



# FIREARMS IN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN SCHOOLS:

*Approaches, challenges and responses*





**United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament  
and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean**

This study has been prepared by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), headquartered in Lima, Peru. The purpose of this study is to contribute to regional and international debates in the fields of disarmament, arms control, and prevention/reduction of armed violence. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Secretariat or the United Nations System in general.

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With the support of



Throughout this study, references to individuals or roles always involve both men and women. To avoid linguistic overload and to facilitate smoother reading, the generic masculine gender will be used (in some cases) with the understanding that all such gender references invariably apply to both men and women.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was designed with the purpose of promoting a comprehensive and necessary dialogue on the challenge posed by addressing the presence and use of firearms in Latin American and Caribbean schools, considering the repeated incidences of firearms detection, possession, and use at schools over the last decade.

UNLIREC appreciates the support received from various governments, international bodies, civil society organizations, and academia, which provided the necessary information for the development of this study.

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## ABOUT UNLIREC

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), headquartered in Lima, Peru, was created by a UN General Assembly resolution in 1986. The Regional Disarmament, Information and Outreach Branch (RDIQB) of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA), in New York, oversees and coordinates the activities of UNLIREC and of the other two ODA regional centres in Africa and Asia and the Pacific.

UNLIREC is the only UN regional entity specialized in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Its main function is to translate the international decisions, instruments, and commitments of Member States in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control into action, at national, sub-regional, and regional levels.

As part of its mandate, UNLIREC provides technical assistance to 33 Latin American and Caribbean States with a view to achieving and maintaining peace and security through disarmament.

UNLIREC assistance aims mainly to:

- Promote practical disarmament measures by strengthening the capacity of States in the field of defence, security, and justice.
- Improve forensic ballistics systems.
- Strengthen stockpile management and security.
- Support firearms and ammunitions destruction processes.
- Strengthen arms control in the private security sector.
- Support the establishment of national systems for the control of conventional arms transfers.
- Strengthen the role and contribution of women in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.
- Integrate arms control measures into citizen security policies and encourage initiatives to reduce and prevent armed violence.

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## ACRONYMS

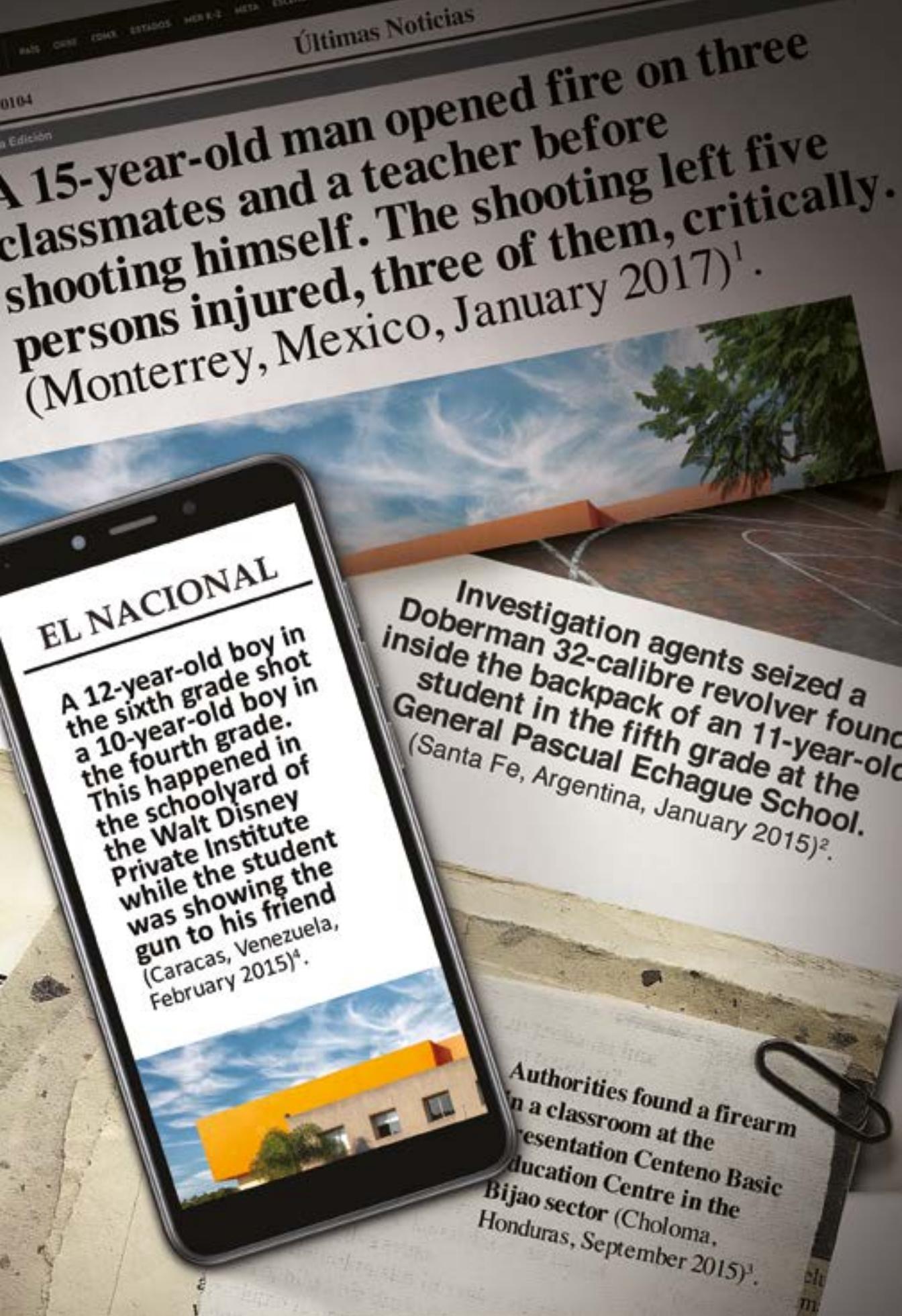
ANMaC	National Agency of Controlled Materials (Argentina)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
FLACSO	Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences
IEPADES	Institute of Education for Sustainable Development
MEP	Ministry of Public Education (Costa Rica)
MINED	Ministry of Education (Nicaragua)
MOSAIC	Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium
C&A	Children and Adolescents
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
OAS	Organization of American States
UN	United Nations
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
Prova	National School Performance Assessment (Brazil)
SIMCE	National System for Learning Outcomes Assessment
SíseVe	Specialized System for the Attention of School Violence Cases (Peru)
SUCAMEC	National Regulatory Entity for Security Services, Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives for Civil Use (Peru)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLIREC	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
GFZ	Gun Free Zones



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# CHAPTER **ONE** *Introduction*





While the cases mentioned above appear to be isolated, news as regrettable as these are more common than believed in Latin American and Caribbean countries. The presence and use of firearms in schools pose a great challenge for communities and countries of the region.

Furthermore, schools-as spaces for learning and socialization- reflect the different facets of society, where children and adolescents (C&A) are also exposed to risk and vulnerability factors. A study performed in 2015 by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) showed that around 30% of school C&A in the region claimed to have been victims of physical or verbal violence at their schools<sup>5</sup>. Violence occurring in schools is expressed through aggressions, as well as threats, bullying<sup>6</sup>, intimidation, sexual harassment, theft, extortion, gang violence, and discrimination, among others.

*Schools = learning and socialization*

Over the past two decades, the phenomenon of firearms in schools has remained a persistent problem in several countries across the region and has been reported in the following instances: schools being used to hide firearms; detection and seizures of firearms inside schools; students and teachers



Source: UNLIREC



who claim to have seen firearms at school; students who have been caught with firearms and ammunition among their belongings; students who have accidentally or intentionally fired firearms on school campuses; armed students who have threatened their peers and teachers; and even suicides and shootings inside schools resulting in injury and death.

But what explains the presence of firearms in schools? What motivates a student to bring a firearm to school?

These questions can be explained by a variety of factors underpinning this phenomenon whereby not even schools can escape the effects of armed violence. At first sight, it stands out that schools are not immune to what is happening in their surroundings.

While 54% of homicides is committed with firearms worldwide<sup>7</sup>, in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is estimated that firearms are present in close to 69% of homicides in Central America; 65%, in the Caribbean; and nearly 53.7%, in South America<sup>8</sup>. On the one hand, these levels of violence affect the youth population in the region<sup>9</sup>, since adolescents and youth are the ones who

suffer the most from the impacts of armed violence<sup>10</sup>. Young men between 15 and 29 years of age are the main direct victims of homicides committed with firearms<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand, armed violence has also reached the confines of schools in some countries, albeit differentially, depending on the context. Schools, therefore, are not immune to the dynamics of violence and criminality in society whereby easy access to firearms and the presence of gangs and organized crime undermine their social structure.

However, it is important to highlight that the presence of firearms in schools is not always intrinsically linked to the violence and insecurity present at the societal level and can, in fact, respond to a variety of factors. In other words, when students bring firearms to school, it does not necessarily mean that there is always an intention to use them.

Cultural and social acceptance, as well as the fact that firearms are considered symbols of masculinity, respect, prestige, and power, drive some students to seek “a place” in schools at the cost of intimidating and threatening their peers, including their teachers. Firearms in these contexts are sometimes used for self-protection against physical violence and bullying that students suffer both within schools and on their way to and from them.

Additionally, a negative psychological profile, self-esteem problems, and a lack of a sense of belonging have an impact on the armed violence inflicted by students inside schools and could explain the motivations behind

these incidents. Likewise, and especially in the case of younger students, the presence of firearms in schools can be the result of curiosity or the simple desire to carry or show off the firearm they had found at home. In short, the variety of contributing factors demonstrates the complexity of the phenomenon we are facing.

The lack of statistical data and records of these types of incidents makes it impossible to determine with certainty the real scope of the problem. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the undeclared presence of firearms in schools may be greater than the cases reported and collected by the authorities and media.



DESPITE THE LACK OF ACCURATE DATA, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS OF THE PRESENCE AND USE OF FIREARMS IN SCHOOLS. IN ADDITION TO THE PHYSICAL IMPACT (INJURY AND DEATH) CAUSED BY THE PRESENCE OF FIREARMS IN THESE ENVIRONMENTS, THE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS AT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL LEVELS ON CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH, AS WELL AS THE COSTS IN TERMS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS IN THE REGION, MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED.

Classroom violence can have cognitive and behavioural effects on students, making them feel less satisfied with school. This, in turn, can lead to lower academic performance and school absenteeism. Students who feel insecure at school and stay at home are at greater risk of lagging behind and dropping out. Further, if acts of violence are not appropriately condemned and not effectively discouraged, they could be seen as legitimate means to resolving interpersonal conflicts.

Some impacts of violence in the classrooms

There is a growing interest in the region to address the phenomenon of school violence. Several States in Latin America and the Caribbean now have policies, programmes, and tools in place to address the different manifestations of this type of violence to ensure that schools remain free of violence. Although numerous specialized studies and publications on violence in schools have identified firearms as a risk factor that contributes to the generation and reproduction of violence in these contexts, thereby affecting the safety and coexistence of the school community<sup>12</sup>; there lacks a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of school violence. Therefore, there are few specific guidance materials on how to tackle and analyse this phenomenon in a detailed and differentiated manner in school violence prevention policies and programmes.

Moreover, the presence of firearms in schools does not receive the attention it deserves as a key component in public arms control policies and in the efforts

being made to prevent and reduce armed violence in the region. Raising awareness about this problem and its real and potential impacts, as well as exploring public policies and other initiatives to strengthen current efforts in this area, is a key task for national and local authorities across countries of the region.



IN THAT CONTEXT, AND IN AN EFFORT TO ANALYSE A POORLY-EXPLORED PHENOMENON, SUCH AS FIREARMS IN SCHOOLS, UNLIREC PREPARED THIS STUDY IN ALIGNMENT WITH ITS MANDATE TO SUPPORT THE STATES OF THE REGION IN STRENGTHENING THEIR FRAMEWORKS FOR ACTION AND RESPONSE TOWARDS THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF ARMED VIOLENCE, AS WELL AS OF THE PROLIFERATION AND ILLICIT USE OF FIREARMS.

Over the past few years, UNLIREC has been engaging in research on this subject. In 2011, for instance, the working document entitled ‘Preventing Firearms Proliferation and Armed Violence in Latin American and Caribbean Schools’ (Preveniando la Proliferación de Armas de Fuego y la Violencia Armada en Centros Educativos en América Latina y el Caribe) was published, and an initial study was carried out on this phenomenon. In this study, incidents occurring between the years 2000 and 2010 were recorded and analysed. As well, the limited responses by States in addressing this issue were also referenced.

Firearms use and possession in schools continue to pose a challenge to citizen security and to peaceful coexistence in school settings, causing some States to develop varying responses and initiatives to address this scourge.

In order to update the previous work carried out on the subject and contribute to putting this problem on the agenda of governments, educators, student leaders, and other interested actors (stakeholders); UNLIREC took on the task of preparing the present study. This consultation document constitutes an approach to the problem of firearms in schools with a view to understanding its nature, manifestations, causes, and impacts. Likewise, this publication highlights the responses and initiatives being implemented in some countries of the region so that they may serve as practical references in addressing the issue. It should prove particularly useful to States, school communities, and other actors involved in citizen security, arms control, and school violence prevention.

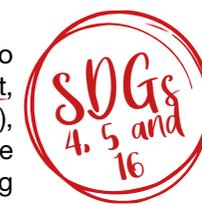
This study has been divided into three sections. The first explores the problem with particular attention paid to its characteristics, manifestations, as well as to the factors and causes that contribute to explaining the presence of firearms in schools. The second section presents a few of the initiatives being

implemented in recent years in some countries of the region to address the problem from different perspectives and dimensions. Finally, this study offers a series of recommendations to comprehensively address the challenge posed by firearms in school settings.

For the preparation of this study, primary and secondary sources from Latin American and Caribbean countries were reviewed, including official documentation, such as laws, public policies, programmes, and statistics. As a complement to this research, in 2018, UNLIREC sent out a questionnaire to States to obtain official information on the problem and the types of measures being undertaken and - in this way - identify the challenges, as well as the needs for assistance.

Additionally, a digital press media monitoring process was carried out between 2010 and the first quarter of 2019 in countries of the region to record and systematize cases in which firearms were either present, or being carried or used at school. Furthermore, specialized research and analyses were conducted on the violence affecting the school environment and how the presence of firearms in schools is being addressed.

These aforementioned efforts are aligned with the commitments of States to move towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, mainly with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)<sup>13</sup>. Some of the targets of these Goals include: ensure safe and non-violent learning environments (4.a); eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres (5.2); significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates (16.1); end all forms of violence against children (16.2), as well as reduce illicit arms flows (16.4). Similarly, the present study drawing attention to the problem of firearms in schools echoes United Nations Security Council Resolution 2419 (2018) on Maintenance of International Peace and Security, which urges States to “protect educational institutions as spaces free from all forms of violence”<sup>14</sup>.



These initiatives likewise respond to the mandate entrusted to UNLIREC in accordance with Article 41, Section II of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects “with the aim of fostering a dialogue and a culture of peace by promoting, where appropriate, education and public awareness programmes on the problems of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons involving all sectors of society.”<sup>15</sup>.

It should be noted that contributing to the prevention and reduction of armed violence in schools is aligned with the Agenda for Disarmament “Securing our Common Future” launched in 2018 by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. This Agenda promotes, under the pillar “Strengthening

partnerships for disarmament”, education for disarmament and involvement of youth in these matters through the establishment of a platform for participation. As part of this Agenda, youth are at the heart of disarmament education efforts<sup>16</sup>.

It is also important to highlight the role played by youth in the design and implementation of initiatives that have an impact on their environment. Their voice must be considered to move away from adult-centric perspectives. This UNLIREC initiative places C&A at the centre of the debate, in line with UNSC Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security<sup>17</sup>, which recognizes young people as agents of change and their active role in the promotion of a culture of peace. Likewise, the Youth 2030 Initiative, launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2018, seeks to empower young people, while ensuring that the UN’s work fully benefits from their insights and ideas<sup>18</sup>.



UNLIREC HOPES THIS STUDY SHEDS LIGHT ON AN UNDERSTUDIED PHENOMENON AND CONTRIBUTES NOT ONLY TO A GREATER AWARENESS ON THE MATTER, BUT ALSO TO STRENGTHENED DIALOGUE AND RESPONSES TO THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN ALL ITS ASPECTS, PARTICULARLY ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, AND YOUTH IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS.



Source: UNLIREC

NOTES

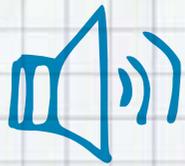
- <sup>1</sup> Franco, Marina and Villegas, Paulina (2017). Un estudiante mexicano dispara contra sus compañeros y una profesora en un colegio de Monterrey (A Mexican student shoots at his classmates and a teacher at a school in Monterrey). New York Times, 18/JAN/2017 <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2017/01/18/un-estudiante-mexicano-dispara-contra-sus-companeros-y-una-profesora-en-un-colegio-de-monterrey/>
- <sup>2</sup> UNO Santa Fe (2015). Alumno armado con revólver 32 en la escuela Echagüe (Student armed with a 32-calibre revolver at the Echagüe School). 23/APR/2015 <https://www.unosantafe.com.ar/policiales/alumno-armado-revolver-32-la-escuela-echague-n2061042.html>
- <sup>3</sup> La Prensa (2015). Encuentran arma en una escuela de sector de Bijao (A firearm was found at a school in the Bijao sector). La Prensa, 01/SEP/2015 <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/875176-410/encuentran-arma-en-una-escuela-del-sector-de-bijao>
- <sup>4</sup> Diario República (2015). Advierten ingreso de armas a escuelas de Caracas (Warning of the entry of firearms to schools in Caracas). Diario La República, 22/FEB/2015. <https://www.diariorepublica.com/nacionales/advierten-ingreso-de-armas-a-escuelas-de-caracas#>
- <sup>5</sup> Trucco, D. and Inostroza, P. (2017). Las violencias en el espacio escolar (Violence in the school space). ECLAC-UNICEF. United Nations.
- <sup>6</sup> UNICEF defines bullying as: a specific form of continued peer-to-peer school violence, in which one or more aggressors have greater power and intentionality to cause pain with violence subjected to a school/institution partner (victim) who is weaker; it comprises all types of violent acts (verbal, physical, social, psychological or through new technologies, physical, against objects, social and psychological) and includes concepts such as harassment, intimidation, abuse and aggression. See: UNICEF (2015). Una mirada en profundidad al acoso escolar en el Ecuador. Violencia entre pares en el sistema educativo (An in-depth look at bullying in Ecuador. Peer violence in the education system). Quito: UNICEF.
- <sup>7</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019, Global Study on Homicide. Understanding Homicide, Viena: ONODC. <<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/global-study-on-homicide.html>>
- <sup>8</sup> Small Arms Survey, 2015, Small Arms Survey: Every Body Counts, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 27. [http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/GBAV3/GBAV3\\_Ch2\\_pp49-86.pdf](http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/GBAV3/GBAV3_Ch2_pp49-86.pdf).
- <sup>9</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the impacts of firearms on young people, as well as to know about a number of initiatives to control firearms in such a manner addressing the specific rights, needs, and capacities of children, adolescents, and youths, see Module 06.20 of the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) concerning Children, adolescents, youth and small arms and light weapons. <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/MOSAIC-06.20-2018SV1.0.pdf>
- <sup>10</sup> Armed violence means “the intentional use of illegitimate force (real or in the form of a threat) with weapons or explosives against a person, group, community or State, that threatens the safety of people and/or the sustainable development.” See: Secretariat of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (2008). Global Burden of Armed Violence. Geneva, pp. 2. <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/Global-Burden-of-Armed-Violence-full-report.pdf>
- <sup>11</sup> UNODC (2019): Global Study on Homicide.
- <sup>12</sup> Violência na escola (School Violence): América Latina e Caribe (Violence in schools: UNESCO, 2003; Clima, conflictos y violencia en la escuela (Climate, conflict and violence in schools), Buenos Aires: UNICEF/FLACSO, 2011; Puglisi, B. La escuela como escenarios en los que se producen y reproducen violencias contra niños, niñas y adolescentes (Schools as scenarios in which violence against children and adolescents occurs repeatedly), Caracas: Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales - ILDIS (Latin American Institute of Social Research), 2012; Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Combatiendo la violencia en las escuelas: Una perspectiva global (Tackling violence in schools: A global perspective), New York: UNICEF, 2007; Poner fin a la violencia en la escuela: Guía para los docentes (Stopping violence in schools: a guide for teachers), Paris: UNESCO, 2009; Eljach, S; Violencia escolar en América Latina y el Caribe. Superficie y fondo (School violence in Latin America and the Caribbean. Surface and bottom), City of Panama: Plan Internacional/UNICEF, 2011.
- <sup>13</sup> For more information on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, see: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/development-agenda/>
- <sup>14</sup> Available at: [https://undocs.org/es/S/RES/2419\(2018\)](https://undocs.org/es/S/RES/2419(2018))
- <sup>15</sup> Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, 2001. Available at: [http://www.poa-iss.org/RevCon2/Documents/Documents/PoA\\_Spanish.pdf](http://www.poa-iss.org/RevCon2/Documents/Documents/PoA_Spanish.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> For more information on the Disarmament Agenda, visit <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/es/>
- <sup>17</sup> Available at: [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2250\(2015\)&referer=/english/&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2250(2015)&referer=/english/&Lang=E)
- <sup>18</sup> Available at: <<https://news.un.org/es/story/2018/09/1442212>>



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# CHAPTER **TWO** *Regional Context*





In recent decades, both public opinion and specialized studies on school violence have identified the presence and use of firearms as a risk factor, which exacerbate violence and coexistence problems at school. In fact, in some countries of the region, the media have reported more frequently on cases relating to firearms detection, possession or use at school. Based on the news and statistics analysed for this study, UNLIREC was able to better understand the nuances and variations of a phenomenon that has been present in Latin America and the Caribbean for several years now.

