# YOUTH ACT!

## MEETING REPORT 16/04/24

## INTERNATIONAL FORUM



## ARTICULATING TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGIES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUTH

2023/24 - BARCELONA - CALI - NAZARET

**Schedule and place:**

Tuesday 16 April from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m, Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) to the Ciutadella Campus Exhibition Hall.

**Organization:**

Universitat Pompeu Fabra GRITIM-UPF Research group (Lorenzo Gabrielli).

**Participating entities:**

Consejo distrital de Cali, Baladna, Consell de Joventut de Barcelona, Servei Civil Internacional de Catalunya, Agència Catalana de Joventut.

**Visual record:**

Yorgos Konstantinou @Y0rgos

**Dynamization and report:**

La Bastida Participació (Otger Vallés, Júlia Mullerat, Bàrbara Casas y Belén Beltrán).

# 1. Introduction

After several months working on the international Youth Act! project, we gathered in Barcelona for the International Forum. In this project, there is synergy between the cities of Barcelona, Nazareth, and Cali, each with its own unique casuistry and unresolved problems. The previous work had been done concurrently in the different cities, and finally, we met on the morning of April 16th to generate contrasts and provide more information.

There are two main objectives. On one hand, to respond to **how young people feel in their respective cities**. Beyond the problems that we know exist, we want to contrast the emotions that we feel in the city where we live, and the imaginaries that we have of it. On the other hand, the aim is to **explain the different strategies of political struggle** and evaluate their applications locally, so that there is an exchange between cities and strategies can be replicated.

The day after, the participants met for a session also facilitated by La Bastida at the headquarters of the Barcelona Youth Council. There were 18 representatives from Cali, 3 from Nazareth and 3 from Barcelona. We regret the lack of participation from Barcelona's participants due to their work or studies during the morning, and also the lack of face-to-face participation of 15 participants from Nazareth, who had not been able to arrive at the venue due to the airspace closures. There are several people from Palestine who will follow the session in parallel online.

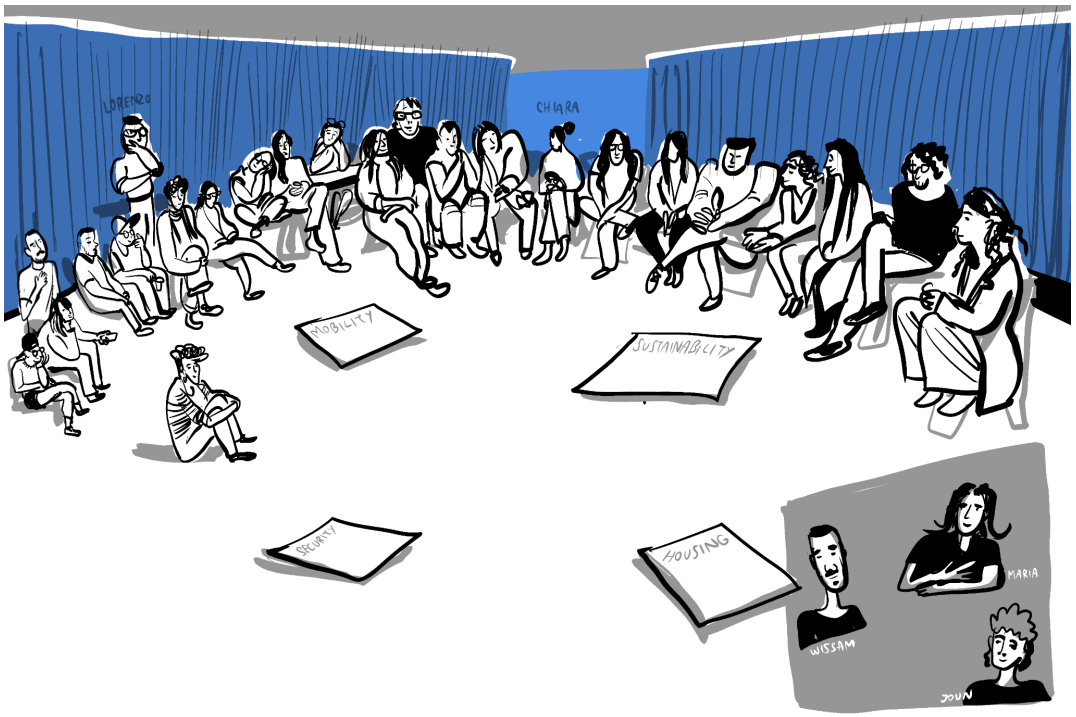
# 2. Sensitive mapping

We start the session with a brief presentation and explaining the methodology that will follow the first part of the session: working in groups.

