

# INFOSHEET: Vulnerability, Risk and Opportunity Mapping (MVRO)

Since 2001, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has been implementing its **Disengaged Child Soldiers and Youth at Risk of Recruitment Program**. Through this program, IOM has been working to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Colombia to prevent the recruitment and use of children and adolescents by illegal armed groups in the context of the armed conflict.

As part of this program, the **Vulnerability, Risk and Opportunity Mapping (MVRO)** methodology was developed to support local-level, sustainable solutions to the recruitment and use of children and adolescents.



Mapping exercise in Cauca

## INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT:

Colombian institutions have made significant progress in creating a culture of prevention to address the participation of children and adolescents in the armed conflict. Comprehensive protection measures have been promoted through national-level government responses that include public policies, laws and regulations related to recruitment prevention.

However, important local-level challenges remain to be addressed: filling gaps in *policy implementation*, developing *concrete actions* and ensuring the availability of *local services*. The MVRO methodology seeks to support the Colombian Government in addressing these challenges.

## STRATEGY:

The MVRO methodology uses participative and community-driven strategies to support a **local-level process** aimed at: improving *knowledge* of recruitment risks, supporting a *community-constructed analysis* of the local context including *verification of rights* of children and adolescents, and developing *prevention plans and strategies*.

The MVRO methodology was designed to target conflict-affected and high-risk communities, using a differential approach that can be applied in both rural and urban settings and with a particular focus on indigenous and afro-Colombian populations.

## LEGAL CONTEXT:

The **Childhood and Adolescence Code** (Law 1098 of 2007), promotes the creation of public policies related to the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents. Regional and local governments are obligated to ensure the protection and guarantee the rights of children and adolescents through public policies and local development plans, and families and communities share co-responsibility.

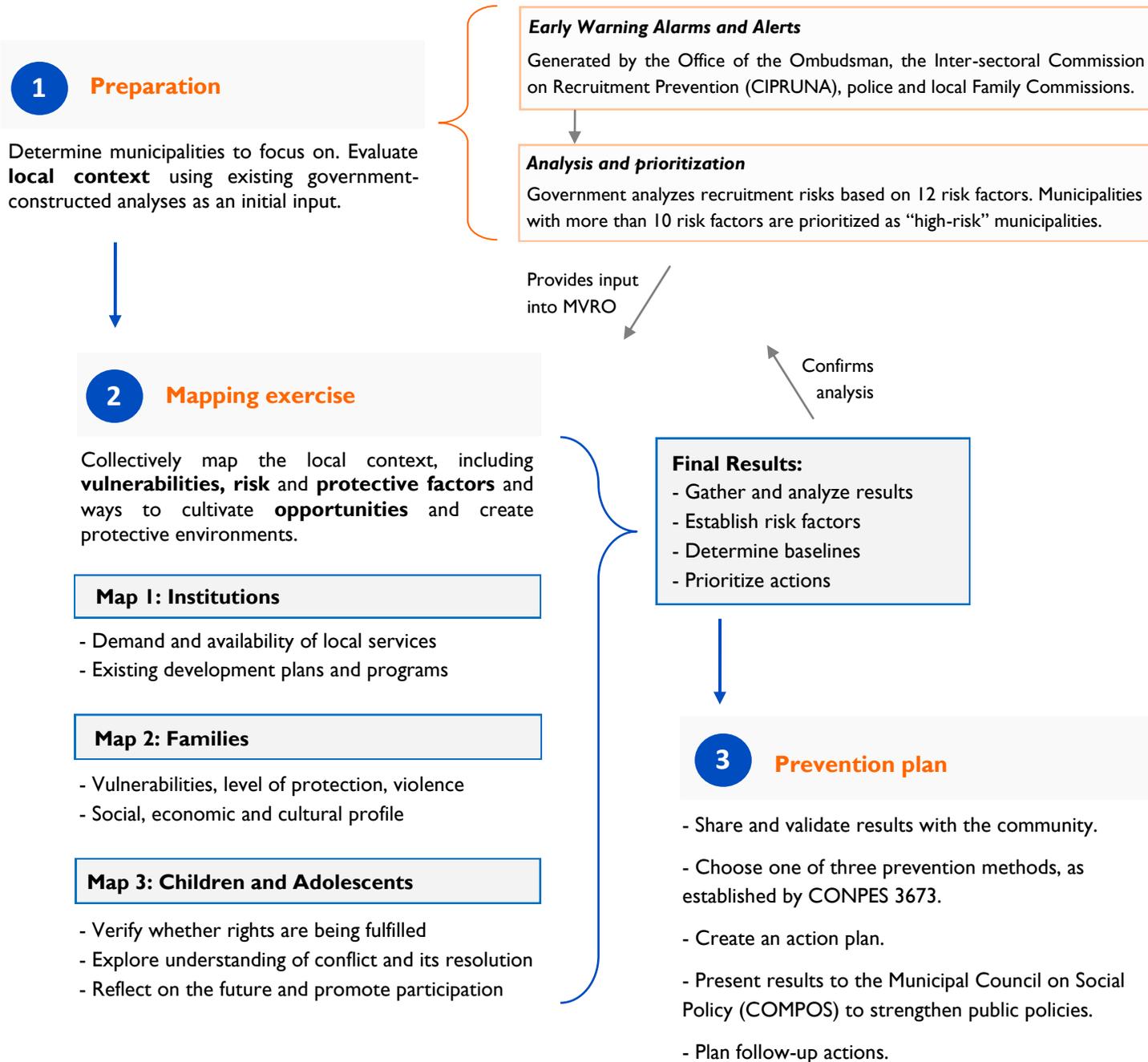
The Inter-sectoral Commission on the Prevention of Recruitment and Use of Children and Adolescents (**CIPRUNA**) was created in 2007 through Decree 4690 to coordinate and guide recruitment prevention efforts. **CONPES 3673 of 2010** established a series of actions aimed at guaranteeing the effective enjoyment of rights and strengthening protective environments in order to reduce recruitment risks.