While information is limited, attention has been paid to the presence and use of firearms in schools in some countries of the region as part of a set of indicators and variables that are monitored and analysed to obtain information on school climate and violence affecting school environments.

### Argentina

In Argentina, a statistical survey, carried out in 2007, by the Observatory of School Violence, found that 5.8% of the students surveyed indicated they had seen a firearm at school, whereas 13% admitted to having carried a firearm or white weapons to school at some point<sup>1</sup>. In 2009, a study - coordinated by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) - at the level of public and private secondary schools in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the Greater Buenos Aires area identified that, in 2019, 10.1% of students claimed to have known or heard that someone had brought a firearm to school, compared to 6.2% who claimed to have seen someone bring a firearm to school.<sup>2</sup>

In 2010, the survey - carried out by the Observatory of School Violence - showed that 1.6% of students in the first three grades of high school and 0.9% of students in the final two grades admitted to having brought a firearm to school, whereas 10.1% of students knew or heard of someone who had brought a firearm to school during that year<sup>3</sup> - In a 2014 survey, when secondary students were asked whether they had been threatened with a "firearm, such as a revolver or gun" during that year, 1.4% of students responded "regularly", 0.9% "occasionally", 0.7% "more than once throughout the year" and 96% indicated "never"<sup>4</sup>.

In addition, the Buenos Aires Provincial Bureau of Educational Management registered 50 incidents involving firearms in schools in during 2016, compared to 62 registered in 2017<sup>5</sup>.

### Brazil

In Brazil, the National School Performance Assessment (known as Prova) reported, in 2007, that 1,427 school principals throughout the country identified daily firearms possession by members of the school community<sup>6</sup>. By 2015, according to data collected annually by the Brazilian Public Security Forum (Forum Brasileiro de Seguranca Publica), it was estimated that 2.1% of students went to school with a firearm<sup>7</sup>. That same year, Prova Brazil registered 4,255 incidents involving students who went to school with a firearm, whereas, for 2017, the same study reported 4,504 cases of this type, representing a growth of 6.6% compared to 2015, and of 215% compared to 2007. In summary, firearms possession in schools in Brazil, according to Prova, increased more than three times in one decade. Another study - developed by FLACSO in 2015 in schools in some Brazilian states - revealed that 4.27% of students claimed to have brought a firearm to school<sup>8</sup>.

**Colombia** In 2016, a survey conducted by the Department of Education of Bogota (Colombia) identified that 6% of students reported having brought a firearm to school<sup>9</sup>.

### Chile

In Chile, in 2010, the National Bullying Survey identified that 13,217 students (6%) reported firearms attacks occurring in their schools in the last year<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, the National Survey on School Violence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Chile (2006, 2008) reported that the perception of aggressions in schools remained relatively high between 2005 and 2007. The survey also showed that more complex forms of violence, such as sexual violence, gun violence, attacks on property and constant threats or harassment increased from one year to the next<sup>11</sup>.

In the 2011 National Survey on Prevention, Aggression and Bullying, 4% of 8th grade students surveyed reported being victims of frequent firearms aggressions<sup>12</sup>. Similarly, by 2012, 4% of high school students indicated that they had suffered from firearm-related threats or aggressions<sup>13</sup>. By 2016, according to official information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Security of Chile, there were three complaints of firearm-related crimes in school settings<sup>14</sup>. In 2018, the Superintendence of Education revealed that 146 complaints involving the presence of white weapons and firearms in schools were registered<sup>15</sup>.

### Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, according to information from the Ministry of Education, between 2006 and 2017, 539 students brought a firearm to school<sup>16</sup>. In 2018, 15 cases of this nature were registered<sup>17</sup>.

### El Salvador

In El Salvador, the 2013 school surveys conducted by the Ministry of Health showed that 7.3% of students claimed to have brought a firearm to school<sup>18</sup>. The 2016 Observatory of the Ministry of Education showed that 5.73% of (subsidized) secondary schools were affected by students in possession of firearms<sup>19</sup>. By 2017, in the same survey, the percentage of schools affected by this situation dropped to 2.90%<sup>20</sup>.

### Honduras

In Honduras, in a study performed in 2017, 4.57% of students surveyed indicated that criminals and gang members are frequently present in their schools; 8.2% reported that gang members operate close to their schools; whereas 2.23% indicated that firearms are frequently brought to schools<sup>21</sup>. Additionally, 4% of the principals (of the 298 municipalities in the country) reported they had witnessed firearms entering their school on one or more occasions throughout the school year. The departments of Atlantida, Cortes, Islas de la Bahia, Comayagua, and El Paraiso stand out amongst the areas in which school principals witnessed firearms entering their schools on more than one occasion<sup>22</sup>.



Source: UNLIREC

## Mexico

In Mexico, between the years 2000 and 2015, at least 38 children were killed as a result of firearms in schools. This is equivalent to 0.48% of the 7,800 firearm-related child homicides registered in the same period<sup>23</sup>. It should be noted that 2010 was the year in which the highest number of student deaths was recorded. In that same year, 12 children died due to firearms in schools. In the state of Zacatecas, 29% of older high school students confirmed they had brought either a stabbing weapon or a firearm to the classroom at least once<sup>24</sup>.

## Peru

In Peru, according to official data from the Ministry of Education, between September 2013 and October 2019, 309 cases of school violence with some type of weapon were reported in public and private schools nationwide. Of these, 21 cases (7%) correspond to firearms in schools<sup>25</sup>.

## Venezuela

In Venezuela, a study carried out in 2012 by the Simon Bolivar University (Universidad Simon Bolivar) in public and private schools in Caracas, Miranda and Vargas, revealed that 5% of the institutions included in the study reported firearms possession at school. In 2014, the Somos Noticia Report recorded at least 10 students who were injured due to a firearm at school<sup>26</sup>. In 2015, news reports underlined at least seven fights between classmates involving at least three firearms and two white weapons<sup>27</sup>.

## Caribbean

A 2003 survey administered to children in schools in nine Caribbean countries showed that one fifth of male students brought firearms to school during the 30 days prior to the survey<sup>28</sup>.

Statistics and figures, such as those above, in addition to the news on incidents that report on presence and use of firearms in schools, indicate that we are facing an increasingly recurrent phenomenon in some countries of the region. Despite the fact that the lack of information and analysis on this subject make it difficult to identify its true magnitude, characteristics and repercussions, it is impossible to ignore its more visible effects in terms of safety and public health (injuries and deaths). Additionally, the psychosocial effect generated by the mere presence of firearms, especially when armed violence is recorded in schools, must be considered. The presence of firearms in schools has a direct impact on the ability to guarantee the right and access to education by children, adolescents, and youth in the region by hindering their development in environments that are free from fear and violence.

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CHAPTER

# THREE

*An approach to the  
Phenomenon of  
Firearms in Schools in  
the Region*

# 3.1

## METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

UNLIREC documented 122 cases of firearms in schools in Latin America and the Caribbean that were reported in on-line accessible media over a period of nine years (from June 2010 to July 2019)<sup>1</sup>. It should be clarified that only news that explicitly covered incidents occurring inside the school were included in the monitoring process. News about students in possession of firearms outside the school, as well as cases of armed violence reported outside or in near proximity to the school was not included. The study only considered actual cases of firearms being brought to schools and omitted cases of reported threats to do so made by students on social media, for example.



THE PRESENT ANALYSIS FOCUSED ON NEWS PIECES CONTAINING INFORMATION ON FIREARMS DETECTION, POSSESSION AND USE AT SCHOOL. BASED ON THE INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM THE CASES ANALYSED, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE FIREARMS WERE LOADED WHEN STUDENTS ENTERED THE SCHOOL. EXCEPT FOR CASES IN WHICH SHOTS (ACCIDENTAL OR INTENTIONAL) WERE REPORTED, IT WAS LIKEWISE NOT POSSIBLE TO DEDUCE THE PRESENCE OF AMMUNITION INSIDE OR CLOSE TO THE FIREARM, UNLESS THE ARTICLE EXPLICITLY MENTIONED IT.



News on the possession of blank guns, pellet guns, compressed air guns, replica firearms, toy guns, and white weapons by students was not taken into account in this study given that none of the aforementioned devices or items fall within the definition of a “firearm”<sup>2</sup>. The control regimes of these devices (blank guns, replica guns, etc.), the actual impact of their use and the criminal responsibility of those who possess them are completely different in relation to firearms and, therefore, were not included in this study.

The object of this analysis was therefore firearms and ammunition since its use or threat of use falls within the definition of armed violence. Neither the news on Molotov nor explosive bombs inside schools were included in the monitoring in order to maintain methodological rigor when categorizing the reported cases.



In efforts to approach the subject of firearms in schools and contribute to a greater understanding of the phenomenon, a general characterisation of how it has been manifested in some countries in the region is presented below. Due to the lack of official records on the matter and that what little is known derives mainly from media coverage of some specific events over the last few years, this section aims to present a general overview of the cases of weapons in schools in the region. Consequently, UNLIREC carried out media monitoring to collect and systematize news about incidents related to the presence and use of firearms in schools in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

In addition, responses to the presence of explosives in schools are of a different nature and constitute very unusual cases. However, incidents with these types of military elements were analysed only when firearms were also involved.

Finally, cases of stray bullets<sup>3</sup> that injured or killed students, teachers, or employees in or near schools were not considered in the present analysis due to the impossibility of determining the origin of the shot.

It is important to point out that the results emerging from the analysis of the media monitoring do not represent any type of indicator or ranking on the situation of the countries in the region with respect to the phenomenon of firearms in schools. As well, the incidents compiled in this study do not represent the actual cases that may have occurred during the reporting period as not all cases are covered by digital media, thus there is a possible dark figure concerning these types of incidents. The data analysed in this study includes only those cases that were identified by UNLIREC in on-line accessible media during the period indicated.

In that regard, the characterisation presented below must be understood as an initial and very preliminary approach to how the presence of firearms in schools has been manifested in those countries where news on such incidents were found. This is due to the limitations inherent in information that arises when performing this type of media monitoring.

This study, in and of itself, does not generate the data necessary to determine the full extent of the problem. A study of such scope would require an extensive analysis and a triangulation of national data provided by the police, school authorities, forensic and public health agencies, including testimonies of victims and witnesses. While these cases were collected ad hoc as part of this research, their aggregate suggests the need to analyse and respond to the presence of firearms in schools.

Below are the most relevant results produced by the analysis of media monitoring conducted by UNLIREC.

## 3.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

According to media monitoring, a total of 122 firearms incidents in schools were identified in different countries in the region between June 2010 and July 2019. It should be noted that, in most Latin American countries, there was at least one type of incident related to the presence and use of firearms in schools<sup>4</sup>. In the case of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries<sup>5</sup>, firearms incidents in schools were identified in only four of the 15 countries that make up this sub-regional organization.

As shown in Map 1, the highest number of incidents were found in Argentina (30), Mexico (28) and Brazil (13), which account for approximately 60% of the total number of reported incidents. Peru, with eight incidents, followed by Guatemala, Panama, and Venezuela, with five incidents, represent countries with an intermediate number of incidents. Whereas, Honduras and Costa Rica, with four incidents, Chile, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic, with three incidents, Belize, Colombia, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, with two incidents, and, finally, the Bahamas, Jamaica and Uruguay, with only one incident, represent countries with lower number of incidents.

It is believed that those countries with the highest number of inhabitants tend to reflect a greater number of cases of firearms in schools in their national media. It is also possible that levels of urbanization, connectivity and existence of intermediate cities entail a greater online media presence at the local level. In general, the number of inhabitants per country, the existence of online media and the interest of journalism in reporting such cases constitute factors that can help explain the number of cases reported in Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil.



Source: UNLIREC



MAP 1. NUMBER OF FIREARM INCIDENTS INSIDE SCHOOLS, BY COUNTRY (2010-2019)



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

CHART 1. NUMBER OF RECORDED INCIDENTS, BY TYPE (2010-2019)



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

### 3.2.1 TYPES OF INCIDENTS

The incidents documented according to media monitoring were classified and grouped into the following categories:

TABLE 1. MAIN CATEGORIES OF INCIDENTS DOCUMENTED DURING PRESS MONITORING

<p><b>Detection</b> of firearms/ammunition</p>		<p>Situation in which firearms (and ammunition) are found within an educational establishment without their ownership being attributed to a specific individual. For instance, in a washroom, yard or classroom.</p>
<p><b>Possession</b> of firearms/ammunition</p>		<p>Situation in which a student carries a firearm inside the school or the firearm is found inside their belongings (backpack, locker, or on their body).</p>
<p><b>Use</b> of firearms</p>		<p>Refers to those incidents in which shots were reported inside schools, as well as in which firearms were used to threaten, intimidate or steal.</p>

Source: UNLIREC

Based on the above, seven incidents (6%) of detecting firearms inside schools, 64 incidents (52%) of firearms possession inside schools, and 51 incidents (44%) of firearms use were found in the 122 reported incidents. As can be seen, 95% of the reported incidents correspond to cases of firearms possession and use:

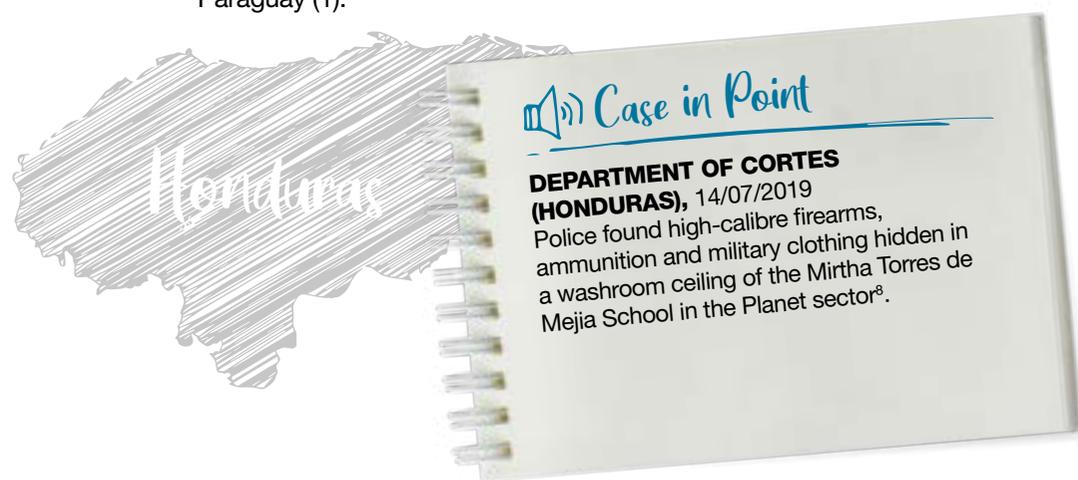
The number of incidents that have been reported in the region may be considered relatively low when compared to countries, such as the United States, where at least 405 incidents of armed violence in schools were recorded between 2013 and 2018<sup>6</sup>. However, there has been an increase in these types of incidents in the region over the past few years. In fact, when compared to the first monitoring exercise carried out by UNLIREC during the first decade of the 21st century, it was reported that the number of news on this type of incident had doubled. It is important to take into account the restrictions inherent in this type of analysis.

In 2011, UNLIREC documented 51 incidents reported between 2000 and 2010 in some countries in the region involving students with firearms in schools and acts of armed violence within them<sup>7</sup>. This quantitative variation could be

largely determined by the ease with which any incident of this type is rapidly made viral on social networks. It is also possible to detect not only an increase in the number of this type of actions, but also changes at a qualitative level concerning the manner in which this phenomenon has been consistently manifested in recent years. Below is a brief characterisation of the types of incidents found:

 **Firearms detection in schools**

Seven incidents (5% of the total incidents) of firearms detection were identified in schools in the monitoring process. In general, these types of cases are characterized by firearms that were hidden or kept in schools. In addition to the aforementioned case in Honduras, incidents of this kind were recorded in Argentina (1), Bahamas (1), Costa Rica (1), Guatemala (1), Mexico (1), and Paraguay (1).

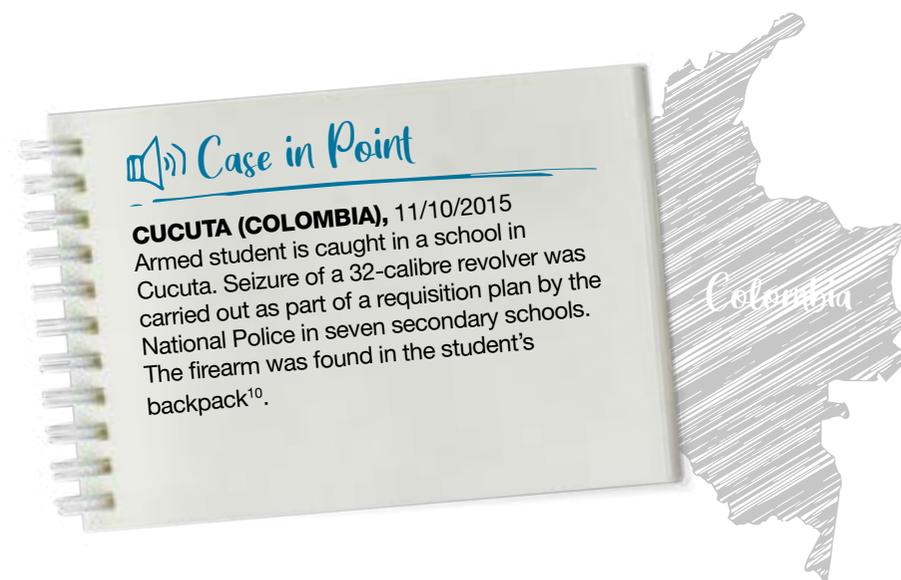


In some of these cases, the authorities not only found firearms and ammunition, but also other illegal items, as recorded in September 2017 in a school in Mendoza (Argentina), whereby a bag containing 40 packets of marijuana, a bulletproof vest, a serviceable disassembled shotgun and two 9-mm gun magazines were found behind a water cistern<sup>9</sup>.

This suggests that this type of incident may involve firearms being brought to and left somewhere in the school by students, as well as firearms and other items being brought to school by personnel or by people outside the school. In the latter case, the vulnerability of some schools into which firearms and other types of warlike items can be brought becomes evident.

 **Firearms possession**

The media monitoring performed showed that these are the types of incidents most frequently reported by the media. In total, 64 incidents of students possessing/carrying firearms inside schools were accounted for, which represents a little more than half of the total documented incidents (52%).



Countries in which such incidents were reported include: Argentina (19), Mexico (11), Brazil (6), Peru (5), Dominican Republic (3), Belize (2), Colombia (2), Ecuador (2), Guatemala (2), Panama (2), Trinidad and Tobago (2), Venezuela (2), whereas Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica, Paraguay, and Uruguay reported only one case.

In general, this type of incident is characterized by students who were caught by their teachers, classmates or school personnel in possession of a firearm among their belongings, mainly inside their backpacks. However, some cases of students carrying firearms tight to their waist were also recorded.

It is worth mentioning that a considerable part of these incidents come to light as a result of claims being made by other students who choose to alert their teachers. In other cases, these incidents come to light due to routine school inspections. In 18 of the 64 registered incidents, that is to say, almost 30% involves students who, in addition to firearms possession, were also in possession of ammunition or magazines, which could serve as a warning of the student's possible intention to use the firearm.

 **Firearms use**

While the mere presence of a firearm at school generates shock and panic, these emotional states are exacerbated when it comes to cases in which firearms are used, that is, when they are fired. In total, 51 incidents involving the use of firearms were identified, representing 44% of the total cases analysed in the monitoring process. At least one shot was reported in 41 incidents of the total cases categorized as "use of firearms." In all other incidents (10), firearms were used to threaten and intimidate.



**MAP 2. COUNTRIES THAT RECORDED INCIDENTS OF CARRYING OF FIREARMS IN SCHOOLS**

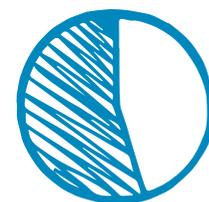


Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

Incidents involving the use of firearms were grouped and classified as follows:

- a. incidents with **intentional targeted shots**, that is, those in which shots were targeted at an individual or group of people;
- b. incidents with **intentional random shots**, that is, those in which shots were made intentionally, but without a defined target;
- c. incidents with **combined shots**, that is, those characterized by intentional shots, both targeted and random, as well as self-inflicted shots;
- d. incidents with **self-inflicted shots**, that is, those in which the carriers of firearms shot themselves;
- e. incidents with **accidental shots** reported due to the handling of the firearm; and
- f. **threats with firearms**, situations in which students used the firearm inside the school to threaten classmates without firing.

