

A man wearing a hat and a jacket stands in front of a large, gnarled tree. A megaphone is perched on a branch of the tree. The entire image is tinted with a deep red color.

# PEACE AND THE COMMONS

Reflections from the Laboratories of Citizen Innovation (LABIC)



INSTITUTO  
**PROCOMUM**





NOTHING IS MORE VITAL TO  
THE PEACE AND SECURITY  
OF INDIVIDUALS AND  
COMMUNITIES ACROSS  
THE WORLD TODAY THAN THE  
LONG-TERM PRESERVATION  
OF THEIR COMMONS.

JAMES B. QUILLIGAN

# PEACE AS A COMMON GOOD

BY RODRIGO SAVAZONI



We are at the top of a hill, from where we can see the La Cocha lake, a broad immensity of chilly waters located in this spot in the world where the Andes and the Amazon connect in their furthest points. Cinthia Mendonça, also a mentor at LABIC, Juan and Maurício, from Centro Innovación Social de Nariño [Nariño Social Innovation Center] and I are sitting on the grass while we listen to Don Hector, a 50-year-old farmer who, for three decades, worked in construction in many Colombian cities. Committed to his origins, eight years ago he returned to his community, Vereda El Socorro, where he lives with a brother, sister and his mother, Doña Rosa, the matriarch. Together they run the farm, raising animals and growing produce. In a little over an hour of conversation, he offers us a master lecture on the relationship between human beings and nature, how to strengthen community bonds, and the commons.







Life there has not been easy. The River that supplies water to the village is contaminated, because there is no Sewage in at least half of the houses. Human and animal waste Run into the water, making it Inappropriate for human consumption and also contaminating the fish. Troubled by the not-so-distant presence of the guerrilla, Drug traffickers and politicians, who only show up during Electoral periods, Don Hector tells us that his people have been quite distrustful. Exchange between equals has become harder. individualism, sowed by the Lords of the world, produces grains of fear, with which peasants produce the bread of discord. They have also been skeptical of outsiders who arrive with magical answers to problems they know so well, while no one asks if they, the locals, have a solution.

Life there is not easy, but there is no grievance in his voice. Quite the opposite. He tells us, for instance, about the lawsuit he led against the public power company, who decided to install transmission antennas in his land without asking for permission. Don Hector Fought to guarantee his rights, after all, during the installation, the power company deforested land that was essential to maintain the watercourse that supplies water to Vereda El Socorro. He won the lawsuit and, although many of his peers were not willing to fight with him, he donated the entire compensation to the community, who decided to use the funds to renovate the chapel.

Days before our visit to Don Hector, which took place in Pasto, Nariño, in Colombia, I conducted an exercise at the Laboratorio de Innovación Ciudadana por la Paz [Social Innovation Lab for Peace] entitled *The Optic of the Commons*. I spoke about the concept of the commons, which guides our work at Instituto Procomum [www.procomum.org]. I drew a timeline of authors and theories, from Elinor Ostrom to Silvia Federici, David Bollier, Christian Laval, Pierre Dar-

dot, and many others. I also mentioned the concept of Good Living [*Buen Vivir*, or *Sumak Kawsay*] [1], a form of knowledge produced by South American indigenous communities. I showed a short, effective video, produced in Germany, that starts with a very thoughtful question: after all, why are we playing alone, when this world needs more and more union? I left a projection on the screen of the Bollier chart [Commons = resource + community + governance protocols]. After my intervention, I organized the participants into groups and let them talk, guided by the question: where are the commons around you? The discussion was very good and, in the final round, each group shared the results of their conversation. Among the many excellent comments and provocative questions, one of them got me thinking, accompanying me during Don Hector's magnum lecture and the following days while I worked as a mentor at the lab. The question is: is peace a common good?

The goal of this publication is precisely to reflect on this question. The proposal is to do so from and with the experiences that took place at LABICxlaPAZ. Thinking with Don Hector and Doña Rosa, with the indigenous communities and the hackers, with those in charge of managing projects. We don't have a sole answer, but several voices that help us reflect on this issue. In the next Pages, we will talk about the commons and peace, and the potential association between these two words in a single sentence.

