and set us up to triangulate in the next phase then better.

5.3.1 Guiding research questions

- Which methodologies exist to measure trust in local government?
- What are the key drivers for improving trust in local government?
- What are the key drivers in Colombia that are hindering trust in local government?
- What are the fundamentals of behavioral science? How does behavioral science explain the lack of institutional trust?
- How do *Participa+* and *Nuestra Barranquilla* align with Yumbo's and Barranquilla's social and political context?
- What do key actors and experts in Colombia think about trust in government? And how do they think it could be improved?
- How could Fundación Corona's ongoing initiatives be strengthened by incorporating the promotion of trust in local government?
- Which interventions in Latin America and particularly in Colombia have been successful in promoting trust in local government?
- What additional strategies and tactics can be tested and implemented in Colombia to help build citizens' trust in local governments?
- What contributions has the field of behavioral science made to understanding trust?
- What progress has been made in applying these insights in practice, and what is out there that already works?

As we narrowed down the scope of our research, we found two directions of analysis: **citizen-government,** where our role would be to understand how we could improve pre-existing citizen engagement levels and perception of trust in local government; and **government-citizen,** where our role would be aiding the implementation of open government practices and institutional response to citizen input. In agreement with Fundación Corona, the project scope was prioritized to the **citizen-government** dynamic. Trust among citizens, which is another important issue, is already being addressed by Fundación Corona in other projects.

5.4 Triangulation phase

To answer the framework's 4 questions, we shifted to data-gathering through expert interviews and focus groups, then incorporated our insights from our literature review through triangulation. The team prioritized a qualitative approach, planning semi-structured interviews with key informants identified in the stakeholder analysis to aim for a deeper understanding of the finalized experiment.

5.4.1 Literature review

We began our project with a thorough literature review, with the intent to identify and summarize the key theories and conceptual frameworks that underpin Behavioral Science and Trust. We started with fast and slow thinking and then turned to cultural behavior, as well as a brief case

study review of nudge units. In parallel, we delved into a better understanding of the historical-cultural background in Colombia and how it relates to institutional trust.

We defined key concepts to understand using OECD and IDB reports, OPSI Innovations Case Study Library, J-PAL, Egap, and other sources, focusing particularly on Latin America to identify successful behavioral science-based experiments that could inform trust and citizen participation initiatives. This review aimed at gathering a broad comparative perspective and potential proposals for experiments. In understanding the specific context of Bogota, Yumbo, and Barranquilla, we utilized a mix of international, national, and local sources, including data from Fundación Corona's report and government open data. In terms of scientific literature on behavioral science, our team was kindly advised by Professor Karla Hoff in addition to the syllabus used in the Behavioral Development Economics course at Columbia University.

Below is a summary of the key concepts and methodologies we decided to focus on, with definitions found in the following chapter:

- **Trust -** According to the OECD, trust is defined as "a person's belief that another person or institution will act consistently with their expectations of positive behavior." (OECD, 2017). In *Trust: The Key to Social Cohesion and Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean*, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) defined trust as "the belief that others will not act opportunistically" and make broken promises or take advantage of people (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022).
- **Institutional Trust** - we delved into understanding institutional trust as "*the belief that institutions will act in citizens' best interest and that they will fulfill their functions in a fair and equitable way*" Rothstein (2001). It is also *"the confidence that citizens have in their government's ability to govern effectively and ethically. It's foundational for social cooperation, economic stability, and the effective implementation of policies and laws".* This is pivotal to fostering social capital, collective action, and youth engagement, emphasizing beliefs, expectations, and behaviors related to trust in government (OECD, 2022a).
- **Collective/cultural mental models -** Mental models are cognitive structures that help individuals summarize knowledge (e.g., prototypes of a category; narratives that give us an idea of what will come next in each situation; identities that tell us "Who we are") and influence how we process information & make sense of the world (how we parse stimuli, organize information, and give it meaning). Collective or cultural mental models are collective representations of reality through which culture works, or "cultural lenses" through which individuals experience the world. They are constructed from the group's historic collective experiences and may be passed through generations (Hoff, 2023).
- **Multi-actor Governance** - we adopted Hannah Arendt's perspective of democracy (cited in Sheldon, 1983) as collaborative management of public affairs, emphasizing the importance of active citizen participation in governance beyond mere maintenance of fundamental rights.
- **Behavioral Insights** - we incorporated the approach from the second wave of behavioral economics, psychology, human-centered service design, and behavioral insights to understand user behavior toward desired outcomes from Professor Karla Hoff. This puts

culture as a central element in shaping people's preferences and behavior (Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, n.d.; South Africa, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany).

- **Political Culture and Citizen Education** - we explored the shared views, normative judgments, and values of the current and past Colombian political system, focusing on how these elements foster civility and self-efficacy among citizens. This examination includes an understanding of how Colombians perceive their roles and responsibilities within a democratic society, emphasizing the importance of respectful discourse and the confidence to effect change within the political landscape (Winkler, 2023).
- **Citizen Participation** - examining the conditions necessary for effective participation, including political, social, and communities in institutions and legal systems (Serrano Rodríguez, 2015, p. 96).
- **Systems Change** - understanding trust and citizen participation within a broader framework of relational change, including semi-explicit and implicit conditions that influence trust and engagement.

We collected our sources by identifying the important keywords and then searching for relevant sources on Clio (Columbia University database), asking experts during interviews what sources they would recommend, and snowballing by digging deeper into the sources listed in those sources. By mainly using sources identified to us by experts, we took this as a form of evaluation for the relevance and quality of sources. Our database of searches was documented via a Google Sheet, and our synthesis occurred by two "editors", who filtered through the content others had found and succinctly summarized it into key findings, presented on slides to the client.

5.4.2 Interviews

5.4.2.1 Theory

Our 17 expert interviews were crucial at two key junctures of our project: 1) in learning about behavioral interventions, from being offered direction in our initial stages of literature to be read, and 2) in testing our final recommendations. The first exploratory aspect allowed us to uncover the initial, and the second stage became confirmatory, validating our findings from our research, interviews, and focus groups, helping us to enhance the robustness of our research while asking whether they believed our proposals were feasible and applicable in the Colombian context. The interviewees were experts in behavioral science, experts in trust, or experts in their local context - being, sometimes, a mix of more than one category. They were usually Colombian academic references in their field of study, professionals working in highly respected institutions that deal with the same topics in Colombia, and Colombian authorities working in local governments and implementing insightful policies. The complete list of interviewees is in the appendix.

The interviewing method we used was semi-structured interviews, as it allowed for the discussion to be guided to explore significant ideas produced in the discussion in greater detail (Longhurst, 2009). We chose interviews to seek people's perceptions of the truth, not on a single objective truth (ibid), and be able to have an ongoing dialogue that allowed us to probe deeper into concepts we were seeking to understand. Our interviews often followed one of the following structures, or a mix depending on the nature of the interview: 1) Informal interviews to scope further context

around our hypothesis, 2) Presenting our project and receiving feedback, 3) Identifying partners for implementation, 4) Listening to their presentations of their own cities, or theoretical, initiatives.

To analyze the data, we retrieved we used a method of coding called Etic coding. Elements of the interviews that were relevant to the concepts we were exploring were highlighted and annotated so that our research constantly helped to build and strengthen the "blue box" framework we were beginning to conceptualize. The method of coding allowed us to organize our ideas by the chosen themes.

5.4.2.2 Process

First, we defined the criteria for selecting experts. We each looked for experts that were relevant to these areas of papers we had read, including individuals who were recommended by our client and advisor. We then reached out to these individuals and scheduled a time. Our preparation before every interview involved defining our objectives and thematic questions using interview guides (see Figure 26 for sample interview notation), as well as defining roles and introductions. In every interview, we had two members of the team and at least one participant taking notes, trying to directly transcribe interviews. We then analyzed these interviews by transcribing them, pulling out quotes and coding these thematically to feed back into our insights.

We each had the task to decide interviewees based on initial research topic, listing 3 interviewees or more based on initial research. This list was further informed by a) who was locally available within our SIPA network, including those we were introduced to by Professor Ocampo b) who we were introduced to by the clients, or c) snowballed from introductions from other interviews. Of course, this likely led to selection bias as those whom we interviewed knew each other or our pre-existing network, possibly reducing the external validity of the insights we did receive, or potentially leaving a blind sight of research we were not introduced to. For each interview, we produced an interview guide, to take notes on and to guide each of us through the conversation, whoever was conducting the interview, comprising: a summary bio of the interviewee, and relevant themes of questions.

5.5 Testing phase

For concept testing, we used focus groups and selected expert interviews. We adopted a Human-Centered Design (HCD) framework for our focus groups, but without Institutional Review Board submission we used focus groups with representative populations as a proxy for understanding citizen's trust and participation. During these, we evaluated our potential interventions via focus groups to discover which demographics and channels were most susceptible to certain behaviors, and thus which experiments would be most applicable to them. After refining the interventions, we then developed a future experimental roadmap presented in this report, including an impact evaluation on the effectiveness of interventions on improving citizen trust towards the local government in Bogota, Yumbo, and Barranquilla.

5.5.1 Focus Groups

5.5.1.1 Theory

In the testing phase, Fundación Corona organized 5 focus groups with the support of their on-the-ground partners: 2 in Bogotá, 2 in Yumbo, and 1 in Barranquilla. 2 of them were composed by public servants working in municipalities (in Bogotá and Yumbo) and 3 of them were composed by citizens working with Fundación Corona's partner organizations: *Fundación Grupo Social* about Suba/Bilbao, Bogotá; *Nuestra Barranquilla* in Barranquilla; and *Como Vámos* and *Participa+* in Yumbo. This was to enhance reliability, so we could ensure that our data collection produced consistent results across similar cases and demographics (Merriam 1995). Each focus group had 5 to 10 participants.

With a different approach, we also conducted group discussion sessions with public servants working directly with participatory issues at District Institute for Community Action and Participation (IDPAC/Bogotá), Directory of Participation and Communication at the Secretariat of Planning of Bogotá, General Secretariat of Bogotá and Secretariat of Welfare and Participation of Yumbo. The goal was to collect supplementary information and insights from people working directly with the core topic of this project.

The theory was to create collective insights from diverse perspectives and a deeper understanding of their attitudes and experiences in relation to each other. The sample was not designed to have a representation of all demographic subgroups (e.g., gender, race, income brackets, job function), but instead to invite citizens and representatives of groups and institutions with which Fundación Corona had already worked to listen to their insights. While we did our best to ensure that the groups were as inclusive and diverse as feasibly possible, we recognized the limitations of the focus groups in fully representing the population.

The sampling bias was considered for our analysis. The selection bias of these participants would likely overstate the results, as each of these groups were already politically engaged and already interacted with participatory procedures, thus reducing external validity for our results. This in mind, we designed the focus groups with meticulous attention to bias given our research in behavioral science, as we were conscious that people would respond to our questions with more generally accepted ideas due to judgment from others in a public environment (Denzin, 1970). This would be even more heightened for the civil servants, who would be accountable to each other. Further, the influence of group dynamics can influence participants' responses, such as in/out groups, one leader that others follow, skewing viewpoints to be more socially acceptable (Denzin, 1970). To tackle this, we paired skilled moderation to encourage open and honest dialogue with our 3-phase approach: testing our experiments with 1) automatic responses, 2) reflective responses, with more time to contemplate their instinctive reactions, and 3) social responses, after the individuals had heard - and been influenced by - other viewpoints. This thus isolated the social reaction to our last round and allowed us to tease out what constituted an "automatic" response, and thus would be pursued by citizens more easily, and what experiments would be more successful if it allowed thinking time.

The desired outcomes of the focus groups - as our main form of methodology in Colombia - were multiple:

- **Focus Group Theory:** as with any focus group, the design enables us to draw out ideas, reactions, and information that participants may not be willing or able to share in an interview or survey.
- **Quantitative Analysis:** clear rankings of proposed interventions, to understand degrees of support for the proposed interventions using A/B testing of the user journey as a simulation of the behavioral experiment.
- **Ethnography:** understand thought patterns, reasons, biases, preferences, and experiences of participants. We decided, in co-creation with Fundación Corona, to deliver a design-centric focus group that uncovered these behaviors and needs so we could refine these insights into a UX (user experience).
- **Uncovering Context:** adjust and enhance the proposed interventions using the social preferences, behaviors, and experiences of Colombians living in Yumbo and Barranquilla, then apply these insights beyond these cities.
- **Focus Group Impact Evaluation:** use the focus group itself as a proxy to see how interaction with concepts of trust, democratic participation, and with each other leave our participants feeling different. We set it up to ask the same question at the beginning and the end, using what "stuck" at the end in the participants' minds as an indication of what experiments were the most memorable to them.

Outcome: test our "how might we…" questions:
- How might we focus on trust in citizens toward local government?
- How might we create new types of positive interactions?
- How might we ensure reciprocity, cooperation, transparency, and communication from citizens to the government?
- How might we prioritize overall civil service/institution rather than individuals?
- How might we restore the credibility *and* reputation of those working in government?

5.5.1.2 Process

We describe our process using slides from our 2 workshops, which were recorded by team members before the focus groups and circulated to the client as an additional output of our project. This demonstrated how to organize, and run, A/B testing and UX-centric focus groups that have a heavy emphasis on Theories of Change. The setup was in three parts:

- Initial questions: primary and probe questions
- A/B Testing: Automatic, Reflective, and Social
- Reflections

We developed these workshops to have very sharp moderation, allowing us to stay on top of the clock and manage group dynamics, such as techniques for balancing voices. We put thought into how we introduced ourselves, trying to use an ethical approach that also didn't compromise the natural form of the experiment that wasn't biased, and landed on an introduction as a consulting

team helping Fundación Corona, not students from Columbia with the bias this might hold in fostering a less comfortable environment. The step-by-step breakdown of the focus group is detailed in the Appendix.

5.6 Theory of Change

As it will be further discussed in the next session, a distrust-oriented cultural mental model is likely to be present in Colombia. This is indicated not only by the high rates of distrust found in surveys, but also by numerous culturally entrenched ideas about how Colombians perceive themselves (and their institutions) as not trustworthy. This distrust-oriented mental model often leads to distrust-oriented behavior. Research shows that feelings of distrust about the intentions of others play a central role in how we interact and can therefore be seen as a precondition of social behavior (De Wit-De Visser et al, 2023). Therefore, distrust-oriented mental models might translate into antisocial behaviors, such as violent actions, non-compliance with rules, and non-engagement with public policies. A survey conducted by Fundación Corona (n.d.) showed that the lack of trust is the third most influential reason for people not to participate in public forums.