It was found that, among the 41 incidents involving shots being fired, 13 (31%) cases were intentional targeted shots, 11 (27%) were accidental shots, six (15%) were a combination of intentional (both targeted and random) shots and self-inflicted shots, five (12%) were intentional random shots, two (5%) were self-inflicted shots, and two (5%) were intentional (both targeted and random) shots. Concerning two incidents (5%), the news did not provide any type of reference that would allow for their categorization.

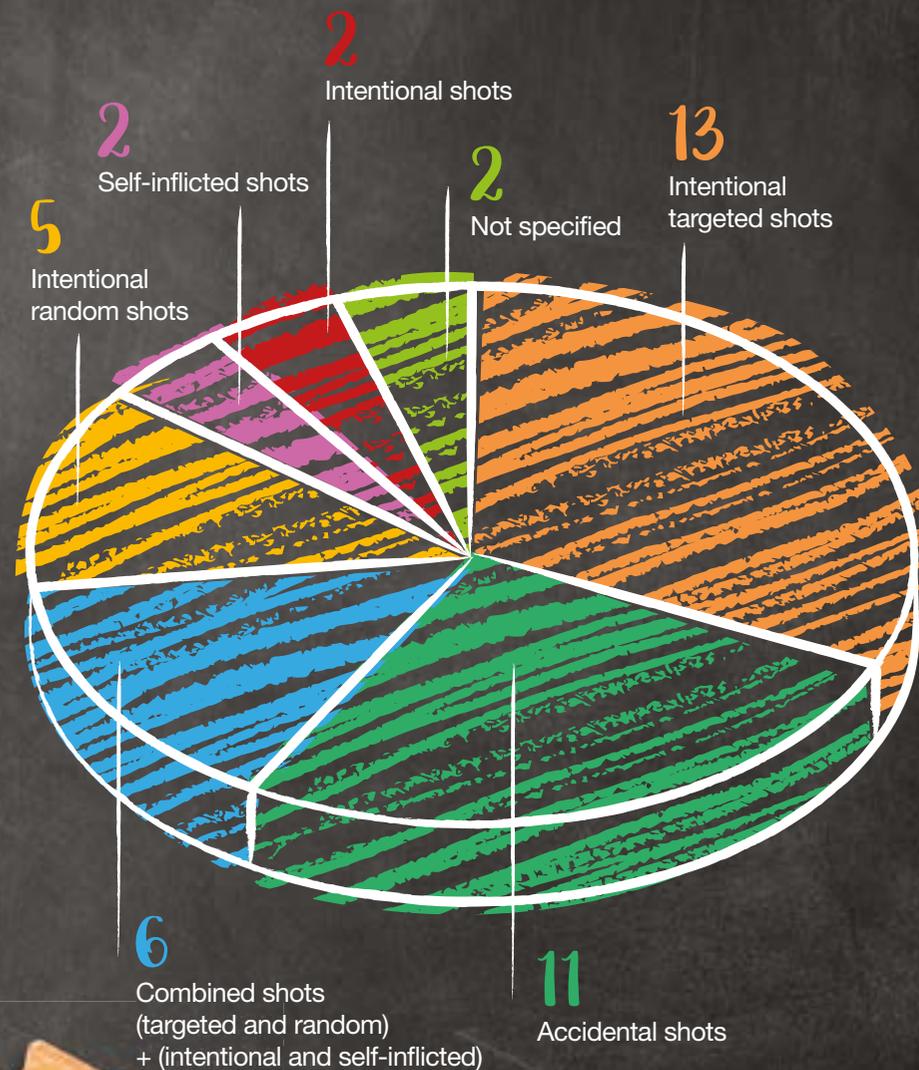


THIS CATEGORIZATION SHOWS THAT 56% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING SHOTS FIRED WERE INTENDED TO HARM SPECIFIC PEOPLE OR ONESELF. LIKEWISE, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO HIGHLIGHT THAT 27% OF THE INCIDENTS CORRESPOND TO ACCIDENTAL SHOTS BEING FIRED.



Source: UNLIREC

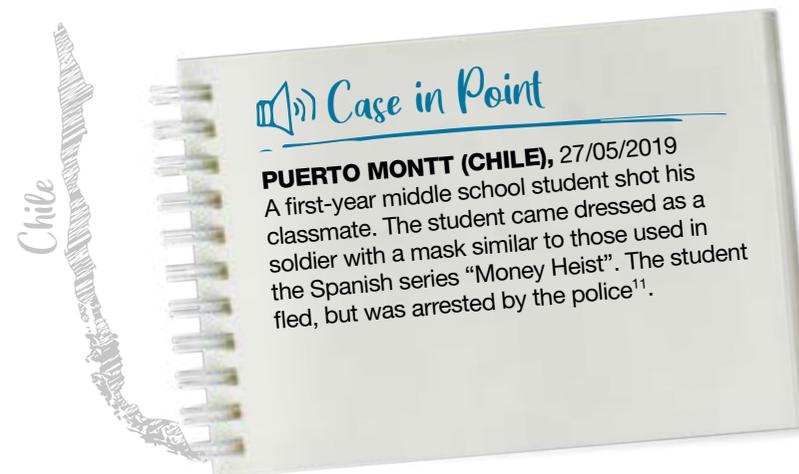
**CHART 2. NUMBER OF INCIDENTS WITH SHOTS INSIDE SCHOOLS, BY TYPE OF SHOOTING (2010-2019)**



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

**a) Intentional Targeted Shots**

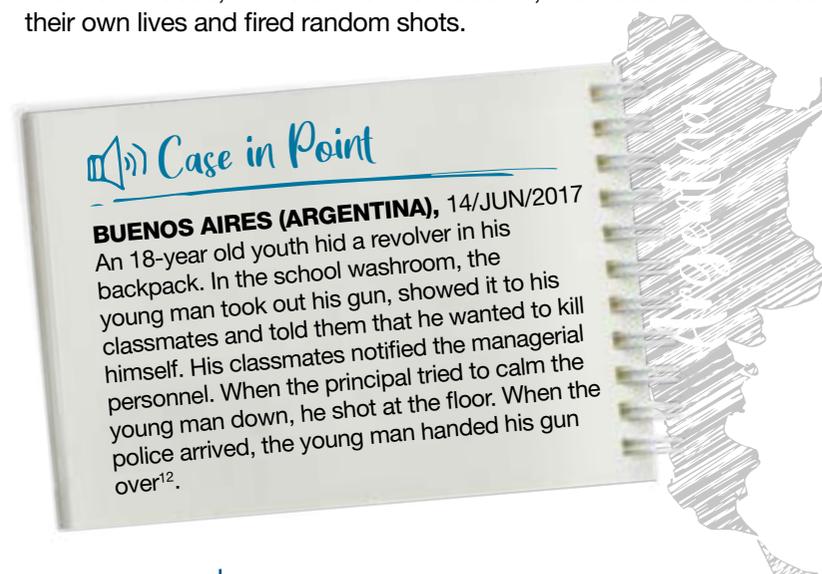
In these cases, the shots had a clear purpose and the armed attack was premeditated. In total, 13 incidents of this type were registered, which occurred in Mexico (7), Honduras (2), Brazil (2), Guatemala (1), and Chile (1). Moreover, the targets of the shots varied; in some cases, the target was a particular person, and in others, the shots were targeted at a group of people. The targets of these shots were other students and, in some cases, teachers.



**b) Intentional Random Shots**

In these cases, the shots were not targeted at a particular person. In some of the recorded incidents, students shot at the floor, at objects, at walls or fired shots into the air. In total, there were five incidents of this kind, of which two were reported in Argentina, and one, per country in Mexico, Panama and Venezuela.

In these cases, there is also evidence of the desire of armed students to attract attention. Indeed, in two of the five incidents, the students threatened to take their own lives and fired random shots.



**c) Combined Shots: (Targeted and Random) + (Intentional and Self-Inflicted)**

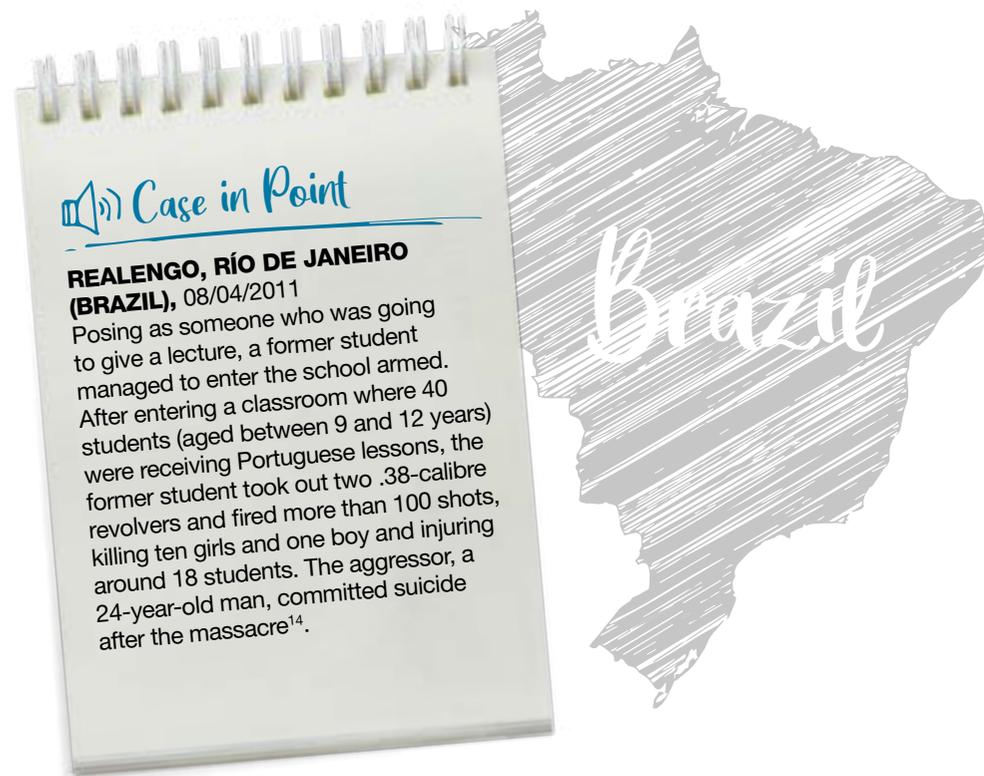
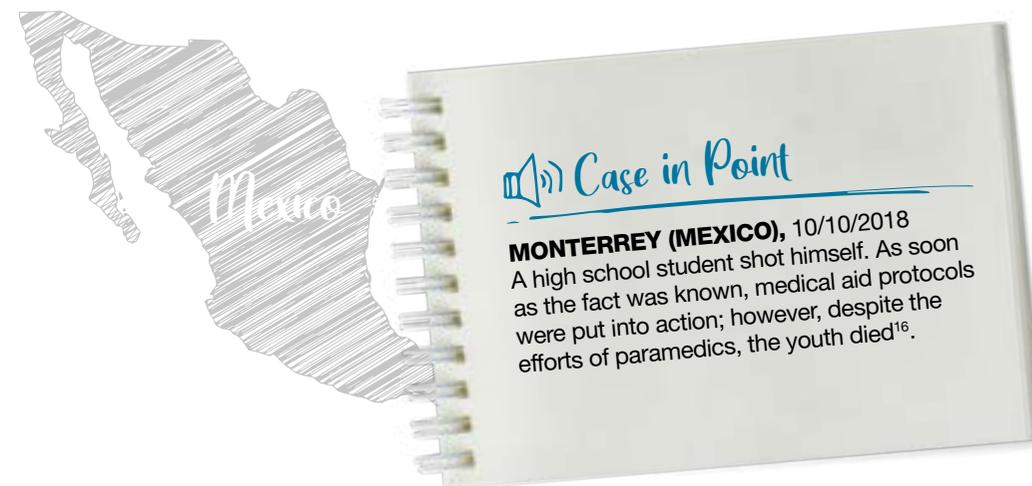
In at least 20% of the cases involving shots being fired, there was more than one type fired in the same incident. In the sub-set of such cases, two (5%) incidents with intentional shots, both targeted and random, were identified. In general, the students involved in these occurrences fired random shots after shooting their victims. One of these cases took place at a school in El Talar (Argentina), where a student, after shooting his classmate, fired three random shots, of which “one hit a wall, another an access staircase and the last one, the Supervisor’s Office”<sup>13</sup>. A similar incident was also reported in a school in Parana (Brazil).

In addition, six (15%) incidents characterized by a combination of intentional (targeted/random) and self-inflicted shots were identified of which four took place in Brazil, one in Mexico and one in Costa Rica. Four (4) of these incidents took place in Brazil, (1) in Mexico, and (1) in Costa Rica.

The same sequence was followed in almost all of these incidents: first, the perpetrators enter the schools armed; subsequently, they shoot indiscriminately against their victims and/or at random; finally, they shoot themselves. Within this group of incidents are found some of the most emblematic cases and those which have caused a great deal of commotion among the public, such as the shootings at schools in Brazil and Mexico in recent years.

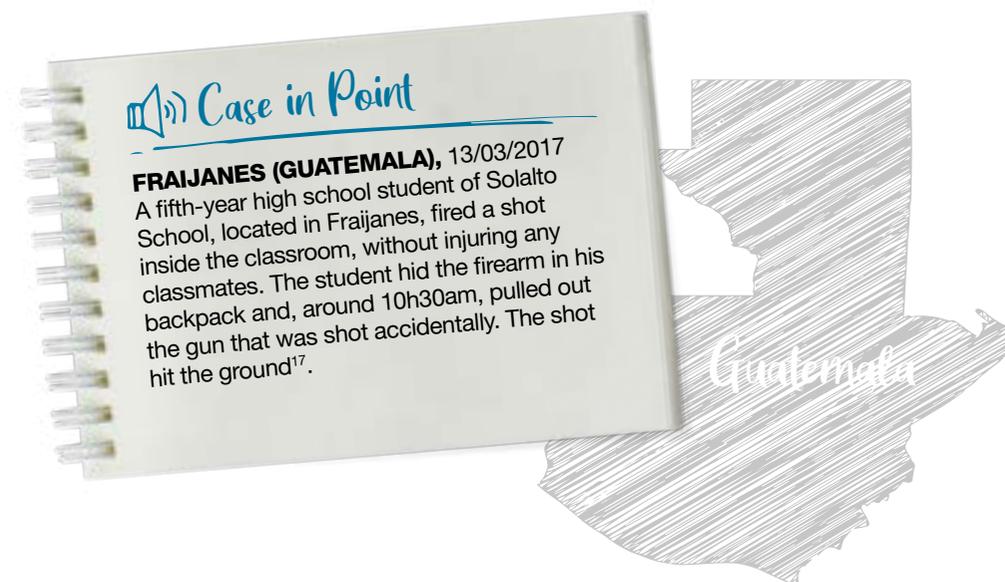
**d) Self-Inflicted Shots**

Within this category, two (5%) incidents involving students going to school armed without any intention of hurting or killing anyone, but rather with the objective of taking their own lives, were documented. The incidents occurred at a school in La Plata (Argentina)<sup>15</sup> in 2017 and at a high school in Monterrey (Mexico) in 2018 and, in both cases, 15-year-old adolescents committed suicide inside the educational establishments by a gunshot to their heads.



**e) Accidental Shots**

The majority of these accidental shots occurred during the handling of the firearm while the students were showing it, playing with it or taking it out of their backpacks. In total, there were 11 (27%) incidents of this nature, which took place in schools in Mexico (3), Argentina (2), Peru (2), as well as one incident each in Guatemala, Panama, Venezuela and Ecuador.



**f) Threats with Firearms**

In some incidents, although no shots were fired, firearms appeared inside schools for other purposes, such as to threaten, intimidate, and even to steal. There were 10 incidents of this nature reported, of which three took place in Mexico; two, in Argentina; and one, each in Peru, Panama, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Chile.



**3.2.2 SCHOOL SYSTEM MODALITIES**

With regard to the type of school systems in place where firearm incidents were reported, it was found that 80 (66%) incidents took place in public schools, whereas 19 (15%) occurred in private schools. The remaining 23 (19%) were inconclusive due to a lack of information. Based on this data, it is observed that the vast majority of incidents occurred in public schools.

The trend continues if this aspect is analysed at the national level, for instance, according to the data obtained, public schools in Argentina record a few percentage points above the average. Of the total reported cases, 73.33% occur in public schools; 13.33%, in private schools; whereas in 13.33% of the cases, this information is unknown.

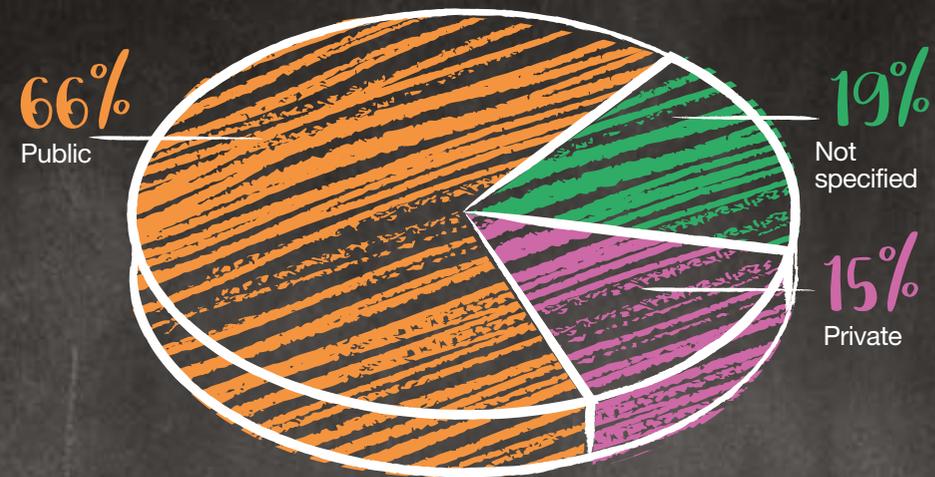
The trend is likewise similar when analysing the cases according to the type of incident. For detecting, possessing and using firearms, public schools account for 85%, 60% and 71% of incidents, respectively.

Source: UNVMC



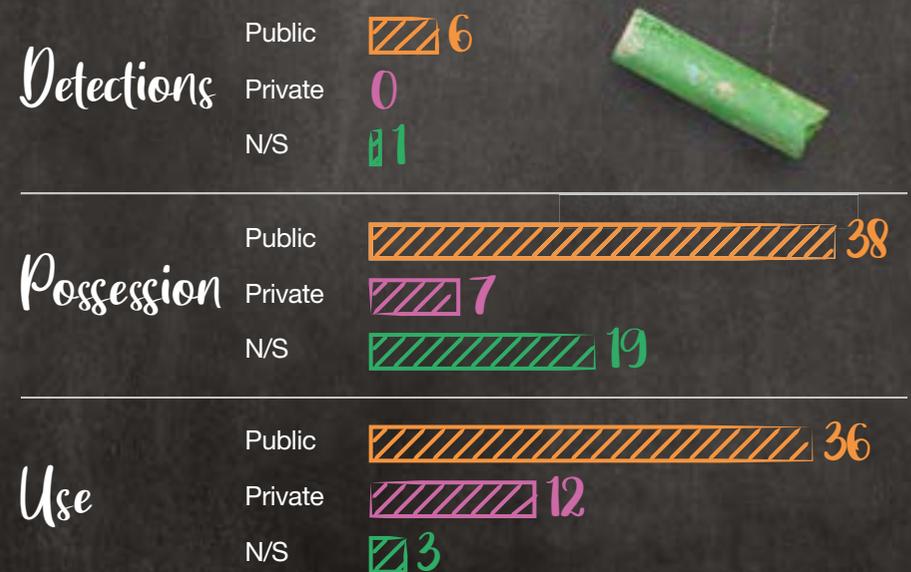
42 | 4

Chart 3. Percentage of firearm incidents inside schools, by school system modality (2010-2019)



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

Chart 4. Total firearm incidents inside schools, by type and by school system modality (2010-2019)



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

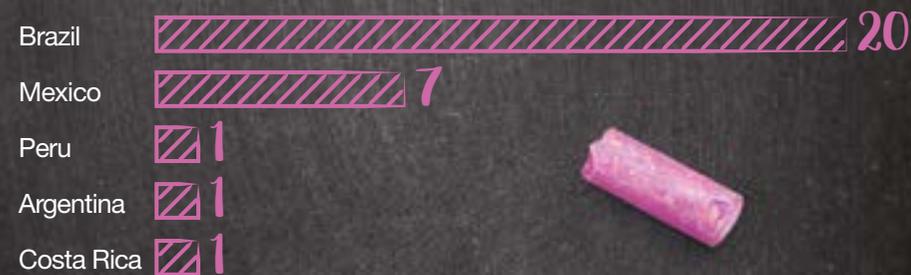


**CHART 5. NUMBER OF PERSONS INJURED BY FIREARMS INSIDE SCHOOLS, BY COUNTRY (2010-2019)**



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

**CHART 6. NUMBER OF STUDENTS KILLED BY FIREARMS INSIDE SCHOOLS, BY COUNTRY (2010-2019)**



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

**3.2.3 DIRECT IMPACTS**

Without a doubt, one of the most visible impacts of the presence and use of firearms in schools are the victims of these incidents. Considering the total number of incidents recorded in the monitoring process, there were 62 injuries and 36 deaths, a total of 98 direct victims of armed violence inside schools in the region.