Sensitive mapping is a methodological tool developed in the field of human geography to capture subjective forms of spatial perception. It is considered an alternative to objectivist ways of representing space. It prefers an embodied approach situated in the body of the person who produces it, and its meaning emerges from a plastic search. Because of their subjective nature, sensitive cartographies are often the subject of participatory creative work with the people involved in the field under study.

In the groups, we will focus specifically on the emotions and imaginaries of the participants (dreams, fears and possible futures), from a subjective point of view. The participants are divided equally into four groups, which roughly summarise the main common issues to the three cities:

- Mobility
- (In)security
- Housing
- Sustainability



## 2.1. Mobility

In the field of mobility we try to encompass everything that has to do with the subject. We refer to the walkable city, public transport, private transport, congestion in the city, space struggles between cars and buses, but mainly to public policies associated with infrastructures. Also accessibility and physical spaces, whether they are accessible to people with reduced mobility or in good condition. Finally, the associated migration, the state of the entrances and exits of the city, and diagnosing whether or not young people are pushed to live in the suburbs and can easily enter the city.

Participants:

- Cali: 4 people
- Nazaret: 1 people
- Barcelona: 2 people

| Emotions | Collective imagination |
|---|---|
| Negative emotions:<br>• Anger: frustrated, irritated, anxious<br>• Fear: worried, overwhelmed<br>• Insecure, anxious, overwhelmed<br>• Anger, frustration, enraged<br>• Anxious<br>• Irritated<br>• Sadness, ignored<br>• Anger, frustrated, enraged<br>• Fearful, insecure, inferiority<br>• Anger, aggressive, hostile<br>• Sadness, desperate, vulnerable | Since the 1990s, public transport in Cali has been in decline. There were some investments planned since the last mandates that have remained halfway or have not even started. Beyond this, there is a significant disconnection between different neighbourhoods, which generates invisible borders. The suburban train exists, but it is not efficient. The tracks and infrastructures are very poor and have a lot of room for improvement.<br><br>The aim in Nazareth is to make transport affordable or even free. A friendly and connected public transport is envisioned, |

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| Positive emotions:<br><br>• Intimate, close or solitary, depending on whether public transport is in good or bad condition.<br>• Valuable.<br>• Playable. | which is comfortable with people and is really public space.<br><br>Barcelona has been improving in recent years, connecting neighbourhoods and trying to make the city more accessible in about 30 minutes. Even so, there is still much room for improvement at the entrances and exits of the city, both by train and by car. |

In general, all contributions have focused on the negative emotions generated by mobility, understanding that it is a necessary issue and that it is not in good shape. It is conveyed as very positive that the city is connected, but that it is also a friendly place where you can walk and have fun. Public transport makes a lot of difference, between positive and negative emotions, and generally there are bad experiences.

Separating the debate by cities:

- In Cali, there is a reflection that transport is hardly planned, and that it does not have a metro, unlike other cities of the same size. The climate in Cali is warm, and the state of public transport is terrible (both trains and buses), which generates mental health problems due to irritability and the vulnerability of having a bad experience on a daily basis. It is also discussed that young people are always considered suspicious and that there is a lack of solidarity among users. There is sadness, and there is discontent with decision-makers.

- Nazareth reflects on what public transport should be like, connecting people, intimate and caring. The duality between cities is raised, that each has different problems at different scales, but that the feeling is practically the same. If public transport were in a good state of maintenance, this would help to encourage connections between users, but as it is now, it generates precisely the opposite, loneliness. On the other hand, the city should also be friendly and safe for walking and strolling.

- In Barcelona, the main problem is at the entrances and exits of the city, as is also the case in Cali. Regardless of the type of transport used (public or

private), there is always congestion which generates problems of coexistence. Within internal transport, there is a value for people with disabilities, where efforts are being made. In recent years, there has also been a policy of connecting neighbourhoods, to try to connect the whole city in less than 30 minutes.

## 2.2. (In)security

In the field of security or insecurity, we deal with the term in a cross-cutting manner. In this exercise, security could be defined as the state in which the (young) person is in a state of tranquillity and is not afraid to live where he/she lives. We deal mainly with physical security, the (non) sense of security generated by police forces (which should instillconfidence), conflicts between different communities coexisting in the same city, and repression on the basis of race, religion, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.

