



Promoción y Defensa
de los Derechos de la Niñez

Learn to live without violence



Transformative research by children and young people

CESESMA, San Ramón, Matagalpa, Nicaragua

Learn to live without violence: Transformative research by children and young people

This publication is an English translation of an original work in Spanish which brings together the work of four teams of young researchers in Nicaragua:

El Plomo-Siares-La Garita Team: Arlen Anielka Sovalbarro Peralta, Daniela Arauz Potoy, Edwin Francisco Sánchez Hernández, Engel Hamilton Araújo Martínez, Katerin Gissel Hernández, María Zeneyda Sánchez Gaytán, Marjuri del Carmen García Sánchez, Paola de los Ángeles Montoya Jiménez, Selena Vanessa López Granados, Zorayda López Pérez.

Samulalí Team: Deglis Vladimir Suárez Dávila, Deyvi Francisco López Flores, Elyin Emerson Pérez García, Esther Ileana Sánchez Martínez, Francisco Granado Hernández, Jasser Jovani Artola López, Jonton Rafael Armijo Méndez, Karleydi Magdalena González Guido, Luis Wilfredo González Hernández, Maykeling Hernández Rizo, Odri Massiel Suárez Pérez, Rodolfo Salgado Maldonado, Santa Inocelia Chavarría Hernández, Silvia Danixa Gómez González, Tania Raquel Méndez Gaitán, Valeska Sujey Suárez Pérez, Xochilt Lisbeth García García.

Yasica Sur Team: Brenda María Rugama Ríos, Elías Alonzo Martínez, Félix Pedro López López, Ivania Pastrán, Jeyson Josué Sevilla, Jorleny Masiel Alemán, José Armando Sánchez, Kenny Rogers Ferrey Urbina, Keyla María Ríos Valle, Manyel Mendoza Rugama, Martha Vanessa Rugama, Mauricio Eliud Chavarría, Milagros de Dios Aguilar, Orlando Junior Blandón, Osiris Sugey Valdivia, Sayda Nohemí Polanco, Yelba del Rosario Villagra, Yeymi Francisco García.

Yúcul Team: Ericka Rodríguez Rodríguez, Fernando Vásquez Vargas, Janeth Pérez Sánchez, Jymy Alberto Dormuz Pérez, Karen Montoya Díaz, Martín Leodán López Zamora, Myriam Polanco García, Pablo Antonio Hernández González, Santo Epifania Ochoa Granados, Sonia Yubelki Valle Picardo, Suyen Isabel Cortedano, William Hernández López.

Coordination and facilitation: Harry Shier, Esmeralda Godines, Aleyda Alemán, Juana Virginia López, Eva Luz Salgado, Camilo Hernández, Marisol Hernández Méndez, Guillermo José Medrano (CESESMA), Nikola Ivanova (National University of Ireland Galway).

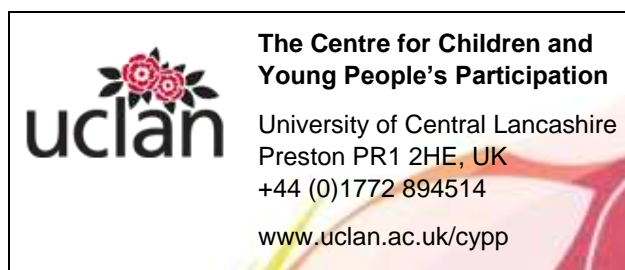
Photography: CESESMA. The photographs were selected and approved for publication by the young researchers with written consent of their parents.

Drawings: The young researchers, selected and approved by them for publication.

Compiled and designed by: Harry Shier

Translated from the original Spanish by: Harry Shier

Published in partnership by **CESESMA** and **The Centre**, September 2012



CESESMA and The Centre authorise the reproduction of this work for educational purposes related to the promotion and defense of children and young people's rights and/or the prevention of violence, provided that authorship is credited to CESESMA and the young researchers.

ISBN: 978-1-901922-85-1

Learn to live without violence: Transformative research by children and young people

Contents

<i>Preface to the English edition</i>	1
<i>Foreword</i>	3
<i>Introduction: The analysis of the social problems in our communities that we did in order to choose our research topics</i>	4
<i>Girls and boys preventing violence in the home</i>	
<i>By the team of transformative researchers from Samulalí, Matagalpa</i>	7
Part 1: Who are we, and how did we do our research?	8
Part 2: Our research findings	10
Part 3: Our recommendations	15
Our Action Plan	16
<i>Without respect there's no trust or friendship and that's what causes violence</i>	
<i>By the team of transformative researchers from El Plomo, Siares and La Garita; San Ramón</i>	17
Part 1: Who are we, and how did we do our research?	18
Part 2: Our research findings	20
Part 3: Our recommendations	24
Our Action Plan	26
<i>All the children and young people in the world have the right to live without violence</i>	
<i>By the team of transformative researchers from Yasica Sur, San Ramón</i>	27
Part 1: Who are we, and how did we do our research?	28
Part 2: Our research findings	30
Part 3: Our recommendations	34
Our Action Plan	36
<i>We want to live without violence!</i>	
<i>By the team of transformative researchers from Yúcul, Monte Grande and Cerro Grande</i>	37
Part 1: Who are we, and how did we do our research?	38
Part 2: Our research findings	40
Part 3: Our recommendations to stop the consumption of alcohol causing violence in our communities	44
Our Action Plan	46
<i>Young researchers sharing experiences</i>	47
<i>Young researchers reflecting on and evaluating our experience</i>	48
<i>APPENDICES</i>	50
Appendix 1: The Children and Young People's Transformative Research Approach	51
Appendix 2: Reflections from the adult facilitation team	55
Appendix 3: Example of an interview form	57
Appendix 4: More experiences of young consultants and researchers in Nicaragua: Bibliography and further information	58

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CESESMA and the four teams of young researchers would like to thank all those who contributed to the research:

- 70 children and young people
- 69 mothers and fathers
- 28 community leaders [women and men]
- 23 teachers
- 1 police captain;

from the communities of Guadalupe Arriba, Piedra Colorada, Samulalí #1 and Samulalí #2 in Samulalí district, Municipality of Matagalpa; Cerro Grande, El Carmen, El Plomo, La Corona, La Garita, La Grecia, Monte Grande, Santa Martha, Santa Celia, Siales and Yúcul in the Municipality of San Ramón, Matagalpa.

We would like to thank the Common Fund for Support to Civil Society for Democratic Governance in Nicaragua (Fondo Común) and the Fund for Gender Equality, Sexual and Reproductive Rights (FED-HIVOS) for the financial support which made this research possible, and the publication of the original report in Spanish; and also the Lizianthus Trust (UK) for the financial support that enabled us to print this English edition.

Translator's note

Round brackets (...) appear in the original. Square brackets [...] contain explanatory notes added by the translator.

Learn to live without violence: Transformative research by children and young people

Preface to the English edition

On behalf of The Centre, I am delighted that we are able to partner CESESMA in the production of this booklet in English.

CESESMA have been friends of The Centre since it was established in 2008 'to promote and research children and young people's participation, inclusion and empowerment'. Harry Shier, CESESMA's education adviser, was the star of our launch event, giving a guest lecture and leading a very successful workshop for participation practitioners, and became our first Associate member.

CESESMA's work is about empowering young people in their communities, and this booklet shows that work at its best. The research presented here was devised, led and conducted by children and young people living and working in four communities in Nicaragua. It reflects their lives and concerns, and so is very practical research. At the same time it is carried out to a high standard of systematic knowledge generation; and it is ambitious, aiming to do no less than to change cultures and values.

Transformative research such as this works on more than one level, as Appendix 1 makes clear. The experience of doing the research is transformative for the young people, and also for the adults with whom they work. The research itself, and the recommendations and action plans developed from it, are potentially transformative for the society. The young people have chosen important topics, such as violence and alcohol abuse in their communities. They use what they learn from their research with members of the community – children, parents, teachers and community leaders – to challenge existing practice and show how it must change in order to achieve a society based on care, mutual respect and solidarity.

As Barry Percy-Smith and I argued in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation* (to which Harry and young people from CESESMA also contributed), there is much that those of us living and working in more affluent countries can learn from practice in parts of the world where life is harder. In places like Nicaragua participation can sometimes be a necessity for survival, rather than the icing on the cake. This gives an urgency to participatory practice, a boldness and ambition, which are sometimes hard to find in more 'sophisticated' settings.

Clearly written and attractively presented, this book is an inspiration to other children and young people wanting to do their own research, and a model for adults seeking to support them. Harry Shier and his team of young colleagues are to be congratulated on producing a report of such outstanding quality.

Nigel Thomas
Professor of Childhood and Youth Research
Co-Director, The Centre
University of Central Lancashire

Learn to live without violence: Transformative research by children and young people

Foreword

We are children and young people from rural communities in the Municipality of San Ramón and Samulalí district in the Municipality of Matagalpa, Nicaragua. In 2011 we formed four teams of researchers to see if we could help solve some of the social problems that most affect our communities. The organisation CESESMA facilitated our work using the *Transformative Research* approach, and supported us throughout the process.

After we had completed our research, each team produced a final report which included recommendations to the different groups of people involved on the topics we had investigated. Each team also drew up an Action Plan for the following year, which will enable us to work for change in our communities through the implementation of our recommendations.

For all of us it has been an important and unforgettable experience. For most of us it was our first experience of being researchers, and we learnt how to carry out research through good communication with other people in the community. We also learned a lot about our own communities. Through our research we helped other kids who are living with violence, and also ourselves, because the truth is it's not only other people who live with violence.

We hope to continue with this process, researching other important topics and helping to find solutions for the most serious problems in our communities. Everything we learnt we want to share with other children and young people in workshops and educational talks. At the same time we want to help the adults in our communities think about the harm they're doing to their children. In this way we can help the children and young people who suffer violence in Nicaragua and in the world.

In the following pages we are pleased to share with you our research reports and action plans. After this we present some final reflections from a joint session of the four teams of researchers we held in February 2012, and a summary of our evaluation of the whole experience.

In the appendices you will find a commentary by the adults from the CESESMA team who supported us and more information about the methodological approach they used.

We hope you will like this book, but more importantly we hope it will contribute to building a world where children and young people can live without violence. We also hope we can motivate other children and young people to become researchers, so that with new knowledge we can continue building a world of peace.

*By the teams of Young researchers from Samulalí, Yasica Sur, Yúcul,
El Plomo, Siases, La Garita; San Ramón, Matagalpa.*

Introduction: The analysis of the social problems in our communities that we did in order to choose our research topics

At the start of the process each team had to decide the topic they wanted to research. The CESESMA team didn't suggest the topics. So before we present our final reports, we would like to show you the analysis of the issues that each team carried out in order to choose their topic, and also the steps in the democratic process we used for each team to select its final topic.

First step:

Through a "rain of ideas" [ideas storm] each team generated a long list of problems experienced in their communities under three general themes: participation, the right to education and prevention of violence.