With respect to the number of injured persons included in the media monitoring, Brazil and Mexico appear at the top with 37 and 10 injured persons, respectively, representing 75% of the total number of injured persons reported. They are followed by Argentina (4), Guatemala (3), Peru (2), and Honduras (2), while Venezuela, Panama, Ecuador and Costa Rica each reported one injured person as a result of the firearm incident.

Almost 95% of the injured persons were students. There were also three injured teachers and one injured principal in incidents reported at schools in Mexico and Brazil.

While a large proportion of news does not indicate the sex or age of the students who were injured, news including this information mostly report male students being injured.

It should be noted that the 62 injured persons recorded in the monitoring exercise correspond to 27 (of the 41) incidents in which shots were fired; that is to say that at least one injured person was reported in 65% of those incidents. A little more than half of these cases were incidents involving intentional targeted shots, as well as combined shots (targeted and self-inflicted shots). On the other hand, 30% of the total injured persons were the result of accidental shots.



THE MEDIA MONITORING RECORDED A TOTAL OF 36 CASUALTIES, 30 OF WHOM WERE STUDENTS. FORMER STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL OF SCHOOLS ACCOUNT FOR THE REMAINING SIX PERSONS KILLED IN SOME COUNTRIES.

Brazil and Mexico appear at the top with 20 and seven dead students, respectively, representing the highest number of student deaths due to firearms inside schools, followed by Peru, Argentina and Costa Rica with one student killed in each country.



### 3.2.4 VICTIM PROFILE

With respect to the profile of the 30 dead students, 14 were male, representing 47% of the total cases, while 13 were female, representing 43% of the total cases involving deaths. As for the remaining 10% of the total cases, the news did not specify the sex of the victims.

Likewise, it was noted that the average age of the students killed was between 13 and 17 years. A teacher was also identified among the casualties. This incident was reported at a school in Olancho (Honduras), where the teacher was killed in the classroom - while teaching - by armed subjects who shot him in front of the class. In this incident, the son of the teacher (also a student) was present in the classroom where his father was injured<sup>19</sup>.

It should be noted that the 36 deaths recorded in the media monitoring correspond to 16 (of the 51) incidents in which the use of firearms inside schools was reported.



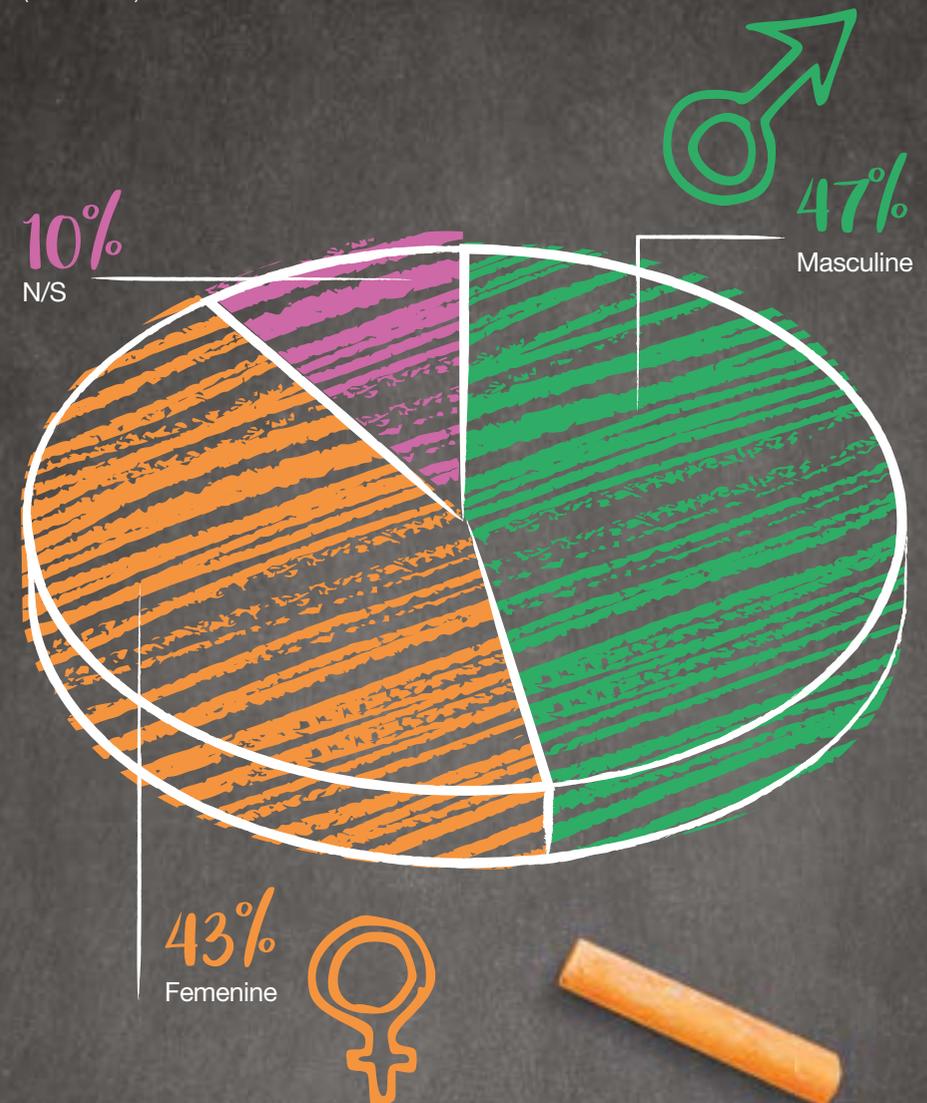
Source: UNLIREC

### 3.2.5 SHOOTINGS

According to Gun Violence Archive, a shooting is defined as an event in which at least four people are injured or killed (excluding the person who shoots) in a single incident. Accordingly, a school shooting would be such that takes place at the facilities of a primary or secondary school, or university<sup>20</sup>.

Based on this definition, we can identify at least four shootings (less than 5%) as part of the set of incidents analysed in the media monitoring. It is worth noting that these four incidents fit the definition of shooting due to both the number of recorded victims and the modus operandi. These incidents took

CHART 7. PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS KILLED BY FIREARMS INSIDE SCHOOLS, BY SEX (2010-2019)



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

place in Brazil and Mexico resulting in 37 injured persons, representing 60% of the total injured persons recorded, and in 24 casualties, representing 66% of the total deaths recorded in the monitoring process.

Without a doubt, the injured and killed are the most visible and serious effects of firearm-related violence in schools. These types of cases are the ones, which attract the most media attention. However, it is impossible to ignore other adverse impacts generated by this phenomenon in the school community, such as the indelible scars at a psychosocial level of those involved in this type of incident. According to experts, C&A and youth - directly or indirectly exposed to incidents involving firearms - can develop psychopathologies, with the most common being post-traumatic stress disorder<sup>21</sup>. This may have an impact on students' interest in attending school, which may then be reflected in their school performance.

While emotional aspects were not reviewed in the news that was analysed, shock and panic levels following firearm incidents in schools are highlighted in some cases. This indicates that, subsequently, the emotional dimension of children exposed to these situations must be duly addressed.



Shows of solidarity on the wall of the Professor Raul Brazil State School in Suzano (Sao Paulo) a few days after the tragedy | Source: americateve.com/Associated Press<sup>22</sup>

TABLE 2. SCHOOL SHOOTINGS RECORDED IN LATIN AMERICA (2010-2019)

Date	Location (Country)	News Headline	Victims
March, 2019	Suzano, Sao Paulo (Brazil)	Massacre in Brazil: school shooting leaves at least ten people dead	Injured: 17 Killed: 9 <sup>23</sup>
October, 2017	Goiania (Brazil)	Two dead and four wounded at a school shooting in Brazil	Injured: 4 Killed: 2
January, 2017	Monterrey, Nuevo Leon (Mexico)	A Mexican student shoots his classmates and a teacher at a school in Monterrey	Injured: 4 Killed: 1
April, 2011	Realengo, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	Massacre of 10 students at a school in Rio de Janeiro	Injured: 12 Killed: 12

Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

### 3.2.6 CARRIER PROFILE

With respect to the profile of students linked to incidents of firearms possession and use at school, it was found that the majority of students involved in such cases was male (97), as compared to (eight) female students of a total of 105 students.

Concerning the 97 male students, as shown in the chart below, it was found that 60% of these were between the ages of 13 and 18. It is worth mentioning that the students' age was not referenced in 20% of the news reporting on these incidents.

After analysing the age of male students based on the type of incident, it was found that students aged 15 to 17 were the most involved in cases of firearm possession. Similarly, students who used firearms (shots) were between 13 and 17 years of age.

In the case of the eight female students involved in these incidents, their age ranges from five to 16 years whereas, the majority were between the ages of 11 and 16. Six of them were involved in firearms possession, while two of them, in firearms use (shots inside schools). One of these incidents involved an 11-year-old female student<sup>24</sup> in Cadereyta (Mexico) who, after handling a gun, fired an accidental shot that caused the death of another 11-year-old student. The other incident was associated with the suicide attempt by a 15-year-old female student in La Plata (Argentina) who fired a self-inflicted head shot in front of her classmates and teacher<sup>25</sup>.



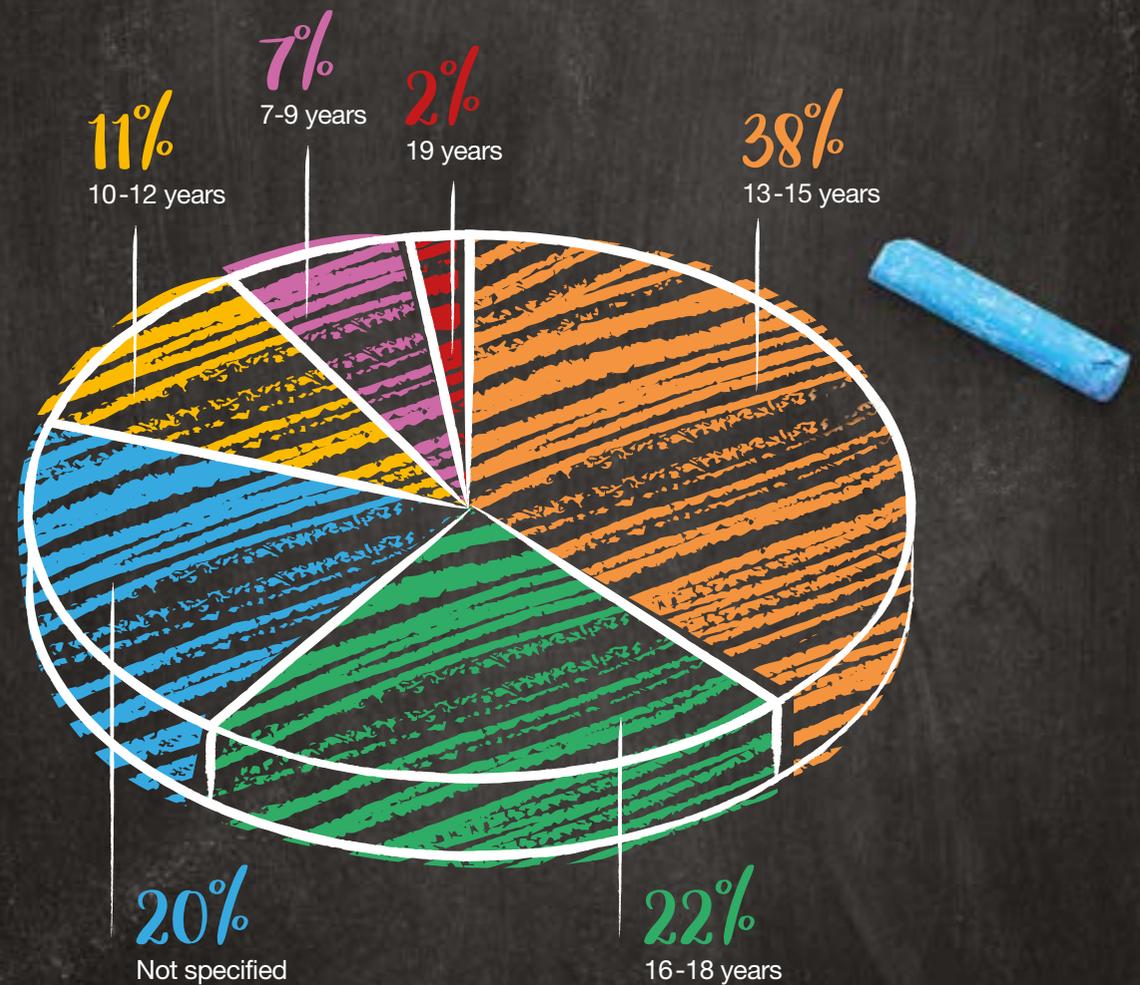
Source: UNLIREC

CHART 8. NUMBER OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN FIREARM INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS, BY SEX



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

CHART 9. AGE RANGE OF MALE STUDENTS INVOLVED IN FIREARM INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS (2010-2019)



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

Furthermore, incidents involving former students as firearm carriers and users were also identified. The cases of three former students aged 17, 24 and 25 years involved in two shootings in schools in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) are recorded as part of these incidents. These former students, besides being the perpetrators of the shootings inside the schools, also became victims after committing suicide upon perpetration of the incidents.

In other cases, outsiders, who entered the schools armed, but who had some connection with the victims, were identified. For instance, an incident reported in July 2011 at a school in Orotina (Costa Rica) involved a high school student who was shot dead by a 17-year-old adolescent who was not a student of that school<sup>26</sup>.

People from outside the schools and whose identity was unknown were also involved in some incidents. For example, a case reported in August 2015 at a school in Chiquimula (Guatemala) involved armed subjects who entered the school and shot three students<sup>27</sup>.

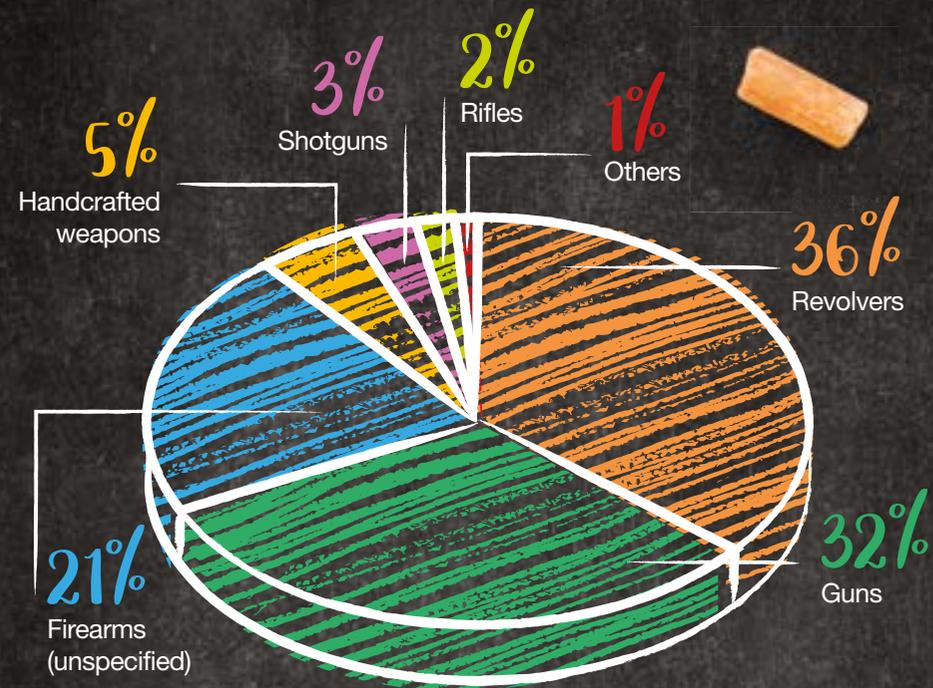
**3.2.7 TYPES OF FIREARMS**

Another aspect to be emphasised as a part of this characterization is the type of firearm involved in the incidents analysed in the media monitoring. As can be seen in the chart below, revolvers and guns were present in 36% and 32% of the cases, respectively, amounting in almost 70% - the vast majority - of the total incidents.

As can be seen, the news did not specify the type of firearm found/used in 21% of the incidents. Handcrafted firearms were reported in 5% of the incidents, whereas shotguns were reported in 3% and rifles in 2%. Finally, firearms such as “pen guns” - found in the possession of a student at a school in Cauca (Colombia)<sup>28</sup> - were reported under the ‘other’ category for the remaining 1% of incidents.

The type of firearms found or used in schools by students were mostly short-barrelled firearms, such as guns and revolvers, which - depending on the calibre and national regulations - may be considered for civilian use. Information on firearm calibres could only be extracted when this information was found in the news. With regard to revolvers, the most common calibres were .22, .32, .38 and .357. As for guns, the most common calibres were 9mm, .22, .25, .32, .40, .45, and 6.35 mm, among others.

**CHART 10. TYPES OF FIREARMS FOUND/USED INSIDE SCHOOLS (2010-2019)**



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

**CHART 11. MOST COMMON CALIBERS OF GUNS AND REVOLVERS**



It should be emphasized that .357 revolver and 9mm, .40 and .45 guns may be considered prohibited for civilian use, depending on the country, yet students had access to them, thus drawing attention to availability of illegal firearms. In incidents of firearms detection in schools, 16 GA shotguns and 7.62mm AK-47 rifles were identified. In the case reported at a school in Guerrero (Mexico), authorities found two AK-47 rifles of 7.62mm calibre, 25 magazines and 1,340 ammunition cartridges<sup>29</sup>.



IT IS ALARMING THAT TWO AK-47 RIFLES WERE FOUND INSIDE THE SCHOOL, SINCE THESE FIREARMS ARE USED EXCLUSIVELY BY ARMED FORCES, BUT ALSO BY ORGANIZED CRIME MEMBERS. THE NEWS DID NOT PROVIDE INFORMATION ON WHO LEFT THESE FIREARMS INSIDE THE SCHOOL OR WHETHER ANY STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT.



With regard to homemade firearms, the calibre of this type of firearm was reported in one news item only, namely the case of a student from a distance-learning secondary school (telesecundaria) in Mexico, who had a handcrafted .22-calibre submachine gun with a full magazine among his belongings<sup>30</sup>.

As a matter of fact, handcrafted firearms, such as those reported in the news, are illegal per se since they do not go through an industrial manufacturing process. The following questions therefore arise: Did students buy these firearms? Did they take them from their homes to their schools? Or, did students make them themselves? In the case of the pen gun, it is well known that this device can be purchased in compliance with a few restrictions on various websites and through social networks.

Calibres of firearms also provide information about whether they are authorized for civilian use, that is, whether they are permissible according to State regulations. Obviously, firearms in the hands of minors is prohibited. If firearms have been taken by the students from their homes to the school, assuming that the parents are the owners, then this analysis may not determine the legality of the firearm. Hence, the firearm in question would have to be checked against a valid licence for carrying or possession in the name of the parents or legal guardians of the minors. As might be expected, this information cannot be ascertained from the news alone.

However, in the case of calibres not suitable for civilian use in some countries (.357 revolver and 9mm, .40 and .45 guns), the analysis allows one to infer that either there were prohibited firearms in the students' home or that such firearms were acquired by the students from somewhere with easy access to illegal firearms.



It should be noted that the detection, possession and use not only of firearms, but also of other types of devices, such as knives, machetes and even explosives, were reported in some incidents. Such was the case with former students who perpetrated the shooting at a school in Suzano, Brazil, in March 2019. Molotov bombs, axes, a bow and arrows, in addition to revolvers, were brought to the school by these former students<sup>31</sup>. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, incidents with other types of warlike items or similar devices were analysed only when firearms were involved.

Ammunition was also reported in addition to firearms. Likewise, references to “firearms with magazines” or “loaded firearms” were made in at least 25 incidents. The amount of ammunition was not determined with certainty, given that the news did not provide specific information in this regard. In some cases, news items indicated that loaded firearms had at least one ammunition cartridge or were fully loaded.



Source: UNLIREC

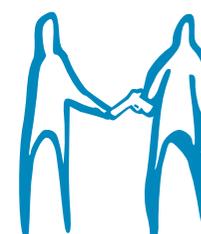
In some cases, the press reported on students who were caught in possession of firearms accompanied by loose ammunition, which ranged from one to a maximum of 20 cartridges. A case that caught the attention of the authorities was reported at a school in Matamoros (Tamaulipas, Mexico) in which a nine-year-old student was caught bringing ammunition to school and distributing it among his classmates<sup>32</sup>.

