School of International and Public Affairs
Case Consortium @ Columbia
Columbia University

SIPA-14-0004.0

Tortoise or Hare?
Fundación Carvajal and Buenaventura

In 2011, Fundación Carvajal (FC) decided to expand operations into Buenaventura, the second largest port in Colombia and one of its poorest cities. The foundation was celebrating its 50th year assisting poor communities across the state of Valle del Cauca, and especially the city of Cali. Buenaventura, however, posed special challenges. Its poverty level hovered at over 80 percent; unemployment was nearly 60 percent; and some 50 percent of the population was under 24 years old. Like the rest of the country, the city had suffered from 60-plus years of armed conflict between rebels and the central government; there was limited physical and civic infrastructure. While the port was active, locals had not benefited much.

FC had recently standardized its approach for social intervention, combining integrated services with focus on a specific geographical area. It worked primarily at the family level in four areas: income generation; housing and environmental conditions; education; and community empowerment. The first step, however, was to build trust, especially with community leaders. To be successful, FC needed full collaboration from its partner communities. The situation in Buenaventura was complicated by a series of previous social programs that had failed, leaving citizens cynical about outsiders.

In January 2011, a small team reporting to FC Executive Director Roberto Pizarro moved to Buenaventura to research conditions in the city and to select four districts for intervention. By October, it had chosen *comunas* 3, 5, 10 and 12. In January 2012, Pizarro selected Dr. Alvaro Dulce to oversee the project. Dulce had worked with FC in Cali and had extensive experience in public health and community work.

But Pizarro had an unexpected requirement: he wanted Dulce's team to complete a socioeconomic survey of the selected districts in Buenaventura by April 2012. Typically, a household survey—with what could be perceived as intrusive questions—took place only after an extended period of trust-building activities. The goal was to survey 2,080 households in 17 neighborhoods within the two target zones. The survey would provide a baseline for FC as it designed new community development programs and would help secure additional funding for the intervention as a whole.

Dulce was concerned. First of all, security conditions in the target districts were poor. He was not sure he could send pollsters into those areas before the community knew a lot more about FC and its intentions. Second, he wondered whether families would answer the survey questions absent an

This case was written by Maria Clara Pardo Garcia for the Case Consortium @ Columbia and the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Funding for the casewriter's travel to Colombia was provided by Fundación Carvajal. (0614)

endorsement from local leaders. Without accurate data, the survey would be a waste of time, money and effort. Finally, were the FC pollsters to create or be party to any kind of incident, not only the data but the credibility of FC and the success of the entire Buenaventura project could be at risk.

To meet the April deadline, Dulce and his team would have to design the survey and plan how to deploy surveyors by the end of February at the latest. But before turning to that, he had to decide whether to accept the accelerated timetable, or protest it.

Fundación Carvajal—brief history

By the 1960s, the demographics in Cali, Colombia, were changing. Marked by steady rural-to-urban migration, the city was among the fastest growing in the world. Yet municipal authorities had limited capacity to keep up with the quick development; no urban planning or government oversight of new urban areas was in place. Poor and working class settlements lacked basic services such as primary schools, water and sanitation, or roads.

Fundación Carvajal (FC) was founded in 1961 by the Carvajal family in response to the growing needs of Cali's urban poor, many of whom worked for the Carvajal company. The company had started in 1904 as a small printing house in Cali. By the end of the 20th century, Carvajal Corporate Group was a multinational diversified into seven different activities.

As then-company manager and first manager of the foundation Manuel Carvajal Sinesterra puts it: "A healthy company cannot prosper in a sick social environment, because sooner or later, it will have serious repercussions on its performance. Therefore, a responsible business person must necessarily become engaged in solving social problems."[1] The family donated 40 percent of its corporate shares to the foundation. So instead of the company owning a foundation, the foundation owned a significant share of the company. This ensured the foundation's independence, a steady income, and allowed it to leverage its investments by seeking external funding.

Five decades. FC first worked with five Catholic parish centers in the eastern section of Cali known as the Aguablanca district. The Catholic Church was then one of the few institutions operating in the impoverished area. Under an agreement, FC operated the parish centers, which provided health care, basic education, job training, nutrition, family planning, sports and recreation to thousands of people. By the early 1980s, change was evident in the areas immediately surrounding the parish centers.

But on the periphery of the ever-expanding district, poverty and a lack of basic infrastructure and services continued to be the norm. In 1982, FC returned the parish centers to church administration, along with a fund to sustain them. The foundation then moved into needier neighborhoods on the outer border of Aguablanca . While retaining some of the elements of the parish centers, it evolved its own strategy. In the words of Maria Eugenia Carvajal, a family member on the FC board, "our approach was to reverse the direction of the arrow: instead of inviting the people to participate in FC's initiatives, FC became involved with the people's own initiatives."[2]

---

1 Fundación Carvajal, *Presentación Institucional,* January 2012 (Power Point slide 2). Courtesy of FC.

2 Quoted from the Institutional video prepared for the celebration of 50 years of FC.

Over the next decade, FC created three centers for community services within Aguablanca (*comunas* 13, 14 and 15). Housing was a priority need, so FC mobilized banks and municipal authorities to help local families improve housing. For example, private banks opened branches inside the community centers to help local families access credit and other banking services. FC also supported local initiatives and small businesses. Public institutions such as notary public offices or the national civil registry located in the centers as well.