Team	Problems that limit kids' participation in our community	Problems that limit our access to quality education	Problems that lead to violence in our community
Samulalí	<p>We are not listened to.</p> <p>We don't have a cédula [citizen's identity card – issued at age 16] and only adults participate in decision-making.</p> <p>Adults think we don't have enough experience and don't give us a chance to participate.</p> <p>Poor communication amongst the young people who run activities.</p> <p>Parents don't trust their own sons and daughters.</p> <p>Family problems.</p> <p>Teachers won't give us permission to miss classes.</p>	<p>Parents don't have the resources.</p> <p>Teachers don't turn up on time for school.</p> <p>Nor do the students.</p> <p>Teachers aren't interested: They are just doing a job and don't have any vocation or love of teaching.</p>	<p>Alcohol.</p> <p>Jealousy among couples.</p> <p>Lack of understanding.</p> <p>Envy.</p> <p>Lack of responsibility.</p> <p>Machismo [overt sexism].</p> <p>Parents believe it is correct to hit their children if they are disobedient.</p> <p>Parents don't think about how we feel, and how they are treating us.</p>
El Plomo-Siares-La Garita	<p>Adults who say because we're kids we can't join in.</p> <p>Some mums and dads don't like their children to participate.</p> <p>Some children are shy or embarrassed to join in.</p> <p>Some don't know how to express themselves.</p> <p>Some have low self-esteem; feel inferior.</p> <p>There are others who feel superior and won't help anyone else.</p> <p>Some feel that their views aren't taken account of.</p>	<p>Lack of money to buy uniform, school equipment, bus fares etc.</p> <p>No transport to get to school.</p> <p>No library.</p> <p>Lack of interest in studying.</p> <p>Lack of resources in the schools: No books, not enough desks, blackboards, sports equipment etc.</p> <p>Poor security at school.</p> <p>Teachers who don't attend to all the students' needs.</p> <p>Lack of continuity of classes: There are classes one day, no classes the next day. Sometimes the teacher doesn't show up.</p> <p>Sometimes no-one knows whether there will be classes or not.</p>	<p>Lack of education.</p> <p>Lack of respect.</p> <p>Lack of trust.</p> <p>Lack of support.</p> <p>Disagreements: Violence is a way of resolving differences.</p> <p>Parents use violence to discipline their children.</p> <p>It's a custom that is passed from generation to generation.</p>

Team	Problems that limit kids' participation in our community	Problems that limit our access to quality education	Problems that lead to violence in our community
Yasica Sur	<p>Adults don't take our views into account.</p> <p>Parents don't give their children permission to participate.</p> <p>Parents make it a condition that we do the housework first.</p> <p>Kids who go along just to hang out.</p> <p>Lack of trust amongst the kids themselves.</p> <p>We are involved in so many things we don't have any spare time.</p> <p>Embarrassment.</p> <p>Due to envy: Kids who think they're leaders don't want anyone else to know more than them.</p> <p>They tell tales so that the mums won't let their daughters out of the house.</p> <p>They say only boys should participate because "they've not got a reputation to lose".</p> <p>Teachers don't give us permission to miss classes.</p>	<p>Distance to the nearest secondary school.</p> <p>Parents not interested in their children's education. They don't appreciate the effort we make to go to school and they don't support us.</p> <p>Boring classes.</p> <p>Children and young people with no interest in studying.</p> <p>Horrible ill-mannered teachers.</p> <p>Ineffective style of teaching.</p> <p>Teachers don't turn up to teach their classes.</p> <p>Problems between children and young people at school.</p>	<p>Booze.</p> <p>Gossip, jealousy.</p> <p>Having a stepfather or stepmother who doesn't like you.</p> <p>Only letting boys go out to play.</p> <p>When the dinner's not ready on time.</p> <p>When a dad sends his son to do a message and the son doesn't pay any notice.</p> <p>When children get bad marks at school and their parents punish them.</p> <p>When women don't do what their husband tells them to.</p> <p>Children fighting amongst themselves.</p> <p>Women fighting over men.</p> <p>Drug addiction.</p>
Yúcul	<p>Lack of opportunities to participate.</p> <p>Parents won't give permission.</p> <p>Too much work.</p> <p>Parents who think it's just a waste of time.</p> <p>Children who don't like to relate to others.</p> <p>Children who are studying and don't want to miss classes.</p> <p>Parents punish them.</p> <p>Shyness.</p> <p>Some don't like to participate.</p> <p>Lack of awareness.</p>	<p>Parents take their sons and daughters out of school and put them to work.</p> <p>Parents don't send their children to school every day.</p> <p>Teachers don't know how to teach.</p> <p>Favouritism by teachers.</p> <p>Poor communication.</p> <p>Teachers don't correct our homework.</p> <p>Distance to travel to school.</p> <p>Illness.</p> <p>Parents won't let their daughters go to school because "they only go looking for boys".</p> <p>Abusive parents; "I suffered for you, and I'll make you suffer".</p> <p>Lack of money.</p> <p>Children can't concentrate on their schoolwork because of problems at home.</p> <p>Lack of adequate food at home.</p> <p>Children without parents who have no-one to help them.</p> <p>Parents who don't pay any attention to their children's schoolwork.</p>	<p>Excessive consumption of alcohol in the cantinas [local bars – often illegal].</p> <p>Traditional parenting customs.</p> <p>Consumption of illegal drugs.</p> <p>Abuse of women due to machismo.</p> <p>Fights among kids at school (using violence to settle disagreements).</p> <p>People don't know any other way to resolve their differences.</p> <p>Jealousy.</p> <p>Family problems.</p> <p>Parents don't receive any training on how to live without violence.</p> <p>Revenge – when someone thinks another has done them an injustice.</p>

Second step:

Based on the “rain of ideas” each team made a short-list of the problems we felt were most serious and where we felt that generating new knowledge about the issue could help in finding a solution. Here are the four teams’ short-lists. In each case the topic we finally chose is marked with a star.

Samulali

1. Parents who hit their children because they think it's the correct thing to do. *
2. Problems in families such as physical and sexual abuse.
3. Machismo as a factor that causes violence.
4. Envy as a factor that causes violence.
5. Teachers who teach as an obligation and not a vocation.

El Plomo

1. Respect in the community, and lack of respect as a factor that causes violence. *
2. Lack of transport to get to school.
3. Factors that limit children's participation in our community.
4. Lack of continuity of classes at school.

Yasica Sur

1. There's no secondary school.
2. Violence in the home. *
3. Adults don't take the kids' views into account in decision-making in the community.
4. Parents have no interest in their children's education and don't support them.

Yúcul

1. Alcohol. *
2. Machismo.
3. Lack of education for parents on how to live without violence.
4. Drugs.
5. Fights amongst kids.

Third step:

To prioritise the topics on our short-list we used a technique of multiple voting and counting using yogurt pots and beans.

**Fourth step:**

Based on the results of the voting, we had a final debate to reach a consensus of the whole team on which topic we wanted to research. For example, according to the votes of the Yasica Sur team, the topic that received most beans was the problem of access to secondary education. However, after more discussion the team decided that this problem only affected some of them and not all, so in the end they chose the second option “Violence in the home”. They said they would still like to research the problem of access to secondary school, but would do it another day.

When we use this method to decide priorities, we always say, “The beans don't make the final decision, the research team decides”.



For more details see Appendix 1 on our research methodology.

GIRLS AND BOYS PREVENTING VIOLENCE IN THE HOME

*By the team of transformative researchers
from Samulalí, Matagalpa*



**Young researchers helping to solve the problem of parents
who hit their children: Their attitudes, beliefs and
knowledge of alternatives**

Part 1: Who are we, and how did we do our research?

We are 17 children and young people from four rural communities in the district of Samulalí, Matagalpa: Samulalí #1, Samulalí #2, Piedra Colorada and Guadalupe Arriba. We are from 9 to 17 years old. All of us go to school. Twelve of us are in primary school and 5 in secondary. We also help our parents with housework and farm work.

We have formed a team of researchers to help find solutions to the social problems that affect our communities.



In our first workshop we talked about what is “research” and what it means to be a researcher.

We made a list of the social problems that most affect us and selected the most important. After a democratic vote, we had a final reflection to choose the topic we were going to research.



Finally we all did drawings to share our experiences of this topic.

In our second meeting we planned the research. First we identified the groups we were going to interview: children and young people, mothers and fathers, school teachers and community leaders. Then we decided the questions we were going to ask each group.

Finally we agreed on how we were going to do the interviews and how many people we were going to interview.



CESESMA helped us prepare the interview forms.



We organised ourselves to carry out the interviews with the people from our communities.





We interviewed 45 people:

People interviewed	Female	Male	Total
Children and young people	7	5	12
Parents	8	3	11
Community leaders	4	7	11
Teachers	6	5	11
Total	25	20	45

We had a third meeting to share and analyse all the information and draw up our conclusions.



We held the fourth meeting of the team at the CESESMA office in San Ramón town. We worked with a computer and projector to produce the report of our research.



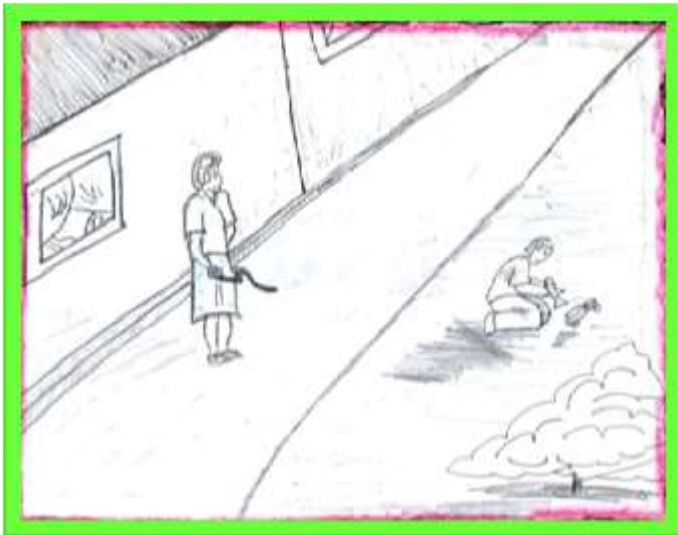
Part 2: Our research findings

1. How to bring up children

The parents claimed that the best way to bring up children is to give them a good education.

The majority of the children and young people interviewed consider the best way to bring up children is to send them to school. Of the 12 interviewed, 7 said the best way to bring up children is to give them good advice.

Most of the community leaders we interviewed consider the best way to bring up children is through good communication, supporting them, maintaining good relations in the family, advising them and setting a good example.



2. Physical and humiliating punishment

What do parents hit their children with?

Of the 12 children and young people interviewed, 10 said they were hit with belts, sticks or canes, one by hand and one said she had her hair pulled.

The majority of the parents said they had hit their children with belts, hands and sticks. There were very few who said they didn't hit their children.

According to the parents, why do they hit their children?

Seventy percent of parents said they hit their children because they were unruly and so had given them a reason to hit them.

The majority of the parents believe it is necessary to hit their children in order to educate them. Very few are opposed to hitting their children and say it is not the best way to raise them.

The majority of the parents also believe it is necessary to shout at their children to educate them, and very few said that shouting at children doesn't help educate them.



Upper drawing:

"I'm going to give you one", "Don't hit me please".

Lower drawing:

"This stick will be stuck to you", "You'll pay for this"
"No mummy".



Upper drawing: Sometimes they treat us badly because we've done something they don't like; they even deny us food.

"You can't do anything right", "No mummy".

Lower drawing: Parents and grown-ups treat us however they want; they might even kill us. "Stupid kid", "No daddy".

According to the teachers, why do parents hit their children?

The teachers we interviewed said that parents hit their children because they have no communication skills, tolerance or understanding. Some said they did it through force of habit or because the children are badly-behaved.



Do the community leaders know parents who mistreat their children?

The majority of the community leaders interviewed (70%) said they do know of families where they mistreat their children whether psychologically (shouts and bad language) or other forms of physical punishment like beatings. Some men are aggressive towards both their children and their wives.

Only three of the leaders said they didn't know any parents who were violent towards their children.



According to the leaders, why do parents hit or shout at their children?

Some of the leaders justified the parents' aggression, saying that that parents hit and shout at their children because they are badly-behaved and don't pay attention to the adults.

On the other hand, others recognise that parents who behave this way don't respect their children's rights and also lack knowledge and information. For these parents hitting their children is a habit, because it's just the way they are.

According to the teachers, how does the treatment that children receive at home affect their behaviour in school and their schoolwork?

The teachers interviewed said that when children and young people suffer violence it affects their behaviour and their schoolwork. Either they behave violently or they become submissive. They are always sad and don't respond positively. They may become rebels. They find it hard to pay attention in class. Some feel they have more freedom at school than they do at home and so they become undisciplined.

4. The alternatives

What alternative ways of bringing up their children without violence are parents aware of?

Nine of the parents interviewed said they were aware of alternative ways to bring up their children. Among the alternatives mentioned were:

- Dialogue;
- Sending them to school;
- Telling them that if they behaved well they would buy them something they wanted.

Two people said they were not aware of any alternative ways of bringing up children.



"Do what I tell you". "Don't pull my hair".

When we don't do as they say, our parents hit us. They do whatever they like to us"

What alternatives are the leaders aware of to bring up children without hitting them?

Of the community leaders interviewed, 9 were aware of alternative forms of child-rearing, but 2 didn't know any alternative. Among the alternatives mentioned were:

- Dialogue;
- Listening
- Not shouting;
- Giving time to your children;
- Parents to undergo training for parenthood.



How do the teachers think that parents should bring up their children?

The majority of the teachers interviewed said that the best way to bring up children is with responsibility, love, friendliness, understanding, advice and respect; giving them confidence in a peaceful way, without shouts or violence.

5. What can be done to help?

What do the leaders think they can do to reduce the mistreatment of children and young people in the communities?