As the distrust-oriented mental model is a consequence of multiple negative experiences between citizens and government in the past (we will delve further into this argument in the following section), the interventions proposed by this project aim to expose people to new types of citizen-local government interactions to break the negative cycle. Through positive and meaningful interactions, we aim to challenge stereotypes and pre-conceived negative ideas about local government and hopefully replace them, to some extent, with more positive feelings and perceptions. With that, we hope to influence Colombians' mental model towards a more trust-oriented functioning that enhances participation.

Although changing cultural mental models is hard, there is evidence from the literature that this is possible. For example, kids from violent neighborhoods in Germany and the United States had their anti-social behavior transformed after having repeated and meaningful contact with people with pro-social mental models (Heller et al, 2015; Kosse et al, 2017). Low-income families in Brazil significantly changed their natality preferences after being exposed to soap operas that showed successful families having fewer kids (La Ferrara et al, 2012). Violence against women became less acceptable after people were exposed to interactive theater plays in which the topic was discussed in India (Hoff et al, 2021). High cast and low cast men in India began to trust each other more after playing a cricket championship in mixed teams (Lowe, 2021). Different from nudges and other classic behavior interventions, changes in mental models are long-lasting as they change perception for good (Macours & Vakis, 2016); therefore, they are essential for long-term sustainable changes.
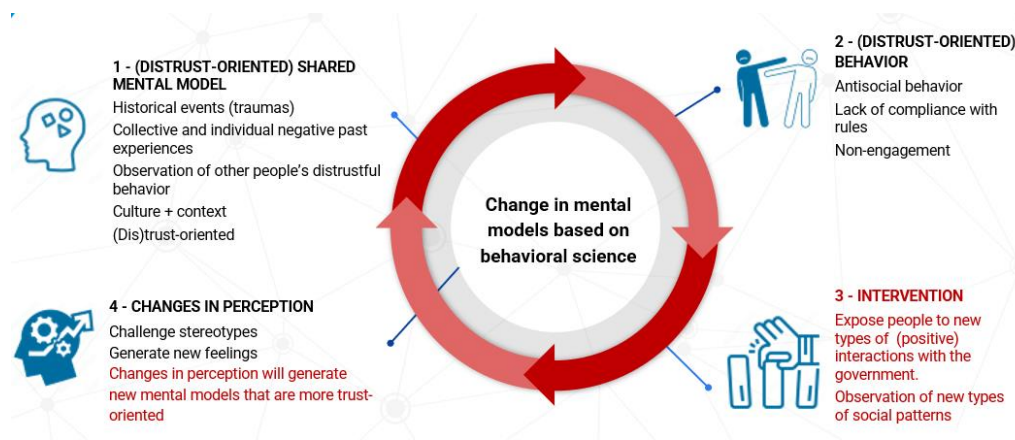
Figure 3: Theory of Change Framework

6. Findings - What shapes the mental model of distrust

Individuals are not fully rational as classical economic theory suggested. Decisions and preferences are more influenced by elements from context, mind, and culture than we realize (World Bank, 2015). People do not confront a new situation in a *tabula rasa*; they process it using associations that they have learned throughout their lives by watching social patterns and considering their past experiences. As mentioned before, these past experiences and accumulated knowledge of a group of people shape cultural mental models. And mental models matter for development because they affect decision-making (World Bank, 2015).

Through literature review and interviews with experts, the group identified some historical, social, economic, and cultural elements that systematically contributed to shaping a distrust-oriented mental model in Colombia. These are the "brown boxes" in the research framework. Although these are high-level quasi-abstract elements, they are important to understanding the roots of distrust that still influence behavior today.

Alesina & La Ferrara (2002) pointed out that both individual experiences and community characteristics influence levels of trust. Here, we will focus on the latter to identify the social structures that shape the distrust-oriented collective mental models. The authors find that factors associated with low trust are: (i) a recent history of traumatic experiences; (ii) belonging to a group that historically felt discriminated against, such as minorities (race and gender); (iii) being economically unsuccessful; (iv) living in a racially mixed community and/or in one with a high degree of income disparity. These elements were also identified in the Colombian context as detailed below.

6.1 Culture of distrust

In Colombia, 70% of the population does not trust the government (both local and national) (OECD, 2023), meaning that Colombia has a "culture of distrust" (Sztompka, 1996). This means

that citizens' negative perception of government does not necessarily result from a personal negative experience, but from the fact that expressing negative attitudes towards the government is a fashion, prejudice, or cultural element (Van de Welle, 2003).

In this context, distrust is not only a standard attitude towards the government but spills over from citizen to citizen, creating social pressure for everyone to feel the same way. This induces a "spiral of silence" (Glynn et al, 1997), in which people are not willing to express positive perceptions about the government as they do not want to isolate themselves from their community - even if this perception does not correspond to reality. The media reinforces this trend by sensationalizing negative cases and not providing adequate coverage of positive ones. Furthermore, negative opinions are more likely to spread than positive ones. The trend reinforces itself by silencing diverging opinions. It becomes harder and harder to revert the trend and the negative stereotypes over time (Van de Welle, 2003).

Explanations for existing negative perceptions of government are no longer dependent on its actual performance or public policies' efficiency but based on culturally entrenched stereotypes (Van de Welle, 2003) present in a distrust-oriented cultural mental model. This theory explains why trust levels are so low despite services' evaluations not being that negative (OECD, 2023), or why 77% of people said that they did not have a favorable view of the city council in Yumbo even though the negative evaluation of the city council's performance was only 19% (Rede Como Vamos, 2023).

The negative stereotypes in Colombia are not only directed to institutions but also to people themselves. Colombia has one of the lowest levels of trust among citizens in the world (Latinobarómetro, 2021). Popular sayings in the country often reinforce the idea that Colombians are not trustworthy: in free translation, *"papaya left, papaya taken", "the safe killed the trust", "think a bad thing and you will be right", "the indigenous malicia"*[3]. The stories communities tell about themselves play a significant role in forming mental models and shaping perception about who they are (as an example, see Frye, 2017; Corno et al, 2022); therefore, the existence of these sayings reinforces the idea that Colombians - and ultimately their institutions - are not trustworthy.

In other words, Colombia has a deeply entrenched distrust-oriented cultural mental model that reinforces negative stereotypes of the government and themselves. These stereotypes bias citizens' perception of people working for the government towards an even more negative scenario, which reinforces the cycle.

6.2 Perceptions of Corruption

Likened to the classic "chicken and egg" problem, corruption and the perception of corruption suffer from circular causality. Cases of corruption can negatively influence people's perception of corruption which then builds a culture of mistrust. This mistrust then causes people to become

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[3] *"Papaya puesta, papaya partida", "seguro mató a confianza", "piensas mal y acertarás", "la malicia indigena"*

numb towards actual corruption cases, thereby normalizing it. This normalization results in people becoming more open to the idea of corruption as a normal fact of life and engaging in corruption themselves. Research shows that honesty and dishonesty are shaped by societal norms and cultures which are shaped by people's response to the rule of law and the behavior of elites such as public officials and celebrities (Weisel & Shalvi, 2015). When cheating is pervasive, is carried out by high-profile individuals, or goes unpunished, citizens are more likely to cheat due to their lowered sense of trust in the rule of law (Gino et al., 2009).

In 2023, Colombia ranked 87th out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) (Transparency International, 2023), illustrating that Colombians still perceive their government to be corrupt or engage in corrupt practices. On average, most national and local institutions in Colombia are classified as having a medium or high risk of corruption in the index ITEP (Fundación Corona, n.d.). There is a persistent climate of mistrust by citizens towards local governments with the justification of corruption suspiciousness (*Team's own interviews, 2024*). According to DANE, 87% of people consider that more than half of the public staff is corrupt and 56% believe that people only participate for their own benefit (Fundación Corona, n.d.). Citizens are seen as exploiting personal connections to public officials to get what they want or using local participation boards (JACs/JALs) to obtain government services for their group (*Team's own interviews, 2024*). In 2019, 20% of Colombians paid a bribe to a public servant (Pring & Vrushi, 2019). For many Colombians, their negative perception of the government being corrupt justifies their corrupt practices since no one gets punished (*Team's own interviews, 2024*), creating a mentality of distrust and exploitation for self-gain - and the belief others are engaging in the same.

6.3 Impact of Historical Experiences

Past shared experiences among groups can durably affect preferences and behavior many years after the event (Hoff, 2023). These collective responses to situations lived in the past often outlive generations and migrations. For example, researchers have found that characteristics of agricultural practices centuries ago heavily influence current social practices. Ancient cultivation of rice was proven to be related to a more collaborative mental model nowadays present in regions of China (Talhelm et al., 2014) and the historic use of a plow in agriculture led to current higher rates of exclusion of women from the formal market in many areas across the globe in present times (Alesina et al, 2013).

Historical events, particularly recent collective traumas, have a significant influence on the current levels of trust (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002). For instance, the slave trade centuries ago is highly correlated to current low levels of institutional and citizen trust in Africa (Nunn, 2008; Nunn & Wantchekon, 2011). In Russia, still today, places near to Gulags have significantly lower levels of institutional trust because of traumas related to past interactions with Stalin's regime which used to break into people's houses and take them to forced labor camps (Nikolova et al, 2019). On the other hand, positive past interactions between citizens and government might result in higher levels of trust in the long run. Guiso et al (2016) points out that the experience of self-governing Italian

cities in the Middle Ages generated a higher level of civic capital that translates into more institutional trust when compared to similar cities that did not have this system.

In Colombia, and the greater Latin American region, marks of colonialism, longstanding slavery, and indigenous domination have contributed to today's low trust levels (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022; Henrich et al 2010; Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002). The perception of a distant government that employs complicated language and does not represent people's concrete interests are directly related to the colonial legacy and still impacts institutional trust (*Team's interviews, 2024*). The historic segregation of certain groups reflects the particularly low levels of trust found among minority groups today.

Colombia's recent history of violence also has strong links to present-day mistrust in the government (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022). Research shows that a populace in a violent region will trust the government when it can offer protection from terrorists (Van Der Does et al., 2019). However, the armed conflict and the violent aftermath showed the Colombian government was willing to work with violent paramilitary groups which kidnapped, assaulted, and killed citizens instead of protecting them. The danger of attracting attention from paramilitary groups or insurgencies cultivated a climate of mistrust towards anybody aside from one's own in-group, especially families (Rubio-Ruamos, 2024). The cooperation between government and paramilitary groups also hijacked the democratic power balance between government and citizens, which resulted in democratic backsliding (Boesten, 2014). Colombia's history with intense violence put the country's trust levels on a downward trajectory despite multiple attempts to correct it. Weak institutions and a cultural norm of distrust (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003) have prevented successful people-to-people interactions beyond close circles of kinship and long-term relationships (Henrich et al., 2010).

6.4 Social Organization - Collectivist Culture

Elvira Salgado Consuegra (2005), in her book *La confianza en Colombia*, provides a valuable framework for conceptualizing trust in Colombia. She explains that there are two types of trust: general trust in others and personalized trust. The first one refers to the tendency of an individual to trust others, which allows said individual to generalize his or her expectations about others' behaviors to people in general. The second one refers to a temporal state and is generated by face-to-face interactions with another individual, which can generate mistrust between people and is often measured at the individual level as peer-to-peer trust.

Salgado Consuegra (2005) argues that the difference in trust levels that we see across countries and among different demographic groups can only be explained by situational factors. If not, there would be no reason for such distinct levels of trust among these groups. She explains that trust is affected by the stories of success or failure when trusting or not trusting others. Thus, individuals accumulate different trust-building experiences or trust-destroying experiences which then shape their trust or mistrust patterns.

Whether a culture is collectivist or individualistic has different implications for the two types of trust mentioned above (Salgado Consuegra, 2005). The author explains that people in collectivist cultures, as opposed to individualist ones, prioritize the goals, needs, shared beliefs, and opinions of their in-groups more than those of the individual. An in-group refers to a group of people with whom someone shares common interests, characteristics, or identities. These typically include family, and groups of close friends, among others. The tying factor is that they constitute a group in which its members feel like they belong and are similar to each other in some way. Similarly, people in collectivist cultures tend to embrace the social norms of in-group members over what is pleasant or required in society.

The author identifies Colombia as a collectivist culture. To reach this conclusion, Salgado Consuegra (2005) cites research done by Hofstede that classifies Colombians as very low in individualism (second to last among 39 countries) and high in power distance (ninth place among the same 39 countries). She also cites House et al., who propose the existence of a high family collectivism, mixed with a high social individualism in Latin America. From this and other research she concludes that, apart from a superficially warm friendly behavior, Colombians have low general trust and tend to establish hierarchical relationships between groups.

Collectivist cultures have higher differences in trust levels between their in-group and out-groups in contrast to individualistic cultures, which have lower differences. This implies that Colombians have significantly lower levels of trust in their neighbors than they have in their family members, friends, and other closely knit groups they identify with and belong to. These findings corroborate with data about trust in Colombia: despite the significantly low level of trust in other citizens (less than 10%, according to the OECD Trust Survey, 2021), 94.5% said they trust their families and 43.6% said that they trust their friends (DANE, 2021). On average, trust in close-knit communities is 56%, while trust in government ranges from 30 to 47%, and trust in unknown people is 15%.

While trust in "government" and in "most people" decline in Latin America, people still rely on their close-knit communities

Share (%) of people who report trusting their communities, the government or most people.