Participants:

- Cali: 5 people
- Nazaret: 2 people (+ online participation)
- Barcelona: 1 people

| Emotions | Collective imagination |
|---|---|
| Emotions expressing non-conformity:<br>• Angry<br>• Anger<br>• Mad<br>• Frustrated<br>• Frustration x2<br>• Unhappy<br>• Concerned<br>• Critical<br>• Surprised<br>• Insane<br><br>Emotions expressing vulnerability: | Applicable to both contexts (Cali and Nazareth)<br>• Healing: reconciliation between communities. It is necessary to improve the social emotional capacity to be able to influence politically.<br>• Government attention to vulnerable areas in order to respond to needs: lack of employment, unwanted pregnancies, etc.<br>• Generate mutual support networks, not only institutional but also |

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| • Insecure<br>• Anxious<br>• Terrified<br>• Overwhelmed<br>• Fear x2<br>• Frightened<br>• Vulnerable x3<br>• Distrustful<br>• Devastated<br>• Exhausted<br>• Powerless<br>• Helpless<br>• Despair<br>• Sad<br>• Sadness x2<br>• Threatened<br>• Miserable<br>• Hurt<br>• Abandonment x3<br>• Lonely<br>• Weak<br>• Submissive<br>• Jealous | collective.<br><br>• Bottom-up solutions, when people know that the problem exists, more life options can be generated.<br><br>• Peace education from schools.<br><br>• Cross-cutting solutions (not only money and security): emotional and psychosocial support, education, for a change of mentality.<br><br>• The role of youth organisations like Baladna that bring together people from all over the city.<br><br>• In the context of Nazareth, it is difficult to imagine as long as Israel's occupation persist. |
| ***This part was worked on by the Palestinian group that did not travel to Barcelona because of the war:***<br><br>**GENERAL FEELING**: insecurity + Uncertainty, the experience is different from one person to another, according to gender or gender expression (verbal assault).<br><br>**POLICE & MILITARY PRESENCE**: the space is policed, we fear the police and we feel insecure with the police presence because we know its there to do mass control of us as Palestinians and to keep the space militarized.<br><br>**INFRASTRUCTURE**: experience of chaos, because there is lack of basic infrastructure which causes tension | • Good & expanded infrastructure: streets where we can easily move, park, play, meet each other.<br>• Less cars, more space for walking and public transportation.<br>• A city that is easy to access from outside.<br>• Names of streets that we feel belonging to, names that are part of our culture and history.<br>• Spaces for nightlife and hanging out.<br>• More public libraries.<br>• Museums for different subjects (art, science, history).<br>• Better maintenance of the archeological findings of the city.<br>• A city with no organized crime.<br>• A city without police control.<br>• A city where we can express our Palestinian identity without |

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| between the neighbors / community.<br><br>**ORGANIZED CRIME.**<br><br>**SAFETY CORNERS**: we do experience safety, familiarity & belonging in our city despite all oppressive systems that are trying to ruin our right to the city and our relation with our space, and this is a result of community efforts and community building.<br><br>No public space but also no personal space which also causes a feeling of insecurity and daily stress. | persecution.<br>● A city connected with the rest of the homeland, the rest of Palestine, the whole LEVANT.<br>● We want to go by train from Nazareth to Beirut and the rest of the levant, which means no colonial presence in our land at all.<br>● A space where we can express our queerness openly and without pinkwashing. |

The emotions that were shown in the group were mostly negative, and a distinction was made between those that denote or express vulnerability and those that show nonconformity. Even so, at the end of the group work it was possible to think of possible scenarios to deal with all these emotions. The situations that were discussed, connected to the emotions of the participants, are shared below, by city:

- The colleagues from Cali told us about the physical violence between very young boys that is generated in vulnerable neighbourhoods because of drugs, money and invisible borders. The CDJC knows of examples of young people who have left these violent groups and they tell us how difficult it is to get out of these dynamics. Vulnerable territories are excluded and have more needs. They are mostly inhabited by people who come from rural areas, displaced by the armed conflict and the control of fields for cocaine cultivation. Even with the peace process, there is still concern about the disagreements of a 50-year-old conflict. There is no appropriate security system, the government does not focus on the social concept of security but rather on repression, and those who suffer most from the situation are the most vulnerable population, there is intersectional insecurity (women, LGBTIQ+ groups...).