Most of the leaders suggested they could invite parents who mistreat their children to meetings, workshops or training events. They could liaise with other organisations to reduce the mistreatment of children.



What do the teachers think they can do to reduce the mistreatment of children and young people?

The teachers said that to reduce the mistreatment of children and young people there should be:

- Good communication in the family;
- Talks for parents and also for children;
- Family counselling;
- Awareness-raising campaigns;
- Dedicating time to children and young people.

What do the children and young people think they can do so their parents will treat them with respect?

Of the 12 interviewed, 8 said they should respect their parents so that their parents would respect them. Two said they could talk to their parents and 2 said they should maintain good communication with trust and advice.



Part 3: Our recommendations

For children and young people to live without violence and mistreatment in the home, parents should:

- Treat their children with love and affection;
- Support their children;
- Respect their children;
- Talk with their children to maintain good communication and family relations;
- Trust their children, so that they will trust their parents.

For children and young people to live without violence and mistreatment in the home, community leaders should:

- Communicate with all the parents;
- Provide information to parents on how the way they treat their children affects their development.

For children and young people to live without violence and mistreatment in the home, teachers should:

- Invite parents to talks and workshops on raising children without violence;

- Counsel parents;
- Create a “School for Parents” to teach about alternatives for bringing up children without violence;
- If a teacher learns that a child is being mistreated at home, bring it to the attention of the authorities.

For children and young people to live without violence and mistreatment in the home, we the children and young people can:

- Share our knowledge on the topic;
- Form support groups where we know there are children suffering violence;
- Teach other children about living without violence, so that they can practice this with their parents;
- Help the children gain more confidence so they will participate in workshops on prevention of violence;
- Carry out more research with people who are interested in this topic;
- Talk to people who can help the children and young people of our community.



Rodolfo Francisco Xochilt Deglis Wilfredo Emerson Maykeling
 Inocelia Deyvin Jasser Tania Odri
 Valeska Silvia Karleydi Jonton Esther

Our Action Plan

Samulalí Team of Transformative Researchers

Action Plan

Objectives

1. For adults to reflect through meetings, talks and workshops, so that they change the attitudes, behaviour, customs and practices that limit children and young people's development, and so find alternative ways to raise their children.
2. For our recommendations to be accepted and complied with.
3. To present our research to the government authorities so they will take the necessary measures in cases where parents violate children's rights.

Area of influence

Town Hall
Mayor
Parents
Community leaders
The population in general.

The police
Ministry of Health
Ministry for the Family
District Council
Schools.

The media:
- Radio
- Television
- Newspapers.

Proposed actions

In the community:

- Make people aware of our research findings.
- Visit families to talk with children who are suffering violence.
- Give talks to the children and young people in the afternoons after school.
- Write and present a play on this topic.

At school:

- Discuss the topic of our research with teachers.
- Give talks on the topic in class-time with our teachers' support.
- Organise cultural activities like music and dance, competitions, mural-painting and poetry.
- Group projects.
- Meetings.

At district level:

- Municipal forum.
- Municipal fair.
- Cultural festival.
- Campaigns.
- Theatre presentations.

At departmental level

- Radio spots.
- TV spots.
- Departmental forum.
- Campaigns.
- March.
- Banners.
- Festivals.

National

- Use radio, TV and newspapers to publicise our findings.
- Use the internet to circulate information.
- Make a presentation at the National Festival against Violence [annual event promoted by Save the Children]
- Take a proposal to the National Assembly [parliament/Dail] (get a deputy to support us and help with this).
- Get our message printed on the cover of school exercise books.

Without respect there's no trust or friendship and that's what causes violence

By the team of transformative researchers from El Plomo, Siares and La Garita; San Ramón



Young researchers investigate the concept of “respect” and how lack of respect contributes to violence in families and communities.

Part 1: Who are we, and how did we do our research?



We are 10 children and young people from three rural communities in the Municipality of San Ramón, Matagalpa: Siares, El Plomo and La Garita. We are from 11 to 16 years old. All of us go to school: Six of us are in primary school and four in secondary school. We also help our parents with housework and farm work.

We have formed a team of researchers to investigate the problem of lack of respect that affects our communities.



In our first workshop we talked about the meaning of “research” and what it means to be a researcher. We drew up a list of the social problems that most affect us and we analysed these to choose the most important ones. After a democratic vote we had a final reflection to select the topic we were going to research. Finally we all did drawings and used these to share our experiences about this topic.



In our second meeting we planned the research. First we decided on which groups of people we were going to interview: children and young people, parents, community leaders and teachers.



Then we drew up the questions we were going to ask each group in the interviews.

Finally we decided how we were going to carry out the interviews and how many people we were going to interview. CESESMA helped us prepare the interview forms.



We organised ourselves to carry out the interviews with people from our communities.





We interviewed 35 people:

People interviewed	Female	Male	Total
Children and young people	7	3	10
Adults (parents and community leaders)	9	4	13
Teachers	10	2	12
Total	26	9	35

We met for a third workshop to share and analyse all the information and draw up our conclusions.



The fourth meeting of the team was held in the CESESMA office in San Ramón town. We worked with a computer and projector to write up our research report.



Part 2: Our research findings



*This is a situation which generates a lot of respect between girls and boys in the community.
"Let's play!" "OK, let's begin". Friends. Friends forever.*

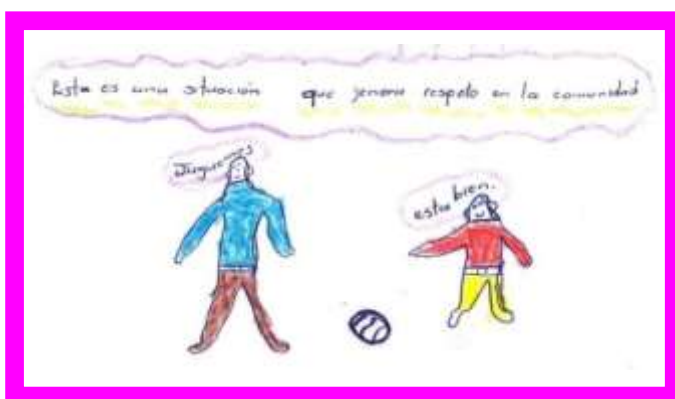
1. WHAT IS "RESPECT"?

What does "respect" mean to children and young people?

It means to respect without discrimination, with gender equality, without being violent towards other people, without differences over religion, politics, race of different abilities.

The adults also talked about *who* they should respect. The majority of the adults interviewed said that one should respect children and young people the same as older people such as friends, neighbours and workmates.

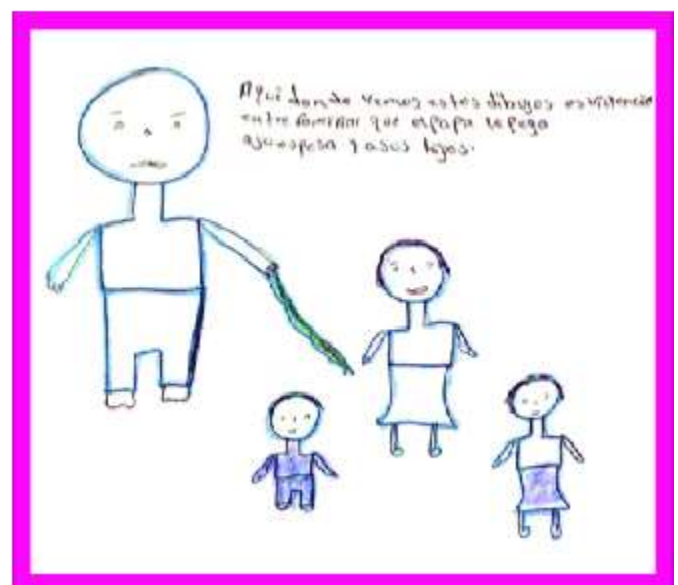
Some people mentioned things we shouldn't do; for example offend others, cause arguments or behave violently.



*This is a situation that creates respect in the community.
"Let's play!" "OK"*

What does "respect" mean to adults?

The adults have various ideas about what "respect" means. These include having self-worth [dignidad], solidarity, love, trust and living in peace.



In this drawing we can see family violence as the father is hitting his wife and children,

What does “respect” mean to school teachers?

The teachers interviewed said that “respect” is a value learnt at school, but that parents can also inculcate values, such as respect for others; not just respect for older people but for people in general.

The teachers also mentioned that “respect” exists when boys and girls respect the rules and norms established in school.



“Good morning”. “Ha ha ha!”
This is an illustration of lack of respect.

Do teachers think they treat their students with respect?

The teachers said they have a good relation of trust with their students. They recognise that they and the students should respect each other equally and should not cause offense with bad language.

Everyone, teachers and students, needs to respect other people’s ideas. They also need to maintain good communication and use an appropriate vocabulary.

They recognise that they must treat their students well and be understanding about behaviour problems. They said that through respect for each other we show that we are good citizens.

They also recognise that not to call people by their name is a lack of respect, and that teachers mustn’t be rude to their students because this violates their right to express opinions.

According to the teachers, what difference does it make at school if they treat the students with respect?

The teachers said that when they trust the students, their academic level improves. They also have good attendance and are more motivated in class. They say that good listening leads to better order and discipline.

They recognise that good relations amongst teachers are also important.

2. HOW LACK OF RESPECT IS RELATED TO VIOLENCE

According to the children and young people, what happens when there is a lack of respect in the home?

There is disintegration and conflict in the family; there’s violence and disagreement. The children feel uncomfortable. They suffer physical and psychological mistreatment. There is no love or affection.

In some families where there is no respect it is an empty home without love. Parents don’t communicate with their children and children don’t communicate with their parents.

According to the children and young people, what happens when there is a lack of respect between people in the community?

The majority said that it causes arguments, problems and enmity. In many cases the fathers emigrate, leaving the family home and abandoning their children not caring about the risks they may face. Sometimes the mothers go too. The children have no one to turn to for help and may end up being abused.

Lack of respect causes physical and psychological violence in the home, in school and in the community. It causes conflict where children and young people’s rights are not respected.



Here he is hitting the girl and hurting her psychologically.
He is pulling the girl’s hair.
This is the girl’s little brother.

Do adults see lack of respect as a factor that causes violence in the community?

All the adults interviewed (100%) believe that lack of respect is a factor that leads to violence. They gave a lot of examples, including:

- Conflict between neighbours;
- Not respecting other people's rights;
- Ignoring or rejecting people;
- Bad language;
- Men who mistreat women;
- Parents who mistreat their children;
- Young men who disrespect women;
- Violence in the street.

Some people say this is due to a lack of education, or lack of culture. They say that another factor that contributes to violence is that there are no authorities nearby [e.g. police, due to remoteness of the communities] and that people don't want to report violence.

Do teachers believe there is a lack of respect in school?

The teachers recognise that when children and young people use verbal insults, it's not just their problem; it's also parents' responsibility to teach their children to respect others.

They accept that it is a lack of respect not to respect children's opinions. Children and young people must enjoy their rights, but they also have a duty to respect their teachers.

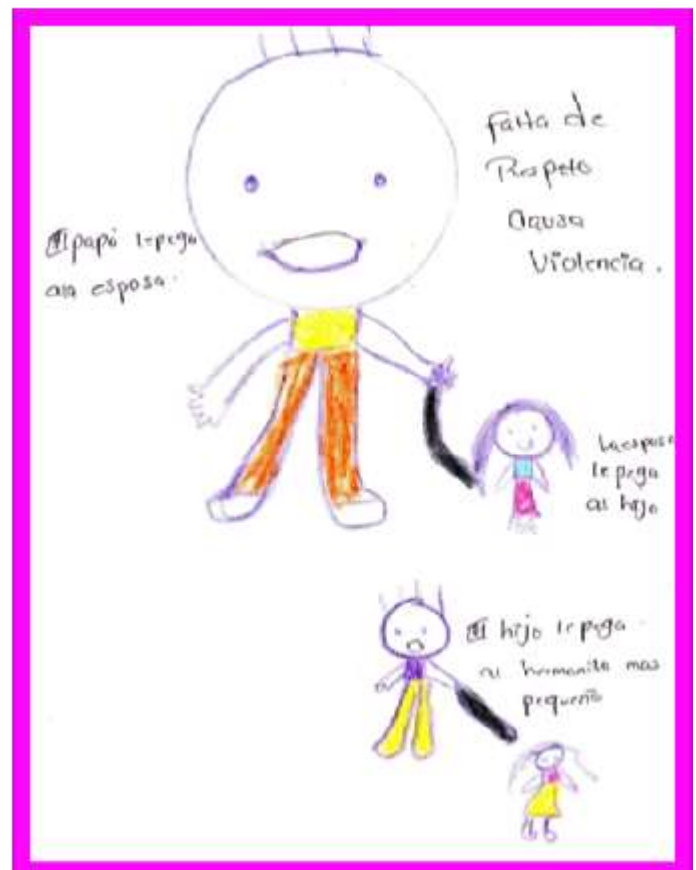


This drawing represents respect because they are playing

3. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PROMOTE RESPECT AND NON-VIOLENCE?