Trust in community 56%
Trust in government (OECD average) 47%
Trust in government 30%
Trust in most people 15%

GRAPH THOUGHT Source: The data for "Trust in most people" and "Trust in government" was taken from Latinobarómetro 2008- 2023; the source for "Trust in community" is LAPOP Americas Barometer 2008-2021. The OECD average was taken from OECD (2024) "Trust in government (indicator)". All the computed averages are simple averages.
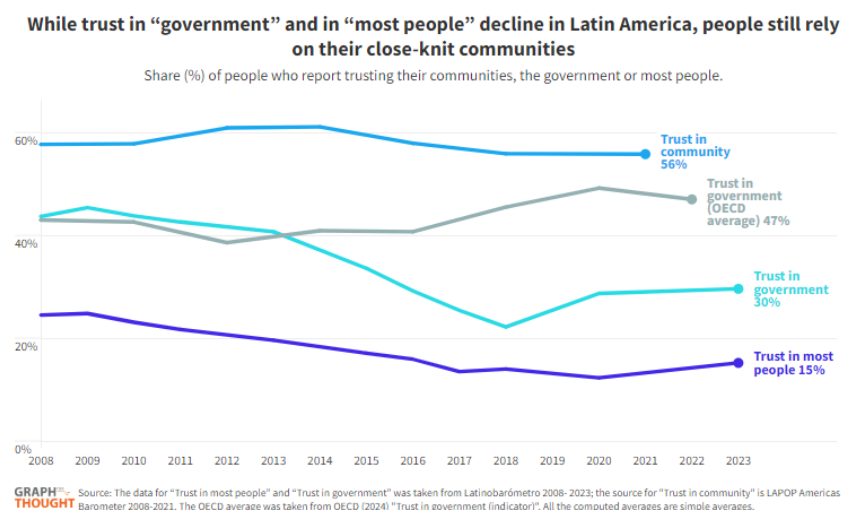
Figure 4 – Trust in different groups in Colombia

Assuming these cultural patterns are challenging to break, at least in the short term, leveraging in-group trust networks could be beneficial and efficient for building trust between citizens and their local government. Strategies that consider people's bonds to each other and how trust is distributed in Colombia would be more effective than strategies that do not. Individualized strategies that target people in a community can prove successful. For example, once a person deviates from the social norm of speaking badly about the government or not participating in the citizen participation spaces because of a lack of trust, it can more easily lead the in-groups that they belong to start doing the same.

With such a high level of distrust in institutions, as well as communication channels like TV, Radio, among others, focusing on generating positive experiences targeted to individuals emerges as an area of opportunity to improve trust in local government. However, a key insight from Salgado Consuegra (2005) that must be kept in mind is the issue of self-selection. She explains that individuals select situations that align with their personality and avoid situations that do not align with their personality. Therefore, individuals with higher levels of trust will presumably participate in experiences that reinforce and validate their trust, and individuals with lower levels of trust will tend to self-select out of these experiences. Designing participation spaces as spaces to do more than just engage with the government could prove successful to engage those people that would probably select themselves out of participation spaces because of their low trust levels.

Nevertheless, even under this context, focusing on leveraging in-group trust would still prove more effective than not, as an individual in a collectivist culture would trust their family's or close friends' perception about the government more than someone who is not part of their in-group. Presumably, trust-building experiences should consider the family unit or close-knit groups. For example, when designing citizen participation spaces inviting groups, such as families, including parents, children, and young adults, would be an important consideration.

Alternatively, focusing interventions on a particular demographic in a strategic way so that the intervention also reaches those belonging to their in-groups would prove efficient. For example, generating positive experiences for young people or children with their local governments could translate into their increased trust levels impacting their parents, and over time this change impacting whole communities.

6.5 Socioeconomic Vulnerability

Colombia possesses the fourth largest economy and ranks third in population in Latin America with around 51.5 million people. The country is predominantly made up of micro and small businesses, which account for over 90 percent of the national productive sector and about 80 percent of employment according to the Ministry of Labor leading to high levels of informality - around 60% of workers are in the informal market (OECD, 2022b). Despite the economic relevance, Colombia still faces high rates of poverty and inequality, which might impact trust.

The OECD Trust Survey (2022) has proven that individuals with lower income and education levels exhibit lower trust in government institutions. In line with earlier findings (Brezzi et al., 2021), the organization reveals that individuals with higher income or education levels generally demonstrate greater trust in their country's government compared to those with lower income or education levels. The average trust level among individuals with the highest levels of education (university/tertiary education) is 48.0%, whereas it is 39.9% for those with medium levels of education (individuals who completed upper secondary education, i.e., high school).
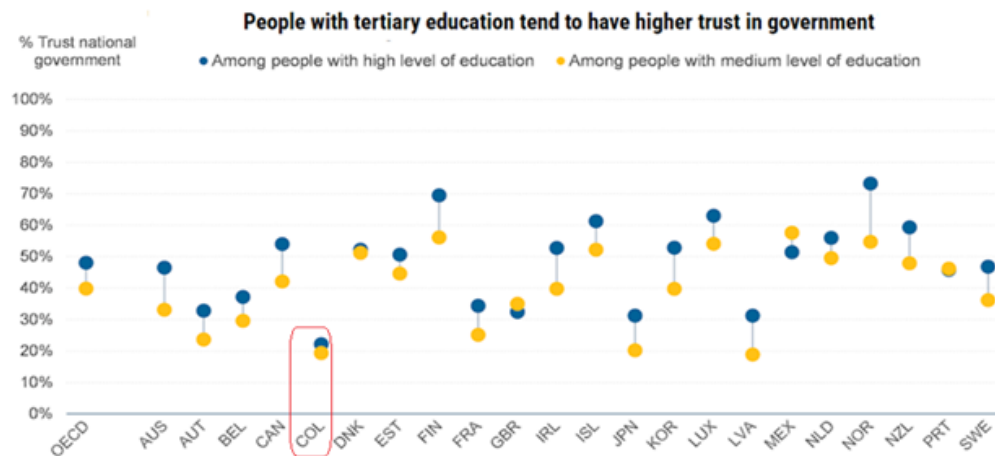

Figure 5: Trust levels between people with higher and medium level of education in OECD countries

According to Trust Survey data across most OECD countries in Figure 4, individuals with higher incomes generally exhibit greater trust in the national government. Specifically, 48% of people within the top 20% of the national income distribution express trust in the government, compared to 35.7% among those in the bottom 20% of the income distribution.
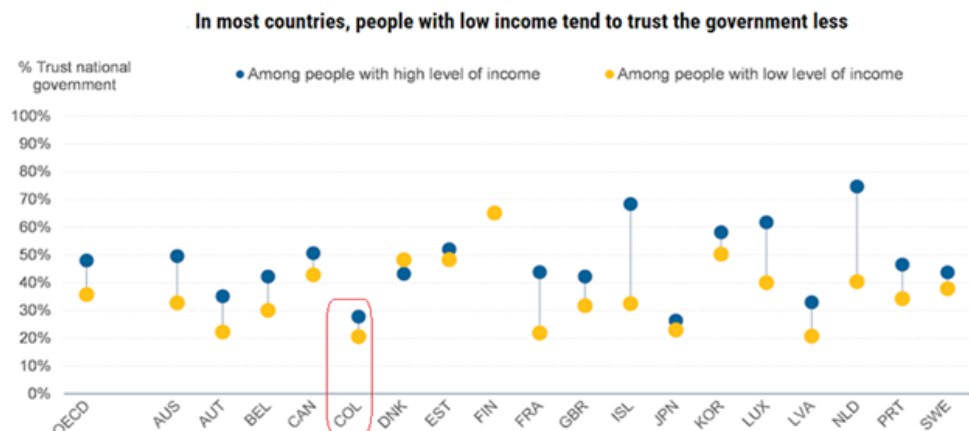

Figure 6: Trust levels between people with higher and medium level of income in OECD countries

In nearly all surveyed OECD countries, except for Latvia, Luxembourg, and Mexico, younger individuals generally exhibit lower trust in the government compared to older age groups. On average, 36.9% of people aged 18 to 29 tend to trust the government, while 40.9% of those aged 30 to 49 and 45.9% aged 50 and over-express trust in the government. The particularly high level of distrust among the youth was clearly perceived in in-loco visits to Yumbo and Barranquilla. Young people were more likely to participate in the recent violent demonstrations against the government in Yumbo, for example.
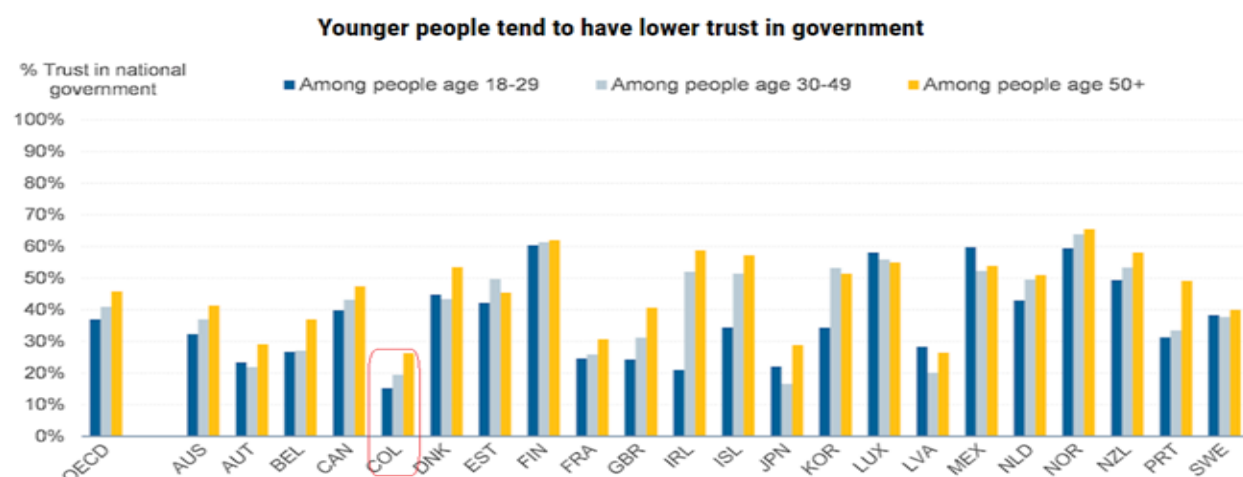

Figure 7: Trust levels across different age groups in OECD countries

According to Figure 5, the economic and social repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis have disproportionately affected young people, raising concerns about potential long-term impacts on their material well-being and opportunities for shaping responses and enhancing public participation (OECD, 2022a).

Perceptions of fairness and equality in policy processes and socioeconomic outcomes play crucial roles in shaping trust. Over recent decades, there has been a widening gap between the rich and poor, coupled with stagnated social mobility, which often leads to negative implications for trust (OECD, 2021; OECD, 2018).

To what extent, then, do individuals anticipate and experience equitable treatment in accessing public benefits and interactions with public employees? Survey respondents generally hold skeptical views regarding the equal treatment of rich and poor individuals by public employees. On average, only 39.9% of respondents across OECD countries believe that rich and poor people would be treated equally by public employees (see Figure 6). Similarly, a nearly equal share of respondents (37.8%) express doubt that rich and poor people receives equal treatment.

Only four in ten think that a public employee would treat rich and poor people equally

Share of respondents who indicate different levels of perceived likelihood that a public employee would treat both rich and poor people equally (on a 0-10 scale), 2021
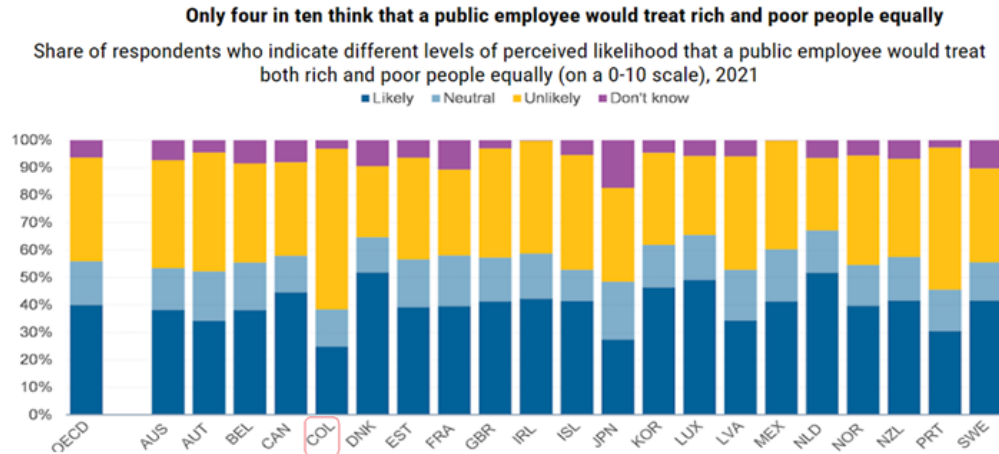
Figure 8: Proportion of respondents who indicate different levels of perceived likelihood that a public official will treat the rich and poor equally

According to the above figures, it seems that the lack of trust between citizens and government is shaped by a complex interplay of economic, social, and various other factors. Individuals with lower incomes and education levels, as well as younger generations, often experience a sense of underrepresentation and disconnection from policymakers, which fosters skepticism towards governmental institutions. Furthermore, feelings of insecurity, disparities in treatment based on economic status, limited social mobility, and reliance on informal employment all contribute to perceptions of governmental inefficacy and injustice. These interconnected economic and social dynamics significantly influence the overall level of trust between citizens and their government.

7. Findings - Reasons for the lack of trust in the current citizen-government interaction

Based on *the team's own interviews (2024)*, focus group discussions, *in-loco* visits and our literature review of the Colombian context, the group identified multiple factors in the current government-citizen interaction that contribute to the lack of institutional trust (located in the research framework as the "blue boxes"). Although these factors are influenced by the mental model elements addressed in the previous section, they are also more tangible and concrete in ordinary life. Identifying these points make more tangible the current pain points in the citizen-government interaction that can be improved through recommendations.

These factors were organized into 3 clusters that represent the different aspects of interaction between local governments and citizens: service provision, participation, and biased perception of public staff.

7.1 Service provision

a) <u>Deficiencies in institutional capacity</u>

The issue of insufficient institutional capacity presents a significant challenge, leading to widespread disillusionment with the democratic system, primarily due to its failure to meet basic citizen needs, including safety and socio-economic security. This phenomenon is exemplified by

the protests in Yumbo, where the inability of institutions and their bureaucratic mechanisms to resolve fundamental issues was evident. Public officials often lack the necessary resources and training to tackle societal challenges effectively.

b) Challenges in navigating the system

The Colombian state apparatus is characterized by excessive normativity, bureaucracy, and overregulation, creating numerous obstacles that prevent citizens from resolving their issues. Despite numerous petitions filed by citizens, effective solutions remain elusive. A disconnection exists between the formal legal framework, which is generally positive, and its practical implementation or alignment with social norms. The complexity of regulations, coupled with unnecessary formalities and obscure language, leaves many citizens bewildered. Moreover, information regarding the services offered by municipal institutions is poorly disseminated among citizens and even public servants.

c) Disconnection between bureaucracy and citizens

A significant portion of public service roles are desk-bound, leading to a perception that public servants lack empathy and are disconnected from the real-world contexts and needs of the citizens they serve. There are numerous instances where city funds have been allocated to projects that fail to meet local needs, rendering them of little benefit to the community. Initiatives that allocate civil servants with direct contact with citizens in the territory as in Yumbo have received positive feedback.

d) Policy and personnel discontinuity

Policy discontinuity, often resulting from political turnover, presents another challenge. The prevalence of temporary contract staff over permanent employees undermines the development of robust public policies and the cultivation of meaningful local relationships, which are essential for fostering trust. New administrations fail to involve public servants in their plans.

e) Civic servants often do not feel valuable

New administrations often overlook the crucial role of public servants within their institutions, although public servants are crucial to enact change. Effective policy implementation is unattainable without the involvement, trust, motivation, and recognition of public servants. Frequently, public servants have task-oriented cabinet routines that keep them unaware of how their work contributes to the broader objectives of the government. Leadership skills and awareness campaigns emphasizing the ethics and values of public service are necessary to address these issues.

f) Interactions between citizens and government are often not pleasant

Interactions between citizens, particularly women and vulnerable groups, and public servants are frequently perceived as unwelcoming. This feeling is often reciprocated by public servants who prioritize completing their tasks over engaging with citizens. Notably, for many residing in informal settlements, their sole interaction with the state is through police encounters, which are frequently confrontational.

