**Data Work Group**

**Meeting Notes**

**Date:** Wednesday, May 12, 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 latest version of baseline questionnaire and feedback received
* Protests in Colombia and how it may affect program implementation
* Priority special populations
* Next steps

1. Review of baseline questionnaire

The questionnaire has been improved. Important updates and changes include:

* New item added that assesses race/ethnicity drawn from the household Pereira survey
* New option added to gender identity items, specifically: non-binary
* Language is now more inclusive
* Changed mental health item from “have you ever had an emotional, anxiety, or mental health problem” to “in the last 12 months, have you ever had an emotional, anxiety, or mental health problem”
* Added e-cigarette as a delivery method to using marihuana
* Two items were added on impact of Covid-19 on mental health
* Two questions were removed that focused on constructs that were les central to questionnaire (current emotional well-being)

A few suggestions PIRE was unable to address:

* Insert SRQ (due to length of scale, unable to include)
* Include health insurance items (removed due to current length of survey)
* Include injection drug use items (not included because the Observatory will be doing a hidden population survey that will focus on IDU)
* Kept all substance use items even those with low prevalence (in order to obtain an accurate baseline of all substances)

Feedback from Work Group (WG) members:

* Generally, WG members were satisfied with latest version of instrument.
* Many WG members asked to reconsider including the health insurance items. It is important to understand access to treatment and mental health services.
* WG members suggested that gender identity and sexual orientation questions be asked at the end. This re-ordering was done with the national household survey of substance abuse after some participants took offense to these items. Highly recommend reordering items.
* WG member explained gender identity question does not follow best practice. WG member will send suggestions via email on how to re-word. Also, recommends adding biological sex item.
* WG members from Ministry of Health asked that current mental health items be replaced with the SRQ scale. The scale characterizes better the mental health of participants. It is validated and has been used in Colombia in previous national surveys.
* Dr. Courser reminded the team that the survey will not be able to measure everything, but PIRE has kept track of all ideas and measurements to collect that data in another way.
* WG member asked to revisit the topic of underreporting which was discussed in last meeting. WG member explained that they conducted an experiment with a 250 person sample in Pereira. In survey, cocaine use was about 2% when it is actually closer to 18-20%.
* WG member agreed that underreporting is concerning in Colombia. Drug use prevalence is much higher in Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile compared to Colombia, and this could be due to underreporting. WG member reminded the team that the best surveys, at least for adolescents, are those that are self-administered rather than face to face. Online surveys could get better data. Also, it is helpful to include items in the survey to see if participants are responding honestly.
* Dr. Courser explained that given the pandemic, there will be less face-to-face administration, and greater use of tablets which will create a perception of greater privacy and confidentiality.

Next steps:

* PIRE team will revise baseline accordingly- e.g., re-insert the health insurance items, biological sex item, review feedback, etc.
* Once survey is revised, PIRE will submit to their IRB. The IRB will review the questionnaire and survey procedures, prioritizing the safety of the staff who administer the survey and respondents.

1. Protests in Colombia – Impact on Project Activities and Data Collection

* In Bogota, there are ongoing strikes, and it is uncertain when the problems will be resolved. However, in the past, strikes have typically not continued for an extended length of time, so depending on when the baseline was planning to be administered it may not affect project activities. WG member however is curious to hear about the impact the protests/strikes have had in Pereira.
* Pereira has been impacted significantly by the strikes/protests, but the municipality is continuing to work with community members in developing resolutions. There is a current police investigation related to the recent death of a protester in Pereira. If needed, the municipality of Pereira can schedule a meeting with the mayor, public officials and INL/PIRE to explain the progress they have had on negotiations and economic recovery, and project collaborations. Despite the protests, their work has continued, including covid vaccination rollout. It is important to understand that these protests are complex, solutions are complex, and that they take time.
* Dr. Courser explained that PIRE is happy to meet with the mayor and public officials.
* Dr. Courser also stated they hope to begin data collection in mid-June at the latest.
* In response to the start date, a WG member explained that many of the projects in Pereira, and similarly in Cali, have been stalled due to the protests and current investigations. The situation is complicated. One WG member explained that roads have been blocked. All progress has been made via the internet from different communication platforms.
* Additionally, it is important for the team in Colombia to keep PIRE/INL informed and determine when it is safe and stable to begin administering surveys. If surveys are administered during times of instability, responses to some items may be heavily affected.
* WG member suggested that if needed, the order of events could be changed so that the baseline is administered during more stable times. In the meantime, if the survey is delayed, we could begin to look at aggregate data and do analysis of other data.
* WG member explained that if safety is an issue, we could administer the survey in partnership with a local entity like a school or service organization, etc.

1. Special populations

* WG member shared that in conversations with Brian Morales and Alan Piracha, it would be important to include hidden populations such as victims of trafficking, homeless, and refugees.
* The methodology for each population will be different. What would be helpful is to hear from persons in Pereira, and given their current circumstances, which special populations should be prioritized.
* Next meeting will discuss special populations.

1. Next Steps/Closing Remarks

* Alan Piracha from INL thanked PIRE and WG members for work on the baseline survey.
* Future conversations will be on special populations and various existing data sources or data needs not included in baseline and should be included in study. Mr. Piracha suggested that WG members, as part of the conversation on special populations, come prepared with existing data sources or ideas on how to obtain data, so that the team can begin compiling a list of indicators or sources of indicators.
* INL will continue to monitor events related to the protest and pandemic as they unfold.
* The second meeting of the Project Intervention Work Group will be scheduled for end of May or early June.
* Dr. Courser stated that next Data WG meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 26th. The date/time may need to reschedule due to an OAD event. If unable to have the meeting on May 26th, PIRE will coordinate with CICAD and send a doodle poll to participants to schedule next meeting.