According to the children and young people, what can be done to create relationships based on respect in families and communities?

- Good communication in the family between parents and children;
- Give educational talks on this topic in the community;
- Maintain good communication with the community leaders;
- Mums and dads treating each other with mutual respect and becoming more aware.



*Lack of respect causes violence.
Father hits his wife.
The wife hits her son.
The son hits his little sister.*

According to the adults, how are they going to show respect for other people?

Establish good communication; treat people respectfully and without violence. Many mentioned that respect has to be mutual, and this applies to both children and adults. They spoke of listening to other people's ideas and respecting their opinions, creating friendship and trust. They talked about the importance of helping others and working for the good of the community.

What do the adults propose to do to establish relationships of mutual respect?

Many spoke of the importance of putting into practice values such as responsibility, mutual support, love for one's fellow human beings and mutual respect. A lot of people suggested workshops or training courses so that people could learn about their rights and responsibilities. Others proposed good communication and not making enemies. Some people mentioned the importance of joining community organisations and participating in activities that can help their families.

What do the adults suggest to prevent violence in communities, schools and homes?

- They talked about the importance of responsibility and values such as honesty, solidarity, love for one's fellow human being, trust and mutual support.
- Reporting violent people to the authorities.
- Talking to people prone to violence about the importance of family relationships and good behaviour.

- Seek help for parents who mistreat their children.
- Make a personal commitment not to use violence.
- Share the lessons learnt from organisations like CESESMA.

How do teachers propose to create relationships based on respect in the schools?

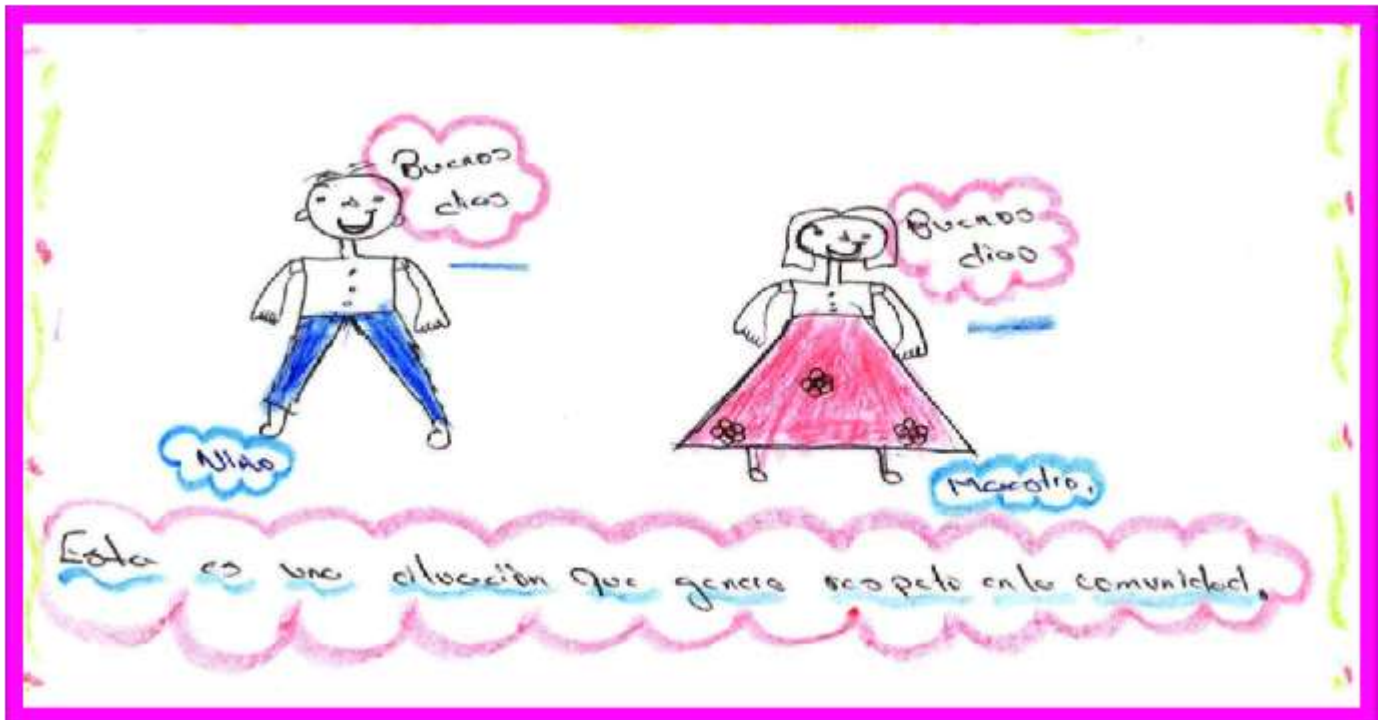
The teachers believe that by working on the theme of gender equality we can build respect through games and creativity.

They feel it is necessary to promote awareness of rights and responsibilities among students and teachers.

They recognise that building trust is a good way to create relationships based on respect.

Arriving on time for class is important, both for teachers and students, as this also creates respect.

Part 3: Our recommendations



Child: "Good morning". Teacher: "Good morning". This is a situation that creates respect in the community.

Recommendations to parents and community leaders to reduce violence by promoting respect in families and communities:

1. Respect all people.
2. Don't mistreat children and young people.
3. Learn to listen, so that you will be listened to.
4. Promote the value of respect for different ideas and opinions.
5. Take other people's opinions into account.
6. Share your knowledge with others.
7. Help families in difficulties who don't have resources.

Recommendations to teachers to reduce violence by building respect in and out of school:

1. Respect your students.
2. Through your example, teach them to respect both adults and children.
3. Teach your classes and correct mistakes with respect and without violence, without humiliating your students.

(Children and young people also have to play their part, practising respect for other people).

What can we children and young people do to build respect and reduce violence in families and communities?

1. Respect everyone, listening and taking account of other people's opinions.
2. Help those who find it difficult to express their opinions.
3. Build trust with other children and young people, because other important values depend on trust, like the respect we deserve as citizens.
4. Share our ideas with other people.
5. Help children who suffer violence at home, so they can have a family that lives in peace and practices mutual respect.
6. Give talks in the community on the topic of respect.
7. Organise campaigns and marches to promote respect and non-violence.



Zeneyda

Paola

Engel

Edwin Selena

Katerin

Marjorie

Arlen

Daniela

Zorayda

Our Action Plan

El Plomo-Siares-La Garita Team of Transformative Researchers Action Plan

Objectives

1. Make people aware of our research findings.
2. Encourage people to listen to our recommendations and put them into practice.
3. Contribute to increasing respect and reducing violence in families, schools and communities.

Area of influence

At home
At school
In the community
In church
In the municipality
In the Department

In the whole country
In the media:
- Radio
- Television
- Newspapers
- Internet

Proposed actions

In the community

1. Hold a community meeting with parents, children and young people to present our research findings about the importance of respect, with the support of Promotores and Promotoras [young community education volunteers].
2. Give talks about the importance of respect in schools and in the community.
3. Organise a community campaign.
4. Liaise with other NGOs and institutions to hold a community forum to promote respect for children and young people's rights in school, community, church and home.
5. Seek alternative ways to carry out our plans and achieve our goals.

At district level

6. Organise a municipal children's forum on the importance of reducing violence and building mutual respect.
7. Organise meetings or training workshops to make people aware of the importance of respect and explore the topic more fully.

At national level

8. Organise a march against violence in the different municipalities and departments of the country.

All the children and young people in the world have the right to live without violence

*By the team of transformative researchers
from Yasica Sur, San Ramón*



Young researchers helping to solve the problem of violence that children and young people suffer in the home

Part 1: Who are we, and how did we do our research?



We are 18 children and young people from four rural communities in the Yasica Sur area in the municipality of San Ramón, Matagalpa: Santa Martha, El Carmen, La Corona and La Grecia. We are from 12 to 16 years old. Most of us go to school. Ten of us are in primary school and five in secondary. We also help our parents with domestic work and farm work. Some of us live and work on coffee plantations.

We have formed a team of researchers to look for solutions to the social problems that affect our communities.

In our first meeting we discussed what “research” means and the role of a researcher.



We drew up a list of the social problems that most affect us and analysed these to choose the most important ones. We had a democratic vote, and after that a final reflection to choose our research topic which is: The violence that children and young people suffer in the home. Finally we all did drawings to share experiences related to this topic.



In our second meeting we planned the research. First we decided which groups of people we were going to interview: children and young people, parents and community leaders.

Then we drew up the lists of questions we were going to ask each group.

Finally we discussed and agreed on how we were going to carry out the interviews and how many people we were going to interview.



CESESMA helped us prepare and copy the interview forms.



We organised ourselves to carry out the interviews with the people of our communities.



We interviewed 72 people:

People interviewed	Female	Male	Total
Children and young people	21	14	35
Parents	17	10	27
Community leaders	8	2	10
Total	46	26	72

Then we met a third time to share and analyse all the information we had collected and draw up our conclusions.



In our fourth meeting we worked with a computer and projector to write up the report of our research.



Part 2: Our research findings



1. Children and young people

Do the children and young people know other children in their communities who are mistreated by their parents? How are they mistreated?

The children and young people were able to identify the different forms of violence that they suffer. We believe that some children wanted to tell us they were being mistreated but denied it out of fear, because their parents had told them not to talk about it.

One of our team members said:

"I chose to be subject of an interview myself, because it's not only other people who suffer violence".

The parents tell their children that they hit them because they love them. In some religious families they believe it's their duty as parents to hit their children and it's a sin not to.

According to the children and young people, how do they feel when their parents hit them?

They said that when their parents hit them they feel depressed. Some said it makes them want to leave home.

A few said that there was no physical violence at home, but inside they felt they were mistreated.

Some girls said their parents hit them because they believed it was the girls' obligation to do all the housework, and they gave preference to the boys.

They felt it was necessary to talk about the violence they were suffering with people who could help them, but sometimes they felt threatened.

Do children and young people believe that hitting is the right way to bring up children? What is the alternative?

The majority said that hitting children was not a good way to bring them up. Only four people said it was a good way, because they thought their parents had good reason to hit them when they were disobedient.

Some said that beatings leave incurable scars. One teenage girl said that the mistreatment she received made her think about how she was going to treat her own children when she became a mother herself.

Those who said hitting was not a good way to bring up children were able to identify alternatives such as conversation. They talked about the need for children and parents to give and receive trust in order to establish good communication and be able to talk about what was wrong. They said there was no reason for parents to mistreat their daughters and not their sons. Boys and girls should be treated equally.

"Child-rearing doesn't mean they have to hit me. It's more about how they guide me on questions of right and wrong".



Why do the children and young people think their parents do this?

- Lack of communication between parents and children.
- Parents don't take account of their children's opinions.
- Parents want to bring up their children the same way they were brought up by their parents.
- Sometimes mothers are mistreated by their husbands and take out their hurt and anger on their children (although not always, because there are other mothers who suffer beatings to defend their children).

However, there were five children interviewed who said their parents did it because they were disobedient.

Do the children think it is possible to be raised without violence?

Some said this would be great because they would live happily and in peace. They talked about the importance of claiming their rights for a better life. They felt they would also have more opportunities to develop and do something better with their lives.

But all this would only work if the parents had the opportunity to learn about how to treat their children better and bring them up without violence.

One boy said he didn't think this would be a good thing, because parents have their own ways to bring up their children and stop them from being disobedient.

2. Parents

According to the parents, how do they think they should bring up their children?

- Teaching them good habits and making them aware.
- Teaching them to be polite and respectful.
- Treating them well from when they're little.
- Not mistreating them physically.
- Stop them getting into fights.
- Teach them to respect other people.

According to the parents, how do they punish their children?

Many parents admitted that they hit their children, though some said they did it in a moderate way that didn't hurt.