*The MVRO methodology has been periodically updated to incorporate new laws and regulations, progress made in guarantees for victims, changes in the structure of the State and lessons learned throughout implementation.*

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**PROCESS:**



**What is “mapping”?**

A “map” is a collection of words and symbols generated by the community to represent their reality, analyze patterns and identify collective experiences. The mapping exercise makes local factors visible including cultural, social, economic and political aspects. Each map provides a representation of a portion of reality in a specific time and place, as interpreted by the community, and promotes a collective and shared understanding of the local situation.

**PRODUCTS:**

**Map of Local Context**

Community-constructed map of local vulnerabilities, risks and opportunities that makes visible the issues faced by children and adolescents. Confirms and builds upon institutionally-constructed analyses.



**Prevention Plan**

Local-level action plan for recruitment prevention, based on the risks and priorities identified by the community, including:

Short-term: Develop **youth initiatives** designed to promote opportunities and contribute to the effective enjoyment of rights.

Long-term: Contribute to improved **public policies** for recruitment prevention, in line with other municipal and regional plans, programs and strategies, including local development plans.

**Follow-up and Monitoring**

Follow-up actions planned. Some local governments and departments form working groups to develop and coordinate local interventions.



**IMPACTS:**

**Increase knowledge**

Improve understanding among children, families and institutions about the risk of recruitment, the local context, and the fundamental human rights of children and adolescents.

**Transform communities**

Help communities to transform negative or violent habits, customs and behavior patterns, to rediscover cultural tools and to appreciate the way that each community understands and responds to conflict.

**Promote participation**

Strengthen the participation of children, adolescents, and families by involving them in decision-making processes, promoting civic participation, and supporting youth initiatives.



Mapping exercise in Cauca

**Implement policies and laws**

Support the implementation of national and international laws, public policies, government plans, and regulatory frameworks at the local level.

**Build capacities**

Provide inputs into decision-making on projects, programs and plans that work to strengthen protective environments. Empower those responsible for ensuring that local prevention activities and methods are carried out.

**Strengthen networks**

Strengthen institutional and community support networks, and help to improve coordination among local actors.

## RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2013

During the implementation of the MVRO methodology in 2013, the most recurrent risks factors, protective factors and opportunities identified included:

### Risk Factors

- Insufficient public spaces for recreation
- Dangerous public spaces with conflict and violence related to criminal groups, illegal armed groups and drug and alcohol consumption
- Violence and bullying in schools, youth gangs
- Forced displacement due to threats of recruitment
- Parents migrating in search of work
- Lack of economic opportunities and limited access to education
- Family violence, lack of affection and care
- Exploitation, sexual violence and child labor
- Limited or inadequate institutional services

### Protective Factors

- Safe spaces for recreation
- Children trust that their parents will protect them, especially their mother
- Parents encourage children to finish school
- Support and encouragement from teachers
- Cultural and sports activities that provide a positive use of free time
- Institutional programs and public policies for children and adolescents

With support from USAID, the MVRO methodology was implemented in **43 municipalities** in 2013 (Antioquia, Arauca, Meta, Cauca, Valle de Cauca, Nariño, Caquetá, Tolima, Guainía, Huila, Bolivar, Magdalena, and La Guajira), with the participation of:

- **10,711** children and adolescents
- **1,600** family members
- **539** community members
- **249** officials from local institutions

### Prevention Plans

*Example: Buenaventura*



In the municipality of Buenaventura (Valle de Cauca), it was determined that public policies should address the following:

#### *Early prevention*

- Training programs on sexual and reproductive education
- Programs to build resilience, motivation and empowerment among parents, children and adolescents regarding education, citizen participation, co-existence and conflict resolution

#### *Urgent prevention*

- Promote the provision of comprehensive assistance for CHA&Y whose rights have been violated or are in vulnerable situations
- Develop public policies focused on early childhood, childhood, adolescence and youth

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