## WHAT IS BUEN VIVIR [GOOD LIVING]?

One of the main references in the discussion on Buen Vivir is Alberto Acosta, a politician and intellectual who was president of the Constitutional Assembly in Ecuador and later split from the government of Rafael Correa, eventually becoming a presidential candidate through a minority coalition. For him, Buen Vivir is a plural concept that intends to build a new form of living, in which the rights of human beings are in harmony with the rights of nature, which is not fully possible in capitalism. Buen Vivir is a concept of community origins that stems from the gathering of different forms of knowledge of indigenous peoples - who actively resisted, throughout their history, against exclusion, exploitation, and colonialism, and who defend a life centered on

self-sufficiency and self-management. Below is an excerpt of Alberto Acosta's book, *El Buen Vivir. Sumak Kawsay: Una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos* (*The Buen Vivir: An opportunity to imagine another world*):

The Buen Vivir proposes a shift from Western cosmivision, because it arises from non capitalist, community roots. It breaks equally with the anthropocentric logics of capitalism as a dominant civilization and with the many forms of real socialism that existed thus far - which must be re-assessed through social-biocentric positions and which will not be simply updated by changing their last names. We shall not forget that socialists and capitalists of all kinds faced each other, and still do, in the realm of development and progress."





# THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CITIZEN INNOVATION LAB (LABIC)

Pablo Pascale sent us a systematization of what he considers to be the central characteristics of Citizen Innovation Labs (LABIC), a new institutional arrangement.

“There are several characteristics that contribute to the singularity of the LABICs and, while we are able to find them separately and other co-creation processes, we will hardly find them combined into a single process, as we see in the Citizen Innovation Labs.” The main characteristics of this kind of lab are:

**OPEN:** anyone can apply and participate, actively and constructively. And any local community where the LABIC takes place can take part in the project development work.

**INTERCULTURAL:** people from different countries, cities, languages and ethnicities interact and work together for 10 to 15 days, a period in which intercultural dialogue is established to reach common goals.

**GATHERING OF DIVERSE KNOWLEDGE:** social, digital and ancestral technologies connect and work together, in a horizontal plane, as collaborators or participant communities. In these gatherings, people with very different knowledge and cosmovisions get together: artists, artisans, engineers, indigenous leaders, farmers, activists, environmentalists, Physicists, *quilombolas*<sup>1</sup> or *palenqueros*<sup>2</sup>, producers, writers, anthropologists, community representatives, developers, public managers, professionals of different backgrounds, students, researchers, etc.

**INCLUSIVE:** in every LABIC, at least 50% of the participants are women, and the diversity of origins is a criteria we uphold. We are also advancing to reach more ethnic diversity and people with disabilities.

**COLLABORATIVE:** participants interact with horizontality and transparency, working in equal conditions and through multilateral exchanges in which everyone gives their contribution based on their experiences.

**CIVIC:** the space is made by citizens: they are the ones who experiment and directly generate the proposals. It is a space where citizenship itself, and not an institution, produces solutions.

**SELF-ORGANIZING:** working groups are organized in an autonomous, non-directed manner. Although they may receive orientation, they are the ones who produce their schedule, plans, priorities, resources and internal operations.

**EXPERIMENTATION:** to develop innovative, creative projects, the space must allow experimentation, “learning by practice”, rehearsing, making mistakes, receiving feedback, redesigning, and learning throughout the creation process until the goal is reached.

**OPEN PRODUCTION:** a space that produces knowledge and proposals which must necessarily be shared for the benefit of society, through open, free licenses.

**INNOVATIVE:** projects that are prototyped and developed in a LABIC must have a level of innovation and be of use and interest to social groups, communities, and/or institutions.

**SOCIAL IMPACT:** innovation is created by citizens, for citizens. Projects in a LABIC have a final goal of generating social transformation and benefits for real collectives and communities.

**NETWORK BUILDER:** LABIC is not only a space of production, but also a device to create solid, sustained networks for the transference of knowledge and experiences as well as for collaboration between different institutional and civic agents.

<sup>1</sup> *Quilombolas* are residents and descendants of quilombos, communities founded by escaped slaves in Latin America, particularly in Brazil.

<sup>2</sup> *Palenqueros* are descendants of escaped slaves in Colombia who speak a unique Spanish-Creole language.



# THE PROJECTS

The Social Innovation Lab for Peace in Colombia – LABICxlaPAZ – happened on February 13 through 25, 2018, in the city of Pasto. During the event, ten projects were prototyped to promote citizenship, peace, and improvement in the lives of people in the post-conflict period, in other words, following the peace agreement between the FARC and the government. The agenda also included a series of workshops and lectures on citizen innovation and promotion of peace.