By the 2000s, conditions in Aguablanca had improved. Families were still poor, but infrastructure and access to services had improved. In addition, public and development institutions had moved into the area. FC was looking for a new challenge. But first, it went through a leadership and organizational change.

New leadership

In 2005, the board elected Roberto Pizarro FC executive director. Originally a civil engineer, Pizarro had spent over 30 years working for the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia (NFCG), where he held a variety of leadership roles, including director for the chapter of Valle del Cauca state. Coffee growers were mostly small family producers, and the NFCG helped improve their conditions. Pizarro brought more than leadership skills to FC; he understood the local context, and had experience in social development in Valle del Cauca.

Pizarro had a new goal for FC: holistic development. Rather than offer unrelated individual programs, he wanted to integrate social, cultural and economic components into each development project. Projects would address the issues in any given geographic area in their entirety, not piece by piece. Finally, rather than looking at individuals in isolation from their families and environment, Pizarro wanted to focus on the family as the unit of intervention. Before, FC had offered different services for different age groups. Now it sought a multiplier effect by targeting programs at an entire household. To achieve integration, Pizarro decided to increase FC's cadre of social workers and deploy them aggressively.[3] As he puts it:

> What I did was to work a lot to strengthen the social fabric. We expanded the role of social work as part of the approach, because I've always believed that it is the social connections in a community that really generate trust… What we have done [differently] has been, first, to better define focus and scope, and second, to deepen the social elements of any particular intervention.[4]

Dulce arrives. In 2006, Pizarro hired as head of social and community development Dr. Alvaro Dulce, with whom he had worked on development issues at NFCG. Pizarro charged him to identify

which social strategies FC should include in future community projects. FC had learned that social change meant behavioral change. It recognized that at the core of any intervention stood a human being, with needs beyond money or material goods. For example, a business owner might benefit from family counseling, which in turn could allow him to profit more fully from an accounting course. FC's holistic approach tried to ensure that any program would benefit the individual, his family *and* the community.

Dulce was a medical doctor who early in his career specialized in family and community medicine. He had worked closely with rural communities where he was expected to engage with patients beyond their physical health. He learned to involve himself in the local culture and to promote wellbeing based on family and community concerns. He says:

> Being a rural community doctor shapes your understanding of your role; it becomes to promote wellbeing, and not to focus exclusively on the disease. The community health center works as a focal point, but all interventions should eventually be defined by the varied dimensions of the human being.[5]

FC wanted Dulce to deploy social workers to strengthen both the social fabric and individual capabilities. Through trial and error, the foundation had developed specific implementation strategies that Dulce's growing department was to expand and standardize:

- offer tools to the community for its own development
- strengthen and create new local leadership
- empower social actors in the area
- stimulate individual and collective self-esteem
- begin with a strong presence but with a well-defined exit strategy

Dulce's first task was to create a department capable of supporting—through direct interaction with the community—all other FC efforts such as education, income generation, housing and the environment. As a start, he created a repository of FC's institutional knowledge about social and community development. Until now, each employee had approached a task as s/he saw fit; there was no standard protocol. Moreover, much of FC's expertise rested with individual employees; when they retired or resigned it went with them. Dulce then integrated his operation into ongoing FC projects. By 2007, he had made great strides: in just a year, the social work staff had grown from 10 to nearly 40.

Functional to matrix. At the same time, Pizarro reformed FC's organizational structure. Historically, FC had operated three categories of programs—education, income generation, and housing development. Each worked separately, with its own hierarchy and decisionmaking process. But with the decision to focus on the family unit, FC wanted to ensure that if one member of a family had contact with an FC program, all other household members would have the opportunity to join FC programs. Social workers, who spent most of their day in the field, would follow up on individual families and their needs.