The cases analysed suggest that the ammunition reported on forms part of the firearms referenced in the news, especially in cases in which shots had been fired, since the type of ammunition must conform to the type and calibre of the firearm in order to fire a shot. In cases in which arms were misappropriated from homes, it is presumed that ammunition was also found. This circumstance sends out a warning on secure storage measures (firearms stored along with ammunition, loaded firearms or firearms with magazines).

As is the case with firearms, it is likewise not possible to determine the legality of ammunition. If it is assumed that ammunition could be taken from the home to school and that it belonged to the student's parents, the calibres should be known to determine their legality, but this information is not provided by the press releases analysed. Even if the calibres of cartridges were known, this information would also have to be checked against the calibres of firearms allegedly held by the parents, in order to determine the legality of the ammunition. Likewise, it would be necessary to analyse the permissible amounts of ammunition for civilian use and confirm how many - with licenses - were in the possession of the parents. In other words, the legality of ammunition is more difficult to determine than that of firearms.

There could also be cases in which the students acquired the ammunition separately from the firearms, but this information could not be obtained from the cases analysed.

### 3.2.8 ORIGIN OF FIREARMS



THE PRESENCE AND USE OF FIREARMS IN SCHOOLS CAN ALSO BE EXPLAINED THROUGH THEIR EASY ACCESS AND PROLIFERATION IN COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT THE REGION. THESE SCENARIOS INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT YOUTH ARE HIGHLY EXPOSED TO FIREARMS AND THAT - AT SOME POINT - THEY MAY COME INTO CONTACT WITH OR EVEN POSSESS THEM.



Based on the incidents analysed in this study, it was found that the origin of firearms is directly related to the students' homes in at least 25 cases<sup>33</sup>. In these cases, the firearms that the students took to school were owned by or belonged to a close family member of the student, such as parents or uncles.

There were even some incidents involving students who carried firearms obtained from their parents who were active members of the security forces. For instance, the .40-calibre gun that was fired by a 14-year-old youth at a school in Goiania (Brazil), leaving two dead and four injured, belonged to one of his parents who served as an officer in the Military Police<sup>34</sup>.

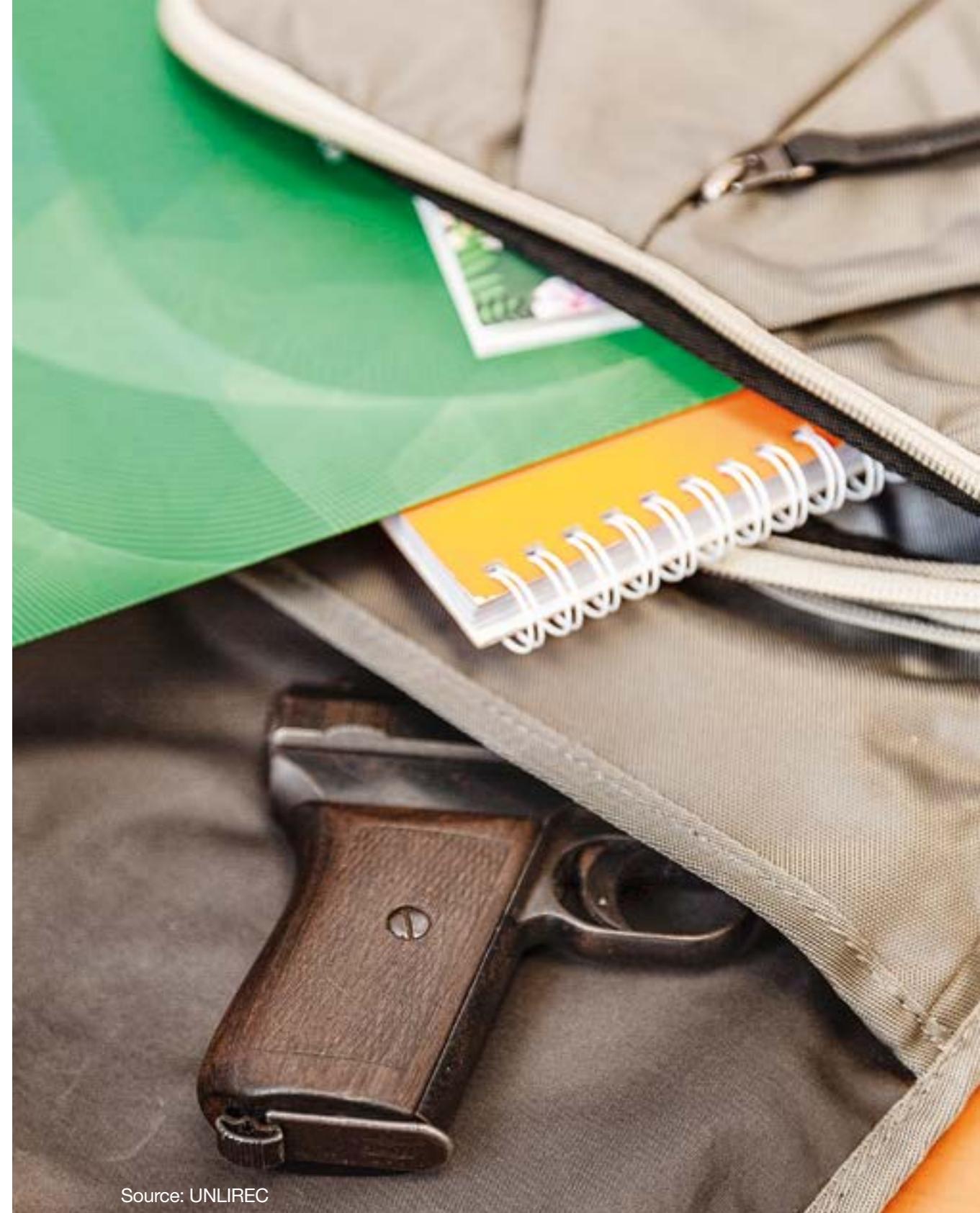
**Among the firearms found on the students were those reported as stolen.** An incident of this nature was recorded in June 2018 at a school in San Rafael, in Mendoza (Argentina), where an 8-year-old student was found with a 9mm gun among his belongings. Authorities were able to determine - through the serial number - that the firearm belonged to a police officer who had been robbed of his service firearm a few months previous by criminals<sup>35</sup>. It is assumed that this firearm appeared in the house of the child who ended up taking it with him to school.

A similar case was reported in Limon (Costa Rica) in which two students - aged 13 and 14 - were caught in possession of a 9mm gun, which belonged to a private security company that had not reported the firearm as lost or stolen<sup>36</sup>.

Another incident reflecting the easy access by students to firearms related to more complex crimes was reported in Hermosillo (Mexico) in which a nine-year-old student was caught in possession of a firearm belonging to his father. As a result, authorities decided to visit the student's home, where they found a variety of firearms of different types and calibres, magazines, ammunition, military uniforms, and armoured vehicles, among others<sup>37</sup>.

**In other cases, the origin of the firearm is associated with the local crime contexts and school dynamics.** For example, in one of the incidents analysed, it was found that a student had brought a firearm to school, which he had obtained on the black market or at drug selling points. This case was reported in November 2015 in a school in Caxias (Brazil) in which an 18-year-old student entered the school armed and fired several random shots, and then shot himself. According to the youth's statement to the police authorities, he had purchased the .32-calibre revolver he used in the incident at a place where drugs were sold<sup>38</sup>.

As indicated above, the cases in which the authorities found firearms and other warlike items inside schools reveal the vulnerability of school environments vis-à-vis the presence of organised crime groups that may consider schools as an extension of their territorial control and domain.



Source: UNLIREC

### 3.2.9 MOTIVATIONS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED FACTORS

Another interesting dimension to be analysed concerning the phenomenon of firearms in schools includes the reasons, motivations and other factors that help to answer the following questions: How does a firearm appear inside a school? Why would a student decide to bring a firearm to school? What motivates him/her? What is the reasoning behind it?

Based on the media monitoring conducted, it is possible to affirm that there is no single reason or single factor explaining the presence of firearms in schools. Rather, we are faced with a multi-faceted phenomenon that draws on both the dynamics of violence occurring in schools (fights, discussions, threats, bullying) and the characteristics of the settings in which they occur. **The proliferation and easy access of firearms, the presence of gangs and actors of organised crime, as well as the violence and insecurity at the community-level are only some of the factors that could contribute to students coming into contact with firearms at some point in their lives, whether as users, witnesses or perpetrators.**

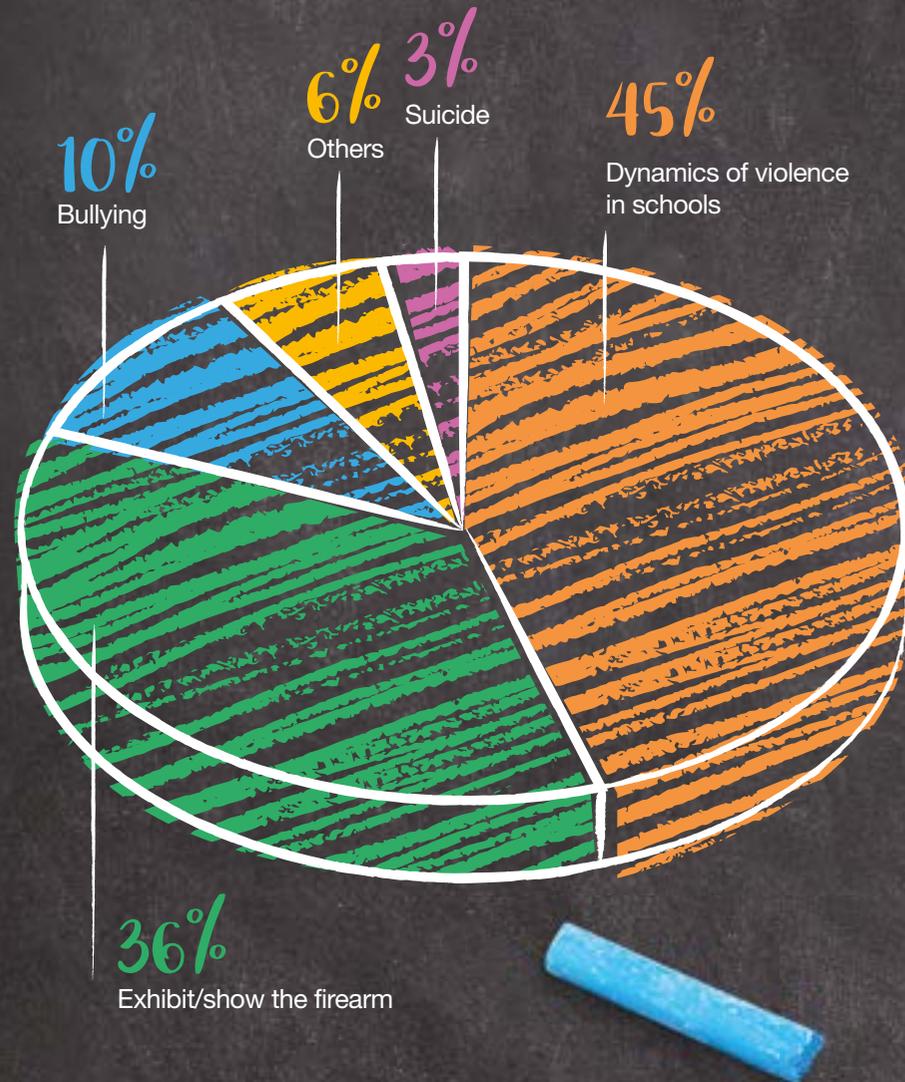


ANOTHER KEY FACTOR IS THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE THAT FIREARMS HAVE BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY. THE SYMBOLIC VALUE ASSOCIATED WITH FIREARMS, WHICH ARE SYNONYMOUS WITH POWER, RESPECT, STATUS, MASCULINITY AND AUTHORITY, HAS ALSO PERMEATED THE BELIEF SYSTEMS OF CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH WHO ADOPT CERTAIN IDEAS AND BELIEFS THAT EXPAND INTO SOCIALIZATION SPACES, SUCH AS SCHOOLS.

The aforementioned factors combined with the violent dynamics taking place in and around schools (community and family sphere) can facilitate the presence of firearms in these spaces at some point in time, as well as regrettable acts of armed violence within schools.

Based on the information obtained from 65 incidents<sup>39</sup> (a little more than half of the total) in which the news referred to the motives and reasons behind the incidents, it was found that 45% of these cases was related to fights and threats inside schools; 36% involved students who took the firearms to school to show and impress their peers; while 10% constituted a response to bullying. Apart from that, in 6% of cases, the motivation or reason for bringing a firearm to school was related to the student's personality and other factors associated with school context and dynamics, such as the presence and actions of gangs and students' links to them. Finally, in 3% of the cases analysed, students took a firearm to school to kill themselves with it.

CHART 12. MAIN CAUSES AND MOTIVATIONS BEHIND THE PRESENCE AND USE OF FIREARMS IN SCHOOLS (2010-2019)



Source: UNLIREC media monitoring survey

### **Violence in Schools and Firearms**

Based on the analysed cases with information on students' motivation to bring and use firearms in schools, 45% were related to the school violence dynamics. In some schools, the absence of a culture that focuses on dialogue makes firearms come across as a valid instrument for conflict resolution. In those contexts, firearms appeared and were used in the midst of quarrels, fights, discussions (or as a consequence of these) or with the purpose of intimidating or threatening students at the same school or at other schools<sup>40</sup>.

In these types of incidents, the cultural and social acceptance of firearms by students comes to light. Firearms are perceived as instruments of power, security, self-protection, dominance, and even virility. There were some incidents of students bringing firearms to schools for the purpose of "earning the respect of others" at the expense of submission, threats and intimidation of their peers, teachers and even principals. In these cases, students may have developed a relationship pattern based on violence whereby the firearm serves as an extension of their power.

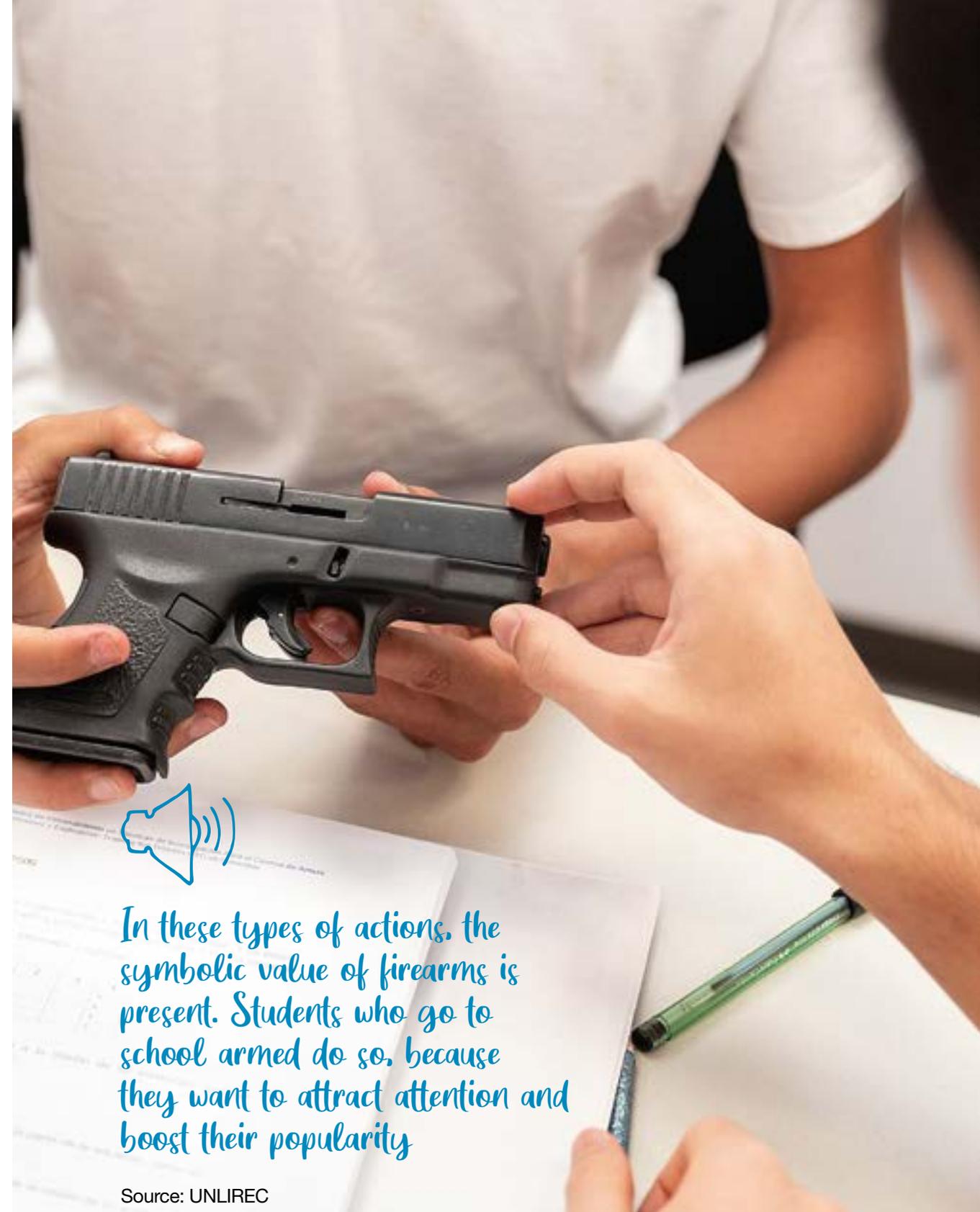
As an example, there was a case in which a 13-year-old student shot the school principal after they had an argument at a school in Jiutepec (Mexico) in 2015. According to the police report, "days before, the principal had warned the student that he would be expelled if he continued to be violent at school, the student then came to school armed to confront the principal and shot him<sup>41</sup>." There were also incidents involving students who went to school armed with the intention of stealing and extorting money from their classmates.

In most of these cases, students know who brings firearms to school and intimidates, threatens, and steals. However, due to fear of reprisals, many students decide not to report the situation and get used to (or naturalise) the presence of firearms on a day-to-day basis.

### **Exhibition of Firearms**

In 36% of the cases analysed, students were found to have taken the firearm to school without any intention of using it or harming anyone. In these cases, which break the causal and predominating automatic connection in relation to firearms and their use, students brought the firearm to school to show them to their classmates.

In these types of acts, the symbolic value assigned to firearms is present. Students who go to school armed do so because they want to attract attention and boost their popularity. On the other hand, it may also be the case that the students in question only wanted to show the firearms to their closest friend(s) because of the curiosity they arouse.



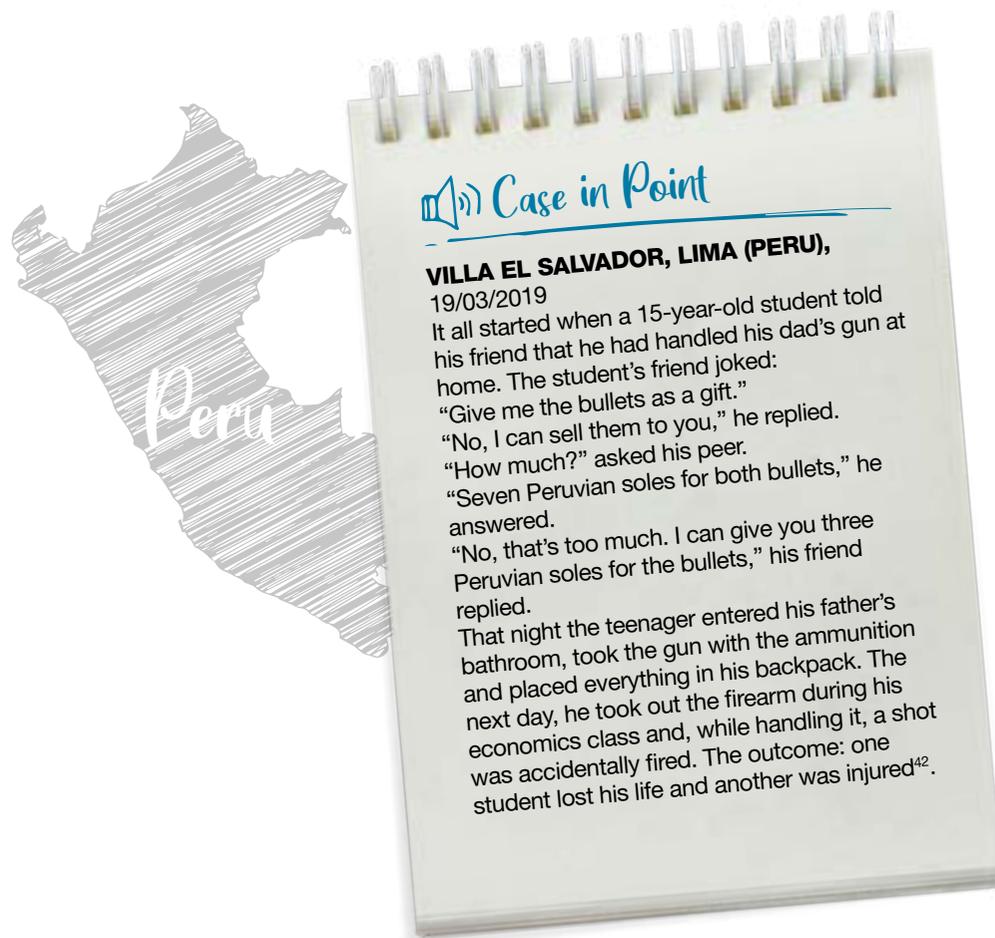
*In these types of actions, the symbolic value of firearms is present. Students who go to school armed do so, because they want to attract attention and boost their popularity*

Source: UNLIREC

On the basis of the incidents analysed, it is noticeable that, in some cases, although there was no intention to use the firearm, there were accidental shots at the time the students handled and “played” with the firearm, resulting in injury and death.