01

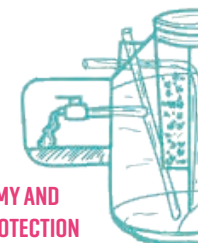
## 3D PROSTHETICS FOR CONFLICT VICTIMS



The project worked with 3D printing of prosthetics for victims of landmines (there are 11,508 victims in Colombia alone), at a unit cost 600 times inferior to the cost of the prosthetics currently used.

02

## ENERGETIC AUTONOMY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



The project manufactured a system to produce renewable energy from waste. It was aimed at the rural areas where conflict prevented access to several technologies.



03

## COLLECTING DRINKABLE WATER FROM FOG

The project conceived your system to retain water from fog and produce drinkable water in an easy, sustainable way.



04

## DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR TEACHERS IN REMOTE AREAS

The project created a digital platform for teachers residing in one of the most conflict-affected areas to find pedagogical support and improve the education offered to their students.

05

## DIGITAL PLATFORM TO ORGANIZE PEACE DEFENDERS



The project created a digital platform to organize the demands and social demonstrations for peace, a tool requested by many Colombians during the peace building process.

06

## THE INGA, AN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY WHO OVERCAME DRUG TRAFFICKING



The project produced a guide for communities affected by drug trafficking based on the experience of the Inga indigenous community in the 1990s, when they reactivated their farming activities and abandoned the growth of opium poppy, no longer having to face the violence of drug trafficking.





07

**TOY LIBRARY FOR  
BOYS AND GIRLS  
VICTIMIZED BY  
CONFLICT**

The project created a toy library for children victimized by the conflict in Colombia, with the incentive of having their families participate in the daily operations.

08

**MICRO SPRINKLERS  
WITH LOW COST MATERIALS**



The project developed and installed micro sprinklers for agricultural irrigation using economic and recyclable materials. The goal was for farmers to improve their harvest in territories with water deficit.



09

**A BOOK TO RECOVER  
THE HISTORY OF AFRO-  
DESCENDANT WOMEN  
VICTIMIZED BY CONFLICT**

The project produced a book with the memories of afro-descendant women victimized by conflict.

10

**VIDEO AS A TOOL  
FOR GIRLS AND BOYS**



The project carried out an audiovisual workshop to allow boys and girls to document their experience as displaced people due to the conflict.

15

days of LABICxlaPAZ

290

project proposals

10

selected projects

750

applications from collaborators

100

collaborators involved

15

nationalities:  
**10** Latin American  
and **5** European

15

open conferences

# INTRODUCING



# PABLO PASCALE

Coordinator of the citizen innovation project at the Ibero-American General Secretariat, and a Uruguayan of Italian descent, Pablo Pascale lives in Madrid and keeps a close eye on all things innovative happening and Latin America. In this interview, he shares the knowledge he obtained from the experience of planning and managing the four editions of LABIC [Citizen Innovation Lab].



### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THE PRODUCTION OF A CITIZEN INNOVATION LAB FOR PEACE?

In the case of the Citizen Innovation Labs [LABIC], this question is fundamental. The model of LABIC varies and enriches itself as we learn from our experiments in each of the editions. Therefore, we often say that this model is very organic, because it draws from and transforms with different contexts. The lessons range from negotiation strategies during intercultural translation in globalized societies, to greater participation of local affected communities in the processes of project production, to a management that is more efficient and sustainable for the resources we use.

However, possibly the main lesson of the LABICxlaPAZ we organized in Nariño, focused on citizen contributions to the post-conflict strategy, was the empirical demonstration

that it is possible to build peace through the contribution and active participation of citizenship, both in the development of proposals and in the production of solutions. The idea that peace must be built collaboratively stands out among other lessons. And I consider this to be not only a lesson for me, but also for many others who were involved in the Lab with us. For the first time in history, a space for citizen participation has been opened up in a peace building strategy as decisive as the one Colombia is going through after 60 years of combat. The fact that LABIC has been capable of contributing to a phenomenon as delicate, complex and internationally relevant as a post-conflict process, generating so much value from citizenship, is a demonstration of the importance that Citizen Innovation Labs can have, especially as institutional models for work in complex social situations.

### MANY INITIATIVES AT LABICXLAPAZ RELATE TO THE LAND, THE RURAL WORLD AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES. WHAT IS THE POSSIBLE RELATION BETWEEN CITIZEN INNOVATION AND TRADITIONAL RURAL COMMUNITIES?