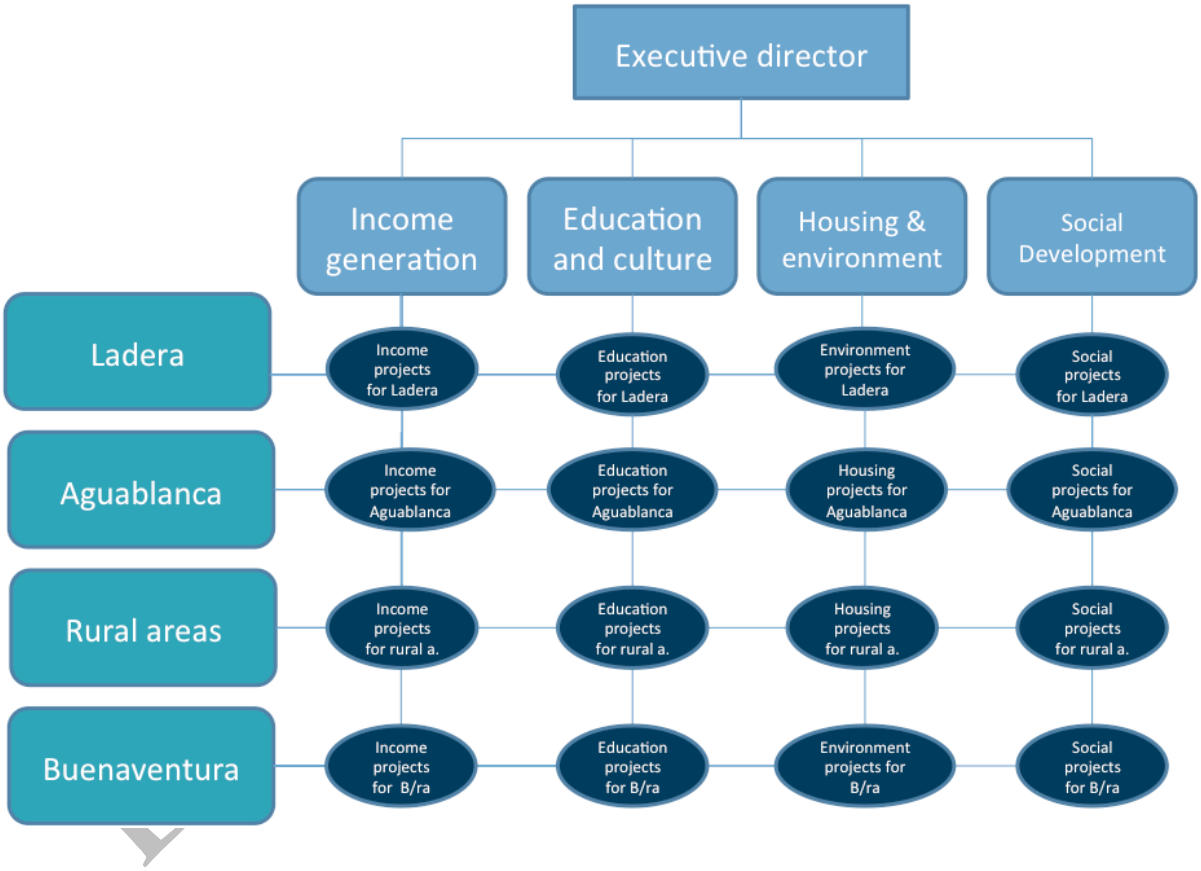
To make the shift, FC in 2008 switched from a pyramidal organizational structure to a matrix with hierarchies for each line of work, but also for each geographic area. This corresponded to the need

[5] Author's interview with Dr. Alvaro Dulce on October 25, 2013, in FC Cali headquarters. All further quotations from Dulce, unless otherwise attributed, are from this interview.

for cooperation across programs and projects necessary for an integrated approach. The head of each geographic area was put in charge of the comprehensive development strategy, while the director of each development strand was responsible for the particular programs and projects within the overarching strategy. The new matrix structure, as well as the new emphasis on social work, was first tested in a project that had started two years earlier: Ladera.

Ladera: new prototype

In 2005, FC had decided to expand in Cali beyond Aguablanca. It looked at a hilly area on the western edge of the city.[6] Cali was divided into 21 administrative units called *comunas*. FC had previously worked in *comunas* 13, 14 and 15 in the Aguablanca district. The city limit to the east was the Cauca river and the area was rather flat. To the west lay *comunas* 1, 18, 19 and 20, surrounded by a mountain range and quite steep.



Neither nongovernmental organizations nor the government provided any services to the recently established communities in the west. FC wanted in expanding to take advantage of what it had learned about community-building in Aguablanca. First, a research team studied the neighborhoods.

[6] FC kept open the three community centers in Aguablanca; it also started a new program in Retiro, an Aguablanca neighborhood that remained stubbornly poor and insecure.

Which ones should FC select? What was important to each community? Who were the players? Who had influence? Focusing on the vulnerable was a priority, but FC also wanted the consent and active participation of the community in any improvement project. It needed to understand a community before choosing to work there.

In late 2005, FC social workers spent time walking through the target neighborhoods. Teams of two social workers were assigned specific areas. These teams used a set of criteria to guide their observations and information gathering and recorded the data in a matrix.[7] The criteria stipulated what social workers should observe and the matrix allowed them to record the ways in which the variables changed across sites. On December 14, the team presented a report on the chief characteristics of six areas: *comunas* 1, 2, 18 and the jurisdictions of La Buitrera, Montebello and Golondrinas. The report drew on FC's own observations as well as on quantitative and qualitative data from the municipality, the media, and the little literature available.

After the presentation, the research team created a second matrix, based on the first one but broader. Matrix #2 measured each variable on a scale from 1-100.[8] The matrix allowed the team to analyze the sites based on wider criteria than observation alone, and to set priorities. By late December, it was able to select two areas based on vulnerability and opportunity: *comuna* 18 and Montebello. FC called the expansion area the "territory of Ladera."

The next step was to build trust. Dulce recommended that FC wait before starting concrete development activities. Instead of starting with a full package of services, he wanted first to establish a relationship with the community. Projects would come only after serious trust-building exercises and deliberation about local problems.