THESE TYPES OF INCIDENTS PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH’S ACCESS TO FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION IN THEIR HOMES, AS WELL AS THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFE STORAGE MEASURES THAT SHOULD BE PRACTICED BY ALL LEGAL USERS OF FIREARMS, ESPECIALLY WHEN RESIDING IN PLACES WHERE CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE PRESENT.



**Bullying**

Another type of violence that is experienced within schools is bullying. 10% of the incidents of firearms in schools involved students who went to school armed (and in some cases with the intention of using the firearm) as a response to acts of bullying of which they were victims. In these cases, the decision to bring a firearm to school is part of the need to “do something” given the constant harassment to which they have been subjected over a period of time.

In some of these cases, students went to school armed with the sole intention of threatening their aggressors. For instance, at a school in Talara Alta (Peru) in August 2017, an armed student was about to take the life of one of his classmates after being a victim of bullying<sup>43</sup>. In other cases, the students brought a firearm to school with the clear intention of seeking revenge by shooting a peer or even a teacher.

Some of the most emblematic cases, such as the shootings recorded in recent years in countries, such as Mexico and Brazil, share a common characteristic: the perpetrators were victims of bullying. For example, at a shooting - reported in October 2017 at a school in Goiana (Brazil) - the aggressor, a 14-year-old student with a firearm hidden in his backpack used it inside a classroom of 30 students, against whom he shot indiscriminately. The incident left two dead and four injured<sup>44</sup>. As reported in the news, the boy was apparently harassed by his classmates, because of his supposed body odour. One of the victims of this incident was a female classmate who had given the boy deodorant as a joke<sup>45</sup>.

As evidenced by internationally collected empirical data, “in most cases, children and adolescents who experience bullying tend to suffer from depression, loneliness, anxiety, low self-esteem and other forms of distress”<sup>46</sup> and, as some studies suggest, they would be more likely to experience suicidal thoughts and attempt suicide than those who have not experienced such forms of aggression<sup>47</sup>.

As a matter of fact, it was found that, in 5% of the incidents analysed that provided information on the perpetrators’ motivation, the main factor that pushed the students to go to school armed was to take their own lives<sup>48</sup>. The suicide of a 15-year-old student reported in September 2018 at a high school in Monterrey (Mexico) illustrates this situation. In this case, as confirmed by authorities, suicide was the product of bullying suffered by the student who, as told by a female classmate, “was always a victim of bullying and who always wanted to please others, but they insulted him. He wanted to make friends, but they mocked him”<sup>49</sup>.

Another similar incident was recorded in November 2013 at a school in the town of Pontevedra, at a school in Partido de Merlo in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in which a fifth-year student took a gun out of his bag and pointed it at his



head before anyone could react. “He talked about voices that only he could hear, said he had seen a message in the numbers inscribed on the classroom heater, a message that told him that he had to kill everyone. He removed the gun from his head and shot at the stove and the wall in front of him. He pulled the trigger three times”<sup>50</sup>.

After the incident, authorities confirmed that the student was in psychological counselling due to behavioural problems, while one of his classmates indicated that “he was not well and was harassed at school. We told the school authorities several times that the boy was coming to class with knives and razors. He said he had to defend himself against the sixth-year male students who were bullying him. Everyone knew that he was suffering, but nobody did anything about it and now they deny it,” he said”<sup>51</sup>.

The fact that firearms are considered a resource that students turn to as victims of bullying is worrisome. Unlike a decade or more ago, when bullying was not given adequate attention, today school authorities and members of the school community are aware of the impacts that school bullying has on children and youth. Therefore, it must be borne in mind that, in cases of bullying, a student’s despair can turn him/her to using a firearm, either to attack others or to end his/her own life.

**Personality Traits**

As mentioned above, in 6% of cases, the motivation or reason behind these events relates to the students’ personality traits and other factors associated with the school context. For example, in the case of the student who was found dead in the lavatory of a secondary school in Monterrey in 2018, peers close to the student confirmed that apart from being a victim of bullying, the boy suffered from Asperger’s syndrome<sup>52</sup>: “He was always a victim of bullying, always wanted to please others, but they insulted him. He wanted to make friends, but they mocked him. That made him stay away from everyone. He played videogames a lot. A rumour was going around that he had Asperger’s syndrome, which made him even more distant. It’s sad, because he just wanted to have friends,” said a female classmate<sup>53</sup>.

In school shootings recorded in some countries of the region in recent years, aspects related to the psychological profile of adolescents and youth of the perpetrators have also been brought into the discussion. However, it is not possible to determine a generic profile that describes the perpetrators of these events. In the cases recorded in recent years in countries, such as Brazil, the available information does not allow the perpetrators to be identified or classified according to a certain psychological profile.

In fact, the references made to youth who perpetrated the shooting at a school in Suzano (Brazil) indicate that “they were normal children. They used to say good morning, good afternoon, good night. They did not use drugs

(...). I never noticed any trait that could indicate they could demonstrate this kind of behaviour. We are all in shock”<sup>54</sup>. Some research suggests that in cases of mass shootings, such as those reported in Brazil in recent years, the perpetrators “generally accumulate feelings of unresolved frustration, whereby their masculinity is in crisis and they are seeking fame and notoriety, which underlie their crimes”<sup>55</sup>.



IN SUCH CASES, THE REASONS THAT A FORMER STUDENT WOULD COMMIT SUCH ACTS CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO AN EXTREMELY NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL, AS WELL AS BAD MEMORIES AND A POOR OPINION OF THE SCHOLASTIC ENVIRONMENT.

In the shooting reported at a school in Realengo (Brazil) in 2011, the perpetrator (a former student) left a letter full of incongruous phrases announcing his suicide. The letter included religious references and a request that no fornicator or adulterer should touch his body and that a “servant of God” should go to the cemetery to “apologise to him” so that, upon his arrival, “Jesus would bring me from death to life,”<sup>56</sup>. Having no additional knowledge concerning the student’s background, it is not possible to create a psychological profile; nevertheless, personality traits can indeed be inferred, including his mental health, which may have influenced the perpetrator to act in such manner.



Source: UNLIREC

## Gangs and armed violence

It is very difficult to make assertions about the psychological profile of a student who uses firearms to self-inflict harm or to hurt others. Adolescence itself is a complicated phase for many youth who are struggling to define their personality as this relates to school dynamics and interpersonal relationships with their peers. The information available in the analysed cases does not allow for further inferences nor is it the purpose of this study to profile the young perpetrators of armed violence and much less to develop their pathologies.

On the basis of the cases analysed, which offer segmented information by the media that is not necessarily presented by specialists in adolescent psychology, the only thing that can be affirmed is that the mental health of the students and their environment are aspects to consider in further research on cases of armed violence in schools.

### Gangs and Recruitment

In some countries of the region, violent territorial control by gangs and armed violence at the community level has also made its way into schools. As a matter of fact, some of the analysed incidents showcase how these groups and other criminal organisations use schools and surrounding areas as part of their modus operandi to hide and protect firearms and other illegal items. This was confirmed by police authorities in Honduras following the detection of high-calibre firearms, drugs and other illegal items found in the washroom ceiling in a school in the Planeta sector in the Department of Cortes, which presumably formed part of the 'Barrio 18' gang territory operating in town<sup>57</sup>.

In some countries, gangs also see schools as a source of recruitment of children and adolescents to be incorporated into their structures. In Honduras, this recruitment can begin at age seven, although it is more common after age 10 or 11. At these ages, children involved in gangs are used to transport drugs, hide firearms or work as couriers<sup>58</sup>. In Brazil, criminal organisations use adolescents and youth as a workforce primarily for drug trafficking. Recruitment can begin at age eight with surveillance activities, and at age 15 or 16, adolescents begin to have access to firearms to defend the territory<sup>59</sup>.



In Mexico, there have been cases in which children are integrated into criminal organisations at age 10 and 11, or at an even earlier age “to work for traffickers either of illicit goods (drugs or firearms) or of people (courier).” In El Salvador, around 15% of gang recruitment has been documented to be carried out in schools<sup>60</sup>.

In some cases, students who were found with firearms were linked to gangs and/or drug sales inside schools. In Ecuador, for example, school authorities report that in some schools, students linked to gangs and drug sales are usually in possession of a firearm<sup>61</sup>. According to a young student, there are students who sell cocaine during inter-sessional period, “not satisfied with that, they hit those who do not want it and threaten them with knives and even with guns to keep them quiet”<sup>62</sup>.

Additionally, there were some cases of students caught in possession of firearms commissioned by gangs with the purpose of transporting and delivering them to third parties. In Venezuela, police affirm that “this is a criminal modality that criminal gangs are putting into practice, since - in response to intense security controls on motorized vehicles - they choose to use students to transport firearms to avoid being detected by authorities”<sup>63</sup>.

Boys are usually given toy guns. Armed characters in films, music videos or video games are usually men and, in everyday life, it is common to find more armed men than armed women, both in professional spheres (armed forces, police forces, private security companies, bodyguards and other professions) and in criminal and violent domains (cartels, gangs). Firearms even play a role in the rites of passage from childhood to adulthood in males. **Men are the main firearms users both regionally and globally<sup>64</sup>.**

As part of the media monitoring carried out, some incidents linked to gender-based violence in schools were identified<sup>65</sup>. In these cases, apart from giving rise to and reinforcing the idea associating “males” with violence and firearms, it becomes clear that - based on this idea of violent masculinity - there is also a certain degree of contempt and hatred towards women.

In one of the incidents reported in Alexania (Brazil) in 2017, the aggressor (man) shot his victim (woman) seven times, because she had refused to go out with him. The shots were aimed at the woman’s face, which shows a clear example of violence against women, in which death is considered a “punishment” for the rejection received, but is also intended to reflect a greater demonstration of power, contempt and domination over the body and life of the woman.



IN THIS REGARD, THE PRESENCE OF GANGS AND ORGANISED CRIME IN SCHOOLS AND SURROUNDING AREAS HAS FURTHER INCREASED THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS EXPOSED TO FIREARMS AND, AS A RESULT, THESE FIREARMS END UP AT SCHOOLS.



The students may be victims of harassment by gang members not only inside school, but also on their way to and from them. As a consequence, some students decide to obtain a firearm and bring it to school as a self-protection measure.

**Gender and Firearms in Schools**

It is not possible to responsibly analyse the presence and use of firearms by youth at school and ignore the gender perspective. It is widely known that firearms are linked to culture, behaviour and mentality, and - in many cases - they are deeply rooted in societies and related to gender roles and “violent masculinity” stereotypes affecting both women and men.

**Case in Point**

**ALEXANIA (BRAZIL), 06/11/2017**  
 A 19-year-old boy shot a 16-year-old girl (from ninth grade) at a school in Alexania. The youth, armed with a .32-calibre revolver, fired at least seven times at the student’s face. According to authorities, the young perpetrator said he hated the girl. According to witnesses, he wanted to go out with her, but she rejected his advances<sup>66</sup>.

Another similar shooting incident was reported in Realengo school in Brazil, in 2011, leaving 12 dead (including the perpetrator) and 12 injured, most of the victims were girls. According to one surviving student, the perpetrator: “killed the girls with shots to the head.” “He shot the girls to kill them.” “The shots fired at the boys’ arms and legs were only meant to injure them”<sup>67</sup>.

In another shooting reported at a school in Suzano, Brazil, in March 2019, subsequent investigations revealed that, as part of the perpetrators’ plan, the girls were to be left naked and shot in the middle of the schoolyard, with their bodies left in humiliating positions.

In some Latin American and Caribbean countries, the current and popular conception of firearms is linked to these negative notions of masculinity. Men and women can make different associations concerning firearms and have different perceptions. It is important to make a differentiated analysis on gender roles, since not all men are violent or seek to follow the prototype of successful armed men. Likewise, there are women who validate some behaviours of this “violent man” and search for a stereotypical protector.

Understanding these social and cultural concepts is necessary to effectively address the subject matter as it relates to children and youth from an early age and, thereby, promote a positive paradigm shift in traditional gender roles through raising awareness, dissemination of quality information and capacity-building.

Since the link between masculinity, firearms possession and violent behaviour is socially constructed, it is essential to pose the question as to whether schools play a role in promoting and socializing this type of belief and behaviour.

**Social Media Networks and the Deep Web**

An additional element that surfaced as part of this study is the use of social networks by students involved in armed violence at schools. Cases have been observed in which students, through messages and photographs on social media networks, announced and promoted acts of armed violence. An incident of this type was recorded at a school in Ramos Mejia (Argentina) in October 2017, when a 14-year-old student filmed himself and uploaded a video announcing: “They are all going to die.” “There is no going back.” “Bang

Bang.” “Today is the great day.” “Who would have thought it would end like this?” “This is my ending”<sup>68</sup>. On that day, the youth brought to school a gun and a pistol, dozens of ammunition and a knife. Although this case did not have a violent outcomes, because it was the adolescent himself who called the police, the episode generated panic and concern among his classmates and school personnel. As the student’s classmates explained, he wanted to “do something to get out of school.”

In another case recorded in Argentina, a 15-year-old student announced her suicide through the social network Voxed. As part of her messages prior to the incident, she announced she was going to take her father’s revolver and shoot herself with it within the first hour. Her message read as follows: “(...) if you do not want to miss the live broadcast, you must pay attention at 7:50 in the morning”<sup>69</sup>. In the end, she shot herself in the head in front of her classmates and teacher.

Possible motivational factors inciting youth to engage in school shootings have been identified in incidents in Mexico and Brazil in recent years whereby groups on social networks have been identified as playing a role in influencing and encouraging youth to execute such actions. For instance, the 15-year-old boy who shot three of his classmates and his teacher at a shooting in Monterrey (Mexico) was a member of a Facebook group called “Legion Holk” that encourages its members to engage in acts of violence. This group, with more than 200 thousand followers, promotes hashtags, such as #MoreMassacresInMexico and #IfI FallTheyAllFall. This group allegedly published messages claiming intellectual ownership over the attack and acknowledging the “courage” of the student responsible for them<sup>70</sup>.



Message published in the Legion Holk Facebook Community  
Source: UNLIREC Translation Quien.com<sup>71</sup>

In the case of the shooting at a school in Suzano, Sao Paulo (Brazil), the Public Prosecutor's Office is investigating whether the two young perpetrators had any contact with groups that operate on the Deep Web, such as the "Dogolachan" forum, which - in the past - had been subjected to a Federal Police operation that resulted in a 40-year prison sentence for one of its creators due to various crimes committed<sup>72</sup>. A posting prior to the day of the shooting raised suspicions that the youth "frequented those forums in which misogyny, racism, homophobia and hatred prevail protected by anonymity" and in which "incels", an English expression meaning celibates<sup>73</sup>, participate. The focus is on the fact that this mass shooting bears a close resemblance to the mass school shooting in Columbine (United States) in 1999. Even though 20 years have passed since that event, it seems that students in other latitudes would like to emulate those actions since the attack in Brazil had been planned for an entire year.

Today, social networks are an essential part of youth's lives that cannot be ignored. Harmful virtual spaces on the Internet therefore pose new challenges in addressing and preventing cases of armed violence in schools.

### Final Thoughts

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, UNLIREC compiled and analysed 122 news items that reported firearms incidents in schools in different Latin American and Caribbean countries between 2010 and 2019. Based on this media monitoring, a general picture vis-à-vis the presence and use of firearms in schools in countries of the region has been presented. The characterisation found in this study demonstrates the fact that we face a complex and multidimensional phenomenon with different manifestations and impacts that cannot be ignored.

There is a wide range of factors explaining why children and youth decide to come into contact with firearms and bring them to school, including curiosity, revenge, self-protection, prestige, involvement in illegal activities, among others. Likewise, this diversity of factors applies to the origin of the firearms that end up at schools. Students obtain firearms through the black market and through contact with unauthorized users, as well as are exposed to them in their own homes.

The motivational factors involved respond to different student profiles and to different settings (local, school, family) in which youth live, develop, and interact with others. It is therefore essential to comprehensively address not only access to firearms, but also the different causes and motivational factors that can contribute to a student deciding whether or not to take a firearm to school. Schools, a place where, in addition to the home, the student is preparing to become a respectable citizen and adult in future life.

Fundamental

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> An earlier study prepared by UNLIREC in 2010 performed a similar media monitoring, which covered a period between 2000 and 2010.
- <sup>2</sup> In accordance with the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which complements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2001), firearm shall mean "any portable barrelled weapon that expels, is designed to expel or may be readily converted to expel a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive, excluding antique firearms or their replicas."
- <sup>3</sup> Stray bullet is defined as "such bullet that causes lethal or non-lethal damage to a person other than the one who is the target of the firearm." See Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (Conflict Analysis Resource Centre), 2013, La violencia más injusta: la tragedia de las balas perdidas en Colombia (The Most Unfair Violence: The Tragedy of Stray Bullets in Colombia), Bogotá: CERAC. [http://www.cerac.org.co/assets/pdf/BalasPerdidas\\_ReporteCERAC\\_Espa%C3%B1ol\\_2013.pdf](http://www.cerac.org.co/assets/pdf/BalasPerdidas_ReporteCERAC_Espa%C3%B1ol_2013.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> Media monitoring did not identify incidents involving firearms in schools in Cuba, Bolivia, El Salvador and Nicaragua during the period indicated.
- <sup>5</sup> Comprised of the following Member States: Antigua and Barbuda, ... Belize, ..., Grenada, ..., Haiti, ..., Saint Kitts and Nevis, ..., Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago; and Associate Members: Anguila, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, and British Virgin Islands.
- <sup>6</sup> Telemundo (2019). Tiroteos en EEUU ponen bajo la lupa la seguridad en los colegios en vísperas de un nuevo año escolar. (Shootings in the US put school security under scrutiny on the eve of a new school year.) La Opinión, 08/08/2019. <https://laopinion.com/2019/08/08/tiroteos-en-eeuu-ponen-bajo-la-lupa-la-seguridad-en-los-colegios-en-visperas-de-un-nuevo-año-escolar/>
- <sup>7</sup> As a result of the first monitoring carried out by UNLIREC, 43 victims (including injured and killed) of accidental or intentional shooting inside schools were recorded. UNLIREC (2011). Previendo la Proliferación de Armas de Fuego y la Violencia Armada en Centros Educativos en América Latina y el Caribe (Preventing Firearms Proliferation and Armed Violence in Educational Centres of Latin America and the Caribbean). Working document. United Nations, Lima.
- <sup>8</sup> La Prensa (2015). Encuentran arma en una escuela de sector de Bijao (A firearm was found at a school in the Bijao sector). La Prensa, 01/SEP/2015 <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/875176-410/encuentran-arma-en-una-escuela-del-sector-de-bijao>
- <sup>9</sup> El Nueve.com (2017). Hallan un arma y drogas en una escuela de Guaymallén. Redacción El Nueve, 15/09/2017 <https://www.elnueve.com/hallan-un-arma-y-drogas-en-una-escuela-de-guaymallen>
- <sup>10</sup> El Tiempo (2015). Armed student is caught in a school in Cucuta. El Tiempo, 10/NOV/2015. <https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16426749>
- <sup>11</sup> SoyChile (2019). Estudiante le habría disparado a compañero de colegio en Puerto Montt (Student would have shot a schoolmate in Puerto Montt). 27/MAY/2019. <https://www.soychile.cl/Puerto-Montt/Policial/2019/05/27/597506/Estudiante-le-habria-disparado-a-companero-de-colegio-en-Puerto-Montt.aspx>
- <sup>12</sup> Varela al Día (2017). Un alumno del San Juan Bautista fue armado al colegio para matarse (A student at San Juan Bautista went to school carrying a firearm to kill himself). 14/JUN/2017 <http://varelaaldia.com.ar/un-alumno-del-san-juan-bautista-fue-armado-al-colegio-para-matarse/>
- <sup>13</sup> Pagina12 (2017). A los tiros en el colegio (Shots in the school). Pagina12.com, 23/MAY/2017 <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/39482-a-los-tiros-en-el-colegio>
- <sup>14</sup> La Nación (2011). Masacre de 10 estudiantes en escuela de Río de Janeiro (Massacre of 10 students at a school in Rio de Janeiro). LaNacion.com, 08/APR/2011. <https://www.nacion.com/el-mundo/masacre-de-10-estudiantes-en-escuela-de-rio-de-janeiro/MKGZH6E7IREX5KKZDKSLS3TDU4/story/>
- <sup>15</sup> Notimérica (2018). Una niña de 15 años se dispara en la cabeza en clase y deja un misterioso mensaje en Argentina (A 15-year-old girl shoots herself in the head in class and leaves a mysterious message in Argentina). Notimerica.com, 04/AUG/2017 <https://www.notimerica.com/sociedad/noticia-nina-15-anos-dispara-cabeza-clase-deja-misterioso-mensaje-argentina-20170804175055.html>
- <sup>16</sup> Garza, Aracely (2018). Tec confirma suicidio de alumno en Prepa de Monterrey. Excélsior, 10/09/2018. <https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/tec-confirma-suicidio-de-alumno-en-prepa-de-monterrey/1264055>
- <sup>17</sup> Prensa Libre (2017). Investigan incidente armado en colegio Solalto (Armed incident at Solalto school under investigation). Prensa Libre, 13/MAR/2017 <https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/comunitario/una-pistola-y-un-estudiante-que-ocurrio-en-el-colegio-solalto/>
- <sup>18</sup> Rodríguez, Eyra (2017). Estudiante roba con pistola dentro del colegio (Student steals with a gun inside school). Elsiglo.com, 20/APR/2017. <http://elsiglo.com.pa/panama/estudiante-roba-pistola-dentro-colegio/23997025>
- <sup>19</sup> La Prensa (2018). Matan a maestro frente a sus alumnos en escuela de Olancho (Teacher killed in front of his students at a school in Olancho) LaPrensa.hn, 02/APR/2018. <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1165286-410/violencia-asesinato-maestro-escuela-erick-banegas-olancho-honduras>
- <sup>20</sup> Gun Violence Archive (n.d.). General Methodology. Washington, DC. <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/methodology>
- <sup>21</sup> Characteristic set of symptoms (sensation of reliving traumatic experiences, avoidance behaviour and exaggerated feeling of permanent threat) that lasts more than a month after a potentially traumatic experience and hinders daily functioning because it generates problems and disorders such as moderate to severe depressive disorders, psychosis, harmful use of alcohol and drugs, suicide and other important emotional symptoms. See: Pan American Health Organization (2016). MhGAP humanitarian intervention guide (GIH-mhGAP). El manejo clínico de los trastornos mentales neurológicos y por uso de sustancias en las emergencias humanitarias (The clinical management of neurological and substance use mental disorders in humanitarian emergencies). Washington, DC.
- <sup>22</sup> AméricaTevé (2019). Arrestan a 3er sospechoso de matanza en escuela en Brasil. <https://www.americateve.com/arrestan-3er-sospechoso-matanza-escuela-brasil-n1020821>
- <sup>23</sup> The difference between the news headline and the media monitoring with respect to the number of deaths accounts for the fact that in such incidents a person was killed in an area near the school before the perpetrators entered the school establishment. The monitoring takes into account merely the injured and killed persons reported inside the schools.