We at the Citizen Innovation Project consider the sources of innovation to be not only technological or based on the knowledge of institutionalized and/or academic methodologies. We defend the idea that innovation can draw from lessons and experiences arising from any place, culture, cosmovision and technological development. Therefore, the forms of work that produce results that positively transform our surroundings and the experience of our lives and communities can be ancestral, scientific, informal, hyper-technological or any other kind. This is why we speak of citizen innovation: because it is an innovation that comes from the creativity that each of us hold and our experience living together, beyond religion, sexual orientation, culture, social economic level or even academic level. And more, we consider the best citizen innovation to be the one that is truly developed from the encounter between an idea and the real context. This is why we encourage the projects to work in partnership with communities, either rural or urban, because the communities hold most of the knowledge that the projects needs to be really useful.

### "NOTHING IS MORE VITAL FOR PEACE AND THE SAFETY OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE WORLD THEN THE LONG-TERM PRESERVATION OF THEIR COMMON GOODS". WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS SENTENCE?

It seems fundamental to me, because it offers a new outlook on the processes of conviviality and security. We could even think of peace and security as common goods in themselves, which should be preserved and understood as such.

### THE BEST CITIZEN INNOVATION TO BE THE ONE THAT IS TRULY DEVELOPED FROM THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN AN IDEA AND THE REAL CONTEXT.

Normally, we consider peace and security to be public goods, and therefore the strategies for their preservation must come only from the State.

But peacebuilding is a highly complex process that comprises multiple social dimensions. Now, let us think of peace not only as a public good, but also as a common good.

If we understand common goods in a broad sense, we would then say that they are resources that are managed, used and shared collectively. And this last part is very important. The idea of commons refers not only to the goods, resources and natural systems themselves, but also to the fundamental set of communities and collective action.

Well, if we understand peace and security not only as public goods – as the sole responsibility of the State – but as common goods, whose responsibility is shared with communities and collective action, then we open a new perspective for their preservation and for the deactivation of underlying causes and conflicts, seeking strategies of preservation and confrontation based on a new view of the complexity of the phenomenon.

Therefore, the preservation of peace and security as common goods is a co-produced task that involves the State, local affected communities, and society as a whole.



THE CITIZEN INNOVATION LABS ARE INSTITUTIONS THAT, RESPONDING TO THAT CIVIC CALL, WERE ABLE TO ELABORATE WHAT MAY POSSIBLY BE THE MOST ADVANCED CIVIC INNOVATION MODEL IN CURRENT TIMES.

This complexity can be seen clearly when somebody goes to post-conflict territories in contact local communities. The territories demand not only State intervention, but also joint, collective action taken with communities, State and society.

This was precisely the standpoint of the Citizen Innovation Lab for Peace that we recently organized in Nariño, Colombia. There, ten projects related to different post-conflict issues were co-produced by citizens, affected communities and State institutions. The result was the empirical demonstration that peace and security can be best preserved by all of us, and that they are common goods.

**THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, WHAT WAS THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION OF LABIC TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A 21ST-CENTURY CITIZENSHIP?**

I believe that the main contribution of LABIC (and other similar citizen labs) is not pointed towards building a certain form of citizenship, but to a new paradigm of institutions capable of adapting to the advancements in citizenship and connecting to it. In other words, these labs (including LABIC) emerge as institutional, methodological devices designed to overcome the legitimacy crisis of institutions inherited from the 20th Century, and to reinvent themselves in the face of a 21st-Century citizenship.

We have been immersed in a legitimacy crisis of institutions, of which more transpa-

rency and citizen participation is demanded – in other words, a redistribution of power.

Until 2010, citizenship already had a voice that could not be silenced and this voice kept increasing, becoming louder than the old mutter of the institutional paradigm rooted in the 20th Century. That is how several attempts began by many institutions to answer to the call of the times and carry out the necessary changes.

The Citizen Innovation Labs are institutions that, responding to that civic call, were able to elaborate what may possibly be the most advanced civic innovation model in current times. They are spaces in which citizens produce their own projects, with the goal of proposing solutions or alternatives to the problems they face in their communities. In the labs, there is no competition. There is experimentation, production and collaboration; knowledge is shared (through free licenses and open repositories), different forms of knowledge meet horizontally, and finally, the space is totally open to every citizen, regardless of their academic background, experience or origin. This way, everyone can not only participate, but also make the institution.

As I have said before, in a few years, when we look at the crisis of institutions of the early 21st Century and the emergence of new leaps towards another paradigm, we will possibly see Citizen Labs as the first prototypes of a new era of institutions.

