

Perspectives and experiences of sexual violence of internally displaced people in Colombian faith communities

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Context

- In 2017, Colombia has **7.2 million reported IDPs**
- **20.342 IDPs reported SV**
- More than 50 years of War - Peace process
- Colombia has a historical Christian – Catholic legacy.
- Templeton-funded FUSBC study: 6 IDP's communities – Sexual Violence (SV)

2016
65.6 million IDP in the world



Colombia #1
7.219.471 IDP
51% women
20.342 IDP Sexual Violence survivors
90% women

Methodology

Question

- ¿What kind of contribution can faith communities make to IDP survivors of sexual violence?

Methodology

- qualitative approach
- 16 interviews with faith leaders of 6 communities
- (1) Case study in Granizal (Bello/Medellín)

Case study

- in-depth interviews:
 - 4 faith leaders
 - 3 SV survivors
- focus group – SV survivors

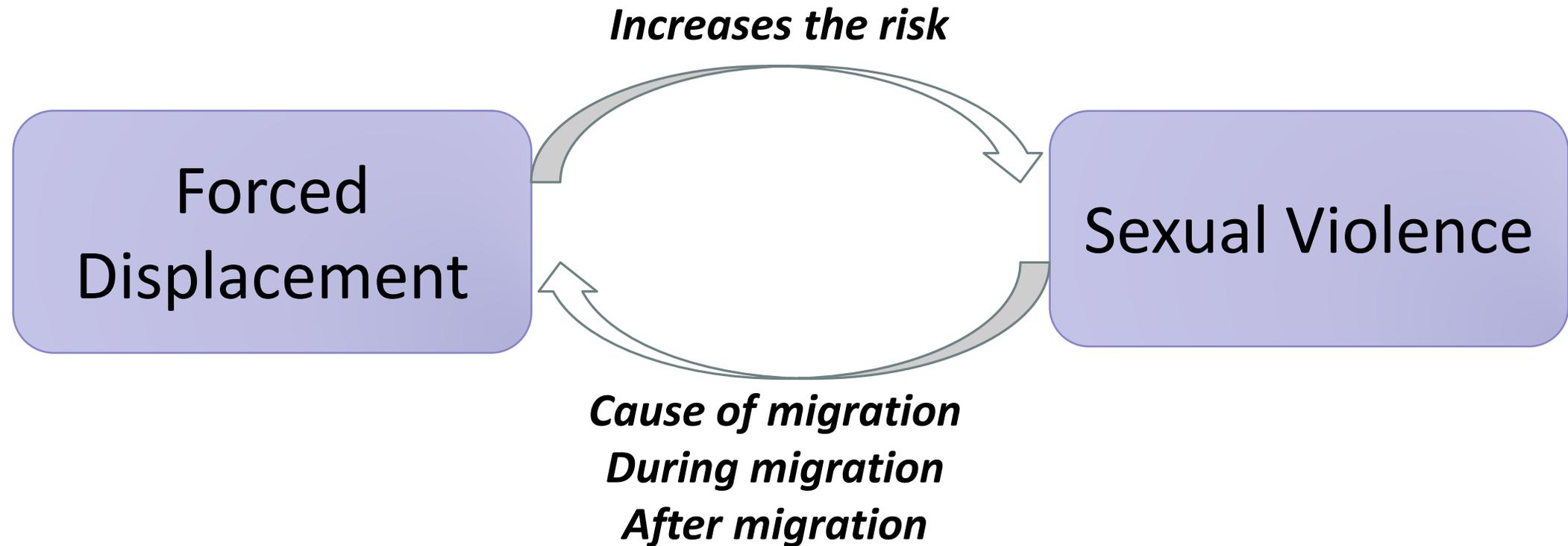


Medellín

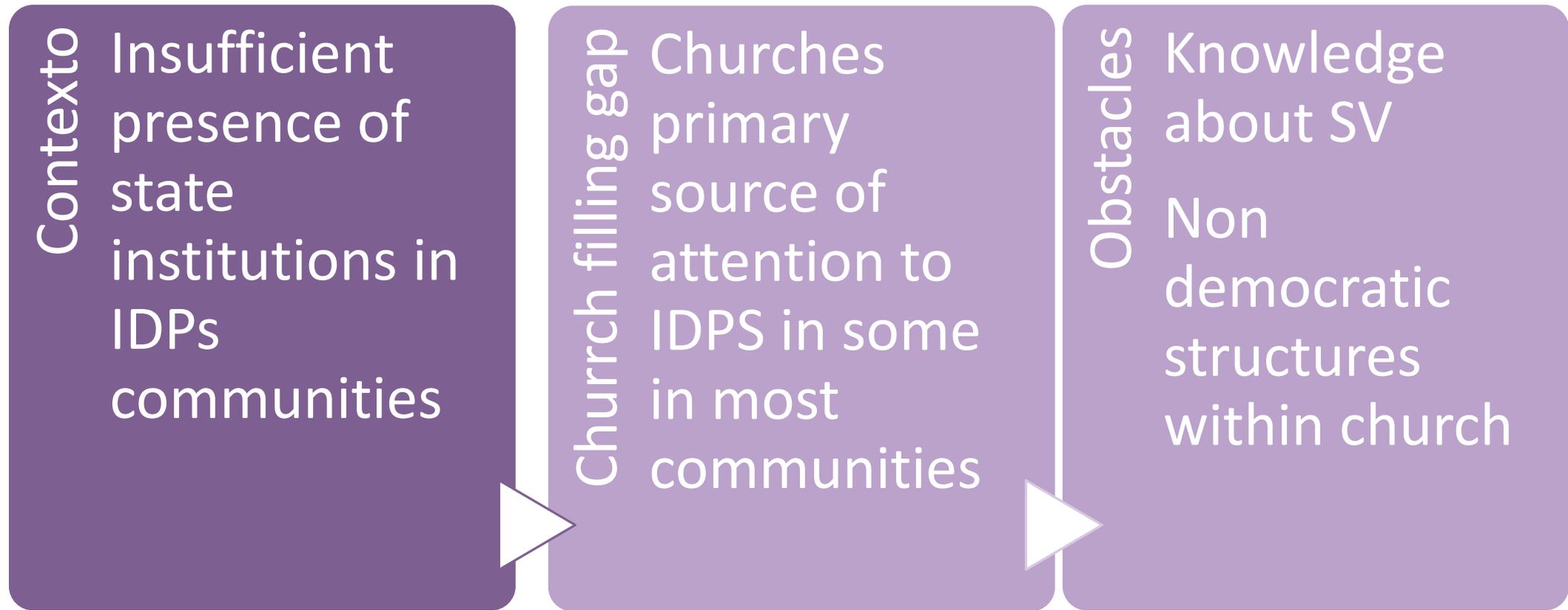
Granizal - Bello

FINDINGS

Experiences of Sexual Violence and displacement: double-victimization



Churches serving IDPS and sexual violence survivors



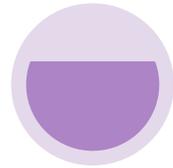


Survivors' perceptions of churches and faith leaders



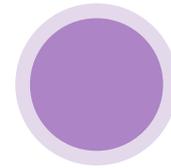
IDPs

feel connected to their faith communities



SV survivors

IDPs SV survivors do not feel connected to churches but emphasize the need of spiritual guidance



Churches

Can help to SV to heal
Preach SV is not God's will



EL GRANIZAL: an example of how churches are learning to address sexual violence

- Unlike other IDP communities, EL GRANIZAL have social service professionals and faith leaders working together.
- Have reported cases to state institutions
- Emphasize that poverty and exclusion increase the vulnerability of suffering SV.
- worried about SV consequences: depression, suicidal intentions



Lessons learned from the Church-NGO partnership in EL Granizal