<sup>24</sup> Ochoa, Ernesto (2017). Alumno ingresa arma de fuego a escuela de Cadereyta; muere un menor (Student brings firearm to a school in Cadereyta; A minor dies). Info7, 11/DEC/2017. <http://www.info7.mx/locales/menor-se-quita-la-vida-dentro-de-escuela-en-cadereyta/2036762>

<sup>25</sup> Notimérica (2018). Una niña de 15 años se dispara en la cabeza en clase y deja un misterioso mensaje en Argentina (A 15-year-old girl shoots herself in the head in class and leaves a mysterious message in Argentina). Notimérica.com, 04/AUG/2017 <https://www.notimera.com/sociedad/noticia-nina-15-anos-dispara-cabeza-clase-deja-misterioso-mensaje-argentina-20170804175055.html>

<sup>26</sup> Univision (2011). Un estudiante fue asesinado en clase en escuela de Costa Rica (A student was killed in class at a school in Costa Rica). Univision, 19/JUL/2011. <https://www.univision.com/noticias/noticias-de-latinoamerica/un-estudiante-fue-asesinado-en-clase-en-escuela-de-costa-rica>

<sup>27</sup> Paxtor, Edwin (2015). Tres estudiantes resultan heridos de bala en ataque en instituto (Three students are shot in attack in high school). Prensa Libre, 05/AUG/2015. <https://www.prensalibre.com/ciudades/chiquimula/atacan-a-balazos-a-tres-estudiantes-en-una-escuela-de-jocotan/>

<sup>28</sup> Argüello, Francisco (2011). El lapicero pistola, una nueva arma peligrosa en las escuelas de Colombia. (The pen gun, a new dangerous weapon in Colombian schools). Elmundo.es, 06/MAY/2011. <https://www.elmundo.es/america/2011/05/06/colombia/1304715120.html>

<sup>29</sup> Tribuna (2019). SEDENA y Policía de Guerrero hallan armamento dentro de una escuela (SEDENA and Guerrero Police find weapons inside a school). Redacción Tribuna, 05/JAN/2019. <https://www.tribuna.com.mx/amp/seguridad/Sedena-y-Policia-de-Guerrero-hallan-armamento-dentro-de-una-escuela-20190105-0036.html>

<sup>30</sup> \_Am.com.mx (2017). Hallan subametralladora en mochila de estudiante (Submachine gun found in student's backpack). Am.com, 13/FEB/2017 <https://www.am.com.mx/noticias/Hallan-subametralladora-en-mochila-de-estudiante-20170213-0028.html>

<sup>31</sup> Arístia, Santiago (2019). Masacre en Brasil: tiroteo en escuela deja al menos diez personas muertas (Massacre in Brazil: school shooting leaves at least ten people dead). France24.com, 13/MAR/2019, <https://www.france24.com/es/20190313-masacre-brasil-tiroteo-escuela-raul>

<sup>32</sup> Infobae (2019). Niño de nueve años provocó alarma en escuela de Tamaulipas al ingresar con un arma (9-year-old boy caused alarm in Tamaulipas by bringing a firearm to school). Infobae.com, 13/FEB/2019. <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2019/02/13/nino-de-9-anos-provoco-alarma-en-escuela-de-tamaulipas-al-ingresar-con-un-arma/>

<sup>33</sup> Regarding the rest of the incidents, the news did not provide information on the origin of the firearms.

<sup>34</sup> EFE (2017). Dos muertos y cuatro heridos en un tiroteo en una escuela en Brasil (Two killed and four injured in a shooting at a school in Brazil.) EFE, 20/OCT/2017. <https://www.efe.com/efe/america/sociedad/dos-muertos-y-cuatro-heridos-en-un-tiroteo-una-escuela-brasil/20000013-3414701>

<sup>35</sup> Radio Mitre (2018). Un niño de ocho años ingresó con un arma a una escuela en San Rafael (An 8-year-old boy brought a gun to school in San Rafael). Radiomitre.com, 12/JUN/2018. <https://radiomitre.cienradios.com/un-nino-de-8-anos-ingreso-con-un-arma-a-una-escuela-en-san-rafael/>

<sup>36</sup> Rodríguez, Oscar (2015). Hermanos de 13 y 14 años llevaron pistola a su colegio. (Brothers aged 13 and 14 brought guns to their school.) La Nación, 06/MAR/2015. <https://www.nacion.com/sucesos/seguridad/hermanos-de-13-y-14-anos-llevaron-pistola-a-su-colegio/UP2LVV6V6FGC3HCCKLNSYM5ZOM/story/>

<sup>37</sup> El Informador (2012). Niño lleva pistola a la escuela: policía halla arsenal en su casa (Boy carries gun to school: Police find arsenal in his house). El Informador, 08/SEP/2012, <https://www.informador.mx/Mexico/Nino-lleva-pistola-a-la-escuela-Policia-halla-arsenal-en-su-casa-20120908-0184.html>

<sup>38</sup> Sena, F. (2015). Aluno entra armado em escola, atira e se fere no abdômen, causando pânico em Caxias (Student enters school armed, shoots and injures himself in the abdomen, causing panic in Caxias). Cidadeverde.com, 04/NOV/2015. <https://cidadeverde.com/noticias/206014/aluno-entra-armado-em-escola-atira-e-se-fere-no-abdomen-causando-panico-em-caxias>

<sup>39</sup> These incidents include: 32 incidents involving any type of shot; 20 incidents of carrying of firearm; 10 incidents in which the firearm was used to threaten; and three cases of finding of firearms inside schools.

<sup>40</sup> For instance, in Paraná (Argentina), teachers state that there have been problems “with students from other schools who come to generate violence, sometimes, due to conflicts in the neighbourhood that end up moving to classrooms.” El Once (2018). Alumno fue amenazado con un arma en una escuela y suspendieron las clases (Student was threatened with a firearm in a school and classes were suspended). ELONCE, 20/APR/2018. <https://www.elonce.com/secciones/parana/545191-alumno-fue-amenazado-con-un-arma-en-una-escuela-y-suspendieron-las-clases.htm>

<sup>41</sup> Tonantzin, Pedro (2015). Estudiante de secundaria le dispara a su director porque sería expulsado. (High school student shoots his principal because he was going to be expelled.) Excelsior, 30/APR/2015. <https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/2015/04/30/1021752>

<sup>42</sup> Diario Correo (2019). Alumno herido de bala en Trilce: “Le dije que no la traiga (el arma) y no hizo caso” [Student shot in Trilce: “I told him not to bring it (the firearm), but he ignored it.”] (VIDEO). Diario Correo (Peru), 20/MAR/2019. <https://diariocorreo.pe/edicion/lima/alumno-herido-de-bala-en-trilce-le-dije-que-no-la-traiga-el-arma-y-no-hizo-caso-video-876941/>

<sup>43</sup> Elias, Jhony (2017). Dentro de colegio detienen a escolar con arma de fuego (Student carrying a firearm is arrested inside a school). La República, 05/AUG/2017. <https://larepublica.pe/sociedad/1070290-dentro-de-colegio-detienen-a-escolar-con-arma-de-fuego/>

<sup>44</sup> EFE (2017). Dos muertos y cuatro heridos en un tiroteo en una escuela en Brasil (Two killed and four injured in a shooting at a school in Brazil.) EFE, 20/OCT/2017. <https://www.efe.com/efe/america/sociedad/dos-muertos-y-cuatro-heridos-en-un-tiroteo-una-escuela-brasil/20000013-3414701>

<sup>45</sup> Sales, Yago (2017). Un estudiante abre fuego en un colegio en Brasil inspirándose en la masacre de Columbine (A student opens fire at a school in Brazil inspired by the Columbine massacre). El País, 21/OCT/2017. [https://elpais.com/internacional/2017/10/21/actualidad/1508544592\\_421762.html](https://elpais.com/internacional/2017/10/21/actualidad/1508544592_421762.html)

<sup>46</sup> UNESCO (2016). Global Education Monitoring Report. Policy Document, ED/GEMR/2016/PP/29/REV. France.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, pp. 3

<sup>48</sup> It must be pointed out that those incidents involving students (and former students) who after shooting indiscriminately inside schools decided to commit suicide are not considered in such percentage.

<sup>49</sup> Excelsior (2018). Bullying habría causado suicidio de estudiante en Prepa Tec (Bullying would have caused student suicide at Prepa Tec.) Excelsior (Redacción), 11/SEP/2018. <https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/bullying-habria-causado-suicidio-de-estudiante-en-prepa-tec/1264269>

<sup>50</sup> Sánchez, Felicitas (2013). Llevó un arma de fuego a la escuela y disparó tres tiros dentro del aula. (He brought a gun to school and fired three shots inside the classroom.) La Nación (Argentina), 09/NOV/2013. <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/buenos-aires/llevo-un-arma-de-fuego-a-la-escuela-y-disparo-tres-tiros-dentro-del-aula-nid1636712>

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> According to WHO, Asperger's Syndrome is recognized as a Generalized Childhood Developmental Disorder, nestled within the “autistic spectrum” and has adverse, although variable, consequences for the social, emotional and behavioural development of children and adolescents. Available at: [http://www.prodeni.org/Salud/s%C3%ADndrome\\_de\\_asperger.htm](http://www.prodeni.org/Salud/s%C3%ADndrome_de_asperger.htm)

<sup>53</sup> Garza, Aracely (2018). Tec confirma suicidio de alumno en Prepa de Monterrey (Tec confirms student suicide at high school in Monterrey). Excelsior, 10/SEP/2018. <https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/tec-confirma-suicidio-de-alumno-en-prepa-de-monterrey/1264055>

<sup>54</sup> Adicrea (2019). Bullying y videojuegos: la historia de los autores de la matanza en una escuela de Brasil (Bullying and video games: The story of the authors of the massacre at a school in Brazil). Adicrea (digital newspaper), 14/MAR/2019. <https://www.adicrea.org/bullying-y-videojuegos-la-historia-de-los-autores-de-la-matanza-en-una-escuela-de-brasil/>

<sup>55</sup> BBC World (2019). La crisis de masculinidad y el fetiche por las armas que esconde la personalidad de los autores de ataques masivos (The crisis of masculinity and the fetish for weapons that hides the personality of the perpetrators of mass attacks). La Opinión, 18/MAR/2019. <https://laopinion.com/2019/03/18/tiroteos-en-nueva-zelanda-y-brasil-la-crisis-de-masculinidad-y-el-fetichismo-por-las-armas-que-esconde-la-personalidad-de-los-autores-de-ataques-masivos/>

<sup>56</sup> Arias, Juan (2011). Un hombre en Brasil mata a diez niñas y un niño, hiere a otros 18 y después se da un tiro en la cabeza (A man in Brazil kills ten girls and a boy, injures another 18 and then shoots himself in the head). El País, 07/APR/2011. [https://elpais.com/internacional/2011/04/07/actualidad/1302127215\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/internacional/2011/04/07/actualidad/1302127215_850215.html)

<sup>57</sup> La Prensa (2015). Encuentran arma en una escuela de sector de Bijao (A firearm was found at a school in the Bijao sector). La Prensa, 01/SEP/2015 <https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/875176-410/encuentran-arma-en-una-escuela-del-sector-de-bijao>

<sup>58</sup> Europa Press (2019). Los riesgos de ir a la escuela en Centroamérica (The risks of going to school in Central America.) Teinteresa.es, 15/JUN/2019. [http://www.teinteresa.es/mundo/riesgos-ir-escuela-Centroamerica\\_0\\_2252774715.html](http://www.teinteresa.es/mundo/riesgos-ir-escuela-Centroamerica_0_2252774715.html)

<sup>59</sup> CIDH (2015). Violencia, niñez y crimen organizado (Violence, childhood and organised crime). OAS. Official Documents. <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/ViolenciaNinez2016.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> Colegio de Altos Estudios Estratégicos (2017). Las Pandillas: Su Expansión Territorial en El Salvador 1992-2015 (Gangs: Their Territorial Expansion in El Salvador 1992-2015). CAEE, 1st Edition. San Salvador, El Salvador. <http://www.cae.edu.sv/images/pdf/PANDILLAS.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> El Universo (2010). Violencia en los colegios, una realidad que permanece oculta (Violence in schools, a reality that remains hidden). El Universo, 06/JUN/2010. <https://www.eluniverso.com/2010/06/06/1/1422/violencia-colegios-realidad-permanece-oculta.html>

<sup>62</sup> El Universo (2010). Violencia en los colegios, una realidad que permanece oculta (Violence in schools, a reality that remains hidden). El Universo, 06/JUN/2010. <https://www.eluniverso.com/2010/06/06/1/1422/violencia-colegios-realidad-permanece-oculta.html>

<sup>63</sup> EFE (2014). Detienen en Venezuela a un joven de 12 años con una escopeta en su morral (A 12-year-old boy is arrested in Venezuela with a shotgun in his backpack). El Economista América, 04/DEC/2014. <https://www.eleconomistaamerica.com/politica-eAm/noticias/6302313/12/14/Detienen-en-Venezuela-a-un-joven-de-12-anos-con-una-escopeta-en-su-morral.html>

<sup>64</sup> For more information on firearms and gender, see the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC), Women, men, and the gendered nature of small arms and light weapons (06.10). <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/mosaic/>

<sup>65</sup> School-related gender violence can be defined as all those “threats or acts of physical, sexual or psychological violence that are perpetrated as a consequence of norms, power dynamics and stereotypes in relation to unequal genders”. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (2015) Education Follow-Up Report for Everyone in the World School-Related Gender-Based Violence is Preventing the Achievement of Quality Education for All. Policy Document 17, UNESCO, Paris.

<sup>66</sup> Correio Braziliense (2017). Homem entra armado em escola e mata estudante em Alexânia. Diário de Pernambuco, 06/11/2017. <https://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/noticia/brasil/2017/11/homem-entra-armado-em-escola-e-mata-estudante-em-alexania.html>

<sup>67</sup> Costa, Fabrício (2011). ‘Ele atirava nas meninas para matar’, diz aluno que sobreviveu a ataque. G1 Globo, 08/04/2011. <http://g1.globo.com/Tragedia-em-Realengo/noticia/2011/04/ele-atirava-nas-meninas-para-matar-diz-aluno-que-sobreviveu-ataque.html>

<sup>68</sup> Di Nicola, Gabriel (2017). Fue con dos armas a la escuela, se filmó y dijo que iba a “matar a todos” (He went with two firearms to school, filmed himself and said he was going to “kill everyone”). La Nación (Argentina), 10/OCT/2017. <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/seguridad/fue-con-dos-armas-a-la-escuela-se-filmo-y-dijo-que-iba-a-matar-a-todos-nid2070776>

<sup>69</sup> Infobae (2017). Murió la joven de 15 años que se había disparado en una escuela de La Plata (The 15-year-old girl who shot herself at a school in La Plata died). Infobae.com, 07/AUG/2017 <https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/policiales/2017/08/07/murio-la-joven-de-15-anos-que-se-habia-disparado-en-una-escuela-de-la-plata/>

<sup>70</sup> Quien (2017). ¿Qué hay detrás del ataque en colegio de Monterrey? (What is behind the attack at Monterrey school?) These are the versions. Quién, 19/JAN/2017. <https://www.quien.com/actualidad/2017/01/19/que-hay-detras-del-ataque-en-colegio-de-monterrey-estas-son-las-versiones>

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem

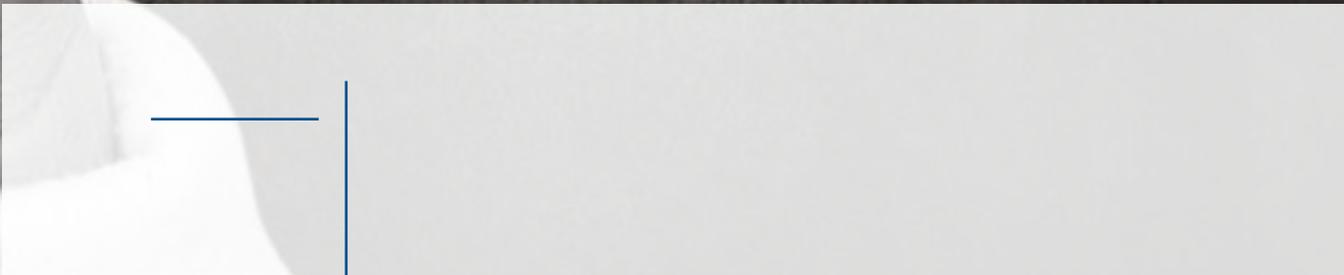
<sup>72</sup> El Universo (2019). Masiva despedida a víctimas de matanza en colegio de Sao Paulo (Massive farewell to victims of massacre at a school in Sao Paulo). El Universo, 14/MAR/2019. <https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/2019/03/14/nota/7233608/masiva-despedida-victimas-matanza-colegio-sao-paulo>

<sup>73</sup> Declercq, Marie (2019). La infinita tristeza de los incels: un retrato de la juventud en crisis de Brasil (The infinite sadness of the incels: A portrait of the youth in crisis in Brazil). VICE (Spanish), 21/AUG/2019. [https://www.vice.com/es\\_latam/article/bjwzrz/la-infinita-tristeza-de-los-incels-un-retrato-de-la-juventud-en-crisis-de-brasil](https://www.vice.com/es_latam/article/bjwzrz/la-infinita-tristeza-de-los-incels-un-retrato-de-la-juventud-en-crisis-de-brasil)



CHAPTER  
**FOUR**

*Responses to tackle  
and prevent the  
phenomenon of  
firearms in schools*





This chapter aims to present the different initiatives that, from the fields of laws, public policies and school coexistence rules, among others, have been implemented in recent years in Latin American and Caribbean countries to tackle the problem of firearms in schools. This section consists of a compilation of responses and good practices that different sectors of public administration (education, citizen security, arms control), as well as various actors (ministries, schools, civil society), have developed to meet the challenge posed by firearms in schools.

The responses detailed below are different in nature in terms of focus, scope, and even the group to which they are addressed. However, all the initiatives mentioned herein are aimed at preventing the entry of firearms into schools.

## 4.1 NORMATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

A fundamental dimension of policies aimed at reducing and preventing firearm-related violence includes the establishment of normative and regulatory frameworks to control and restrict the carrying, possession and use of firearms by citizens in alignments with regulations determined by the authorities of each country on a sovereign basis. As part of these regulations, there are prohibitions on the possession and entry of firearms in certain public spaces. In Latin America and the Caribbean, several countries have introduced specific controls for the possession of firearms in school settings.

To prevent  
and reduce  
armed  
violence in  
schools

This type of regulation can be reflected both in national laws (mostly those on civilian firearms control and regulation) and their respective regulations, as well as in executive orders or municipal ordinances in the local sphere.