Trust building. One key aspect of building trust was to engage without creating expectations. Starting in early 2006, FC hosted a series of community meetings to assemble a priority list of needs using a "problem tree." The goal was to mobilize the community to think about its own problems, opportunities and aspirations. Instead of promoting its own programs, FC allowed community members to identify challenges unaided. FC wanted the community to consider it a development partner, rather than an external actor imposing ready-made solutions. Recalls Ladera leader Miriam Gomez:

> They [FC social workers] asked whether we saw needs in the community. We would tell them about lack of employment… that many people were out of work. Then they would ask us what could be done. They did not know, and wanted to know what we thought could be done.[9]

In addition, social worker teams worked with local leaders to introduce FC to the community. They undertook only short-term collaborations with local institutions. For example, they worked with a women´s organization to organize a New Year's celebration. The women had been collecting funds, and FC contributed the balance needed for a successful event. In September 2006, FC organized a Forum of

---

7 See Appendix 1 for the list of criteria.

8 See Appendix 2 for the variables in Matrix #2.

9 Author's interview with Miriam Gomez on October 23rd, 2013 in FC Community center in Ladera. All further quotes from Gomez, unless otherwise attributed, are from this interview.

Local Development and Social Building, which brought in public institutions to discuss their different intervention models in the *comunas*. From this platform emerged an initiative to formalize an inter-institutional network of organizations working in Ladera.

FC looked for "early victories"—small programs that could start a conversation with locals about social change, and demonstrate quick and beneficial results. Building on each community's conclusions about its problems, FC in in summer 2006 began to offer some of its standard capacity building programs such as free parenting workshops and classes on experimental art, entrepreneurship, and literacy. Ladera leader Gomez observes:

> [Before the arrival of FC] we were very disorganized, everyone for himself, everyone minded his own business, cared only for his home, nobody cared whether the street was overgrown, or whether the neighborhood was dirty. But after FC came, we started forming groups; and all began to change around activities that the foundation promoted and shared with us.

It partnered with public institutions to bring in existing services such as school meals. It sponsored a group initiative to start a small business that would provide employment for the associates, and provided job skills training and administrative support. Financed by the governor's office, the foundation built a community health center. These actions helped FC become better known in the community and demonstrated its good intentions. But it also wanted to conduct a survey.

Survey. To target its efforts most effectively, the foundation needed solid data on social and economic needs. That meant a household survey, both to help design relevant programs and to establish a baseline for future evaluation purposes. Program monitoring and evaluation was not only a fundamental part of the FC model, but a requirement of its external funders. FC knew it needed to involve the community both to build support for and to conduct the survey. It worked with local leaders to organize information sessions and obtain participants' consent. FC also prepared a detailed plan for qualitative research (focus groups) and, most important, to deliver the results of the study to the community.

The Ladera survey, carried out from May 22-28, 2007, covered 842 households. The foundation invited all employees (including managers) to administer the surveys or help with other logistics. A significant group volunteered and was trained in how to fill out the questionnaires and other research techniques. This strategy proved successful: on the one hand, community members felt that FC had a high level of commitment and engagement; on the other hand, the survey made work more meaningful for many FC employees. After the survey, FC hosted focus groups of local leaders to gather qualitative information to complement the survey results. One theme that emerged was the lack of trained leaders. FC also mobilized resources for construction of the community health center, which opened in December 2007.

Finally, some two years after choosing Ladera, FC was ready to present the results of the survey. Between February 21 and April 28, 2008, FC convened 12 meetings, first with leaders and then with the larger community. Together, FC and the community designed a strategy to respond to the identified

needs in education, income generation, the physical infrastructure of public spaces, and the desire to strengthen the social fabric.

Ladera launch. In April 2008, FC launched its Ladera development program with a full menu of activities. For example, in May, the foundation started *truque comunitario* or communal barter.[10] Based on the assumption that everyone has something to contribute, barter of both tangible and intangible goods—from a smile to clothes to services—became a major source of social interaction and the basis for new community networks. Initially, housing had been a priority. But Ladera residents held no title to the land, so FC instead organized families and the municipality in *comuna 18* to create land titles.

In August, acting on suggestions from the community focus groups, it opened a Leaders School. Eighty-two "students" took an 18-month course in how to organize, mobilize and access public and private support networks.[11] The goal was to empower local leaders to find resources and propose solutions on their own. Ladera leader Gomez observes:

> In Leaders School we realized many things … that we have rights. It taught us what we didn't know about our rights, how to raise [issues], to engage someone without swearing or anything like that, but to know how to get in [and defend] our position.

Meanwhile, FC searched for outside funding partners for Ladera projects. Typically, FC funded 20 percent of its projects directly, and raised the rest from other donors. In developing a community center and a socio-economic development project for Ladera, for example, FC was able to leverage its own investment with funds from four international institutions: the Autonomous Community of Madrid, LIMMAT Foundation (Switzerland), Codespa Foundation (a Spanish development NGO) and ACTET (Belgian aid). Altogether, they contributed almost €1.5 million (US $2.2 million) over three years, 2008-2010. ACTET and LIMMAT, for example, provided €650,000 (US $950,000) to build the community service center in *comuna 18*. It opened on July 10, 2010 with services from day care to meals for children, recreation and a learning center. The building included an IT lounge, job skills training workshops, an auditorium, and landscaped space around the five-story building.