# INTRODUCING



# PAOLA CORAL

Paola Coral is the coordinator of Centro de Innovación Social [Social Innovation Center] of Nariño, a Colombian province that has been standing out worldwide for innovative policies conducted by governor Camilo Romero and formulated by professor and designer Javier Arteaga Romero. Citizen Innovation Labs always have a local coordinator, someone from the territory that sets the pace for the event. At LABICxlaPAZ, that coordinator was Paola, who had gotten to know the methodology of LABIC at Cartagena, also in Colombia, where she collaborated in a project. We sent her some questions and she replied to us by email.

### WHAT WAS YOUR MAIN LESSON AT LABICxla-PAX?

It is hard to prioritize what I have learned. I could divide my experience into professional and human lessons. Professionally, I would highlight everything that has to do with a network that weaves itself, with the self evaluation of what I know, the reflection of my challenges, my capacities and goals. Personally, LABIC puts to the test our values, respect, tolerance, our ability to understand, and our judgement. If I could highlight one thing, it would be the value of building as a community.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CITIZEN INNOVATION LABS AND OTHER PROCESSES THAT CO-CREATE SOCIAL SOLUTIONS?

At the labs, experimentation is valid. In fact, it is the pillar of the process. And time, everything is done to beat the clock; and the spirit of the solutions is to serve any community from the very conception of any idea that is taken to the lab.

### AT LABICxlaPAZ, MANY INITIATIVES ARE RELATED TO THE LAND, THE RURAL WORLD AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES. WHAT IS THE POSSIBLE RELATION BETWEEN CITIZEN INNOVATION AND TRADITIONAL RURAL COMMUNITIES?

Rural and indigenous communities are also formed by citizens. For me, what matters is the relationship with communities in general. In a way, what is most valuable about the labs in their relationship where these communities is valuing ancestral practices, such as the minga [Latin American communal work], respect for nature and collective processes. The labs adopt practices that belong to traditional communities.

"I BELIEVE THAT COMMON GOODS ARE TOOLS THAT ALLOW US TO LIVE IN HARMONY, WITH COLLECTIVE MEMORY, VALUING WHAT BELONGS TO EVERYONE, WHEN WE CONSOLIDATE RESPECT AND RECOGNITION OF WHAT WE ARE."

### "NOTHING IS MORE VITAL FOR PEACE AND THE SAFETY OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE WORLD THEN THE LONG-TERM PRESERVATION OF THEIR COMMON GOODS". WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS SENTENCE?

I believe that common goods are tools that allow us to live in harmony, with collective memory, valuing what belongs to everyone, when we consolidate respect and recognition of what we are. Where we came from and where we are going. It is hard to say anything beyond what the sentence says.

### YOU MET LABIC AS A COLLABORATOR IN A PROJECT IN CARTAGENA, AND YOU LATER BECAME THE COORDINATOR OF THE LAB THAT TOOK PLACE IN NARIÑO. WHICH OF THESE TWO EXPERIENCES AFFECTED YOU THE MOST?

They were both very good. Collaborating gets the best out of you as a human being and puts it to the service of others. Organizing something gets the best out of someone in service of others – very different scenarios and very different feelings. Organizing is a huge responsibility, but everything makes sense when you see the consolidation of the work during the closing session. If I had to choose, I would go with organizing.



# IMPRESSIONS AND FEELINGS OF SOME OF THE PROJECT PROPOSERS





## A LOW-COST, ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY IRRIGATION PROTOTYPE THAT IS BORN OUT OF CONFLICT, COUNTRY LIFE AND THE INTERACTION BETWEEN A COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATORS.

**M**y personal story is focused on the work related to Colombian agriculture. I come from a family of farmers and grew up working in the fields. As a child, I was a direct victim of the Colombian armed conflict because the village where I was born and raised in suffered constant attacks from armed groups. Me and my family were displaced from our land and forced to live in the state capital of Tolima.

The project I proposed for LABIC emerged from an investigation of self-sustainability and led to the development of an artisan, portable irrigation prototype which could be created manually. The system is built with recyclable material, which makes the project low-cost and environmentally friendly.

My team of collaborators in this project had seven people – six Colombians and one Brazilian. The experience was remarkable, because each of us was able to contribute to improve the functioning of the project. I believe that there is something particular to each of our cultures

and I was amazed by the love for what we were doing. The most gratifying part was installing the prototype for the first time in the clear waters of Chachagui; we were all very emotional. For me, peace can be reached when society contributes with something special, such as an innovative idea that transforms the production model of a territory. By building Aspersores de Paz (Peace Irrigators), we created a social fabric across the entire community that participated in the workshops. This was a collaborative work with the young members of a local educational institution and elderly citizens, alongside whom we designed the ideal model for irrigation, always attentive to their recommendations. We transformed some of the productive ideas that already existed in the community, introduced others, and enhanced good agricultural practices and management.