- Nazareth is located in Israeli-occupied territory (Palestine '48) and is one of the most populated cities in the north with the largest Palestinian population (both Muslim and Christian). Part of the Palestinian population of

Nazareth had to leave their villages and homes and have been left to live in the suburbs or slums of the city. The socio-economic and historical situation defines security. Population has no access to weapons, yet the military gives them to them, especially in the slums. It is in the military's interest to divide the Palestinian population and let them "kill each other", which is why they allow weapons to circulate. Participants from Nazareth agree with those in Cali that the military and the police generate more insecurity and repression than security for the Palestinian population.

## 2.3. Housing

In the field of housing, we mainly talk about the value of land, how it is currently being used in the different cities and what urban planning model is being promoted by the city councils. Related to this, the insecurity linked to housing: the high prices that prevent the emancipation of young people in Barcelona, the self-creation of housing in the hills of Cali or the expropriation by an authoritarian state in Nazareth. In all cases, an exodus of young people from their hometowns is generated, and it is argued that housing should be a right, and that the state should ensure it.

Participants:

- Cali: 3 people
- Nazaret: 0 people
- Barcelona: 1 people

| Emotions | Collective imagination |
|---|---|
| Emotions expressing sadness:<br>• Hopeless<br>• Vulnerable (x3)<br>• Inferior<br>• Abandoned<br>• Helpless<br><br>Emotions expressing disgust:<br>• Critical (x2)<br><br>Emotions expressing fear:<br>• Threatened<br>• Humiliated<br>• Frightened<br>• Rejected | In general, both Cali and Barcelona participants shared ideas or phrases. Highlighting:<br>• Housing should be a RIGHT.<br>• Housing should be a public good, in order to avoid price speculation.<br>• The State should also promote policies for the integral improvement of housing, but also of the whole habitat, since the neighbourhood is fundamental for the development of the community.<br>• There should be decent housing, with enough space to be able to develop your family life, it should be of good quality, and it should also be |

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| • Anxious<br>• Insecure (x2)<br><br>Emotions expressing anger:<br><br>• Disappointed<br>• Anger<br>• Furious (x2)<br>• Mad<br>• Reluctant<br>• Sceptical<br>• Frustrated<br>• Hostile | a safe environment.<br><br>• We should think in a sustainable way, it is no longer necessary to build more. There is already enough physical space for everyone to live in dignity, but the problem is that it is not in the hands of those who need it.<br><br>• The question whether the 'ownership should be from the State?' arises.<br><br>• Unionising emerges as a response to alternative ways of obtaining housing today through self-organization.<br><br>• Housing cooperatives emerge as a collective alternative to obtain private property in dignity. |

The main emotions that have been shared in the group have been negative, with frustration, anger, fear and insecurity that come with the idea of not being able to own a home. These emotions were shared by Cali and Barcelona team members, highlighting that:

- It is a widespread problem among young people, and one that has increased over the last few generations. This has led to changes in the way they relate to each other, the way they think about life as a couple and even the family. It also highlights the forced exodus that is taking place in the big cities, forcing people to find cheaper spaces in the periphery and even on the outskirts of the big cities.

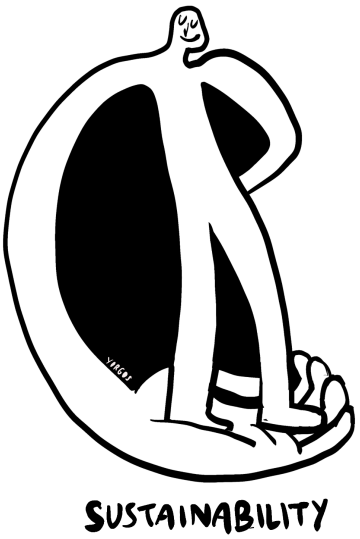
- In the case of Barcelona, there has been a sharp increase in the number of flats for rent, which has pushed up prices in emblematic neighbourhoods that for a long time had a strong local presence, and nowadays the local residents have been forced to move to other areas in search of a sense of neighbourhood and tranquility.

- Participants from Cali share that they have observed a growing land grabbing and self-construction in the hills around the city, generating new conflictive and insecure areas on the outskirts. They do not justify it, but they understand that if the State is not capable of providing solutions or

alternatives that can offer possibilities of access to decent housing, people will look for ways to become independent.