In other areas, FC offered technical assistance on rainfall management, the relocation of families living on steep land prone to landslides, and an assessment of the local water/sewage system. On the education front, it advanced programs to train teachers and benefit students. For example, between September 2008 and June 2009 more than 150 children who were old for their grade took an accelerated course to return them to grade-level. At the same time, another 450 students participated in a reading program called *Palabrario*. FC also targeted preschool education. Typically, neighborhood women banded together to care for the youngest children (0 to 6 years). By June 2009, FC had trained 90 caregivers and 43 teachers in early childhood development. Additionally, it improved the physical environment of area kindergartens.

[10] This methodology was suggested to FC by Fundación Laudes Infantis in Bogotá.

[11] This project was developed in partnership with a local NGO called *Corporación Juan Bosco*, which specialized in community training and education.

An FC strength was its programs for small businesses and entrepreneurship. From July to September 2008, FC surveyed small businesses in the area, and drafted a profile of the business owners and their interest in training. At the same time, it surveyed the working age population in the community. Based on these, FC created a series of training programs to improve people's capacity to generate income, whether as small business owners or as employees. By the end of 2009, FC had trained more than 100 people in trades such as baking, fast food, automobile mechanics or construction. Moreover, more than 50 family-owned small businesses improved their management skills, resulting in increased sales and lower costs.

Regardless of the subject area, FC project and program managers focused on serving families in a comprehensive and consistent way. Dulce's department targeted the family as a whole, strengthening social networks through community groups and promoting partnerships with other institutions. Social workers were key to helping different programs reach different members of the same families, and to creating a sense of common community purpose. Dulce was gratified to see that the integrated approach was working. As he observes:

> Today the community in Ladera feels that it is not FC which has brought development, but that they themselves are making use of the opportunities we have come to build with them. While our programs focus on improving conditions of quality of life, our efforts have also built local capacity.

Buenaventura next?

In 2011, FC celebrated its 50th anniversary. It had an endowment of USD $272.8 million and 126 employees. A total 66,000 people participated in its programs. FC annually invested $17.2 million—$3.7 million from its own resources (dividends from Carvajal Company), and an additional $13.5 million which it raised from third parties, mostly international.

FC felt that, in Ladera, it had proven the validity of its holistic approach to development. To mark the anniversary, the foundation documented its lessons learned, consolidated into 12 principles. They were:

- focus on the **most vulnerable** where no other institutions are present
- go **beyond financing social development** to design and operate programs; connect to the target communities
- make **sustainability and empowerment long-term goals.** FC considered its work done when locals could improve conditions for themselves
- development works only when **people own the solutions** to their problems
- **do not replace the state**; partner with public institutions and advocate for improved service delivery
- **promote partnerships** between communities and private and public institutions
- **geographic approach**: recognize local potential and work with what is already available
- **integrated approach**: make the family the unit of intervention.
- **assess** the impact of programs and adjust continuously
- **share** and reproduce lessons for replication elsewhere

- recognize that development needs **follow-up**
- **adapt** knowledge and technical training to match different abilities; build the capacity to be independent

In fact, the foundation had an opportunity in its anniversary year to take the "Ladera approach" and try it in an entirely new setting, beyond Cali. In 2010, it looked around Valle del Cauca for possible areas of expansion; the city of Buenaventura emerged as a likely candidate. Migrants from Buenaventura were well known in Cali, especially in Aguablanca. Executive Director Pizarro decided to explore the idea of opening up a site in Buenaventura. He says:

> We started to think, to the extent that we continue doing work here [in Cali], why not start looking upstream… What can we do in Buenventura? That is how we started, that was the big question. The answer we had was: none, we don't know… That is precisely the starting point of the model, from the recognition that we don't know.

Buenaventura was the largest municipality in Valle del Cauca. It lay on the Pacific coast and included a large rural area, plus an urban center with over 90 percent of the population. At over 350,000 residents, Buenaventura had long been a national center for trade. It was the second largest seaport in Colombia and the most important opening to the Pacific. In addition to its economic importance as a port, Buenaventura was home to bio-diverse flora and fauna; it also boasted a rich cultural heritage of indigenous and Afro-descended communities.

But the bulk of the population lived in poverty. According to an official report, Buenaventura in 2003 received as development funding only six percent of the taxes it sent to the central government.[12] More than 80 percent of the population lived below the poverty line, and more than half of those suffered extreme poverty. Unemployment rates, at 61 percent for those aged 25-54, were among the highest in the country. Housing was also deficient, with many living in *palafittes* (houses built on stilts over water), which increased the difficulty of providing water and basic sanitation. Buenaventura's Human Development Index was 0.69, compared to the national average of 0.84 and the state of Valle del Cauca at 0.86.