Others preferred to tell their children off, or give them advice instead of punishment. Some give them jobs to do as a form of punishment. None of the parents we interviewed mentioned [common traditional] punishments like making children kneel on the floor on sand for hours.

Another form of punishment is not to let children have things they want, like watching their favourite TV programme, or not letting them go out.

Only two parents said they don't punish their children and one said it isn't necessary to punish them.





*The daughter can't defend herself because she is disabled...
And the father is an alcoholic.*

How do the parents feel when they have to punish their children?

They say that above all they feel sad, and it is hurtful for them. This means they really ought to think about it before they do it. However they give all kinds of justifications; for example:

"I console myself knowing that it's the right thing to do".

"It's necessary for them to learn".

Some say they feel fine. But there are others who say they punish their children with feelings of anger or rage; that is, without thinking about what they are doing.

Only one person said, "I don't feel capable of punishing".



This man is hitting his wife. She doesn't defend herself because he is drunk.

Do the parents believe that punishment is necessary?

Almost three quarters (72%) said they believed punishment was necessary.

A Little over a quarter (28%) think it is not necessary.

Those who think it is necessary offer various justifications; above all saying they believe that unless they punish them their children won't learn, won't pay attention to what they say and won't obey them.

One father said it was his duty to punish his children, and another said that the Bible ordered it.

Those who said that punishment wasn't necessary said they believed advising their children was sufficient and that punishing them just made things worse, since they don't learn anything through being mistreated.

What kinds of activities do parents give their children permission to do, and what do they forbid?

Among the permitted activities most mentioned were:

- ✓ Recreational activities.
- ✓ Educational activities.
- ✓ Sports.
- ✓ Religious activities.

Among the forbidden activities:

- ✗ Hanging out, wandering about [vagancia],
- ✗ Keeping bad company.
- ✗ Parties.
- ✗ Drugs.



How do parents treat their sons and daughters differently?

Half the parents interviewed (50%) said they allow their sons to do things that they forbid their daughters to do. Some say there are some jobs for boys and others for girls.



Things considered suitable for boys only included parties, hanging out in the street, playing with other boys and playing football. Some parents forbade their daughters to play football or go out and about. Others insist that their daughters stay at home and do the housework.

However 42 % said that for them there was no difference in what was permitted for boys and girls. A few said that all have the same rights and the same abilities.

"Both boys and girls can enjoy recreation perfectly well".



This is a man who, when something bad happens to him in the street, he takes it out on his wife at home. Here he is throwing the food in her face.

3. Community leaders

How do the leaders think parents should bring up their children?

- Setting a good example;
- Not arguing in front of them;
- Telling them that we all have the same rights;
- Sending them to school to get an education;

- Giving them advice instead of treating them with violence;
- Being responsible parents;
- Leaders, such as pastors, should be an example to others;
- Teaching them to follow God's way;
- Teach them to respect the school rules and be polite.



This is a man who makes his wife suffer. He's always on the booze, and hits his wife and children.

What has been the leaders' experience in bringing up their own children?

They said that sometimes, when they are in a bad mood, they don't have the patience:

"But I respect them, and I talk to them about how we're all equal and all have the same rights and responsibilities – as long as they obey me".

For some of them it has been difficult, because they want to be good parents, but sometimes their children don't understand them:

"It's hard for them to understand that what I want is for their own good, and to stop them getting into bad ways".

"It's been a good experience, because with understanding one tries to be an exemplary father".

"I try to be understanding because they are still small, and you can't treat them with violence because they are too young to understand".

How do the leaders communicate with their children?

They recognise that sometimes they are violent. One said that when he got angry, "Just from my look, they know I don't like what they're doing".

For others, it's a case of talking to them with respect and giving them good advice:

"Sharing knowledge with them so that they will be good men and women, both human and spiritual; so they will be good sons and daughters of God".

It's important for the leaders to think in terms of building trust with their sons and daughters, so that when they are going through difficult moments they will listen to advice, and know that their parents are there for them to give them love and companionship.

"Sometimes there are boys and girls suffering because of lack of communication, and they will often harm themselves, thinking that their problems have no solution".

"With good communication, you can avoid physical mistreatment".

How do the leaders believe they contribute to the prevention of violence?

- "By talking to the parents, because as a leader one can help to improve the relationships between children and parents, so they can develop mutual support".
- "Awareness-raising with the neighbours, so they participate in the community activities that CESESMA invites them to, so as to learn new things and improve family relationships".
- "Setting an example in the community, and sharing with the children and young people all the good things we've learned".
- "Reporting men who mistreat their partners to the authorities".
- "Being aware of the children; making sure they are not suffering any kind of violence".

Part 3: Our recommendations



In this drawing I did, the man was drunk and he was mistreating his wife, and the children were crying because their mother was being treated very badly, and because he might hit them too.

Recommendations to the parents

1. Respect your sons' and daughters' human rights.
2. Look for alternative ways to bring up your children without violence.
3. Have conversations with your children. Listen to them and take their opinions into account.
4. Give them advice.
5. Set them a good example of how to behave.
6. Don't dismiss what they say. If they tell you that someone is abusing them, believe them, even if it's a member of your own family.
7. Show them love and affection.
8. Teach them values.
9. Send them to school and support them in their schoolwork.
10. Don't let them go off with people you don't know.



Recommendations to community leaders.

1. In your role as a community leader, give talks to the parents, sharing your knowledge with them to help them improve family relationships.
2. Set a good example to the community. Talk to everyone with respect and give them good advice.
3. Raise awareness amongst the neighbours, encouraging them to participate in the activities CESESMA organises.
4. Organise community campaigns against violence.
5. Look out for the children of the community, to make sure they don't suffer violence.
6. Listen to children and young people who are suffering and may harm themselves if they have no-one to talk to.
7. Report men who mistreat their family, physically or emotionally, to the authorities.

What can we do as boys and girls to help make sure that the children of our communities don't suffer violence in their homes?

1. Talk to the parents, and promote good communication between parents and children.
2. Visit families where the children and young people are being treated badly.
3. Hold discussions with the kids, sharing experiences and opinions with them.
4. Organise campaigns against violence in the communities; for example to demand a new law to protect children, and that the laws are enforced in our communities.
5. Report abusers and people who mistreat children and young people to the authorities.



Manyell Martha Milagros Yaymi Yelba Jeyson
 Ivania Osiris Keyla Sayda Mauricio Kenny
 Félix Pedro Armando Jorleny Brenda Elias Orlando

Our Action Plan

Yasica Sur Team of Transformative Researchers

Action Plan

Objectives

1. Tell people about our research findings and recommendations.
2. Make people more aware of the topic of our research.
3. Get people to act on our recommendations so as to achieve change in families and communities.
4. Plan more topics to research with other groups.

Area of influence

Families
Schools
In the community
The church
The municipality

The department
The capital
The country
The world

Proposed actions

In the community

- Present our research to different groups in the communities.
- Develop and present a play based on what we have learnt.
- Give talks on the topic with games.
- Do drawings and use these to make banners with messages about prevention of violence.
- Organise training workshops for parents and for children and young people. Invite the kids who haven't participated in workshops before.
- Raise this issue in the Citizen's Power Committees.
- Raise the issue in our families, schools, churches and throughout the community.
- Organise community forums.
- Organise community campaigns.

In the district and the department

- Present our research. Raise the issue in a municipal or departmental forum, so that people will act on the recommendations.
- Work with the people in the markets.
- Raise the issue through advertising on the buses.
- Raise the issue on the coffee plantations.
- Organise a departmental campaign.
- Use radio and other media to promote the results of our research and make people aware of our recommendations.
- Present a play on the subject using puppets.

National

- Organise a forum in the capital to present our research findings.
- Raise the issue on radio and television, and in the newspapers.
- Have messages printed on T-shirts and baseball caps.
- Raise the issue on the internet, with CESESMA's help and support.

We want to live without violence!

By the team of transformative researchers from Yúcul, Monte Grande and Cerro Grande



"How tasty! Proud to be a boozer!"

"I want some!"

Young researchers helping to find a solution to the problem of alcohol as a factor that causes violence in our communities.

Part 1: Who are we, and how did we do our research?



We are twelve children and young people from three rural communities in the municipality of San Ramón, Matagalpa: Yúcul, Cerro Grande and Monte Grande. We are from 9 to 19 years old. All of us go to school. Eight of us are in primary school and four are in secondary. We also help our parents with housework and farm work.

We have formed a team of researchers to investigate social problems that affect our communities.



In our first meeting we talked about what “research” means, and the role of a researcher.

We drew up a list of the social problems that most affect us and we analysed these to choose the most important ones. After having a democratic vote, we had a final discussion to decide on our research topic. We chose the topic of alcohol as a factor that causes violence in the community.

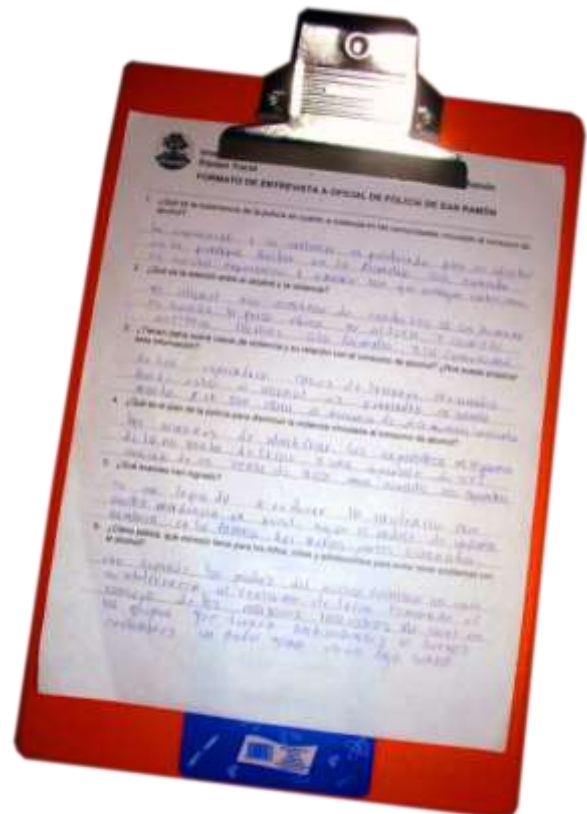
Finally we all did drawings to share our experiences about this topic.

In our second meeting we planned the research. First we decided on which groups of people we were going to interview: Children and young people under 18, young people from 18 to 25, parents and community leaders. We also decided to interview the local police chief to find out his view on this topic.

Then we drew up the lists of questions we were going to ask each group.



Finally we agreed on how we were going to carry out the interviews and how many people from each group we were going to interview. CESESMA helped us prepare the interview forms



We organised ourselves to carry out the interviews with the people from our communities. Some of us worked in pairs and a few worked on their own.

We interviewed 39 people:

People interviewed	Female	Male	Total
Children and young people 8-17	3	5	8
Young people from 18-25	3	2	5
Parents	13	5	18
Community leaders	6	1	7
Police captain	-	1	1
Total	22	12	39

We met again for a third meeting to share and analyse all the information and draw up our conclusions.



The fourth meeting of the team was held in the CESESMA office in the town of San Ramón. We worked with a computer and projector to write up the final report of our research.



We added some recommendations to complete the report.

Part 2: Our research findings

1. Children and young people

What do children and young people know about the consumption of alcohol in their communities?

The children and young people think that the consumption of alcohol is one of the worst problems that affects them. It affects their schoolwork because of the violence in the community and the mistreatment in their families.

They are aware of the illegal liquor stores open every day of the week causing problems in families and in the community.



Community Centre. Kids sharing alcohol.

Do the children and young people consider alcohol is a factor that causes violence?

All the children and young people interviewed (100%) agreed that consumption of alcohol is a factor that causes violence.

They said that this violence affects children and young people and the rest of the family, because when people

drink alcohol it changes their behaviour. They don't care about their family, they offend other people, they don't go to work and they don't provide money to support their family.

This behavior causes both physical and psychological damage to the family and the community. Some of them become shameless and expose themselves in the street. They don't support their wives and families. The children don't receive their parents' love and affection.

What are the problems that the children and young people face when their parents drink, and how do they feel?

11 of the 17 children and young people interviewed (65%) said that their father drank liquor.

They said they felt bad, sad and upset because of the problems this caused for them and their mothers; also because when the adults have problems they often take it out on their children.

At home, the fathers who drink are violent. They hurt their children with blows and kicks; they scold them and mistreat them. The children experience all this and learn from what they see.