7.2 Participation

a) <u>Participation doesn't usually create concrete results</u>

Citizen participation frequently falls short of producing tangible outcomes, leading to a disconnect between engagement efforts and visible achievements. It is essential to ensure participants can witness concrete, visual evidence of how their contributions have shaped final outcomes. This visibility imbues the participatory process with value and significance. Participation should not be perceived merely as an isolated event but as a continuous process. Governments must fulfill the commitments made through participatory channels; failure to do so can erode trust, as unmet expectations lead to disillusionment. Effective communication post-engagement is crucial, even when suggestions from participants are not implemented. Governments should ensure citizens are aware that their input was considered and explain the rationale behind the decision-making process, whether it concerns feasibility or the broader benefit to the community.

b) <u>Lack of self-efficacy and civic culture</u>

There is a notable deficiency in civic engagement and a sense of low self-efficacy among the population. Individuals must feel that they are part of both the problem and its resolution. Fostering a mindset oriented towards the common good, where citizens hold themselves accountable and feel co-responsible for the success of public initiatives, is paramount. The demand for collaborative efforts between citizens and public officials was a prominent theme in focus groups and was particularly emphasized by public servants in key roles. However, participation mechanisms like participatory budgeting can inadvertently fuel competition among citizens, framed as a contest for resources. Without thoughtful design, participation spaces may undermine solidarity and civic culture instead of fostering engagement for collective benefit.

c) <u>Appropriation of channels of participation and lack of knowledge about participation tools</u>

The utilization of participation channels often becomes a negotiation tool for personal or political gains. A phenomenon known as "participologos" has emerged, describing individuals who dominate these spaces without accurately representing the broader community. Opinion on local administrative bodies (JAC/JAL) is divided; while some question their efficacy, others believe in their potential for improvement. Enhancing the qualifications and training of members within these organizations emerged as a preferred strategy for improving participation quality. This approach underscores the need for informed and representative engagement in participatory processes, aiming to elevate the integrity and effectiveness of civic participation tools.

7.3 Biased perception of public staff

a) <u>Stereotypes drive the image of public service</u>

Stereotypical perceptions significantly influence the public image of public servants, who are often viewed as corrupt, inefficient, and indifferent to the collective welfare. For citizens to place their trust in the government, there is a need to cultivate a sense of pride in public service, fostering an ideal of exemplary public management. In Colombian society, a pervasive lack of interpersonal trust extends to public servants as well. Negative experiences and corruption scandals tend to overshadow the positive contributions of municipal efforts, leading to a diminished appreciation

of their achievements. Media plays a crucial role in shaping these perceptions, often sensationalizing corruption scandals and glorifying nefarious figures through popular television series. Success stories in public service are either underreported or undervalued, with achievements frequently dismissed as exceptions.

b) <u>The strong common sense that public servants are corrupt is a major barrier to trust</u>

The prevalent belief in the corruption of public servants constitutes a substantial obstacle to building trust. There exists a common perception of widespread corruption among others. On the other hand, people do not see themselves as corrupt. This gap exacerbates issues related to co-responsibility and self-regulation. This mindset, where individuals justify their corrupt actions by presuming corruption in others, creates a reluctance to be the perceived 'fool.' Furthermore, there is a significant discrepancy between the perceived extent of corruption and actual incidences, with the perception often exaggerated beyond reality.

c) <u>People don't understand data provided in open data initiatives</u>

The availability of tools for monitoring government actions and resource allocation is not widely known among citizens, hindered by digital illiteracy and a lack of awareness on accessing these digital platforms. In Colombia, trust in the information provided by institutions, whether public, private, or philanthropic, is notably low, posing a significant challenge to enhancing transparency and the effective use of open data. Citizens seek tangible evidence of public investment outcomes. Government initiatives aimed at addressing social issues often suffer from a lack of transparent goals, leading to perceptions of inefficacy or performative action. The inauguration of programs perceived as disconnected from pressing needs is seen as a misallocation of resources for mere publicity.

d) <u>People don't understand how the government works and are suspicious about how decisions are made</u>

A general lack of understanding regarding governmental operations and decision-making processes breeds suspicion among citizens. The complexity of government functionality is a barrier to trust, as it is challenging to have confidence in what is not understood. A lack of communication about the rationale behind specific decisions leads to assumptions of ulterior motives. While transparency concerning budgets and contracts is critical, the intricacies of such information often remain inaccessible to the general populace due to technical jargon.

Governments implement strategies intended to address societal challenges; however, the underlying theory of change often remains opaque to the citizenry. This obscurity fosters a perception among citizens that public officials may lack the competence to make impactful decisions, or that their efforts are merely superficial, aimed at creating an illusion of progress ("Focus group citizens - Suba"). Moreover, there is a critical view towards politicians who launch initiatives perceived as disconnected from fundamental needs, leading to a widespread belief that such actions represent a misallocation of resources, merely serving as opportunities for public relations rather than genuine societal improvement.

8. Findings from Focus Groups

As mentioned in the methodology section, the group used 5 focus groups to test ideas about different interventions aiming to enhance institutional trust. We proposed **fifteen** interventions to be tested and discussed as follows:

A. You see a report from a respected institution that contains solid data showing that public officials in your municipality are more trustworthy than you think they are.

B. You see that a public official in the municipality has been prosecuted for corruption.

C. You see a video about a well-trained public official who wins an "employee of the month" contest, awarded by an alliance of NGOs, thanks to his innovative work that improved public service in the mayor's office.

D. You are invited to attend a public meeting with city officials where you can meet them in person, talk, and understand what they do on a day-to-day basis.

E. You participate in a space for citizen participation of the mayor's office and receive a thank you text and subsequent information that gives you an account of the actions that were taken as a result of the space you were in.

F. You receive an invitation to an initiative led by your municipality in which neighbors and public officials come together to identify a problem in your community and develop a project to solve it.

G. Children and adolescents from your community are invited to learn about the work of a public official in the mayor's office. When they return, they tell you what they have learned and how excited they are to be public servants when they grow up.

H. Use the City Hall chat box to ask questions and write requests. After submitting your question or request, you receive a quick response from your mayor's office.

I. You request that your city hall fix a hole in your street and receive proof that it has been fixed within 1 month.

J. You see a section in the news that allows you to understand what a public body of the mayor's office does. You now understand the functions and limitations (of resources and power) of this institution, and the roles of the officials who operate it.

K. You receive a simple and clear brochure about what the city has done with your taxes.

L. You see a public work and there is a sign that says when it will be finished, how much it has cost, and the contact of the entity of the mayor's office responsible.

M. You need to solve a procedure before a municipal institution, and you feel that the public servant who is attending you is being friendly and helpful.

N. You urgently need to find the answer to a specific question, and the mayor's office website answers your questions, saving you from having to call.

O. The Juntas Administradoras Locales (JAL) are strengthened in skills, knowledge, and practices so that they respond more adequately and transparently to the citizen needs of the neighborhoods in which they operate.

8.1 A/B Testing Results

8.1.1 Overall

The total number of focus groups for A/B testing is five, with a combined participation of 36 individuals **(above 30 - commonly used sample size minimum)**. Of these participants, 24 are citizens (7 from Bogotá, 7 from Yumbo, and 10 from Barranquilla), while 12 are civil servants (5 from Bogotá and 7 from Yumbo). As mentioned in the methodology section, the participants were people working with Fundación Corona's local implementation partners.
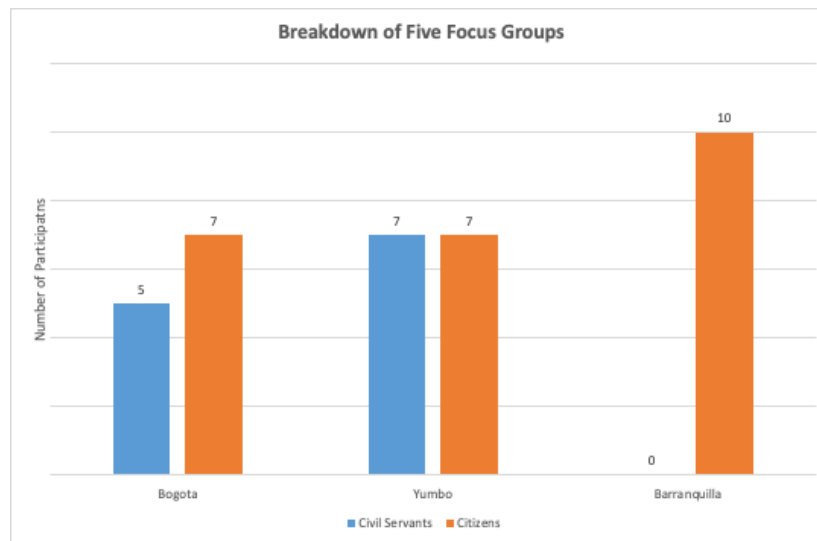

Figure 9: Breakdown of proportions of civil servants and citizens per city

The overall **most preferred** intervention among all focus groups, across all cities and profiles, was Intervention "O", which is "The Juntas Administradoras Locales (JAL) are strengthened in skills, knowledge, and practices so that they respond more adequately and transparently to the citizen needs of the neighborhoods in which they operate." This choice indicates a demand among citizens and civil servants for transparency in local government operations and an appreciation for the efficient delivery of public services. Understanding that strengthening civil servants' skills, knowledge, and best practices is necessary for achieving this goal.

The **second most preferred** intervention was "F" which is "You receive an invitation to an initiative led by your municipality in which neighbors and public officials come together to identify a problem in your community and develop a project to solve it." This preference reflects the recognition among both citizens and civil servants of the importance of participation,

cooperation, and coherent problem-solving to identify community issues and develop practical solutions.

The **third most preferred** intervention overall was "E" which is "You participate in a space for citizen participation of the mayor's office and receive a thank you text and subsequent information that gives you an account of the actions that were taken as a result of the space you were in." This choice underscores the high demand for communication between civil servants and the population, emphasizing the importance of participation that yields feasible, tangible, and measurable results.

The **least preferred** option among all focus groups was intervention "A" which is "You see a report from a respected institution that contains solid data showing that public officials in your municipality are more trustworthy than you think they are." This suggests that presenting data at this point, given the current level of trust and quality of government services, would be perceived as "trust washing," potentially resulting in the opposite effect of trust-building.

8.1.2 Breakdown of results by location and profiles

City	Most preferred intervention		Least preferred intervention	
	Civil Servants	**Citizens**	**Civil Servants**	**Citizens**
Bogotá	I, K, F	O, F, I	C, B, J	A, B, C
Yumbo	O, J, K	O, E, F	I, B, A	I, B, A
Barranquilla	-	O, F, E	-	A, C, J

Figure 10: Breakdown of the top three most and least preferred interventions by profile and city
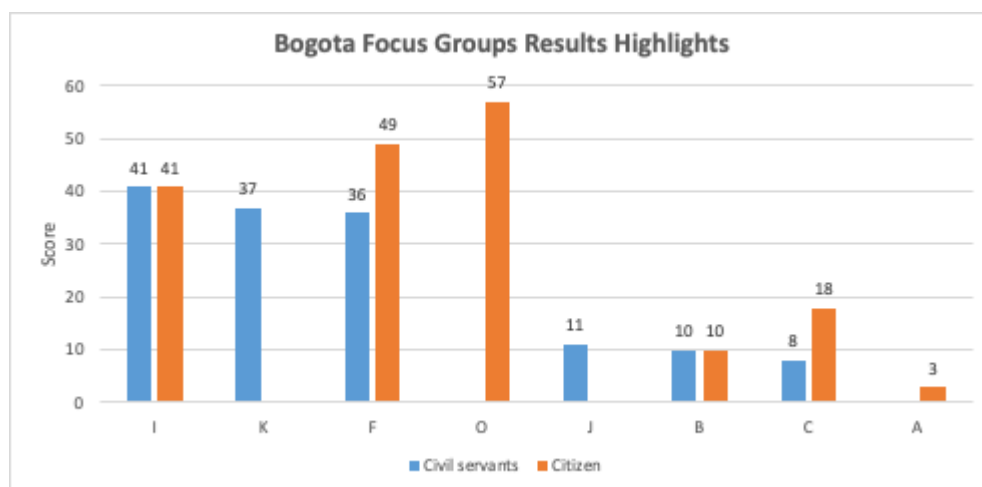

Figure 11: Preferences of civil servants and citizens in Bogota

According to Figures 8 and 9, there are notable commonalities in the most desired interventions. **In Bogotá**, **citizens** *prioritize intervention O, while* **civil servants** *favor intervention I the most.* However, interventions *I and F appear among the top choices for both* **civil servants and citizens**.
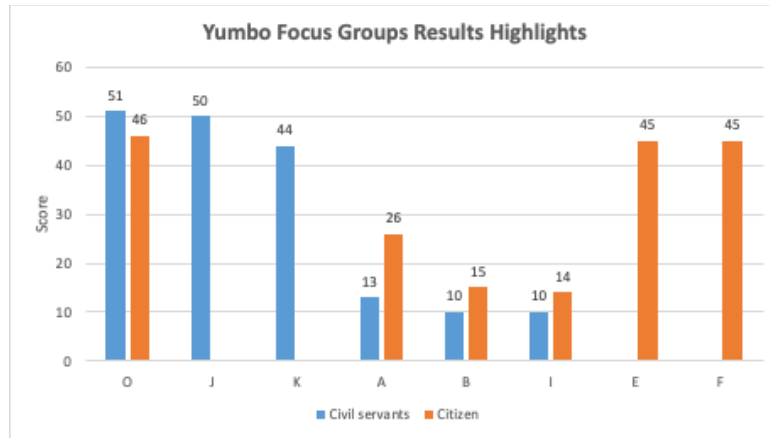