History. This situation was not new. The city was founded during Spanish rule in 1540. For centuries, local communities descended from indigenous groups inhabited the coastal region. In addition, the Spanish had imported African slaves to work in local goldmines. Many later escaped or bought their freedom. However, apart from a few small towns and villages, the vast territory was largely isolated from the national economy.

In the 1910s, however, and after the opening of the Panama Canal, Buenaventura assumed a new role. As a port, it attracted a steady influx of migrants from rural areas. Fishing and other river and sea-related activities constituted the main source of sustenance. Native communities survived thanks to communitarian and collective practices. For example, the neighborhood of Bajamar ("low tide") was built by migrants who could not afford land. Instead, they built houses over the water and slowly filled the seabed to form entire neighborhoods. Wrote one commission:

> Everything was done through the efforts of the community, as this was a swamp. The first houses were built nearly 5 meters high, because the tide was high. Access was via wooden bridges. Filling the swamp was a collective job; it was done with garbage brought from the market. Then, the politicians promised to bring more trash in dump trucks, in exchange for votes. It was a tragedy because of the flies, rats and bad smells. To mitigate it all we would spray *especifico* [creoline-based disinfectant].[13]

Racial and geographic marginalization were the norm. Only after 1991 did a new national constitution recognize these communities as ethnic minorities. A 1993 law gave collective land deeds to communities living in the territory. But in 1996, the same year the first titles were delivered, violence intensified.

Colombia's armed conflict

[12] Ministerio de Trabajo. (2012). Buenaventura, ciudad puerto de clase mundial. Plan local de empleo 2011 – 2015.

[13] Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, Bogotá Septiembre de 2009. Informe sobre la situación de derechos humanos y desplazamiento forzado de la población afrocolombiana que ocupa el territorio de Bajamar de Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca). Author's translation

Since the late 1940s, Colombia had suffered war between the state and different armed groups over control of territory. The motivation of the groups had varied. Some scholars traced the origins of the conflict to a period called *La Violencia*, triggered by the assassination of a popular political leader, Jorge Eliércer Gaitán on April 9, 1948. The two main political parties—Liberals and Conservatives—faced off, with police on the side of the Conservatives and peasants supporting the Liberals. In 1964, left-leaning peasants created the guerilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (or FARC), with the goal of overthrowing the government.

During the Cold War, what had been a conflict for land was framed as a conflict between communists and oligarchs, the former seeking support from Cuba and the USSR, the latter from the US. The guerrilla groups used kidnapping, extortion and drug deals to generate revenue. The US for its part supported the government, and provided training in counterinsurgency strategies. In the 1980s, right-leaning landowners organized paramilitary groups to defeat the guerrillas. The resulting confrontations had a devastating impact on civil society. Massive displacements and human rights violations were common.

In 2005, the government and the paramilitary groups signed a peace accord. Ex-combatants were given amnesty and returned to civil life in a process often criticized for being too lenient. A significant number of the demobilized combatants turned to drug trafficking. These groups used violence and coercion to gain or maintain control over the drug trade and routes to the Pacific or the Atlantic. Buenaventura, with its access to the Pacific, became an area of violent contention.

A complex combination of military, strategic, and economic interests put the whole district of Buenaventura in the crossfire, creating massive displacement. In 2000-2001 alone, 46 massacres[14] reportedly took place as paramilitary forces targeted civilians, alleging collaboration with the guerrillas. After 2002, paramilitary forces threatened the low tide communities and committed acts of violence and human rights violations. The guerrilla group FARC fought back using similar tactics. By 2010, Buenaventura was home to the largest number of displaced persons in the state after Cali.[15]

Despite its decades of experience, expanding to Buenaventura would present FC with major challenges. In late 2010, the FC board of directors approved the project.

Exploration

Typically, organizations and government institutions in Buenaventura operated from Cali or Bogotá. FC by contrast wanted to become part of the city. The first step was to explore it. In early 2011, as it had in Ladera, FC set out to study local dynamics. The goal was to understand the local culture and what local people wanted, their dreams and aspirations. Furthermore, the team needed to identify which institutions already existed so FC could, as its principles stated, work with what was available. Pizarro identifies two key decisions:

---

[14] Departamento Nacional de Planeación—DNP, *Dimensiones Especiales del Desarrollo, en Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2006-2010*, Estado comunitario: desarrollo para todos, 2006.

[15] At the same time, 80,000 fled Buenaventura between 1997 and 2010. Fundación Carvajal, *Presentación Institucional* [PowerPoint slides in Fundación Carvajal files], January 2012. Courtesy of FC.

> We made two simple choices. They can be very subtle, but for us are critical: to open an office there, a building with a signpost that said Fundación Carvajal; and the other that is much more subtle, to get a rented apartment where we could accommodate up to 10 people. There is a very powerful message behind that; it says we have come to *live* in Buenaventura. We want our people to see the dawn in Buenaventura!

Observe. In February 2011, two FC staff relocated to Buenaventura to make a first assessment and start building connections. One of them was Idalia Tunubalá, a social worker at FC since 2005 with wide experience in community development in Valle del Cauca. Tunubalá had been a pioneer in opening the Ladera territory and was recognized for her drive, her people skills and her social development expertise. The other was Juan Diego Saa, who started at FC in January 2010 after earning a master's degree in economic development. He managed an FC project to integrate demobilized combatants into civil society. That had brought him to Buenaventura on a regular basis.

