**Data Work Group**

**Meeting Notes**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 21, 2021

**Time:** 11:00a-12:00p EST (10:00-11:00a hora de Pereira)

1. Dr. Matt Courser provided an overview of the agenda.
   * Review feedback and changes to the baseline questionnaire. Discuss next steps with the instrument, particularly the key task to reduce the length of the questionnaire with the help from WG members.
   * Begin discussion on student/youth survey; discuss existing efforts and impact of the pandemic on this type of data collection. Also, discuss youth currently in school and out of school.
   * Next steps on finalizing baseline survey, and set stage for record level data indicators.
2. Dr. Courser provided an overview of changes that were made to the baseline survey, upon receiving feedback from WG members. The following changes were discussed:
   * The team expanded types of demographic questions and moved items to the beginning of the survey.
   * The team pulled neighborhood and quality of life items from existing Colombian national surveys. These items have been used before successfully in Colombia and fit the research context better than prior items (e.g., items re: quality of life, perceptions of crime, and gang behavior).
   * Replaced and/or improved items that assess personal characteristics and attitudes (and serve as measures of protective factors). E.g., replaced resilience scale with scale recommended by WG member and validated in Colombia; replaced relationship with parents/friends/peers and quality of life items with items used in prior national surveys.
   * Expanded a series of questions on mental health and access to treatment.
   * Expanded items to measure tobacco use.
   * Added lifetime use on some measures per WG recommendation, although PIRE team concerned about this measure as it can never decrease; PIRE team prefers past year and past 30 days.
   * Removed leading peer/family use items, and improved current family/peer use item to ask who from family uses substance.
   * Added items that assess injection drug use and associated risks with IDU, eg., infectious complications from injection drug use.
   * New scales that were recommended by WG members and used in other national surveys were added to assess alcohol and substance dependency and abuse.
   * Added community support and engagement items that are more relevant to context.
3. WG Member Feedback and Questions

* Overall, WG members agreed that the baseline is much improved. New additions (e.g., mental health, community engagement, crime and addiction items) are great. They see their feedback in the new version of the survey.
* WG member asked how to best reduce the length of the survey? That will be an important task.
* WG member agreed that survey should not assess drug use with prevalence of less than 2%. However, it is important to keep in mind that some substances like heroin and other injection drug use, although numbers are low, are important to measure due to its high risk of overdose and negative health outcomes.
* The substances to include in the next version can be informed by the latest results of the Pereira and national studies.
* WG member agreed with Dr. Courser that baseline should not assess lifetime use.
* WG explained that connecting crime to addiction is important to them. WG member shared that they appreciate that the baseline questionnaire is the first tool in gathering this information, and acknowledged that there will be other opportunities in the future through secondary data and literature to gather more information on the link between the two.
* Dr. Courser thanked WG member for the reminder – this is one of multiple tools of data collection. The data for the study and evaluation will come from a variety of sources and will work together.
* WG member explained that language in the survey does not address gender appropriately; WG member’s team will make those adjustments in new version.
* WG member shared that items that assess social inclusion, e.g., stigma and discrimination should be included. WG member explained that they want to make sure that there is sustainability and if there is not an understanding of discrimination and stigma (towards drug use), it may not achieve that.
* Dr. Courser agreed and shared they will work to integrate items that measure stigma in this questionnaire. Important to understand stigma, and drivers/facilitators of that stigma.
* WG member stated there is a need to refine items on motivations, life projects, and other protective factors. Understanding risk and protective factors can help us to understand where we should focus our work.
* WG member explained that understanding the three types of persons as they relate to drug use may help with selecting items. Specifically, the resolute nonusers, the persons who are contemplating use, and the actual users. It is hard to assess the behaviors of actual users in a household survey because they are often not at home. Additionally, this data can be collected through other avenues. Therefore, WG member explained persons who are contemplating use should be the focus; interventions may be more likely to generate an impact for this vulnerable population. With this baseline, we can capture their attitudes and opinions re: use through perception of harm items, refusal skills, or other risk factors that they are exposed to.
* Dr. Courser affirmed the programs for this intervention cover all turf, and added that WG member highlights a useful framework to think about both programmatically and from an evaluation stand point.
* WG member from Pereira suggested including items that not only assess access to treatment, but also access to social services and specific treatment that helps prevent opioid overdose, like methadone treatment and access to naloxone. WG member stated they think it is important for Pereira.
* WG member added that interventions may not be able to affect the cost of illicit substance and how they access such substances, so may not need to be included in baseline.
* Dr. Courser explained that access to social services could be collected through other data available.
* WG member added that a discussion on other data sources available may open some opportunities to reduce the size of the questionnaire.
* WG member also stated that piloting the instrument may help to determine which items to eliminate to be able to include stigma items and access to naloxone medication.
* WG member shared they have identified a questionnaire that has been validated in Colombia to inform additional MH and suicide items. WG member will share with PIRE team.
* WG member shared there is a lot of redundancy among neighborhood and crime items.
* WG member suggested possibly streamlining the process by formatting response options in a consistent manner (e.g., make all responses Likert).
* WG member added that access to service items could be improved by mentioning specific organizations in Pereira. That data could be useful for programming later on.

1. Next Steps for Reducing Baseline Survey

* Dr. Courser requested that WG members review instrument and identify 5-10 items that are not as critically important to this study compared to some of the other measures.
* Dr. Courser explained the team will need to cut about 30-35 questions to keep it under an hour.

1. Youth Surveys

* Dr. Courser asked WG members about existing efforts related to surveying youth in Pereira and about any experiences and impact that the pandemic has had on those survey efforts.
* WG member suggested the Planet Youth Survey that has been implemented in Bogota, Colombia. WG member also explained that it is critically important to understand adolescent perceptions and use before it worsens. WG member shared results from a Chilean study that saw significant changes in use among youth between 2018 and 2020. In 2020, there was 1/3 less consumption, crime, and risk factors, and strong protective factors. The pandemic and the restrictions generally have become protective factors.
* WG member suggested the youth risk and protective factory survey, Communities that Care, which has been administered across numerous cities in Colombia.

1. Closing Remarks

* Discussion on youth survey and how the pandemic has affected data collection will be tabled for next week’s meeting.
* The PIRE team will work to make additional changes to the baseline questionnaire and requested that WG members share any additional feedback via email.