Others said it made them feel uncomfortable because it caused fights in the house. They felt this violated their rights, and that the younger children were worst affected. Some said they felt traumatised by the violence they had experienced.

On the other hand, 35% of the children and young people interviewed said that their parents didn't drink and that they felt proud and happy as there were no problems caused by alcohol in their families.

How does consumption of alcohol affect children's experiences at school?

The children and young people said that when they go to school there are sometimes drunks in the street, and they can be violent. The drunks hang out in the road leading to the school. Some children said they had been grabbed and molested, others said they had had stones thrown at them. They also said the drunks are indecent and do their business in front of the children.

What advice would the children and young people give to the people who drink alcohol?

They would advise the people who drink alcohol to stop, because it is bad for their health and damages family relationships and relations with the neighbours. It is unhealthy as it causes problems in the family.

They should be more responsible, practice moderation and have more respect for their family and other loved ones.

What can children and young people do to help prevent violence due to alcohol in their communities?

- Organise community meetings. Talk to the people who are selling the liquor.
- Organise campaigns and marches to stop the sale of this product that is damaging children's lives.

2. Parents

How do the parents feel when someone in their family drinks?

Most of the parents interviewed said that there was someone in their family who drank alcohol (61%).

They expressed feelings of sadness, of feeling bad, worried and upset. It makes them feel this way to see someone damaging their health and their life. They are worried because he might hit them or cause problems with the neighbours. They said they often felt afraid because when a family member is drunk there may be shouting and violence. One mother said, "There is no peace in the family".

On the other hand, the parents who said that nobody in their family drank said they felt fine. They felt happy because nobody treated them badly.

What kind of violence had parents suffered at the hands of people who had drunk liquor?

Half the parents interviewed (50%) said that at least once they had suffered violence from someone who had taken liquor.

The people who had been violent towards them included husbands or partners, brothers and sons. One person mentioned her father, and another her friends. There was only one case where it was a stranger in the street.

They described three cases of punches and one case of being threatened with a knife. Others spoke of humiliation, mistreatment and lack of respect. The people who drank also humiliated and mistreated their children. One person said that her father denied she was his daughter when he was drunk. Another said her father had forced her to marry against her will.

What have they done to try and prevent this happening again?

Most of the people interviewed said they tried to find a solution by talking with the person who drank, trying to get their attention and giving them advice. They talked about the importance of dialogue so that the person who drank would respect his children and think about what he was doing and the problems that the booze was causing.

However, there were some who said that for them the solution was to steer clear of people who drank and not provoke them.



Drunk hitting his wife with a belt.

How do the parents feel when they see people drinking alcohol?

Some people feel that the worst harm they are doing is to themselves. For example they could make themselves ill, or even die. They could end up being robbed, beaten, killed or thrown in jail. One person said this is because they don't like or respect themselves; that is they have poor self-esteem.

Others think about the harm that the person who drinks does to others: to their family and to the community.

Some suggest giving them advice to help them get better, but others said they prefer to stay away from such people.

One person said, "If they're going to drink, they should do it responsibly". Another said that when she saw people drinking, "I feel sad, and there is fear in my heart".

What can parents do so their children won't have problems with alcohol?

- The majority of the parents interviewed said that they would give their children advice on the topic.
- Two people said that since they don't drink alcohol they can set a good example to their children.
- Two people said that the solution could be found in the Lord.
- One person suggested sending his children out to work so they don't get into drinking.

4. Young men and women from 18 to 25



*"We're going to settle things, because yesterday you were on drugs and you broke the window in my house".
"I don't give a ****, let's fight"*

What do young men and women know about alcohol?

The Young adults interviewed said that alcohol was something that caused problems for children and young people as well as for the family and the community. They believe alcohol leads to violence and that consumption of alcohol is harmful to health, as it is a type of drug.

How does the problem of alcohol affect young adults, and what bad experiences have they had in relation to alcohol?

They said it affects them because it causes fights at home. People who drink can't control themselves; they offend others and mistreat their wives and partners.

The young people who had experience of drinking alcohol said that it turned people against them; they felt nobody liked them and this made them become aggressive and badly-behaved.

Two young women interviewed said that their partner had hit them or thrown them out of the house. Another said she had once nearly been killed because she was drunk.

What do the young men and women think they can do in relation to the problem of alcohol?

- Give talks to help people recognise that alcohol is a serious problem.
- Close the places that sell alcohol.
- Organise a meeting with the local authorities and insist that the laws are enforced.
- Two of the people interviewed said they would try to advise the people who drank.
- The young adults also said they thought this research project is an important step, as the results could help other young people.

5. Community leaders

What has been the community leaders' experience with people who drink alcohol?

The community leaders interviewed said that in their experience people who drink are violent towards their families, waste their money, offend other people and get into fights.

They said they generally won't take advice and can't see the damage they are doing to their family, or how the alcohol stops them taking care of themselves, so they become dirty and scruffy.



According to the community leaders, why do people consume alcohol?

The people interviewed said that people drink because:

- They are looking for a way out of their problems;
- They won't listen to advice, or attend courses;
- They are prone to vices;
- They mix with bad company, which leads them into bad habits.

How do the leaders believe that alcohol causes violence?

All the leaders interviewed said that consumption of alcohol causes violence because it leads to lack of respect for oneself, for one's family and for the public in general, which causes drinkers to treat others badly. Also drunks tend to hassle other people and become aggressive.

What do the leaders think of the people who drink alcohol and cause violence?

The people interviewed said that drinkers don't listen to advice and mistreat their families and other people. They don't see that this is harming their health and their life.

They should seek help in rehabilitation centres, with the support of their families, since the company and support of the family is fundamental to breaking their bad habits.

A couple of people interviewed said they had been drinkers and had rehabilitated themselves. Their advice to those who had not been able to rehabilitate themselves was to stop drinking and leave the life of vice that it had led them to.

What can community leaders do to help solve the problem of alcohol?

The leaders interviewed said they could help solve the problem in the following ways:

- Help drinkers recognise the problem of their addiction; the harm the alcohol is doing to their family and their health, as it leads to violence and the disintegration of the family.
- The drinker must also play a part in their recovery, listening to the advice they receive, and the talks at the rehabilitation centres; accepting the support of other organisations that promote citizens' welfare.
- Those who sell alcohol must also play their part by adhering to the bylaws that restrict sale of alcohol on certain days, so that it doesn't affect the children going to school.
- Close the illegal liquor stores.

5. Interview with Francisco Ramón García, San Ramón District Police Captain



What is the police's experience of violence in rural communities related to alcohol?

We recognise alcohol as one of the principal factors involved in domestic violence, even leading to killings. The National Police have recognised the importance of working on this issue.

How is alcohol related to violence?

Alcohol changes people's behaviour. When people get drunk they often commit illegal activities that affect their families and the community.

We have specific data on injuries and even murders where alcohol was a factor. Examples of the most relevant cases in this area include a violent murder that affected the whole community. Another was a case of mutilation in the community of La Corona. Another was a case where a husband came home drunk and broke a window. As a result his wife suffered serious injury to her eyes from the broken glass, and their daughters witnessed the whole thing.

What is the police's plan to reduce alcohol-related violence?

1. Identify illegal liquor stores and take steps to close them.
2. Raise awareness about not selling alcohol.
3. Talk to the community leaders so they don't set a bad example.

What have you achieved?

- We've closed illegal liquor stores in the communities of Yúcul and Santa Martha.
- Through constant attention and frequent visits we've reduced the number of violent incidents.
- The index of domestic violence has reduced.
- There are fewer reports of injuries.
- There are fewer reports of violent behaviour.

As a police officer, what advice would you give children and young people to help them avoid problems with alcohol?

- Don't waste your youth on drink.
- Listen to the advice of your teachers and older people.
- Don't get involved in groups with a criminal record.

Really a lot depends on parents and the family. Parents with good habits raise healthy children.

*When he's been drinking alcohol,
he fights with his wife.*



Part 3: Our recommendations to stop the consumption of alcohol causing violence in our communities



Recommendations to adults

1. Discuss this topic in the community organisations, so they can help to resolve the problems in the community due to alcohol.

2. Talk to and offer advice to people who drink alcohol.
3. Liaise with the community leaders to organise community meetings on prevention of violence and the problem of alcohol.
4. Organise action to close down the illegal sale of alcohol.
5. Report violent behaviour to the authorities.
6. Advise the children and young people not to follow the example of those who drink alcohol.
7. Take action to ensure the protection of children and young people who suffer violence.





Recommendations to community leaders

1. Raise awareness of those who sell alcohol.
2. Organise support groups and talks for people who want to stop drinking.
3. Organise community forums on the topic to try and reduce the sale of alcohol.
4. Advise the children and young people so that they don't follow their parents' bad habits.
5. Help raise parents' awareness so they can set a good example to their children.

Recommendations to the local authorities

1. Regulate the selling and buying of alcohol.
2. Restrict the days when alcohol can be sold.
3. Penalise people who don't follow the rules.
4. Control the legal bars and close down all the illegal ones, to put an end to the illegal sale of alcohol.
5. Provide services for rehabilitation of alcoholics.

What can we do as children and young people to help solve the problem of alcohol?

1. Avoid the bad influence of people who drink.
2. Advise other children and young people against starting to drink.
3. Support the children of parents who drink, and help them avoid following in their parents' footsteps.
4. Organise educational activities with other children and young people to raise awareness of the topic; for example community festivals, plays and talks in the community centre.



Martín
 William
 Pablo
 Ericka
 Jymy
 Suyen
 Karen
 Myriam
 Fernando
 Janeth
 Santos

Our Action Plan

Yúcul Team of Transformative Researchers

Action Plan

Objectives

1. Tell people about our research.
2. Make people more aware of the topic of our research so they will act on our recommendations.
3. Help people in our community to make changes.

Area of influence

In families
In the local community
In the schools
En the municipality:
district council, police.

Department
National
International

In the media:
- Radio, television
- Newspapers
- Internet

Proposed actions

In the community:

- Make a public presentation of our work plan in the community centre.
- House-to-house visits to talk to people who have problems with alcohol.
- Invite people to learn more about our research and give talks in each local community.
- Ask for help from the community leaders to organise the talks in each community.

In the schools:

- Visit the schools to explain our research to the adults.
- Present the research in the schools by means of a festival to share our action plan with students and teachers. For this we will need posters, banners, a sound system and materials to put on a play.
- Cultural activities with dance, songs and poems.
- Write and present plays with the students.

- Essay competition.
- Murals with drawings.
- Encourage more research projects.
- Design and print leaflets and give them out to all the children.
- Encourage parents to take their children to school to avoid violence from drunks in the street, and to look out for their children before and after school.

In the municipality:

- Liaise with the local authorities and leaders to make a new regulation that sale of alcohol should be prohibited within 200 metres of a school.
- Municipal forum and fair.
- Campaigns with banners.
- Devise and present plays.
- Marches, parades or carnivals.
- Municipal lobby.

At departmental level:

- Departmental forum in Matagalpa city.
- News items in radio and television programmes.
- Drawing and song competitions.
- Public opinion survey on the topic of alcohol.
- March through the main streets of Matagalpa with banners, placards and our message printed on T-shirts.

National:

- Take our recommendations to the National Assembly.
- Share information by Internet.

Young researchers sharing experiences

In February 2012 the four teams of young researchers met in the town of San Ramón to share experiences. First they shared the photographs that had been taken throughout the research process to remind themselves of the different stages of their research projects. Then each team presented their final report and action plan, and received feedback from the other teams. Each group was then able to use the feedback they received to review and improve their original plan.

Reflecting on this sharing of experiences, the young researchers expressed their opinions:

"It was important to be able to share the topics we'd researched in our communities. I learnt a lot of things I wasn't expecting".



"I learnt about the topics the other groups had researched. For example I learnt about how many children and young people suffer violence at home".



"To promote children and young people's participation you have to talk to the parents personally".

"We need to ask for the community leaders' support to give talks and run workshops in the communities".



"I learnt about the importance of research".



"We want CESESMA to continue to support us in our research process. We want to present our research in different places like coffee plantations, schools and churches. We need help with materials to be able to share our experience in the communities".

Young researchers reflecting on and evaluating our experience

A process that brings about change at every level

As they completed their research reports in November 2011, the young consultants did both individual and collective evaluations of their experience. In the following pages they talk about their experience as researchers, the lessons learnt, and their hopes for the future.