For nine months, Tunubalá and Saa conducted research. They read everything they could get their hands on about Buenaventura, including government policy documents and reports on health, social indicators, economic development, and so on. In addition, they identified and analyzed the special legal framework that applied to Buenaventura; especially important was Law 70 of 1993 that recognized Afrocolombians' collective rights to land and sought to protect the cultural identity of ethnic minorities. After obtaining the available official information, the team established connections with respected institutions working locally, both public and private.

FC did have some experience in Buenaventura. As early as 2009, FC had worked on a series of education projects in the municipality, including the rural areas. One, performed under contract to the state secretary of education, had built capacity for nursing and elementary schools students and teachers. Another project focused on helping children aged 9-15 to complete elementary school. In addition, a cargo company operating in the Port of Buenaventura had hired FC to help build a corporate social responsibility program. In early 2011, FC was trying to establish a company owned by dockworkers themselves to eliminate middlemen. FC social workers got to know the workers, their families and some local leaders.

These prior commitments provided a platform for direct engagement with other city communities. As in Ladera, an FC team visited different neighborhoods to establish connections first with local leaders, but without raising expectations. FC had not yet identified which specific neighborhoods to focus on. Fortunately, the brand name Carvajal was associated with good quality goods: *Carvajal does things right* was the corporate slogan for a while, and it stuck in people's minds.

The Buenaventura team used a matrix, with similar principles but different variables from the one in Ladera, to record the information it had gathered. Says Tunubalá: "We took into account technical as much as human criteria [to select the specific neighborhoods] because we would go there, we would get to know the leaders, we would see the conditions in which people were living… Then, we would

come back to the office and debate."[16] The team came to see that, in Buenaventura, it would have to add questions about gender, ethnicity, age and human rights.

In early October 2011, the team was ready to choose specific locales. Using an analysis matrix to compare the *comunas* in terms of need and potential, the team narrowed the choice to six and forwarded the selections to Pizarro. He decided to ask for a second opinion. Historically, FC had gone after the most challenging situations. However, Pizarro sought advice from an external consultant with expertise in the Pacific region. FC, the consultant opined, would have to balance its commitment to a clear exit strategy against its commitment to focus on the most vulnerable. As Pizarro recalls:

> This was a particularly interesting decision, because it changed our perspective from what we had done in Ladera. We had always said: we will go to the most critical areas, that is our mission. Originally, in Buenaventura we were going in the same direction. However, our consultant, who really knows the Pacific and knows us well, said, 'I recommend that this time, you go to critical areas, but not necessarily to the most critical areas, because if you go to the most critical, you won't be able to leave for 40 years.'

FC took the consultant's advice and, from October 18-20, dispatched a mission from its Cali office. Mission members seconded the original choice, applauded the criteria developed by the Buenaventura team and narrowed the choice to four *comunas*: 3 and 5 in the low tide area, and 10 and 12 on the mainland. In total, there were 17 neighborhoods. Recalls Tunubalá:

> Choosing a territory is something rather abstract; you as a social worker have to construct it. Geography per se does not capture all the different aspects of a territory. In a territory you find personal interests and social dynamics, political interests as much as commercial and corporate dynamics. A territory is comprised of people in their complexity, it is not an easy thing to measure. And when one is choosing a territory, one needs to be extremely serious in saying: Yes, I'll work here!

FC officially approved the borders of the Buenaventura project in late October 2011. One deciding factor was that the city planned a macro infrastructure project that would eventually require the relocation of communities in the low tide area. Meanwhile, *comunas* 10 and 12 were targeted by the city for potential urban expansion. Both processes would require assistance and FC thought it could play a strong supporting role in helping people relocate.

The team spent November and early December planning (in late December all closed for Christmas). By then, the Buenaventura team had grown beyond Tunubalá and Saa to a total of six people. As was FC policy, the new staff members were local.

---

[16] Author's interview with Idalia Tunubalá on October 24, 2013 in FC Buenaventura office. All further quotes from Tunubalá, unless otherwise attributed, are from this interview.

Build trust?

FC had first to let the selected communities know they had been chosen. On January 24 and 25, 2012, the team convened a meeting in the Buenaventura office with community leaders. The team described its intention to work with them. It explained FC's development approach and its expectation of collaboration. As Buenaventura Team Manager Saa recalls:

> These were our credentials: we arrived saying, we are not here to simply add names on an assistance sheet. We do not bring ready-made solutions in the form of projects that we will implement no matter what. What we bring is a long-term plan—a proposal to work together. We first need to know each other, so that together we can build the solutions to the problems of the community.

After the first meeting, each local leader organized a follow-up in his/her neighborhood. The FC team attended and again communicated the plan, the expectations and FC's work. Participants were able to ask questions, and see the FC staff for themselves. FC made clear it would not replace the state; its role would be engagement with an active community in pursuit of local development. Community participation was crucial, they emphasized. "You can argue that it became more like a collective covenant that legitimized the beginning of the intervention," says Tunubalá.