Additionally, it is relevant to highlight how in the second part of the activity, all these negative emotions turn into hope and self-organization spirit. The participants firmly believe that things can be done better, and that their convictions will be able to mobilize others in the struggle for what should be considered, by all, as a fundamental right for a better future.

## 2.4. Sustainability




In the field of sustainability, the main question is how to live sustainably in cities. It is not only about environmental change or policies that refer to curbing global warming. We refer to the human footprint, to see how we move forward as a society and what facilities or difficulties we have to be sustainable within the city. Related to this, what local policies are like, whether or not they favour the sustainability of the city and its inhabitants.

Participants:

- Cali: 5 people
- Nazaret: 0 people
- Barcelona: 0 people

| Emociones | Imaginarios |
|---|---|
| Negative emotions:<br>• Sadness<br>• Furious<br>• Confusion<br>• Guilty x5<br>• Disillusioned<br>• Frustrated x2<br>• Perplexed<br>• Insecurity<br>• Fear<br>• Useless<br>• Resentful<br>• Anger<br>• Impotent<br>• Outraged | On one hand, the imaginaries raised suggest that as a society we are not progressing in the best way:<br>• The state of frustration affects mental health and suicide, in some cases.<br>• A collapse is imagined, which will lead to the new channelling of nature. As a society we are going to hit rock bottom and we must do it, and then adapt as a society and take responsibility.<br>• There is an uncertain future, recurring issues such as deforestation are on the table, or not wanting to have children, due to overpopulation and consumerism.<br>• There are many murders of environmental leaders, |

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| • Despair<br>• Overwhelmed<br>• Used<br>• Anguish<br>• Anxious<br>• Uncertainty<br><br>Positive emotions:<br><br>• Hope x2<br>• Optimism<br><br>Neutral emotions:<br><br>• Curiosity<br>• Prankster<br>• Conscientious<br>• Sensitive | if you get too involved and visible you are murdered, which generates despair.<br><br>On the other hand, at the level of solutions, environmental innovation is proposed:<br><br>• Introduce the concept of sustainable planning in cities (administrations), tougher laws. At city level and at unit level (blocks).<br><br>• More innovative sustainable systems for a sustainable future through science and culture.<br><br>• More government support for these issues, e.g. with greener cities or more environmental awareness in schools.<br><br>• Rivers and nature reserves with rights, applying to give rights to natural spaces, for example in the flat area, to protect them. |

The participants in this group come from the same city: Cali. Most of the emotions expressed by the group are negative. The most shared emotion is the guilt of not taking responsibility, the violent context in Cali where people who take on leadership or activist roles end up being punished and killed. Instead of taking more visible positions, small acts are made that are not transformative. This is combined with the frustration of not being able to do anything more than individual acts or campaigns that last a single day.

There is a general sense of feeling useless, even if many campaigns are carried out, participants observe that change is minimal: ‘what we do has little impact or reach.’ There is a shared frustration of feeling that there is always more that can be done.

In the current context of Cali, there is a lot of frustration, anger and resentment with the organization of COP16, as local actions are organized by local institutions that the group consider inappropriate and are perceived as superficial, such as the ‘Mi Cali Bella’ campaign.

Positive emotions are also shared during the conversation, such as hope and optimism, which is the driving force that allow the youth to stay involved. Examples of good practices are shared, such as the urban garden movement in Puente Mil.

A dichotomous state is identified where negative emotions coexist with positive ones: 'I share hope with despair'.

# 3. Strategies and practices

In the next part of the session, it has proposed to carry out a work of exposition by cities of the main strategies and practices that have been used to deal with the YA! issues. The idea was to create a space of synergy in which we could learn from each other and see if we could collect ideas to replicate in the cities of origin.