"We have a human rights team and we have worked about violence ... we went to the communities that surround the church and we began to do an informative work and then we began to address victims of abuse, allowed victims to talk ... then we started a restoration work (...) When there's a very strong impact, we send (survivors) to a psychologist, but in the talks, a job of forgiveness is done, because many feel guilty." (Senior Pastor, El Granizal)



Lessons learned from the Church-NGO partnership in EL Granizal

"Nor to point out, nor to blame, to educate, to go with love, to go with respect and above all this accompaniment, it is an accompaniment of friends, a pastoral accompaniment ... (make them) feel important... To be with them ... but to teach them that they are more important for God, because we must also begin to teach who God is and the care of God because there is a person who is pressed because everything that happens where God was." (Leader of women - Granizal)

"Church must open spaces to denounce, tell what happened, how to go to the authorities ... We should not shut up" (Senior Pastor, El Granizal)



Victims voices: between support and solidarity

“They have helped me a lot, more than anything to approach God because at that time I said that what was happening to my girl was his punishment for my rebelliousness and she made me understand that no, that that was not God's punishment.”

(Woman IDPs)



Victims voices: sharing and making-meaning processes

Suddenly (church can) form workshops, places to understand that I am not the only woman displaced or the only one raped, or the only person who suffered, but there will be more, so let it be a process unless you see others and where we could talk with each other.

(Woman IDP)



Conclusions

- Understand the importance of the role of churches in State-less territories and the importance of their work with victims.
- Lack of knowledge about sexual violence Vs. learnings in the practice
- Survivors and faith leaders agreed on the need for a new vision of *women in the church, justice in SV cases*, and get *more tools* to address this phenomenon.



Next steps

- Curriculum and guides for the faith communities. (2018)
- Evaluation of the use of curriculum and guides. (2019)