**Jesus Díaz – ASPERSORES DE PAZ**

## THE ACT OF PLAYING AS A FORM OF RESISTANCE AND AUTONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT.

**T**he toy library emerges as a development of the actions and activities that took place in the Children's Arts, Science and Technology Platform, a project I began in 2013 in São Paulo. Based on the premise of creating by playing and playing by creating, the platform proposes an open, plural, transdisciplinary pedagogy that engages in the relationship between childhood and technology, art and science. By focusing on cognition, perception, collaborative work, and incentive to reflection, open technologies and innovation develop into tangible and intangible constructions for common good.

The team of collaborators in the project conducted an investigative study of toy library models considering theories by Jean Piaget, information collected in the neighborhood where the toy library was to be installed, and solid qualitative information collected by our collaborators in the city of Pasto. This information was essential to the construction of a model that could be applied to the context of the city. We were able to develop a work methodology that could be brought to children not as didactics, but as an open lab, with active partners in the process of designing the toy library. An approach like this allows the development of strong friendship bonds which mix into the affection for the work.

The Citizen Toy Library was not intended to be just an interdisciplinary project, but also an intercultural one. It is not about the implementation of a single space, but a program that can be replicated in different context and crises. In Pasto, many children come from different parts of Colombia because of the conflict. People who have been displaced by violence. Working with them means working with affection, memory, narratives, and identity.



ity. We use artisan technologies and techniques as an opportunity to build a common space that belongs to them; a space where they can express themselves, have autonomy and also be acknowledged as children.

**Daniel Gonzales - TOY LIBRARY FOR GIRLS AND BOYS VICTIMIZED BY CONFLICT**



## A COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM FOR COL- LECTIVE CONSTRUCTION THROUGH DIVERSITY

I have been a social communicator, journalist and activist all my life. I was the general coordinator of the global mobilization against the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), which happened ten years ago in 183 cities with almost 14 million people. A mass mobilization, initiated on Facebook, led to the basic project that I took to LABICxlaPAZ: a civic mobilization model based on strategic communication. I developed this model ten years ago, when I participated in different demonstrations in which, somehow, a methodology was used to facilitate connections between people with the goal of generating more civic organizing and, later, collective understandings of a topic as complex as mobilization. This is the process I enhanced at LABICxlaPAZ: a platform for online learning and training, still under construction, through which we can share these experiences and this knowledge.

We need to identify, recognize and develop more people as legitimate voices. The conflict in Colombia caused us to lose our ability to

recognize others as people who think and dream differently, who have different dynamics, but who are legitimate precisely for being different.

I believe that the Aranae platform allows us to meet through communication processes as people, people capable of building based on difference, capable of contributing to this network fabric and creating things collectively.

This was the first time I participated in a LABIC as a project proponent. I had participated before as a collaborator and supporter. The way we connect in this space and exchange experiences and knowledge is very rich. What we end up reaching in so little time is intense and concentrated, but doubtlessly changes people's lives.

**Rosa Lozano - Aranae - AN ONLINE PLATFORM  
TO ORGANIZE PEACE DEFENDERS**

## OVERCOMING HORROR THROUGH WOMEN



**T**elas de Araña (Spiderwebs) was a process carried out by women only, an experience that opened many doors and broke many barriers essentially because of the issues we were tackling.

It was very good to create this project through a meeting between diverse and powerful women who did not know each other. And it was all the more beautiful because we decided on four conditions: 1. we deeply wanted it to happen; 2. we would listen, and not judge: each woman would have her truth and be respected; 3. we would collaborate, and not compete; 4. we would allow ourselves to explore and discover our own being: anything we did would be, first and foremost, for ourselves.

Our process involved the disengagement and engagement of culture. We formed two groups of different women, mixing teenagers and older ones. We understood their different perspectives, recovered words, developed a methodology and got to know ourselves. With this, we gradually healed some of the wounds left by the war and built other forms of relationship between people.

We understood that memory is not just part of the past or of Colombia – it is also everything that keeps on happening. In the war, women also have the role of perpetuating their ancestral knowledge that was suspended in time. We understood that the cultural and social initiative of women can help develop new plans for life and this allows us to overcome the war in complete, practical terms. We reached the conclusion that it is impossible to prevent people from using guns or bombs, but it is possible to inject new forms of mobilization that don't employ violence or horror.