Figure 12: Preferences of civil servants and citizens in Yumbo

Interestingly, **Yumbo** residents both **civil servants** and **citizens**, ranked intervention O the highest, indicating that this intervention addresses shared needs or concerns within these communities.
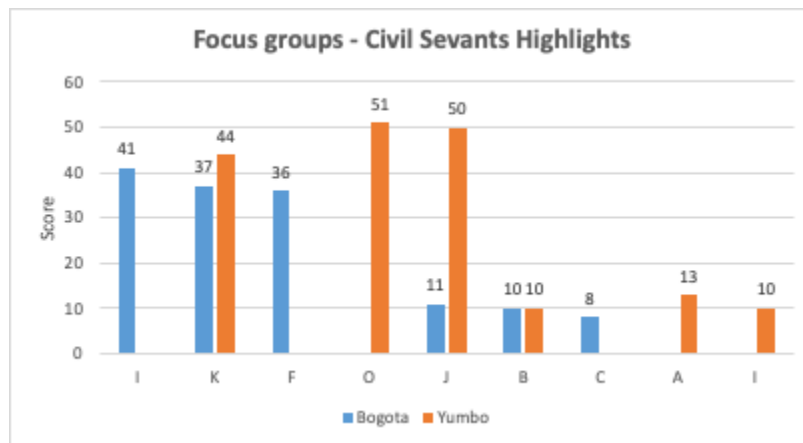

Figure 13: Preferences of civil servants in Bogota and Yumbo

Moreover, intriguing **similarities between** the choices of civil servants and citizens across different **cities** are apparent. For example, **all civil servants** across locations have intervention K as one of the common top choices, while intervention B is consistently among the least preferred.
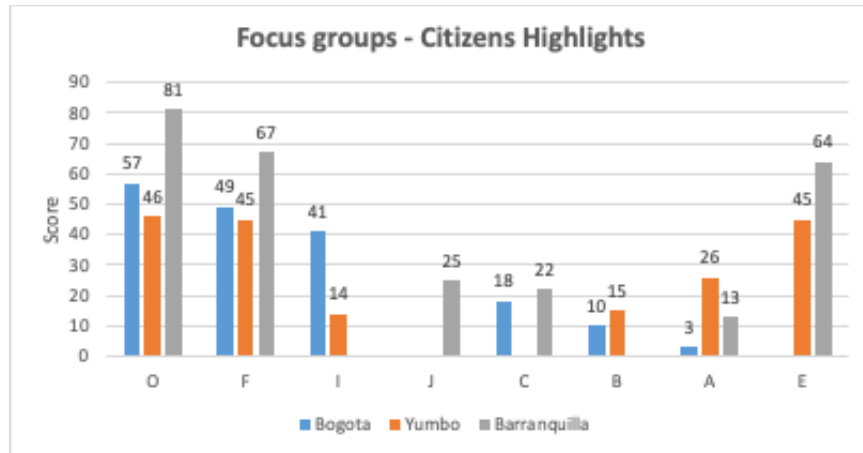
Figure 14: Preferences of civil servants in Bogota, Yumbo, and Barranquilla

Similarly, **citizens across all three locations favor** <u>interventions O and F</u> among the top three choices followed by option E (one of the top preferred in Yumbo and Barranquilla). Yumbo and Barranquilla citizens have nearly identical preferences, except for the order of the top three choices. Additionally, **all citizens** across **the three locations** commonly choose <u>intervention A as the least preferred option</u>, followed by intervention B chosen in Bogotá and Yumbo, and intervention C in Bogotá and Barranquilla.

These findings highlight both the shared preferences and nuanced differences among civil servants and citizens across diverse locations, underscoring the importance of tailored interventions to address specific community needs and concerns. However, showcasing similarities indicates that a common approach for intervention of a certain degree can be applied across all three cities.

8.1.3 Takeaways of the A/B Testing Results

One significant conclusion drawn from the A/B testing results is the proximity of preferences between citizens and public servants, indicating a substantial alignment in their priorities and values. While there are nuanced differences based on location, overall, interventions emphasizing transparency, community engagement, and practical problem-solving are universally favored by both citizens and public servants.

This alignment suggests a shared desire for accountable and participatory governance, emphasizing the importance of tailored interventions that foster collaboration between government entities and local communities. Despite varying roles and perspectives, the convergence in preferences underscores the potential for unified approaches to address common challenges and improve service delivery across diverse geographical contexts. Effective policy and program design should capitalize on these shared preferences while acknowledging specific local nuances to maximize impact and relevance.

8.2 Free Rankings

8.2.1 Overall
Interestingly, the overall free ranking results among all focus groups closely mirror the A/B testing results of the focus groups with minor changes in the top three interventions:

The most preferred option was "F" which is "You receive an invitation to an initiative led by your municipality in which neighbors and public officials come together to identify a problem in your community and develop a project to solve it". **The second most preferred** option was "E" which is "You participate in a space for citizen participation of the mayor's office and receive a thank you text and subsequent information that gives you an account of the actions that were taken as a result of the space you were in". Finally, **the third most preferred** option, "O" which is "The Juntas Administradoras Locales (JAL) are strengthened in skills, knowledge, and practices so that they respond more adequately and transparently to the citizen needs of the neighborhoods in which they operate", indicating that only the order of the most preferred options changed in comparison with the A/B testing results.

The striking similarity between the A/B testing and free ranking in the top three interventions suggests effectively catering to both "fast" and "slow" modes of thinking. For "fast" thinking, which relies on intuitive and automatic processing, the option of strengthening local administrative boards (Option O) appears favorable. This intervention is perceived to be a quick and intuitive solution, requiring minimal cognitive effort, and satisfying the desire for immediate, tangible actions. Conversely, for "slow" thinking, characterized by slower and more decision-making, the intervention involving an invitation to a community-led initiative (Option F) is preferred. This initiative involves systematic planning, thoughtful evaluation, and a thorough understanding of underlying issues, meeting the need for comprehensive and well-considered approaches. By accommodating the preferences of both cognitive functions, the selected interventions demonstrate a holistic approach to engaging both civil servants and citizens effectively. This balanced strategy acknowledges the significance of embracing diverse thinking styles while fostering meaningful participation and decision-making within the community.

The **least preferred option** across all focus groups Free Rankings was intervention *"J" which is "You see a section in the news that allows you to understand what a public body of the mayor's office does. You now understand the functions and limitations (of resources and power) of this institution, and the roles of the officials who operate it."* The **second least preferred option** was *"M. You need to solve a procedure before a municipal institution, and you feel that the public servant who is attending you is being friendly and helpful."* Despite differences in the least preferred options between the Free ranking and A/B testing results (were A and B as mentioned in the previous subsection), some similarities exist among these four interventions. Notably, the least preferred options in both cases involve attempting to influence perceptions without addressing substantive changes in government services. These interventions are targeted towards leveraging media or altering perceptions, rather than implementing tangible improvements in government services. The aversion towards such interventions suggests that participants prioritize substantive changes over attempts to merely shape perceptions. It implies that the focus on changing perceptions without addressing the actual quality of government services is perceived negatively

by both civil servants and citizens. This lends credence to the project and the client's wishes to avoid trust-washing.

These findings underscore the importance of prioritizing genuine improvements in government services rather than solely focusing on altering perceptions. Trustworthy governance is perceived to be the one that prioritizes actions that enhance transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness, rather than relying solely on attempts to influence public opinion through media or friendly interactions with public servants. Our project will recommend steps for effective change by advocating for government policy reforms and a deeper engagement between citizens and the state so that real change occurs *alongside* an improvement in perception towards the government to increase trust.

8.2.2 Breakdown of results by location and profiles

| City	Most preferred intervention		Least preferred intervention	
	Civil Servants	**Citizens**	**Civil Servants**	**Citizens**
Bogotá	L, F, H	F, D, A	G, K	M, L, N
Yumbo	K, C, G	F, I, B	I, D, B	N, G, A
Barranquilla	-	F, E, O	-	J, C, M

Figure 15: Breakdown of the top three most and least preferred interventions by profile and city

The rankings of preferred interventions across different locations provide valuable insights into the unique preferences and priorities of both civil servants and citizens in Bogotá, Yumbo, and Barranquilla.

In Bogotá, civil servants favored interventions L (providing clear information on public works), F (engaging in collaborative problem-solving initiatives), and H (utilizing a chat box for inquiries). These interventions prioritize clear communication, active engagement with citizens, and responsiveness to their concerns. Conversely, interventions involving children's involvement (G) and simplified tax information (K) were less favored, possibly indicating a preference for more direct and substantive interactions with the public.

Citizens in Bogotá, on the other hand, favored interventions D (meeting city officials in person), A (receiving reports about civil servants), and F (engaging in collaborative problem-solving initiatives). These preferences suggest a desire for direct engagement with authorities, opportunities for civic participation, and transparency regarding governance issues. On the other hand, the interventions "M", "L" and "N" were less attractive to citizens.

Figure 16: Most and least preferred interventions of citizens in Bogota
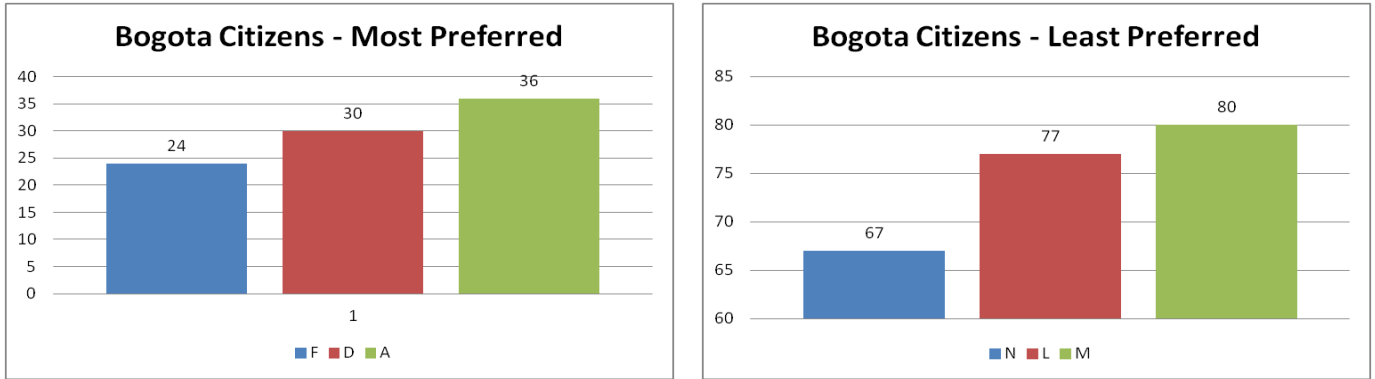
In Yumbo, civil servants favored interventions K (providing clear tax information), C (highlighting exemplary public officials), and G (involving children and adolescents). These preferences may reflect a focus on promoting understanding of municipal operations, recognition of outstanding performance, and fostering future generations' interest in public service. Conversely, interventions related to immediate service provision (I, D, B) were less favored, possibly indicating a preference for longer-term capacity-building measures.

Yumbo citizens favored interventions F (engaging in collaborative problem-solving initiatives), I (receiving prompt service responses), and B (being informed about corruption prosecutions). These preferences underscore a desire for active involvement in community initiatives, efficient municipal services, and transparency in governance. On the other hand, they did not prefer interventions "N", "G" and "A" as much.

Figure 17: Most and least preferred interventions of civil servants in Yumbo
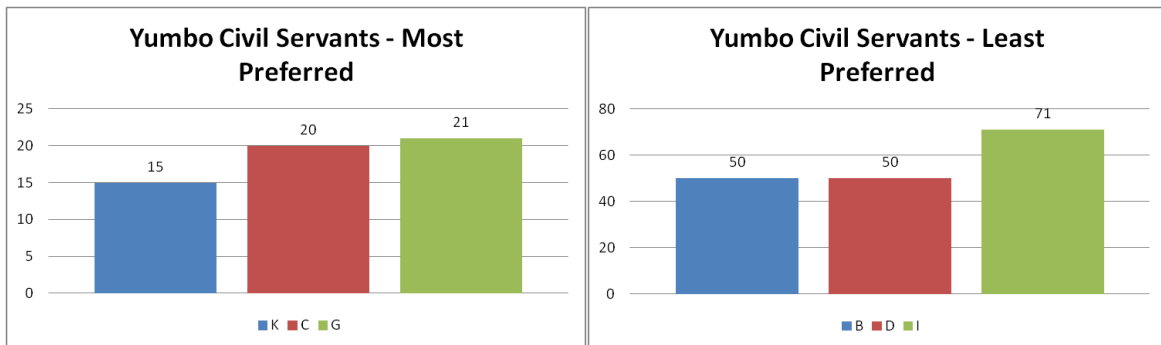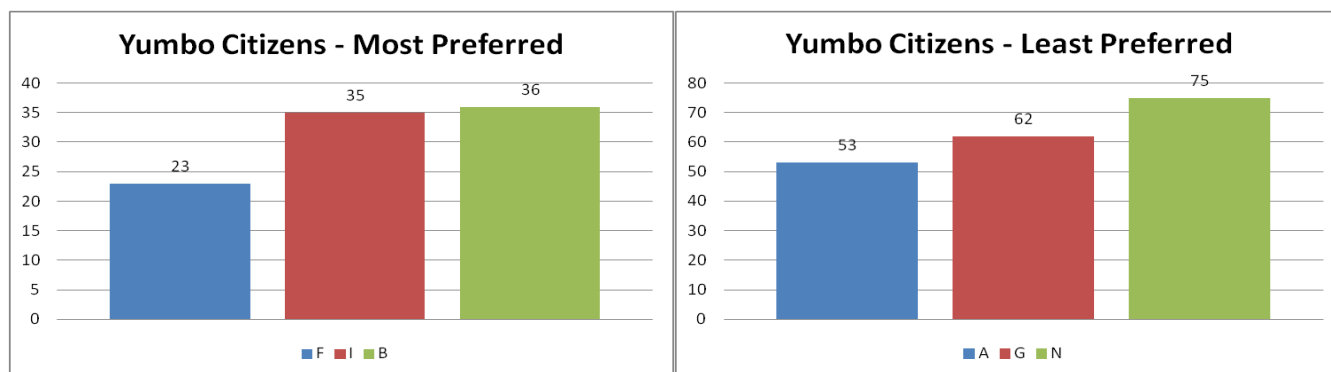
Figure 18: Most and least preferred interventions of citizens in Yumbo

In Barranquilla, citizens favored interventions F (engaging in collaborative problem-solving initiatives), E (receiving feedback after citizen participation events), and O (strengthening local administrative bodies). These preferences suggest a strong emphasis on community engagement, responsiveness from authorities, and enhancing local governance structures. Conversely, interventions related to informational content (J, C, M) were less favored, possibly indicating a preference for practical engagement opportunities over passive information dissemination.