How we felt at the beginning of the process

In general the children and young people felt excited at the idea of being a researcher. Some saw this as a step towards taking on other roles in their communities, like being young leaders or training to become promotores/as [community education volunteers] so as to share their knowledge with other young people.

"I felt excited because I was going to interview adults".

"I thought it was going to be easy, but when I went along on the first day I saw it was going to be very interesting".

"I thought I would be able to become a promotora in my community".

"It was a chance to learn about new things which I could teach the people of my community".

Some of the young people thought that in researching these kinds of topics they might meet resistance from some of the people they wanted to interview. Some were afraid that people might not accept them, wouldn't answer their questions or might not be supportive of what they were trying to do, and this caused some feelings of insecurity:

"I felt proud to be a researcher, but at the same time I was nervous because I thought the community might not support me".

"I thought people might not be willing to support our research".

"I'd never have thought of being a researcher, let alone interviewing parents. I was frightened of what they might say to us in the houses we visited".

"The people I interviewed listened to me, and gave good answers to my questions".

Personal transformation

The young people believe being part of a research team has helped them to develop personally, to set themselves new challenges and express their opinions on the topics and issues they were researching. They also developed a commitment to teamwork.

"Being part of this research project made me feel I was progressing".

"What motivated me at the start was thinking about all the children and young people who suffer violence and that maybe I could do something".

"At the beginning I felt insecure and nervous, but I got over it. I felt secure in what I was doing".

"We all expressed our opinions, and working this way things went well".

"It was working as a team; each one contributed to get the job done".

As a result of their analysis of their research topics, the young researchers felt they had become more aware of the causes of social problems and the impact these had on children's lives. Among the many things they learned, they highlighted the following:

"I've learnt about children and young people's rights. We are children with rights, and must not be treated with violence".

"I've learnt that sometimes the kids are violent to one another because they don't understand how the violence they've suffered themselves has affected them".

"In our communities people don't understand that the way they live is domestic violence. They don't realise. They think it's normal".

Transforming the community

At the start, the young researchers were worried about how the interviewees would react; that perhaps people wouldn't listen to them, wouldn't think the research was important, or wouldn't want to give them information. In practice, however, they encountered very few difficulties.

"When I interviewed the parents they answered my questions very well".

"They all answered the questions. They gave us the information we asked for and were honest with us".

"In my community we were accepted and were able to carry out the interviews".

Transforming the school

The young researchers believe the experience of being a researcher has had a positive effect on their school work, as it has given them new knowledge and skills that they can put into practice in school.

"This experience has been useful for me as it's given me more knowledge for my studies".

Identifying alternatives to transform social problems

Their analysis of the issues, and the way they incorporated the perspectives of different people in their communities, has enabled the young researchers to identify alternative approaches to the prevention of violence, and above all to realise that there are possibilities to transform the reality they are living.

"Children and young people must be spoken to with respect, love and affection, and not by hitting them or mistreatment. Instead of mistreating their children parents should raise them through communication".

"I learnt about the topic of domestic violence and how to prevent it; how to develop good relations with other people".

"I learnt to respect older people, but also that we children deserve respect, and our parents need to recognise this".

"I learnt about the importance of listening to people, so that in our community we can all practice mutual respect and leave the violence behind".

Lessons learnt

The children and young people identified things they had learnt as a result of this process that they wanted to share with others:

"Doing research develops your way of thinking. It gives you a different way of looking at problems".

"The research project motivated us to prevent violence, so we can all live without violence".

"We've been researching topics of real importance for the community, though we didn't see it this way before. Now we have information on the problems that affect us. In my community there is a lot of mistreatment of children and I think research is a good way to help these children".

"The most important thing I learnt is how to organise myself and participate".

"Researching and interviewing other children is easy. A big thing I've learnt is how to overcome the fear of doing it with adults".

"When we interviewed other children they answered openly about how they lived at home. The adults found it harder to answer".

Looking to the future:

The young researchers felt that their findings require action, so that their recommendations don't remain on paper but can be implemented to help prevent violence.

"Making people aware of these findings, we can help stop children suffering violence".

"I believe research is very important. It's a way to help prevent violence in the home".

"We need to pay attention to the important things this research has taught us. It was important for us, and it can be important for others".

"We need support to make people everywhere aware of our research, using different media like banners and T-shirts among others".

"We need to continue with our research and our action plan so as to improve things by promoting non-violence in our country and in our communities".



APPENDICES



Appendix 1:

The Children and Young People's Transformative Research Approach

In this appendix we (the adult team) present the background and theoretical underpinning of the Children and Young People's Transformative Research approach, along with some thoughts about the types of transformations we can identify, and a step by step summary of the methodology.

Background

The Children and Young People's Transformative Research approach is an update and extension of a model of "Children's Consultancy" which has its roots in the UK in the 1990s. This approach was developed to enable children to take on the role of consultants to provide expert advice to the management of organisations and institutions in the arts, culture and recreation sectors, with particular reference to making programmes and facilities child-friendly.¹

Starting in 2007 CESESMA began to implement an adapted version of "Children's Consultancy" in Nicaragua, enabling children from coffee plantations and the surrounding rural communities to research the social problems that affected them and act as consultants to the NGOs working in the area like Save the Children, Trócaire [Irish Catholic Development Agency] and CODENI [Nicaraguan Coordinating Council of NGOs working with Children and Youth] as well as CESESMA itself. Appendix 4 contains a bibliography of published reports of these projects.



This experience enabled CESESMA to identify aspects of the approach that tended to limit the empowerment of the participating children and young people. For example an adult always told them what topic they were going to research and they weren't able to decide this for themselves. Also once they had handed in their report, there

was no commitment to follow-up or further action to support the young people in getting their recommendations implemented.

This led to the development of the Transformative Research model, which differs from the earlier "Children's Consultancy" model in two main respects:

- The teams of young researchers decide for themselves on the topics they want to research (see the introduction to this volume for their account of how they did this).
- Once they have completed their research reports, the teams are supported in developing an action plan to disseminate their findings and follow up their recommendations. The supporting organisation makes a commitment to support this process [in the preceding pages each team's action plan is presented at the end of their report].

Underlying principles

The Children and Young People's Transformative Research model is founded on a human-rights-based approach, with particular emphasis on three of the underpinning principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: The child's right to be heard and for his or her opinions to be given due weight in decision-making (Article 12), free from any form of discrimination (Article 2), thus enabling decision-making consistent with the best interests of the child (Article 3).

Making decisions consistent with the best interests of the child often requires a source of expert advice on what is considered most appropriate, most acceptable and most "child-friendly". We believe that the foremost experts on children's daily lives are children themselves. They are the leading authorities in relation to the subject-matter of their own lives: their families, their needs and wishes, their hopes and dreams, their fears and troubles, the communities they live in and the jobs they work at.

Finally we believe that children and young people have the potential to be effective researchers, as long as they are provided with equally effective process facilitation, appropriate research methodology and at least the same level of technical and IT support that any team of adult researchers would require to carry out their work effectively.

¹ [For a contemporary account of this experience see the articles gathered at: www.harryshier.comxa.com/1998-99.htm]

These key ideas have underpinned the development of the following ten guiding principles of the Children and Young People's Transformative Research approach:

1. It is founded on a human-rights-based approach.
2. The foremost experts on children's everyday lives are children themselves.
3. Children readily take on board and identify with the idea of themselves as researchers, and understand what this role implies.
4. The role of the adult is to facilitate and accompany the research process. The adult facilitator is neither a teacher nor another researcher.
5. The children themselves decide on the topic they are going to research. The adult role here is to facilitate a process of list-making, reflection and then selection (which may or may not include voting) so that the final decision is the children's authentic choice (In our experience at CESESMA it has been necessary for adults to establish boundaries; for example if the choice of topics is limited due to the way the research is being funded. However this applies equally to adult researchers, whose options are often limited by funding criteria).
6. It is important to provide the same level and quality of technical support as would be provided to adult researchers, while recognising that the way in which this support is provided must be appropriate to the age and experience of the children and young people involved. For example, the young researchers whose work is presented here used computers, but had an adult in the role of technician/typist as they did not have sufficient experience of using computers themselves.



7. Children and young people already have knowledge based on their own life experience. However, in a Transformative Research project they can learn more about a topic, expanding and deepening their existing knowledge.
8. The children and young people design and plan their own research. They decide what questions they are

going to ask, who they are going to ask, how, when and how many.

9. The children and young people produce their own research report in their own words. In our model, they also design the report and select photographs and drawings to illustrate it. If a formal report prepared by adults is required as part of the project, this is prepared and presented separately and the two are not to be confused.
10. The organisation that supports the young researchers must make a commitment to continue to accompany and support them in drawing up and carrying out an action plan to disseminate their findings, and promote the implementation of their recommendations.

The Four Transformations

First transformation: Empowerment of the young researchers

Both their own evaluation [see the summary above] and the observations made by the adult facilitation team [Appendix 2] show how the young researchers have developed new knowledge, skills and attitudes, increased their confidence and self-esteem, and developed a new vision of themselves as change agents in their communities.

Second transformation: Changes in adult attitudes

Their parents and teachers, and the leaders of their communities, have seen what these children and young people are capable of achieving, and this has forced them to rethink old-fashioned ideas about what children can and cannot do, and recognise their potential role as drivers of change in the community.

Third transformation: Reciprocal learning by adult facilitators

Facilitating and supporting the young researchers has been a learning experience for the adults of the CESESMA team, generating new knowledge and skills in relation to our facilitating role, and strengthening relationships based on mutual understanding, respect and solidarity with the children and young people we work with.

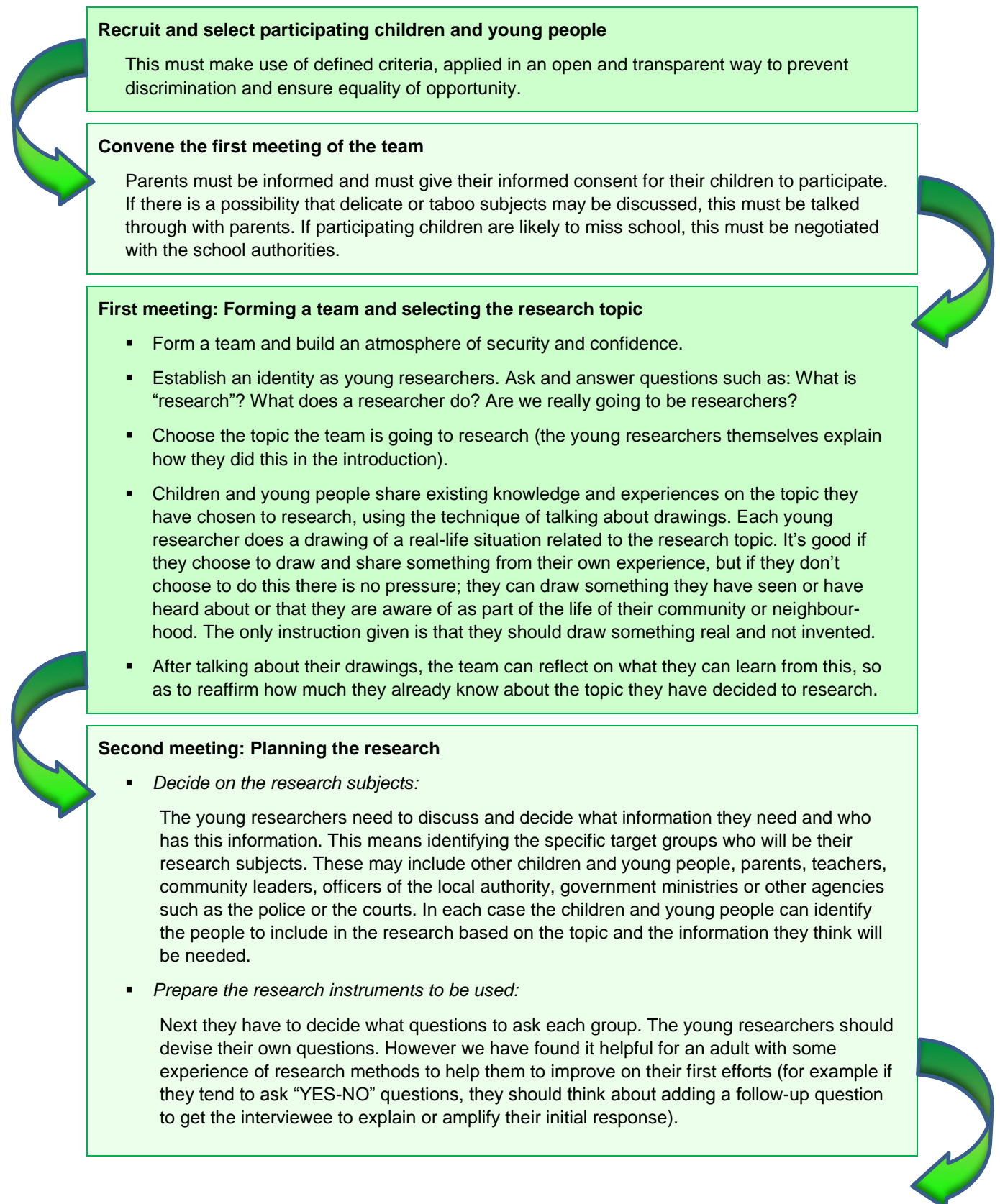
Fourth transformation: Transforming society through community action

At the time of writing, the four research teams are at the stage of disseminating their findings and planning activities to promote the implementation of their recommendations, with the continuing support of CESESMA. The impact of their work remains to be measured after a year or so of implementation. Nonetheless, knowing these young researchers, whose work forms the main body of this book, there can be no doubt that we will soon be able to see real transformations that contribute to building a world without violence.