**Danny Fuentes Moncada - TELAS DE ARAÑA:  
RECOVERING SOCIAL FABRIC**



# TESTIMONIALS BY SOME OF THE COLLABORATORS

The methodology of the Citizen Innovation Labs comprises two open calls. The first one selects the project proponents. The second one selects ten collaborators for each project. These people bring knowledge that complements each other and form a multidisciplinary team that will develop the prototype. The work begins remotely, because these teams are also international, and carries on during the event, when new bonds are created and others are strengthened. Check out testimonials by some of the collaborators of LABICxlaPAZ:

## LORENA PORTELA, BRAZIL ASPERSORES DE PAZ

What amazed me at LABICxlaPAZ was realizing how similar we are. I already felt this calling to be closer to other people in Latin America and I believe we should strengthen each other. It's remarkable to see how well it flows. We understand ourselves culturally. We felt like one big family and I felt at home from the very beginning. This was not the first Lab I took part in. I had participated before as a proponent and this time I was a collaborator. I love the methodology, it is so powerful and motivating. We exercise our creativity and our boundaries. There is so much Exchange and learning - and it's all so much fun! I believe the movement of designing solutions for peace and the post-conflict period is beautiful and important. It goes beyond what is obvious by proposing the development of micro-policies and technologies for sociability and collectivity.

## VIVIANE ZERLOTINI, BRAZIL ASPERSORES DE PAZ

It was remarkable to find so many people with the goal of doing something that the community had already planned and dreamed of. It is rewarding to collectively fulfill a wish that emerges from that territory, and to do so with its residents.

The format of the Lab was interesting because it gave us an opportunity to be completely connected with the team, the community and the organizers of LABICxlaPAZ for 15 days.

The Lab helped me better understand the history of Brazil and other Latin American countries, understand what we have in common and, especially, immerse myself in the conflict and damage reduction policies. Both in Brazil and in Colombia, there is so much humanity. Our humanity is very expressive. This can be seen in the traditional rural, quilombola, and ribeirinho communities, and so many others that maintain a deep connection with nature and a strong environmental awareness of the need to perpetuate life on this planet.

The LABICxlaPAZ experience shows that it is possible to work in another way, repairing the damage we inflict to nature and recovering our awareness that nature includes human beings.

## PEDRO DIAZ, BRAZIL

### PLATAFORMA PARA PROFESSORES

LABIC is a project of major importance that creates benchmark cases in vulnerable areas. It gradually creates projects with communities, producing initiatives and connecting Laboratories working with common, public initiatives of civic innovation throughout Ibero-America.

In Colombia, we got to know an area as rich in prosperity as it is in conflict. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian residents, in a region scarred by the war of the Colombian Narco State, display their strength and resilience to inhabit, live and create their technopolitical forms of life. During my contact with the communities, my work with art and music was very important to perceive this primary sensibility in the common social practice, and its predominance over any productive and efficient approach to entrepreneurship or innovation.

Therefore, methodologies and communications for peace must take into account the artistic expressions and approaches in which people's lives and dreams are embedded.



## ROSANA RODRÍGUEZ VELÁSQUEZ, COLOMBIA

### #ARANAE: APRENDIZAJE EN RED PARA LA PAZ

#### [NETWORK LEARNING FOR PEACE]

I am a communicator born in Pasto and living in Medellín for the last 14 years. Participating in LABiCxlaPaz was very important to me, after all I am a native citizen of that town and I had been estranged from it for a few years.

Although I had been hearing from my family about the national news regarding the conflict and the peace agreement, working with an initiative in the territory was amazing because I engaged in it as a professional, and not only as someone who was born there. I also had the opportunity to get to know citizen and government dynamics which I had not witnessed before.

This was my first time participating in a LABIC. It was such a rich process of getting to know the methodology and I was impressed at how collaborative work can contribute to specific projects, such as this one for peace, in such a long conflict that hasn't ended yet.

To reach peace, it seems essential to me that initiatives emerge not only from federal, state or city governments, and that other kinds of organization exist. The reality of territories such as Nariño, struck by such a long, complex conflict, requires different institutions not only from the public sector, but also private, as well as citizens as active subjects in the construction of a new, post-agreement reality.