We are divided into different groups by cities, with a card that will serve as a summary to explain the strategies. Here are the cards for the different cities.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">INCLUSIVE TERRITORIES AND SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Social development</td><td>Cali</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">PRIMARY ACTIONS:</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">• Action to put the urban and the rural together.<br>• Urban community garden: strengthening and promotion.<br>• Entrepreneurship: fairs/exhibitions, money and seed for cultural strengthening .<br>• Occupational inclusion, in “Cali Incluyente” (1000).</td></tr>
<tr><th>POSITIVE ASPECTS:</th><th>ASPECTS TO IMPROVE:</th></tr>
<tr><td>• It allows the population of the territory to access the services.<br>• Strengthening of Social Organizations.<br>• Integration of these territories.<br>• Awareness of nutritional and social security.</td><td>• Politicisation of the programme and its resources.<br>• Few quotas which results in limited impact.</td></tr>
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| COMMUNITY GARDENS | |
|---|---|
| Food sovereignty | Cali |
| **PRIMARY ACTIONS:** | |
| • Creation of vegetable gardens.<br>• Community ownership.<br>• Articulation with multi-agency population.<br>• Management of the vegetable gardens. | |
| **POSITIVE ASPECTS:** | **ASPECTS TO IMPROVE:** |
| • Food security and security in public spaces.<br>• Claiming and security in public spaces.<br>• Citizen culture. | • Difficulty for their sustainability.<br>• Lack of financial support. |

| YOUTH IN PEACE (Gob. Nacional) | |
|---|---|
| Security | Cali |
| **PRIMARY ACTIONS:** | |
| • Training young people at different educational levels.<br>• Community work to build social network.<br>• Monetary transfers conditioned to the above points. | |
| **POSITIVE ASPECTS:** | **ASPECTS TO IMPROVE:** |
| • Use of free time.<br>• Prevents young people from joining the organised crime chain. | • Weak monitoring and support.<br>• Targeting and selection.<br>• Politicisation. |

| GÜIREO Y CHACALEO | |
|---|---|
| Security | Cali |
| **PRIMARY ACTIONS:** | |
| • Awareness-raising.<br>• Participation in an inter-sectoral roundtable.<br>• Articulation and dialogue.<br>• Visibility with directive actors. | |
| **POSITIVE ASPECTS:** | **ASPECTS TO IMPROVE:** |
| • Making the situation visible to the government.<br>• Advocacy from the main actors. | • Mistrust of institutional processes.<br>• Structural fears. |

| HOUSING COOPERATIVES | |
|---|---|
| Housing | Barcelona |
| **PRIMARY ACTIONS:** | |
| • Cession of use of public land or purchase of blocks.<br>• Ownership of the cooperative's land.<br>• Creates housing plus community.<br>• Demonstrations and impacts with other cooperatives in the model. | |
| **POSITIVE ASPECTS:** | **ASPECTS TO IMPROVE:** |
| • The property is owned by the cooperative, which serves as an umbrella, and there is no risk of it returning to the market.<br>• Other ways of living, diverse families. | • Access: it is not always possible to make the option accessible to everyone. |

| LAND AWARENESS ACTIONS | |
|---|---|
| Migration processes | Barcelona |
| **PRIMARY ACTIONS:** | |
| • Workshops for schools on the migration processes in the Mediterranean.<br>• Talks and workshops in civic centres.<br>• Assemblies and volunteer groups. | |
| **POSITIVE ASPECTS:** | **ASPECTS TO IMPROVE:** |
| • It promotes knowledge about migration processes, and the reasons for migrants and their conditioning factors.<br>• The theory of contact is presented, which makes it possible to get to know people who seem to be distant. | • Difficulty in combining the volunteer group's schedule with the school.<br>• Difficulty in reaching new audiences. |

| TEJWAL (narrative reclamation) | |
|---|---|
| Social act / mobility | Nazaret |
| **PRIMARY ACTIONS:** | |
| • Researching<br>• Organizing tours<br>• Social educational teaching / guidance<br>Goals:<br>• Resisting: individualism and zionist narrative<br>• Maintaining heritage | |
| **POSITIVE ASPECTS:** | **ASPECTS TO IMPROVE:** |
| • Reconnecting with: nature, political identity, society and culture.<br>• Learning about: environment, history, Current political and social problems. | - |

| SOCIAL OUTBREAK IN COLOMBIA | |
|---|---|
| Mobilisation | Cali |
| **PRIMARY ACTIONS:** | |
| • General strike.<br>• Creation of spaces for political training.<br>• Participation in representation spaces. | |
| **POSITIVE ASPECTS:** | **ASPECTS TO IMPROVE:** |
| • Enabled people to organise. Broadening of spaces for participation.<br>• Qualified political awareness, participation and advocacy. Expansion of participation mechanisms.<br>• Dialogue roundtables, greater popular representation and institutional approach.. | • Violence (institutional politics, persecution, deaths, imprisonment).<br>• Instrumentalisation and intellectual appropriation.<br>• No guarantees, ruptures at the grassroots. |