The research process, step by step

The Children and Young People's Transformative Research approach adapts itself to different contexts, topics and target groups. However, as the guiding principles set out above make clear, it always requires a

logically-structured methodology. Below is a step-by-step summary of how the research process was structured in the four experiences presented in this book.



(Second meeting, continued...)

- The team should agree on how they are going to organise themselves to carry out the proposed interviews or other research techniques. These agreements must include rules relating to safety and protection of the young researchers, and it is the adult facilitator's responsibility to ensure that everyone understands these rules and agrees to abide by them.
- The researchers need to make specific commitments, taking into account the time, opportunities and resources they have available. For example, they may decide to work in pairs, with each pair undertaking to carry out ten interviews in the afternoons after school, to be completed before the date of the next meeting.
- The adult facilitators must take on the responsibility of getting the interview forms typed up and photocopied, using the interview questions already drawn up and agreed on by the young researchers. This may mean several different forms for the different target groups to be interviewed. An example of one such interview form can be seen in Appendix 3.

Fieldwork

- The Young researchers carry out their fieldwork according to their agreed plan. It is advisable that an adult facilitator should accompany them during this stage to ensure safety. Photographs of the research in progress (taken with permission of the people being photographed) will be a valuable resource when the time comes to prepare and present the final report, and this may be another task for the adult facilitator.

Third meeting: Analyse the information

- Share and analyse the findings.
- Draw up conclusions for each target group and for each question asked.

Fourth meeting: Write up report

- If possible, the young researchers should be facilitated in preparing their report using Powerpoint technology, which permits a genuinely participative and authentic shared writing process. At this stage an adult facilitator can support them in the role of IT technician/typist. Typically the young researchers' reports include a brief description of the research methodology, a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations, often illustrated with drawings and photographs chosen by the young researchers.
- Generally the young researchers write up the first part of their report before formulating recommendations. This enables them to go back over their findings and conclusions before adding recommendations to complete the report.

Fifth meeting: Action Plan

- At the start of the fifth meeting it is important to revisit the final report as it stood at the end of the previous meeting.
- Next, to establish a context for their Action Plan, the young researchers can do a rapid appraisal of their home communities [known by the initials ROLA in Spanish], identifying Resources available, Opportunities to promote their findings, Limitations they will have to overcome and Threats that could keep the recommendations from being implemented.
- Draw up the Action Plan, defining (a) their objectives, (b) the proposed area of influence and (c) the proposed actions.
- Evaluate the research Project. In the four experiences presented in this book, the young people filled out an individual evaluation sheet and also did a group evaluation.

Appendix 2: Reflections from the adult facilitation team

The team of CESESMA education workers who facilitated and accompanied the research process met in March 2012 to reflect on the experience. The following is a summary of their discussion.



Forming the research teams

- The proposed research programme was linked to CESESMA's ongoing programme of training and development of young community education volunteers ["promotores" and "promotoras" in Spanish]. Research skills form part of the community education skills that we are aiming to develop with this group.
- The idea of the research project was presented to the existing training course groups and they helped recommend members of the research teams from children and young people who were already participating actively.
- Although at the start of the process most of the participants didn't have much idea about the role of a social researcher, they were highly motivated and willing to learn and develop new skills.

Choosing the research topics

- It was important for the children to choose the research topics. To start this process we suggested a wide field of possibilities covering participation, the right to education and prevention of violence. However all four teams independently chose aspects of the prevention of violence theme as their research topic. For us, this is further evidence of the constant violation of their human rights that these children are subjected to in their daily lives.

Sharing experiences through drawings

- The children did drawings to show the various ways their chosen issue manifested itself in their lives and how it affected them. The drawings help children to

make visible and share situations that it is difficult for them to put into words.

Devising interview questions and agreeing tasks and responsibilities

- The fact that some of the young researchers had already participated in CESESMA's promotores/as' training course made it easier for them to suggest interview questions based on their research topics.
- At this stage it was important for us to prepare the young researchers by discussing how perhaps not everyone would want to answer their questions and not everyone was going to respond positively. We explained that for researchers this is quite normal and they shouldn't see it as a big problem. If this does happen, they should respond politely without feeling embarrassed and look for someone else more willing to participate in their research.

Accompanying the young researchers during their fieldwork



- Thanks to the training they had received, the young researchers already knew a fair bit about their research topics, which gave them greater self-confidence when carrying out interviews. Although they found it easier to interview their peers than adults, they were willing and able to interview adults too. However some of the adult community members found it difficult to accept the idea of children as researchers.
- The research teams continually sought to improve the interview format. If they found people were having difficulty answering a question, they discussed this with the help of the adult facilitator to see if they could improve the wording for the subsequent interviews.

Analysing the data and forming conclusions

- This is the part of the research process that demands most time and concentration from children and young people. It was difficult for them to complete all the data analysis in a half-day workshop. This is something we need to take into account in planning future children's research processes, allowing sufficient time, and including more breaks and games for a change of pace.

Writing the reports

- It is important for the young researchers to have access to technical equipment like a computer and data projector to communicate their research findings. It is not fair for them to be disadvantaged in this respect just because they are children and young people from rural communities.
- On the other hand, we don't want the young researchers to be completely dependent on technology. They need to be prepared with other ways to share their findings when there is no computer or projector available; for example providing written information in user-friendly formats such as illustrated leaflets or wall-posters.

Community appraisal and action plans

- Unlike the previous stages, at this point in the process we had to design a new method, as we had not done this in our previous Children's Consultancy projects. However this part, which was the fifth meeting of each team, worked very well. It enabled the young researchers to project into the future, suggesting possible actions to help address the issue they had researched. However, we feel this part needs more time and effort if the children's plans are to be more than rough outlines and become concrete *action plans*.²

Sharing experiences between the four research teams

- We feel this is a necessary part of the overall process. It provides an opportunity for the young researchers to present their reports for the first time "among friends", without fear of embarrassment if things don't go perfectly, before they have to present them to adult audiences.
- It also provided an opportunity to give and receive peer feedback on their action plans. This helped the four teams improve on their original draft plans and identify concrete achievable actions based on their earlier appraisal of the resources and opportunities available in their communities.

Reflections on the role of facilitator

- Supporting this process has led to both personal and organisational development. The children have taught us how easy it is to carry out research. For those of us

who are also undertaking part-time university degrees, what we have learnt from these children and young people has helped us with the development of research proposals and methodology for the research projects we have to do as part of our degree courses.

- The final report provides a product that will be useful both for CESESMA and for the young researchers themselves. However, we don't see the final report as the end of the process, but rather a starting point to help launch a variety of actions to promote children and young people's proactive participation.
- Although the leading actors were the children and young people, this process used an integrated or holistic approach (ecological model) by involving other key stakeholders in the research process. This in turn builds the young people's capacity for advocacy and their role as change agents.



- This experience takes us beyond the limits of the "child-to-child" approach. Working on these projects, the young researchers relate to adults as equals. Adults learn to recognise the children and young people as active citizens and value what they are contributing to the development of the community.
- The Transformative Research model supports children and young people's empowerment. The young researchers become aware of their capacity to help transform situations that impede their development and that of their communities. This helps increase their self-esteem, as they recognise themselves as change agents.
- We know of children and young people in neighbouring communities who have heard about the Transformative Research programme and are hoping they too will soon have the chance to become researchers and help find solutions to the problems that affect their communities. We therefore feel it is important that CESESMA keeps on promoting and developing this participation approach with children and young people in rural communities.

² [For example, some of the young researchers' proposed actions are not appropriate tasks for children to attempt].

Appendix 3: Example of an interview form

[In each case the questions were written and agreed by the young researchers themselves.]



San Ramón Transformative Researchers: Yúcul Team

FORMAT FOR INTERVIEWS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

(Boys and Girls aged 10-17)

Details of the person interviewed:

Community:

Male ☐ Female ☐

Age:

What year are you in at school:

1. What do you know about the consumption of alcohol in your community?

2. Do you think the consumption of alcohol leads to violence? ☐ YES ☐ NO
Why?

3. Does your father drink? ☐ YES ☐ NO
What problems does this cause, and how do you feel about the situation?

4. How does the consumption of alcohol affect the children who attend school in your community?

5. What advice would you give to people who drink alcohol?

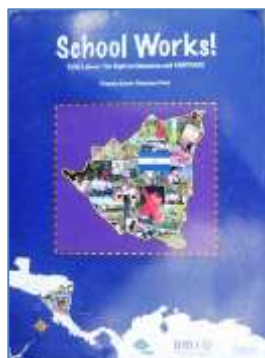
6. What can we do so that the children and young people of our community don't have to suffer violence due to alcohol?

Appendix 4: More experiences of young consultants and researchers in Nicaragua: Bibliography and further information

The following documents are available from CESESMA's website: www.cesesma.org/documentos_eng.htm.

They are available in English unless it says "Spanish only".

All are published by CESESMA unless another publisher is mentioned.



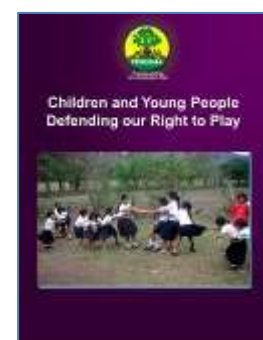
Children and young people of Santa Martha and Guadalupe Arriba. 2008. **"Sharing how we live"**. Contribution by children and young people from two rural communities to the classroom resource pack *"School Works! Child labour, the right to education and Fair Trade"*, published by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, INTO.

CESESMA. 2009. ***A study of the problem of violence against children and young people in the Samualí district of Matagalpa***. Report by a team of Young Consultants from Guadalupe Arriba in Samualí on their research into the problem of violence in their community (Spanish only).



The Young Consultants of Santa Martha. 2009. ***The Young Consultants of Santa Martha coffee plantation investigate the problem of violence***. Published in *"A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation"*, Barry Percy-Smith and Nigel Thomas (eds). Routledge, UK, pp 228-229.

Children and Young People Defending our Right to Play Action Group, Samualí. 2009. ***Children and Young People Defending our Right to Play***.



Young Consultants of Santa Martha. 2011. ***Rights and Wrongs***. Report by the Young Consultants of Santa Martha coffee plantation on their research into the relationship between business and human rights on the plantation.

CESESMA-UNN with an introduction by Jennifer Matamoros (13) and Damaris Aguilar (14). 2011. ***Our Voice Counts***. Child-friendly version of the research report *"Children and young people as active citizens: Impact on public policy in Nicaragua"* (Spanish only).



Young consultants of San Ramón, La Dalia and Matagalpa. 2012. ***Children and young people making a contribution so that our rights are complied with in Nicaragua***. The recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to the Government of Nicaragua 2010, rewritten by and for children and young people. Published by CODENI (Spanish only).

Learn to live without violence

Transformative research by children and young people




Four teams of young researchers from rural communities in Nicaragua research topics they have chosen to help solve the social problems affecting their communities.





Centre for Education in Health and Environment, CESESMA

San Ramón, Matagalpa, Nicaragua
coordinacion@cesesma.org
+505 2772 5660
www.cesesma.org



The Centre for Children and Young People's Participation

University of Central Lancashire
Preston PR1 2HE, UK
+44 (0)1772 894514
www.uclan.ac.uk/cypp

ISBN: 978-1-901922-85-1