Figure 19: Most and least preferred interventions of citizens in Barranquilla
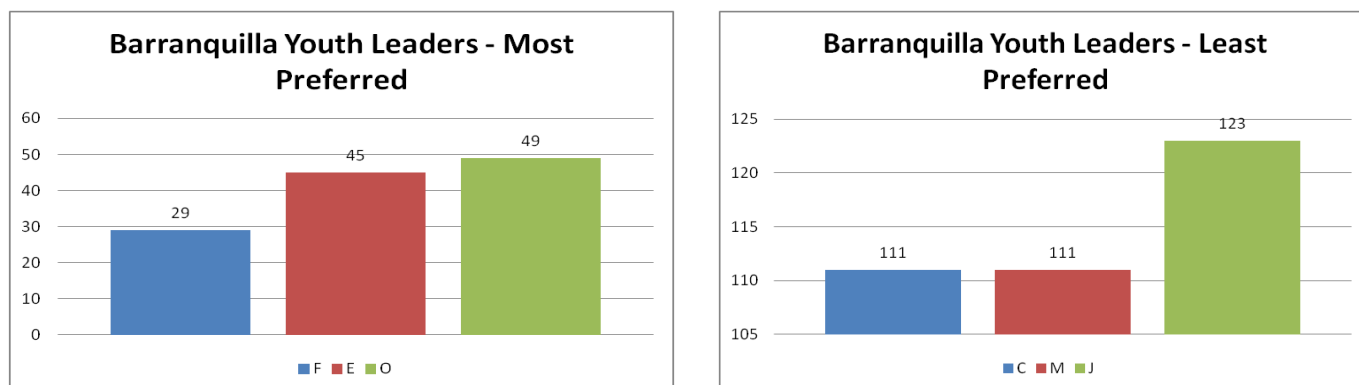
The rankings of preferred interventions across Bogotá, Yumbo, and Barranquilla unveil nuanced preferences among civil servants and citizens, shedding light on the diverse needs and priorities within each community. In Bogotá, civil servants lean towards initiatives focusing on transparent communication channels and active citizen engagement, exemplified by their favoritism towards interventions like providing clear information on public works (L) and utilizing chat boxes for inquiries (H). Conversely, citizens in Bogotá prioritize direct interactions with authorities and transparency regarding governance issues, favoring interventions such as participating in community projects (F) and being informed about corruption prosecutions (B). These preferences suggest a strong emphasis on accessibility to information and avenues for citizen participation to foster trust and accountability.

In Yumbo, civil servants prioritize initiatives geared towards promoting understanding of municipal operations and fostering future generations' interest in public service, as seen in their preference for interventions like providing clear tax information (K) and involving children and adolescents (G). On the other hand, Yumbo citizens prioritize efficient service delivery and transparency in governance matters, favoring interventions such as receiving prompt service responses (I) and being informed about corruption prosecutions (B). This indicates a focus on immediate service provision and transparency in addressing corruption issues within the community.

9. Focus Group Results and Link to Recommendations

The results from the focus groups observed from the A/B test and the free rankings results, confirmed by discussions with participants, show that improving the citizens' experience in the already existing participation moments is crucial to improve institutional trust. Approaches related to the use of data or technical training are not appealing to the population and do not seem to improve trust alone. On the other hand, we observed that the three preferred interventions were all related to improvements in the participation cycle, starting with Attracting Participation, followed by Participation Moment, and ending with post-participation.

Attracting Participation is the stage whereby citizens are encouraged to participate in the policymaking process. This is exemplified by Intervention F where invitations are sent out to Colombians to engage public officials in solving a community problem. The Participation Moment is the stage whereby citizens and public officials collaborate, which is exemplified by Intervention O in which local participation boards are more prepared and effective. Finally, Intervention E represents improvements in the post-participation moment in which people would receive feedback and follow-up about their contribution to the final policy, closing the full cycle of participation as illustrated in the table below:

Intervention	Participation Process
F. You receive an invitation to an initiative led by your municipality in which neighbors and public officials come together to identify a problem in your community and develop a project to solve it.	Attracting Participation
O. The Juntas Administradoras Locales (JAL) are strengthened in skills, knowledge, and practices so that they respond more adequately and transparently to the citizen needs of the neighborhoods in which they operate.	Participation Moment
E. You participate in a space for citizen participation of the mayor's office and receive a thank you text and subsequent information that gives you an account of the actions that were taken as a result of the space you were in.	Post-Participation

Considering the identification of the importance of the participation moment and the identified need for improvements in different stages of this process, the group suggests that the behavioral insights recommendations should focus on enhancing the users' experience in the participation process, addressed in its multiple stages. We believe that there is a significant potential for leveraging trust in local governments by improving citizens' experience in the participation process as this is an in-person powerful interaction moment between local governments and citizens in which expectations and promises are built. We saw from interviews, focus group discussions and literature that trust can actually be fostered in participation spaces (Campbell, 2023). However, in order for the strategy to work, it is crucial that people feel truly heard, perceive that their inputs and concerns were truly taken into consideration by policymakers, understand how decisions were made and observe concrete results from the participation forum. On the other hand, if people who participate feel like their opinion was not truly taken into consideration or that the government has a poor performance regardless of previous participation, the initiative has high chances of backlashing and reinforcing distrust (Campbell, 2023).

The participation cycle is illustrated below and represents a framework for organizing the recommended interventions in the following section:
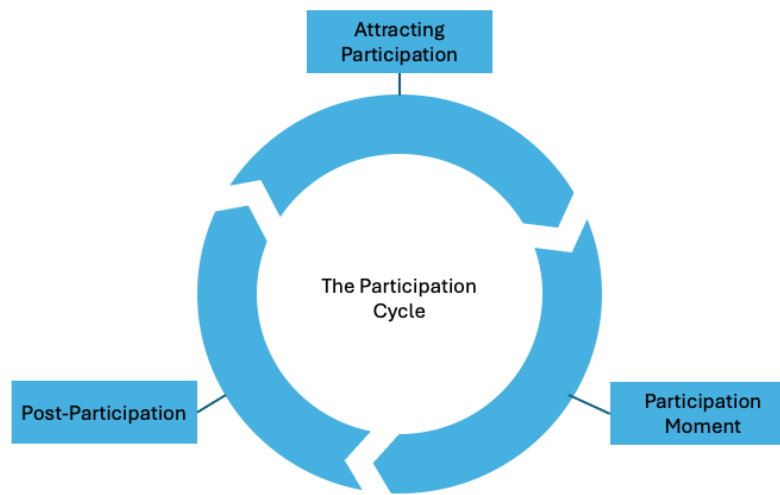
Figure 20: The Participation Cycle

10. Recommendations for Enhancing Trust through Behavioral Insights

In this section, we outline a set of targeted recommendations aimed at boosting citizen participation and trust in local governments. Drawing on behavioral insights, these recommendations are crafted to effectively engage citizens at various stages of participation. First, we will delineate the key goals that guide these recommendations, followed by a detailed presentation of our structured approach across three phases: Pre-participation, Participation, and Post-participation.

10.1 Guidelines for Recommendations

a) <u>Collaboration / Community-Building (Enhance Civic-ness and Self-Efficacy)</u>

The first guideline focuses on fostering a collaborative spirit among citizens to enhance their civic engagement and sense of self-efficacy. This involves utilizing the role model effect (Moreira, 2019; Beaman et al., 2012; Iyer et al., 2012; Correll et al., 2015) by showcasing successful collaborations and community improvements through stories of local role models. Coaching and mentoring programs (Algan et. al, 2022; Macours & Vakis, 2016) where experienced community members guide new participants and can enhance skill development and confidence. Additionally, providing opportunities for citizens to observe tangible results of their contributions reinforces the value of their participation. Organizing community-engagement activities that require collective action promotes a sense of shared responsibility while integrating local cultural elements and symbols in public projects strengthens community identity and pride.

b) <u>Unbias Perception about Public Service / Servants</u>

This guideline aims to correct misconceptions and biases about public services and servants, fostering a more accurate and positive public perception. Techniques include inter-group collaboration (Lowe, 2021; Rao, 2019), which facilitates interactions between different social groups and public servants to reduce biases and build mutual respect. The role model effect (Moreira, 2019; Beaman et al., 2012; Iyer et al., 2012; Correll et al., 2015) is also significant here, highlighting the exemplary behaviors and achievements of public servants through media and public acknowledgments. Ensuring that public servants are trained in customer service skills can improve every interaction with the public, creating positive and memorable experiences that contribute to a favorable perception of public services.

c) <u>Spread Understanding (Communication and Information)</u>

The goal of spreading understanding involves improving the public's comprehension of governmental processes and policies through clear and effective communication. Citizens often do not want to participate because they fear they will not know or understand, which is disempowering. Employing clear language that is simple, even colloquial, and free of jargon ensures that all citizens can easily understand governmental procedures. Framing information in a way that emphasizes the benefits of participation and engagement can motivate further involvement, while individualized communication addresses the specific concerns and interests of different community segments, increasing relevance and engagement. Also, framing information in the form of stories can impact mental models and allow for the content communicated to have more impact (La Ferrara et al., 2012; Paluck & Green, 2009; Esposito et al., 2023; Frye, 2017). Providing feedback and regular updates on how citizens' input has influenced government actions fosters ongoing engagement and trust. Showcasing transparent decision-making processes enhances public trust and accountability, essential for sustaining active citizen participation.

Together, these guidelines utilize behavioral theories to facilitate deeper and more meaningful engagement between citizens and their government, aiming to build a foundation of trust and cooperation that can significantly transform the landscape of citizen participation.

10.2 Participation Framework

Our participation framework is structured into three sequential phases designed to optimize citizen engagement and trust in government processes. These phases—Pre-participation (or Attracting Participation), Participation Moment, and Post-participation—create a holistic approach to civic engagement, guiding citizens through each stage of interaction with government initiatives.

10.2.1 Pre-participation Phase

The Pre-participation Phase is designed to prepare and motivate citizens for upcoming engagement opportunities, setting a foundation for successful participation. This phase focuses on building anticipation, trust, and understanding through targeted outreach and educational initiatives that address the diverse needs of the community.

a) Individualized Invitation Letters: Central to this phase are personalized invitation letters that inform citizens about the potential positive outcomes of their participation. These letters are carefully crafted to enhance trust by clearly articulating how everyone's contribution can lead to meaningful community improvements. Ensuring diversity in the recipients of these invitations is crucial for inclusive participation.

b) Inspirational Campaigns: Inspirational campaigns play a vital role in motivating citizens to engage with local governance. By showcasing successful stories of local community improvements that have been accomplished through the collaboration between citizens and public servants and endorsements by local celebrities and leaders, these campaigns highlight the tangible benefits of civic involvement and reinforce community pride and connection.

c) Informative Campaigns: To demystify government operations and build foundational trust, informative campaigns provide clear and accessible information about the roles and responsibilities of Local Administration Boards, the mayor, and other relevant municipal entities. These campaigns are essential for ensuring that citizens understand how their contributions can impact government decisions and community outcomes.

d) Community Engagement in Public Spaces: Transforming public spaces into active community hubs is another strategic element of this phase. By encouraging the collective use of these spaces for local cultural and recreational activities, we foster a sense of belonging and community identity that is crucial for sustained civic engagement.

e) Engagement by Permanent Public Staff: Dedicated public staff are tasked with building personal connections within the community, particularly focusing on engaging those who are typically less involved in political processes. Their continuous presence and outreach efforts are key to bridging the gap between the government and its citizens, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued.

Each of these strategies is interconnected, working together to create a receptive atmosphere that encourages broad and enthusiastic participation from all segments of the community. This preparatory work is essential for laying the groundwork for effective and meaningful citizen participation in the subsequent phases.

10.2.3 Participation Moment

The Participation Moment is the critical phase where direct and active engagement occurs, providing a platform for citizens to interact meaningfully with government initiatives. This phase is meticulously designed to ensure that each participant has a positive and impactful experience, thereby reinforcing their trust in the process and enhancing their willingness to contribute constructively.

a) <u>Personalization and Recognition:</u> A key strategy in this phase is the personalization of the participation experience. Acknowledging each participant by name and ensuring that their contributions are visibly recognized and appreciated helps build a personal connection and reinforces the importance of everyone's role in the civic process.

b) <u>Public Staff Stories:</u> Sharing personal stories and experiences by public staff helps humanize them and creates a bond of mutual respect and understanding between government employees and citizens. These narratives not only provide insight into the challenges and successes within the municipality but also inspire trust and empathy among participants.

c) <u>Collaborative Problem-Solving:</u> Central to this phase is the facilitation of sessions where citizens collaboratively identify and solve local socio-urban issues. Utilizing innovative and horizontal tools in this space, like social cartography, would prove important. This hands-on approach not only empowers participants but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the outcomes, enhancing the collective efficacy of the community.

d) <u>Clear and Colloquial Communication:</u> Effective communication is crucial during this phase. Ensuring that information about municipal processes and services is communicated in clear, simple language helps participants fully understand and engage with the issues at hand. This transparency is essential for building trust and ensuring that all participants feel informed and capable of contributing meaningfully.

e) <u>Pedagogical Spaces for Civic Engagement:</u> Establishing educational spaces where participants can learn about the importance of thinking collectively for the common good is vital. Highlighting examples of proactive community members who have successfully impacted their neighborhoods encourages others to engage in similar efforts.

This phase is pivotal in solidifying the participants' connection to their community and government, ensuring that the engagement process is both rewarding and enriching. By focusing on personal recognition, effective communication, and collaborative problem-solving, we aim to create a participatory environment that is inclusive, empowering, and transformative.