# INTRODUCING



# GILBERTO VIEIRA

Check out the story by Gilberto Vieira, from Data Lab, one of the lecturers in the event





## LABORATORIES FOR TRANSFORMATION

**W**e have just returned from Pasto, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, located in the province of Nariño, in Colombia. The people there say that it lies in the heart of the world. It could be so: their territory is located between the Andes, the Colombian Amazon and the Pacific Ocean – a sacred region, inhabited by an indigenous, rural majority who now fight to maintain their traditions in a country that lived 52 years of civil war between the Colombian government and the FARC. The nation is going through a remarkable moment following the establishment of a peace agreement between both parties. There is an agreement. But peace must be built through collectivity and democracy, with citizens involved in the process.

This is the intention of LABICxlaPaz – a Citizen Innovation Laboratory for Colombian peace. The event, which lasted until February 25th, gathered over 100 social innovators – professionals with the most diverse backgrounds, from agricultural techniques to 3D impression – who, alongside the local population, would prototype impactful projects that could be implemented in the near future. Among these clever locals were farmers and direct descendants of traditional communities, all of them eager to build bridges between collaboration methods, techniques and people to build a more democratic Colombia, freed from fear.

The event is organized by the Ibero-American General Secretariat in partnership with a number of institutions. Among them is Instituto Procomum, who invited data\_labe and who have been at the forefront of the debate on the commons in Brazil through the idea that it is necessary to activate communities, protocols and resources in the shaping of democratic, transformative processes for cities. Also noteworthy is the government of Nariño, who since 2016 has been placing transparency at the center of governance and, even more, activating the community through data. It makes our eyes sparkle.

My participation was short, but enthusiastic. I spoke about the importance of using data to narrate our own stories, about recognizing ourselves as citizens when we participate in government decision-making processes, which, after all, are directly linked to data production. My speech happened in the night following the decision for military intervention in Rio de Janeiro. Of course, I am directly affected by this and it was inevitable to raise the issue of peace, of the ostensible presence of the state and armed groups in Brazil's favelas, as well as the disastrous result of decisions such as this one, which only aggravate the context of genocide of our population. Inevitable comparisons with a Colombia that is hurt by civil war and institutional racism emerged.

I also participated in the talks and debates on the sustainability of projects and ideas such as data\_labe under conservative governments. It is important to build strong, transparent institutions that employ more contemporary models of work and management, so that, along with our communities, we can impact society and democracy as a whole. It makes our head spin!




# THE POSSIBLE ALLIANCE BETWEEN COMMONERS AND HUMANI- TARIANS

BY RODRIGO SAVAZONI



The article by James B. Quilligan for Kosmos newspaper, available online at the link <http://www.kosmosjournal.org/wp-content/article-pdfs/commons-for-peace.pdf> is an excellent document for those who wish to think about the relationship between humanitarian movements working to defend peace and activism for the commons. According to Quilligan, although apart, both these movements defend the same approach: strengthening local agents [stakeholders] and developing bottom-up rules for community agency as a way to solve concrete issues.

He writes that “Both fields generally agree that sustainable security in particular areas should be established by the people who live there, since they are the ones most knowledgeable about potential solutions to their problems. Commoners assert that resource security cannot be guaranteed by people they don’t know or trust, and many human security proponents agree that outside forces are not always the best source of citizen safety”.




Another point of agreement for both movements is about external intervention, a resource often employed in the attempt to bring “order” to places under armed conflict. For humanitarian security, this kind of intervention is unjustifiable and, for commoners, unnecessary in the least.

When we listen to the communities of affected citizens, as we did during LABICxlaPAZ in Colombia, we realize that force exerted from the outside in often creates new problems and develops into conflict between outsiders and the local population.

“Both fields agree on devolving power to local communities and the non-interference of outside forces. They converge on the creation of locally chartered agreements for the protection of civilians and their common goods, encouraging communities to flourish through legitimate local management. They also agree that peace itself is a social and cultural good, which must be locally managed and shared.”

Quilligan proposes the creation of an action front named Commons for Peace - C4P that can merge qualities of the humanitarian movement, especially their capacity to mobilize international forces and understand the geopolitical dynamic of conflict, and the approach of commoners, which entails ceaseless work against the siege on community goods by governments or markets. C4P emerges as a trans-local agency, in which international networks act to strengthen local communities as they develop solutions to their own problems. In his article, the activist and researcher defends the need for “safeguarding a community’s sources of survival, sustenance and well-being by resisting abusive interference, whether domestic or foreign”.

Coherently, he predicts that *“nothing is more vital to the peace and security of individuals and communities across the world today than the long-term preservation of their commons”*. Therefore, if we wish to build a society based on Good Living, we will only do so if we join our common forces to create lasting peace.







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