Dulce in charge. By the beginning of 2012, Dulce had been working with FC for about five years. He had been deeply involved in the development of the integrated and territorial approach. He had led the process of compiling lessons learned into a single model with a protocol for future interventions. The model had become stronger and more clearly defined. However, in Dulce's mind it was still a work in progress and would probably always be.

When FC started thinking about Buenaventura and during the implementation of some of the preliminary programs, Dulce as head of the Social Development Department had provided guidance and support for the team's daily work. But in January 2012, Pizarro put him in charge of the entire Buenaventura operation. The assignment came as a bit of a surprise, because other departments had more experience handling projects outside Cali. But Dulce accepted the job as an opportunity to see whether the success in Ladera had been a fluke, or redounded to the credit of FC's integrated, family-focused, geographically targeted development strategy.

Buenaventura, Dulce was aware, posed one of the biggest challenges FC had faced in years; the potential for failure was considerable. He knew that without the trust and buy-in of the community, there would be little progress. Over the years, many organizations with good intentions had come to Buenaventura; too many had dropped out, mission not accomplished. For locals, those failures bred mistrust of outside interference, and impatience with promises.

As he considered the scope of FC's proposed involvement in Buenaventura, Dulce wondered how to ensure the security of both staff and local partners. The area continued volatile, with active remnants of the armed groups that for so long had destabilized it. Illegal activities no doubt continued as well. FC would have to win the trust of the community and, in turn, rely on it for its own security. Dulce was prepared, as in Ladera, for a lengthy period of trust-building activities.

Deadline. Thus, he was surprised when Pizarro asked him to complete the survey of the selected districts' socioeconomic conditions before April 2012. Dulce was far from persuaded that the time was right. This was going to be FC's first major operation outside Cali. He had hoped for months of small projects that would build FC's credibility in the community and win trust. If things went wrong, chances for a successful development initiative could be compromised, or even lost for good. As he argued:

> We are already in the middle of January. Are we already on [sufficiently] good terms with local leaders? Security and socioeconomic conditions are becoming more complicated. What if we are not able to get the surveys answered because we are rushed out of neighborhoods by the community or armed actors? … Several institutions have gone there and flamed out.

Tunubalá agreed. She knew how important it was for respondents to answer the questions in the survey truthfully. She hesitated because there had not been a continuous FC presence in all the target neighborhoods. She feared people—not knowing enough about FC—would not open their doors to surveyors. "I believed we needed more presence on the ground, that people would know us better so that they could say... oh yeah, we know them, the FC people are coming!," she says.

Team Leader Saa, however, had no such doubts. The survey would provide the information FC needed to build a concrete development plan together with the community. He had been waiting for a green light since October 2011, before Pizarro's validation mission delayed the process. Saa had led the Buenaventura team for more than a year and, even with Dulce in charge, retained considerable responsibility. The two men had a positive working relationship. But Saa believed the community was more than ready to take the survey. Residents, he felt, held a positive attitude towards FC; now they wanted to see results. Delaying the survey might in itself be detrimental if the community tired of waiting.

At the same time, events in Buenaventura were moving quickly and other aid and government organizations were starting to focus on the community. That represented important opportunities for partnerships and funding that could be lost if FC waited. Even the chief social service agency (the Department for Social Prosperity) wanted to start work. The survey results would present FC with an opportunity to influence policy. Pizarro, while he preferred an early survey, understood the dilemma. "There is no way to measure trust; it is a very subjective thing," he says. "Knowing when there is enough trust is like a craft." The foundation would have to decide within days: schedule the survey in a hurry for March, or wait until the tested trust-building activities were complete?

APPENDIX 1

Matrix with the list of criteria for observation

Matrix 1 - Guide to the observation of Ladera								
Geographic location	Background of the Comuna	Demographic characteristics	Existing infrastructure	Economic conditions	Education	Family conditions	Community aspects	Environment and vulnerability
Map of the comuna including its limits and the identification of vulnerable areas List of neighborhoods Access roads Weather characteristics	Brief history of the comuna How was it developed Changes and developments across time	Background of the dwellers Number of people Mobility among the dwellers (internal migration) Demographic data available about the population (gender, age)	Housing (number of houses, characteristics and topology) Legal status of plots Urban development and infrastructure Public service provision Transport	Sources of employment Percentage of population working Businesses present in the comuna Main commercial activities	Level of education in the community Literacy rates Percentage of population in school age	Number of members per household Configuration of the family Intra -family relationships	Leadership Community programs Local development Institutions Main challenges Recognized events among the community	Pollution of the environment Presence of water bodies

APPENDIX 2

Matrix with the list of variables for the socio-economic characteristics of the communities to be selected for intervention

Component	Comuna 1	Comuna 2	Comuna 18	Comuna 20	La Buitrera	Montebello	Golondrinas
Housing conditions (%)							
Health							
Socio-economic activities							
Family dynamics							
Recreation infrastructure							
Security statistics							
Environment (risk and vulnerability)							
Transport availability							
Institutions present in the area							
Average score from 1 to 100							