10.2.3 Post-participation Phase

The Post-participation Phase is essential for reinforcing the positive experiences of civic engagement and ensuring sustained involvement. This phase focuses on acknowledging participants' contributions, providing constructive feedback, and maintaining a continuous dialogue to foster long-term relationships between citizens and their government.

a) <u>Appreciation and Feedback:</u> Following participation, it is crucial to express gratitude to all participants. Sending personalized 'thank you' letters that detail how each person's input

was utilized enhances participants' appreciation of their contribution. For inputs that were not incorporated, providing clear explanations helps maintain transparency, trust, and accountability.

b) Information on Resource Allocation: To ensure participants see the tangible outcomes of their involvement, flyers or digital communications detailing how public resources were allocated because of their contributions are distributed. This transparency helps reinforce the efficacy and impact of their participation.

c) Social Media Engagement: Encouraging participants to share their experiences on social media serves multiple purposes. It helps amplify the success of the engagement initiatives and inspires others in the community to participate. Creating attractive, "Instagrammable" spots within participation venues can facilitate this sharing, making the experience both memorable and shareable.

d) Leadership Development: Transforming local leaders into mentors or coaches for other neighborhoods or cities is an effective strategy for spreading successful participation practices. This leadership pipeline not only enhances the capabilities of emerging leaders but also leverages their experiences to inspire and guide others in different communities.

e) Continued Engagement Information: Keeping participants informed about future opportunities for engagement is vital for sustaining their involvement. Regular updates about upcoming workshops, their objectives, and detailed schedules ensure that the momentum of civic participation is maintained and that community members remain engaged and prepared to contribute.

By meticulously addressing these aspects, the Post-participation Phase nurtures the ongoing relationship between citizens and their government, ensuring that the initial enthusiasm and trust built during earlier phases are not only preserved but also strengthened. This strategic follow-up is crucial for building a robust civic engagement ecosystem that can evolve and adapt over time.

10.3 Roadmap - A Step-By-Step Citizen Participation Journey

This section takes a deeper look into the operationalization of the Participation Framework, specifically into the "Informative Campaigns" recommendation from the Pre-Participation Phase. Two roadmaps for demystifying government operations and informing citizens about the roles of their government, as well as how to engage with it, in the context of participation spaces are outlined. These roadmaps were designed with the behavioral insights uncovered during the research project.

The first roadmap relates to an informational campaign that allows citizens to understand the participation channels that are available and how others have engaged with the local government successfully in the past. It involves inviting citizens to an event in which they can interact with citizen role models who have engaged with their local government to create projects that increase their respective community's well-being. The first roadmap ties into the second one, as one of the items of the proposed participation exercise involves engaging with the citizen role models.

The second roadmap delineates some examples of activities that participation spaces should include to increase citizens' understanding of the functioning of their local government. It provides recommendations on communication strategies for the participation space and adds some

additional steps that relate to ensuring the space's success, separate from the informative component. spaces that a participation exercise should include and details how to communicate them to citizens.

1. Informational campaign that promotes self-efficacy and citizen engagement with the local government.

a) **Mapping Out Collaborative Citizens:** This initial step involves (1) identifying and cataloging citizens who have successfully collaborated with local government institutions to address community challenges. The mapping effort should be territorial-based, and it is recommended for the responsible team to engage in conversations with local community people in the multiple neighborhoods selected to detect a diverse group of citizens. This action is based on enhancing civic culture and self-efficacy, highlighting successful community-driven initiatives that have led to meaningful improvements, and serving as inspiration for broader community involvement.

b) **Understanding Previous Collaborations:** (2) The second step involves interviewing the identified collaborative citizens to learn about their initiatives and inviting them to be part of the informational campaign. The team responsible should highlight that by participating they will be able to meet other citizens like themselves who have engaged proactively for their communities in other parts of their city.

c) **Cultural Messaging:** (3) The third step involves designing the communication product. Following the identification of engaged citizens and their respective stories, the informational campaign should leverage messages that resonate with the community's collectivist culture. (3.1) First, the communication tool should highlight prompts such as "What are your friends suffering from? What is your family suffering through?" This approach is aimed to personalize the issues and motivate collective action for common benefits.

d) **Localized Action Calls:** (3.2) This step shares concrete examples of civic engagement, like, for example, Jorge's (a made-up citizen) story of creating a community garden through collaborative efforts with local government. This is based on addressing citizens' lack of understanding of local government processes, illustrating practical ways citizens can engage and make a difference, thereby demystifying governmental functions and encouraging active participation. (3.2.1) The communication product should have multiple versions that are strategically designed and distributed according to the demographics and interests it aims to attract.

e) **Invitation to Participate:** (3.3) Also, the campaign should invite citizens to participate in workshops featuring role models like Jorge. This step, based on the concept of the role model, showcases successful examples of civic engagement, and offers practical learning opportunities for participants to see how they can replicate similar successes in their areas. It should include prompts such as "Get to know the people that are driving positive change around you," "Take a leadership role to solve the problems that you, your family and friends are suffering from."

f) **Interactive Engagement Opportunities:** (3.4) The final element of the communication tool provides mechanisms for citizens to directly connect with active community changemakers, through a QR code that allows them to find contact details for local activists. This step addresses citizens' lack of understanding of local government processes

by facilitating direct interactions and engagement, encouraging community members to initiate and lead their civic projects. (4) These interactive engagement opportunities would be hosted in participation spaces designed by the local government.

By structuring the journey around these insights, the process is designed to empower citizens through education, role modeling, and direct engagement, fostering a proactive and informed community capable of sustained civic participation. Each step builds upon the last, ensuring a holistic and impactful engagement experience.

2. Informational campaign that invites different demographics to an informative participation space by leveraging identity, close group dynamics, and other elements.

The present roadmap delineates the steps relating to logistics in a numbered format (1), (2), (3), and so on, and the items that the informational campaign should contain in letters, the first item beginning with: (A).

a) **Addressing Communication about Institutional Offers:** Citizen participation moments are a great opportunity to address the lack of knowledge regarding institutional offers and attract those interested in registering for local government programs through that. (1) The first step would be to identify programs that would benefit the neighborhood's demographics the most. (2) Once these are identified the organization should communicate with public officials from the relevant offices to negotiate their presence in the participation moment. (A) Finally, the flyers that invite the population to participate should highlight that the event will provide access to public officials facilitating sign-ups or providing information about social programs. This ensures a wider demographic attends these spaces, addressing the issue of insufficient knowledge about available programs and benefits.

b) **Identity:** During focus groups, identity emerged as a crucial element for community engagement. Integrating local cultural elements and symbols in public projects strengthens community identity and pride, ultimately improving attendance and engagement in participation events. For crafting the informational campaign about the event, the organizer should begin by (4) mapping spaces where residents feel most identified with, or which represent a hub for community activities. Subsequently, (B) the communication products should be distributed and promoted in the identified space and, if possible, the event should be hosted there.

c) **Practicality:** Citizens lack time to engage in participation efforts. To increase convenience and highlight the appreciation of the authorities to participants, local restaurants should be engaged to provide food at the event. The organizer should (5) launch a call for neighborhood-based food providers to cater the event, (6) select the most competitive ones, and (C) highlight their presence in the informational products.

d) **Addressing Self-Selection through Sports, Arts, and other characteristics that tie to identity:** People tend to self-select out of experiences that don't align with their worldview. To engage those less politically involved, the participation event should include activities outside of the mere participation exercise. One way to achieve this would be to incorporate an awards ceremony during the participation event. Recognizing community members in sports, arts, or culture draws in a broader demographic, including family and friends of those being recognized. If relevant and logistically possible, the organizer could (7) host a

sports or culture competition some weeks before the event and recognize the winners during the main participation event. (D) By including these events in the informational campaigns, a broader range of community members would be interested in attending.

e) **Personal Stories by Community Members to foster pride:** To foster a sense of community and belonging, it's essential to demonstrate shared interests and identities among neighbors. One way to reach this goal is to invite citizens to present their neighborhoods, what defines them, and why they take pride in their locality to local officials. (E) Including an invitation to community members in the informational campaign would allow for the selection of participants to be democratic and to steer away from political tensions within the neighborhood. During the event, the presentations would help in highlighting commonalities and strengthen neighborhood bonds.

f) **Personal Stories by Public Servants:** An additional segment should feature a public servant sharing their journey into public administration. The focus would be on storytelling to cultivate empathy and dispel stereotypes surrounding public servants. The presentation would delve into the personal narrative of the public servant, detailing their motivations for entering the field, what they find fulfilling about their work, and their contributions to the city. By framing the presentation as a narrative, the audience can connect on a human level, understanding the passion and dedication that drives public servants to serve their communities. (F) The informational campaign would highlight the presence of the public servant(s) who would speak at the event. It is recommended that the public servant is part of the entities that are closest to the citizen, for example, JAL members. However, they should be invited from other areas of the city to dissipate potential political tensions existing within the community and their direct public servants.

g) **Self-Efficacy, Civic Culture, and Positive Experiences with Local Government:** As mentioned in Informational Campaign #1, one activity in the event would involve citizens delivering presentations detailing how they led successful engagements with the local government to enhance their community's well-being. Presenting their experiences in a narrative format would allow them to serve as role models for participants during the participation event. This approach not only aids in improving the understanding of how to engage with the government but also enhances civic culture, self-efficacy, and the sharing of positive experiences with local authorities.

11. Impact Assessment and Experiments

Given that there are 3 stages of the intervention, different quantitative techniques will be used to evaluate the causal effect of the interventions.

Running an experiment

In a city in Colombia, several districts will be selected to introduce an intervention aimed at increasing trust in the government. Non-government Organizations along with the Government will conduct the "Sample Program", outlined below, using a randomized control trial. As outlined in the participation cycle, three phases of participation affect a citizen's perception of how their engagement is valued by the state. Thus, it would be worthwhile to test the changes before and after the program. Comparable districts will be chosen as control groups to compare the level of trust in districts where the interventions will be conducted (treatment group) with control groups.

Sample Program

1. Test (trust)
2. Pre-participation Phase Intervention
3. Participation Moment Phase Intervention
4. Post-participation Phase Intervention
5. Test (trust)

Effectiveness of Intervention

To determine whether and/or how effective the intervention raises the trust profile of citizens towards the government, we will deploy a simple linear regression and obtain the correlation coefficient.

Sample Regression Function: trust $= \beta 0 + \beta 1$ (sample program) where sample_program is a binary variable. The intervention group with implemented intervention will have a sample_program value $= 1$ whereas the control group without implemented intervention will have a sample_program value $= 0$.

Using STATA (see Appendix D for a specific command), we can determine the correlation coefficient, r, of the linear regression.

Coefficient Interval	Correlation
0.00 – 0.199	Very Weak
0.20 – 0.399	Weak
0.40 – 0.599	Medium
0.60 – 0.799	Strong
0.80 – 1.000	Very Strong

Figure 21: Ranges of correlation coefficients and their strengths

Using Figure 21, we can determine the strength of the correlation. The stronger the correlation (closer to 1), the more effective the intervention in raising the trust levels of citizens.

Addressing the statistical significance of the correlation coefficient

It is important to know for certain whether the correlation between the tested intervention and trust is statistically significant. The t-test will enable us to determine whether the correlation between trust and intervention is absent and rule out interventions that do not statistically significantly affect trust.

Evaluation:

Sample Regression Function: trust $= \beta 0 + \beta 1$ (sample program)

Test for Statistical Significance:
After multiple measurements of trust are taken over a specific period, we can conduct a t-test on the slope of the graph (β1) at 95% confidence level to test if the association between the intervention and trust levels is statistically significant.

Null Hypothesis: H0: p = 0 (The population correlation coefficient is not statistically significant from 0. There is not a significant correlation between the sample_program and trust levels)
Alternative Hypothesis: H1: p =/= 0 (The population correlation coefficient is statistically significant from 0. There is a significant correlation between thesample_program and trust levels)

Calculate t-statistic:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

x̄ = obersved mean of the sample
μ = assumed mean
s = standard deviation
n = sample size

Figure 22: T-Statistic calculation

Determine the Degrees of Freedom:
The degrees of freedom (df) for the t-test are usually equal to the total number of observations minus the number of estimated parameters in the model (including the intercept). So, $df=n-k-1$ Where n is the number of observations and k is the number of independent variables in the model.

Calculate the Critical Value:
Determine the critical value from the t-distribution table or use software to find it based on the desired significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and degrees of freedom.

Compare the t-statistic to the Critical Value:
If $|t| >$ critical value, reject the null hypothesis (H0)
If $|t| \leq$ critical value
$|t| \leq$ critical value, fail to reject the null hypothesis ($H0$)

Interpretation:
If the null hypothesis is rejected, it indicates that the coefficient is statistically significant.
If the null hypothesis is not rejected, it suggests that the coefficient is not statistically different from zero.

The above t-test can also be evaluated using STATA (see Appendix D for specific command).

<u>Importance of using randomized control trials to evaluate impact</u>

The use of randomized control trials to test the effectiveness of interventions means that we would be able to obtain a clear answer as to whether the proposed interventions were effective in raising trust levels or not. Randomization of citizens used in both control and intervention groups ensures that biases are minimized, ensuring that the only cause of changes in trust levels must come from the interventions. The determination of how long the experimental intervention is to run before trust is measured is left to the organization administering the experiments. Interventions that require more time and resources to implement should be under a longer evaluation period. Due to the nature of trust being intimately tied to culture and perceptions, we foresee that any changes in trust levels will take time. As such, we recommend that any experiments have a minimum run time of one year to allow for significant changes to take effect. For a more detailed evaluation of minute/specific changes in trust levels, the regression discontinuity technique can be employed (see Appendix E).

12. Conclusion

Behavioral Insights (BI) is a powerful tool that helps to determine how people experience and respond to changes. Leveraging this concept has enabled us to explore what it would take to improve people's trust in the government and enhance citizen democratic participation in Colombia. This project sought to analyze the key barriers to citizen participation by understanding their preferences and dynamics between citizens and local governments, and what builds their pre-existing mental models. We built up this picture through three phases: the scoping phase, using insights from a literature review and interviews with experts, triangulation with in-loco visits, and testing in focus groups. By testing our interventions with citizen focus groups, we were able to understand which of their thoughts and behaviours were impacted by automatic thinking, reflective thoughts shaped by socio-cultural mental models and their responsiveness to social pressures from each other and collective mental models.

Following our testing, we developed a list of recommendations using behavioral insights to improve the participation process and a roadmap to be implemented by Fundación Corona's partners and local governments. Our recommendations focus on exposing citizens to new types of positive interactions with the government to change the current distrust-oriented mental model towards a more trust-oriented one. Our recommendations need to work alongside suggested government policy to ensure the interactions are not just "trust washing" but building mechanisms and a culture of trust. This plug-and-play model has been designed to be contextualized to other cities and provide an analytical framework for local governments and NGOs. It provides a roadmap for localities to determine their own unique citizen dynamics and develop BI-based interventions, alongside suggested qualitative impact evaluations to showcase their efficacy. With this, our recommendations aid the country towards a more citizen-focused and equitable approach in terms of public policies. By changing collective mental models, ultimately, Colombia's democracy - and thus economic and political development - can be enhanced.

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Appendix A - Focus Group Methodology

The following slide (Figure 22) outlines the overall structure of the Focus Group and these three areas, as well as the corresponding Theory of Change that the section is testing. These questions all pertain to the EAST framework (explored further in Figure 22). The figure also notes what the observer should be keeping an eye out for and noting in their observer guide. Our Focus Groups encompassed all elements of the behavioral process in an experiment.

Figure 22: The following figure is the EAST framework, which had been informing our thinking in the Behavioural Intervention process and was suggested to us by the client. The Focus Groups specifically allowed for Section 2: understanding the context, which helped us to use the Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely questions below to understand what intervention was appropriate for which population, the cultural, historic, and social context, as well as understanding how feasible it was according to the citizens themselves.

We're at Phase 2 in the EAST implementation framework

1. Define the outcome
What behaviour is to be influenced?
How can this be measured reliably and efficiently?
How large a change would make the project worthwhile?
Over what time period?

2. Understand the context
Does this make sense given the context?
Does this make sense given whose behaviour needs to change?
Is this intervention sensitive?
Is this intervention feasible?

Use of Focus Groups to determine these questions

3. Build your intervention
4. Test, learn, adapt

Figure 23: The following figure is the COM-B framework, which had been informing our thinking in the Behavioural Intervention process and was suggested to us by the client. This framework was a helpful complement to the EAST framework as the questions on the left-hand side helped us to delve one level deeper into the EAST categories, then define which questions corresponded to each of these.

We will use the Focus Groups to test the COB-B framework

How to test

- Given personal and national traumas, are citizens ready to accept this behaviour?
- Can all citizens physically access this change?
- If no, can we create or build channels that allow all relevant populations to change their behaviour at a low trade off?

- Are the social networks, groups and dynamics individuals are in conducive to accepting this behaviour?
- Is a citizen in a sufficient financial and physical position to incorporate this behaviour into their everyday lives?

- Are citizens willing to incorporate behaviour into their everyday lives?
- Would their automatic "fast" systems respond positively to this behaviour shift?
- Or would it require further reflection, for their "slow" system to accept this as a positive behaviour?

COB-B framework

CAPABILITY — Can this behavior be accomplished in principle? → Physical / Psychological

OPPORTUNITY — Is there sufficient opportunity for behavior to occur? → Social / Physical

MOTIVATION — Is there sufficient motivation for the behavior to occur? → Automatic / Reflective
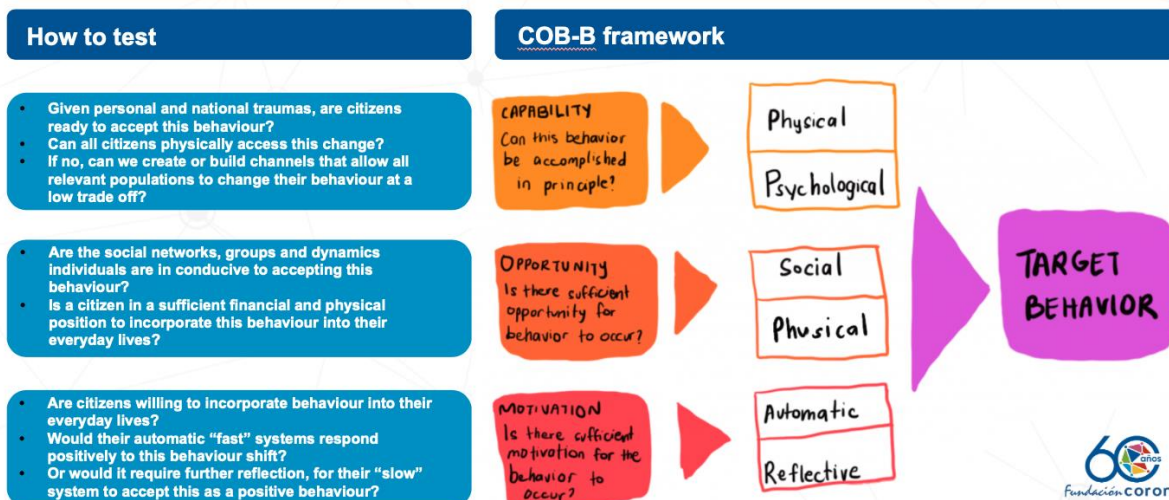
→ TARGET BEHAVIOR

Figure 24: We designed the framework, so each part of the focus group directly answers questions from our combined **EAST and COM-B** framework, as a strong Theory of Change is required to ensure that every part of the Focus Group has a purpose. Often, the activity and questions we ask

of participants is not what we are seeking to measure and observe: often we seek to measure social interactions between individuals or thought processes. These combined frameworks help us to answer our "5W1H" - what, why, when, where, who, how". This informed our Theory of Change for the remainder of A/B testing.
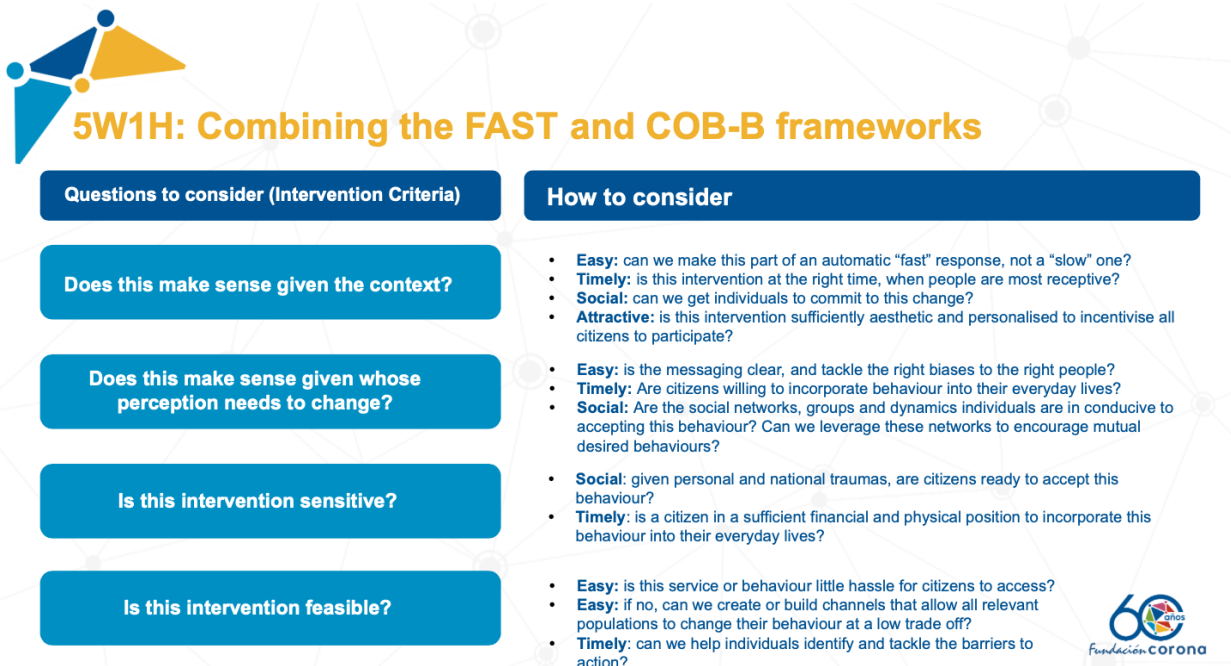
Figure 25: These social discussion card prompts were used to delve one level deeper into the A/B responses during the "Social" section, when participants were allowed to interact and thus include peer-to-peer effects in our results. We devised these cards to get the participants to rank their key barriers to making their chosen A recommendation feasible in their own life (the "E" component of the framework - is it easily implementable behavior by these individuals?). They allowed us to begin a discussion reframing the barriers into positive statements once the participants had collectively ranked their preferences as a team: what would you like to see, or be able to commit to?

Social: discussion cards

At a time that make sense for me	• When **would** be best for you?
In a way that feels personal	• What would you like to feel like you're personally being seen?
Something I can commit to	• Would you be able to **commit** to this change? What would help you to if not?
Delivered in a way that's easy for me	• What would be accessible and easy for you to reach?
Something that looks credible and professional	• What would looking credible look like to you?
Delivered in a way that is clear and makes sense?	• What would clear messaging look like to you?

Figure 26: For our A/B testing, we used a Round Robin format. This allowed us to get a natural ranking of all experiments. We repeated 8 A/B experiment ideas in "I" statements, so that the participants could really imagine themselves carrying out the action. We repeated these steps 3 times over for each of the 3 journey maps we created: i.e., three lots of 8 A/B tests. A/B testing, especially for the "automatic" system testing, are quick tests asking participants which they prefer: A/B, B/D, G/H. This allows the facilitators to create a natural ranking of which letters (experimental option) won the most, and thus which the group preferred overall.

Step 1: A/B testing is conducted to rank all 8 possible interventions to gauge preferences - Round Robin format for 1v1 testing (done for each person)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Wins	Losses
A	■									
B		■								
C			■							
D				■						
E					■					
F						■				
G							■			
H								■		

Participant	Wins	Losses	Ranking
8	7	0	1st place
7	6	1	2nd place
6	5	2	3rd place
5	4	3	4th place
4	3	4	5th place
3	2	5	6th place
2	1	6	7th place
1	0	7	8th place

Step 2: Add points of interventions from all participants. 1st = 8 pts, 8th = 0 pts (3 participants: A = 8+6+3 = 17) and rerank.

Appendix B - Interviews Methodology

Figure 27: Sample Interview Notation

MEETING AGENDA - Juan Carlos Prieto Garcia

Date/Time: Wednesday, March 13th 2024

Juan Carlos Prieto Garcia - Director of Participation and Communication at the Secretariat of Planning + 3 public servants

The team is organizing multiple participation assemblies for providing inputs to the distrital development plan (plano distrital de desarollo 2024-2028)

Roles: Tatiana (presentation 1) Izabel (presentation 2)

Objectives

- Listen to the Secretariat of Planning's goals and challenges to strengthen citizen participation in Bogotá
- Present an overview on the capstone project and receive feedback
- Articulate partnership for future implementation

Notes

Appendix C - List of Interviewees and Consulted Institutions:

List of Interviewees:

Name	Position / Institution
Andrés Hernández Montes	Director of Transparencia por Colombia
Elisabeth Ungar	Former Director of Transparencia por Colombia
Carolina Calderón Guillot	FUNCICAR
Santiago Silva Jaramillo	Professor EAFIC
Paca Zuleta	Director at Escuela de Gobierno
Karla Hoff	Columbia University
Juan Camilo Cardenas	Universidad de Los Andes
Beatriz Helena Vallejo	CEO, Speaker, Founder & Behavioural Change Scientist at ETHOS BT
Juan Camilo Gamez	Sciences Po
Henry Murrain	EGOB Uniandes
Juan Pablo Camacho López	Director at IDPAC
Juan Carlos Prieto Garcia	Director of Participation and Communication at the Secretariat of Planning
Liliana Caballero	General Secretary of Bogotá
Alexander Ruiz	Mayor of Yumbo
Nelson Eduardo Muñoz	Secretary of Welfare and Participation at Yumbo Municipality
Andrés Pérez	Director of Planning at Yumbo Municipality
Lorena Bolívar De la Ossa	Leader of Bilingualism at the Department of Education of Barranquilla

List of consulted institutions:

1. Municipality of Bogotá
2. Municipality of Yumbo
3. Municipality of Barranquilla
4. Como Vámos Yumbo
5. Participa+ Yumbo
6. Nuestra Barranquilla
7. Fundación Grupo Social
8. Ford Foundation
9. Foro por Colombia

10. USAID
11. Instintivo
12. Suma
13. Movilizatorio
14. NIMD
15. Territoria
16. Colombia Lider
17. Fundación Origen
18. Plural
19. Lab del PNUD
20. Consejo de competitividad
21. Ethos
22. ProBogotá

Appendix D - Regression Discontinuity Technique

<u>Potential concerns to identify the causal effect of the intervention:</u>

Threats to internal validity:

Selection bias – people who will decide to participate in the stages 1 and 2, on average, might be prone to have more trust in the government compared to people who will not participate.

Omitted variable bias – comparable groups of districts (treatment and control groups) might differ in unobserved characteristics. Factors such as socioeconomic status, historical context, or existing levels of trust in the government could influence both the selection of districts for the intervention and the outcomes measured.

Threats to external validity:

Demographics and socio-political dynamics of the selected city may limit the applicability of the results to other settings.

<u>Addressing threats to internal validity</u>

To address the potential threats to the internal validity of the intervention, the regression discontinuity technique will be employed. The regression discontinuity technique allows for identifying causal effects by leveraging naturally occurring thresholds or cutoff points. By comparing outcomes on either side of the threshold, we will be able to isolate the effects of the intervention while controlling for confounding variables.

<u>Evaluation:</u>

Expected Discontinuity Chart

To make it easier to understand the discontinuity chart, we will set the period when the awareness campaign will be conducted as the cutoff point in our RDD.

The X-axis represents days of the month, while the Y-axis represents the citizens' level of trust to the government.

The difference observed in the level of trust on either side of the discontinuity chart would then accurately represent the impact of the awareness campaign.

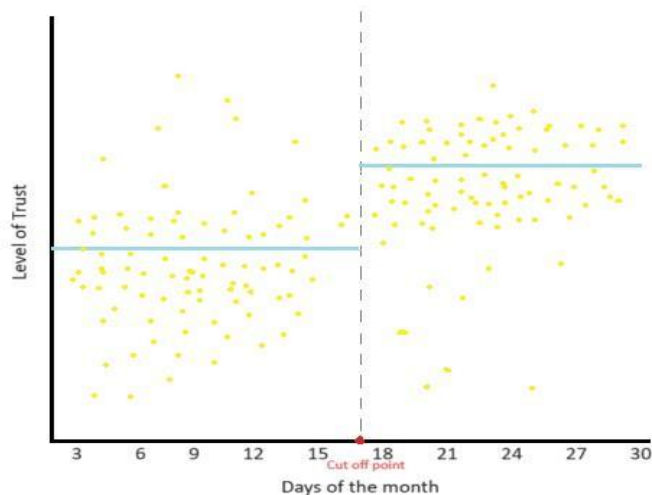We expect that choosing an appropriate bandwidth will help us deal with heterogeneity (the difference between the treatment and the control groups).

Figure 28: Expected Discontinuity Chart