### NATIONAL SPHERE

Some States in the region have incorporated explicit prohibitions against the carrying, possession and entry of firearms into schools into their legal frameworks. In countries, such as Bolivia<sup>1</sup>, Brazil<sup>2</sup>, Costa Rica<sup>3</sup>, El Salvador<sup>4</sup>, Nicaragua<sup>5</sup> and Venezuela<sup>6</sup>, these provisions are included as part of the sectoral policies for civilian firearms control, which extend this prohibition to other State institutions and public spaces.

In the normative frameworks of Bolivia and Nicaragua, firearms are prohibited in schools. This restriction is also extended to ammunition, explosives, and other related materials. In the case of Nicaragua, this prohibition has also been incorporated into the Manuals for the Operation of Public, Private and Subsidized Educational Institutions (Manuales para el Funcionamiento de Centros Educativos Públicos, Privados y Subvencionados). In these manuals, for example, as part of the disciplinary regime and process applicable to students, “possessing and using white weapons and firearms, whether or not handmade, sharp objects and all types of explosive material”<sup>7</sup> are considered as very serious offenses. In the event of a situation of this nature, formative measures shall be applied and, in the event of illegal acts, students shall fall under the competence of the relevant authorities, in accordance with the Code for Children and Adolescents (Código de la Niñez y la Adolescencia) of the country.

In the laws of the other States imposing these prohibitions, reference is only made to firearms as opposed to related items. On the other hand, the regulations in place in Bolivia and Venezuela exclude security personnel and armed forces from such prohibitions in school spaces.

Regarding the type of educational institution, the regulations in Brazil, Costa Rica and El Salvador specify that only public educational institutions shall apply the prohibition of firearms possession and entry. In the case of Panama, provisions are applicable to both public and private schools.

In other countries, the prohibition of firearms in schools has been incorporated through specific agreements promoted by the education sector, as is the case in Guatemala<sup>8</sup>. In response to some incidents involving students and firearms inside schools, in 2017, the Guatemalan government updated the Peaceful Cohabitation and Disciplinary Rules Towards a Culture of Peace in Educational Institutions (Normativa de convivencia pacífica y disciplina para una cultura de paz en los centros educativos). Through such a ministerial agreement, the entry of firearms into schools is restricted, as well as “any device or object created to attack, cause physical and psychological damage or damage to properties or facilities”.

In Panama<sup>9</sup> and Uruguay<sup>10</sup>, similar to the experience in Nicaragua, provisions that prohibit firearms possession and entry in schools have been incorporated into specific regimes applicable to the obligations that students must fulfil in the schools. In Panama, this prohibition includes students from both public and private schools. In the case of Uruguay, the prohibition of bringing firearms to schools applies only to secondary school students.

#### LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL SPHERES

Provisions on the prohibition of firearms in schools at the local level, such as Resolution No. 00137, promulgated in 2002 by the General Directorate for Schools of the Government of Mendoza, in Argentina<sup>11</sup> have also been identified in the region. This resolution establishes the total prohibition of firearms in schools, defines the types of firearms to be controlled<sup>12</sup> and outlines preventive, disciplinary and rehabilitation measures for offenders.

This resolution states that the presence of firearms in schools is an expression of a serious social problem that must be addressed by guaranteeing the physical safety of the individuals and the entire educational community. Likewise, the resolution urges schools to implement psychological support measures for students who bring firearms to school and, at the same time, defines different types of sanctions and measures for students who are involved in such cases, depending on the academic grade they are in. These sanctions may include immediate preventive suspension or loss of regular student status. Additionally, students who bring firearms to school shall be subject to individual assessments and may be required to undergo therapeutic treatment along with their parents or guardians.

## 4.2 GUN-FREE SCHOOLS

Across the world, some governments and communities have opted to establish Gun-Free Zones (GFZ) as a complement to the existing national regulations. The term “Gun-Free Zone” refers to a geographically limited space, where the carrying or possession of firearms by civilians is prohibited to reduce armed violence and to promote public security. The purpose of these zones is to help change social norms and attitudes regarding the use of firearms, thus reducing the alleged need to carry and/or possess them. In addition, alternatives are created, thus challenging the belief that firearms increase security<sup>13</sup>.



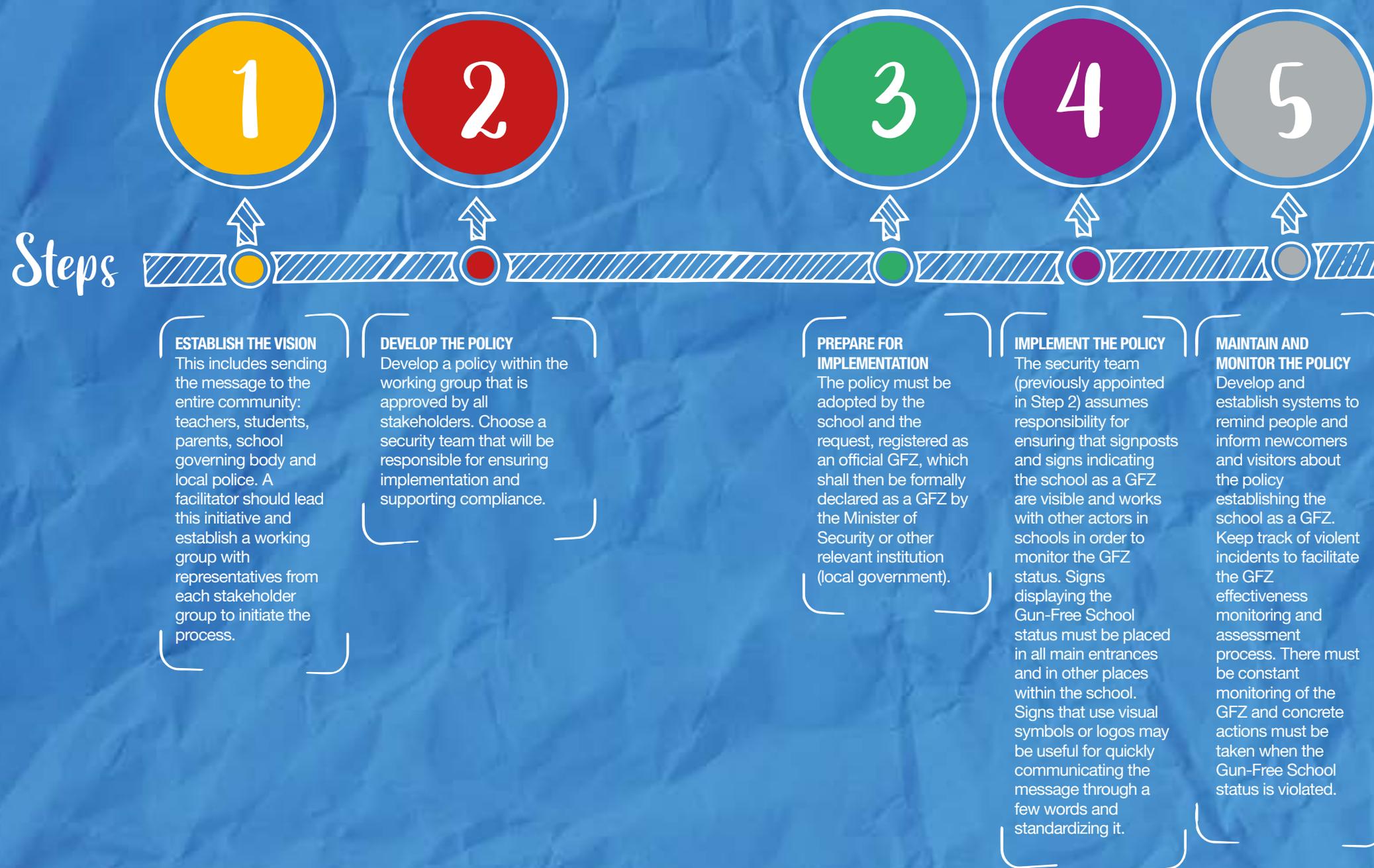
A wide variety of locations, such as businesses, municipal buildings, parks and squares, or entire communities have been declared as GFZ in different countries. Schools can also be declared as GFZ to avoid conflicting interpersonal confrontation with firearms and positively influence individual and collective security perceptions among the members of the student community, especially in educational establishments located in areas with high crime and armed violence rates where firearms are in circulation<sup>14</sup>.

The GFZ are usually subordinate to national legislation or municipal ordinances. The characteristics of the GFZ and their operation may vary in different circumstances, depending on the type of restriction (prohibition on the carrying or possession of firearms), the scope of their coverage (certain areas within a community or an entire town) and their duration (temporary or permanent).

Although there are not yet initiatives in the region that have extrapolated the GFZ to school settings to the extent of South Africa - a pioneer in the establishment of GFZ - its experience can serve as a practical reference for the region. The non-governmental organization Gun Free South Africa (GFSA) that works on armed violence prevention programmes considers that schools are the perfect platform to launch a GFZ given that communities instinctively feel that schools should be non-violent environments. Therefore, it is relatively easy to achieve that community actors and members accept the idea of a gun-free school. In this regard, GFSA has developed a 5-step model to establish Gun-Free Schools.

South African case

CHART 13. GFSA 5-STEP MODEL TO ESTABLISH GUN-FREE SCHOOLS<sup>15</sup>



Schools declared as GFZ in South Africa have been successful, because a school is more than a physical facility, it is a space where messages and attitudes flow to the community to which the school belongs. Once the Gun-Free School message is established, it is easier to implement the concept in nearby environments and facilities. Some schools enforce the GFZ status by using metal detectors and providing secure storage for those who intend to enter with firearms, whereas other schools choose to enforce the GFZ status through community acceptance and trust.

GFSA evaluated the results of schools declared as GFZ. The main result was that the students reported feeling safer in school facilities than in public spaces or buildings. People also reported hearing less shots. There was a notable difference in firearms possession. Students and teachers observed a sharp reduction in the number of other students bringing firearms to school. This led to a climate of greater confidence and an improved atmosphere at school.

To ensure that a Gun-Free School does not remain isolated from the rest of the community, it is important to disseminate the message among youth - beyond the confines of the school - so that they understand that firearms possession is not exclusive to schools, but rather part of a broader social problem.



Source: UNLIREC

The experience of South Africa can easily be replicated in Latin America and the Caribbean. Most schools in the region have infrastructure in space to support the establishment of a GFZ in collaboration with communities and local governments willing to support such initiatives.

Some countries in the region that have developed specific protocols for the presence and use of firearms in schools have incorporated explicit guidelines so that appropriate measures are adopted in order to visibly place signals and signs reminding the school community of the prohibition on the entry, possession and use of firearms in schools.



Source: IANSA

In Costa Rica, the Protocol of Action in situations of detection, possession and use of firearms is explicit in the prohibition, which must be incorporated into the internal regulations of each school, be disseminated among the educational community, and put up in visible places<sup>16</sup>.

A similar provision is included in the Protocol of Educational Communities Councils for the Promotion of Values and Recognition of Early Warnings in Situations of Detection, Possession and Use of Firearms in Nicaragua, which indicates that such prohibition signs must be made visible through banners displayed in strategic locations with a view to promote prevention campaigns.

# 4.3

## FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SECURE STORAGE

As evidenced in Section 3, many students who have brought a firearm to school, regardless of the reasons, did so, because they had access to them in their homes. These firearms usually belong to one of their parents or other close relatives. Therefore, youth do not have to obtain the firearms through intermediaries given that they often find them in their own homes. In many of the incidents recorded, children would not have taken a firearm to school if they had not found them or had not known where they were stored and how to access to them.

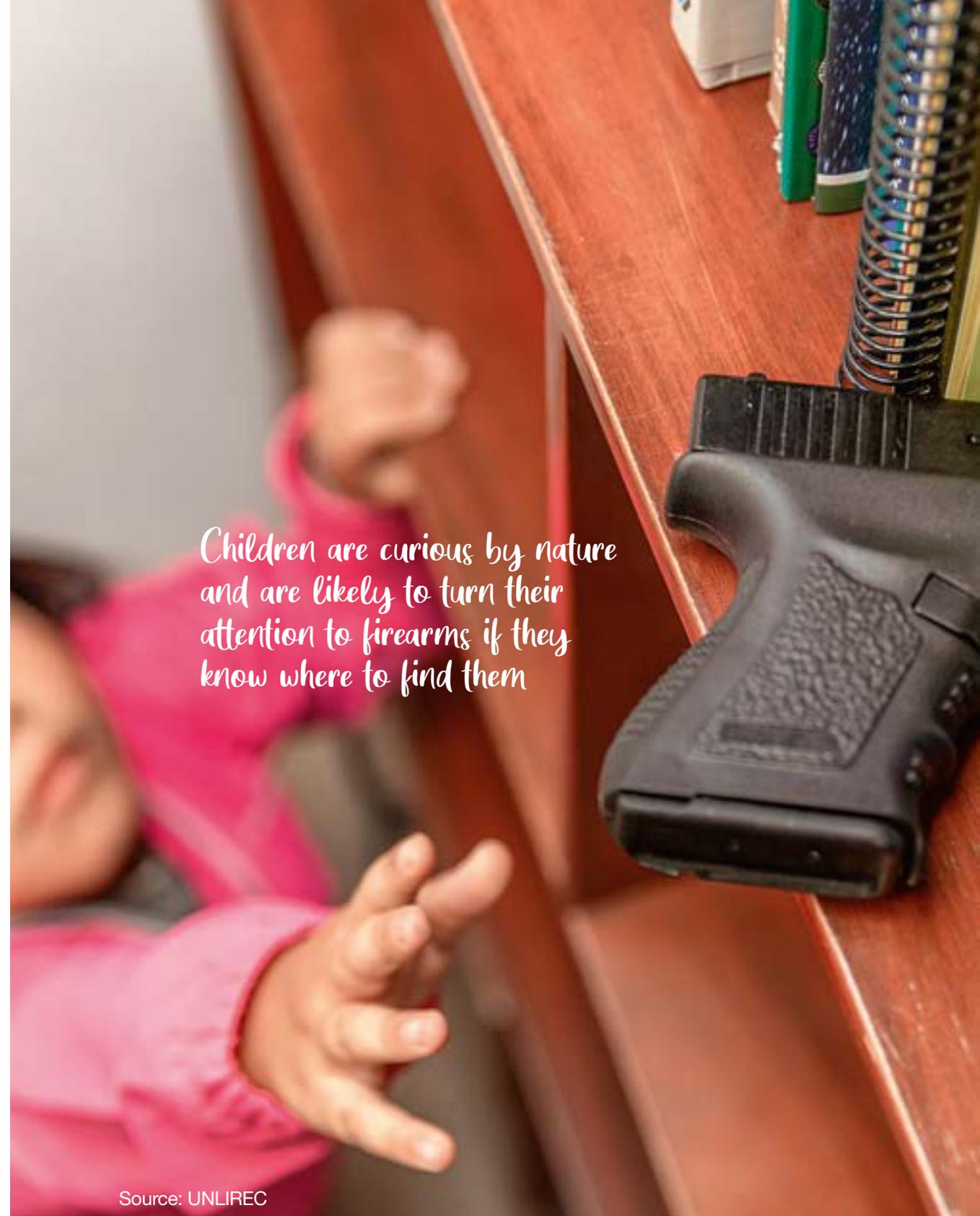


A FIREARM PRESENT IN A HOME IS A RISK FACTOR FOR MINORS WHO, WHEN HANDLING IT, CAN ACCIDENTALLY CAUSE INJURY OR DEATH TO THEMSELVES OR TO THIRD PARTIES. IN ADDITION, IT CAN PROMOTE PREMEDITATED OR IMPULSIVE SUICIDAL TENDENCIES.

Also, children and adolescents can transfer these risks to schools by removing firearms from their homes. Therefore, secure storage measures are a fundamental aspect in preventing C&A from gaining access to firearms and their ammunition.

Children are curious by nature and are likely to turn their attention to firearms if they know where to find them. Parents might think that hiding a firearm under a mattress or in a drawer is sufficient to safeguard them. However, incidents reported in the media indicate that many incidents and accidents can be attributed to negligent storage of firearms in the home. In other words, access by children and youth to firearms at home has an impact on the safety of the school environment, since numerous cases of accidental or intentional shooting in schools can be attributed to improper storage of firearms at home.

Precautions taken at home can reduce the access of C&A to firearms. However, it is not enough to hide firearms at home without adequate security measures to keep children and youth away from them. Secure storage is primarily the responsibility of the owner of the firearm. In some countries, there are rules regarding the storage of firearms that firearms' holders must comply with. These measures must also be accompanied by adult educational programmes on the risks of access to firearms by minors.



*Children are curious by nature and are likely to turn their attention to firearms if they know where to find them*

Source: UNLIREC

In some states of the United States, child access prevention laws require owners to store firearms in a safe place out of the reach of minors, for instance, under lock and key. Failure to comply with these rules is considered a criminal offense<sup>17</sup>. Some laws are quite specific and require that firearms be secured in a closed container or equipped with a tamper-proof mechanical lock or other safety device, so that firearms remain inoperable for anyone other than the owner or other legally authorized user<sup>18</sup>.

**In Latin America and the Caribbean, few countries have incorporated provisions on secure storage into their laws regulating civilian firearms.** For instance, the Firearms Act of Jamaica establishes in its general provisions the grant and issue of licences, certificates and permits, as follows: “no Firearm User’s Licence, Firearm User’s (Special) Permit or Firearm User’s (Employee’s) Certificate shall be granted until the applicant therefore has satisfied the Authority that he has made adequate provision for keeping the firearm in respect of which his application is made in a secure place when it is not being carried or used in accordance with the Licence, Permit or Certificate [...]”<sup>19</sup>.

The regulations in place in Barbados are similar in requiring that those individuals who are issued a firearms licence must: (a) store or keep the firearm or ammunition in a place of safety approved of by the Commissioner; and (b) ensure that the firearm or ammunition is not left in any place unless such firearm or ammunition is properly secured after removal: (i) in a locked receptacle; or (ii) in the case of a firearm, by means of a locking device, in such manner as may be prescribed or the Commissioner may approve<sup>20</sup>. Saint Lucia includes the same provision in its regulations<sup>21</sup>.

In Brazil, decrees have been issued requiring the submission of a statement that the home has a secure storage place with a lock in cases of residences inhabited by children, adolescents or people with mental disabilities<sup>22</sup>, have been issued. However, this does not apply to all categories of firearms and there is currently a legal debate about when this requirement would apply.

A study conducted in 2005 in the United States assessed the link between the child access prevention laws and the reduction of unintentional and self-inflicted injuries or deaths caused by them. The study concluded that storing firearms blocked, unloaded, or separated from ammunition is associated with significant reductions in the risk of unintentional and self-inflicted injuries and deaths among adolescents and childrens<sup>23</sup>. While this study was conducted in the United States, a country with a gun culture that is very different from that of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is still valid to consider the indication that secure storage can be an effective means for reducing children’s access to firearms.

The basic secure storage procedures consist of keeping unloaded firearms in locked places, as well as storing ammunition separate from firearms and under lock and key. There are devices that are used to prevent children or other unauthorized persons from firing firearms, such as internal gun locks, gun padlocks, trigger locks and technologies that the industry is constantly developing<sup>24</sup>. To date, sufficient studies have not been conducted on these devices<sup>25</sup> and there will always be people for and against such products that are placed on the market. While the purpose of this document is not to recommend any product, legal firearm owners are encouraged to consider secure storage measures as safety and security practices in homes occupied by minors.

*Secure guns in homes*

In order to inform legal users of firearms about the advantages of secure storage (especially when this is not included in the firearms laws) awareness programmes are required for parents who are firearms holders. In the United States, these interventions are carried out by health professionals who provide advice on the risks of unsecured firearms within children’s homes or within friends and neighbours’ homes where children go. These sessions are given to parents when they attend their scheduled appointments with paediatricians. During the consultations, printed materials with detailed strategies to reduce the risks associated with firearms, their storage and children’s access to them are also provided. Assessments of these types of projects found that those individuals who had received advice from their doctor were three times more likely to make changes in the manner in which they store firearms in their home. This included ensuring that firearms were routinely unloaded and stored out of the reach of children (to make them inaccessible or unknown to them)<sup>26</sup>.

Logically, it is easier to transfer secure storage practices to legal holders who undergo a licencing process than to illegal ones. The latter do not participate in the dissemination of information on risks and good practices on firearm care. Therefore, parents who possess an illegal firearm may feel inclined to deny that they own it.

Likewise, information on secure storage should be addressed to parents who, due to their work (police, private security guards), hold service firearms that they take home. In this regard, awareness and education campaigns on secure storage measures should go beyond the instances in which only legal owners attend and use other dissemination platforms, such as schools or institutions where parents work.

For instance, public schools in Milwaukee in the United States, at the beginning of the school year in 2017, issued a statement on keeping schools as safe learning spaces. Recognizing that some parents own legal firearms, parents

were asked to be cautious and keep firearms out of the reach of children. The statement contained some suggestions validated by police authorities<sup>27</sup>:

- ② Buy a safe-deposit box or a gun lock/padlock;
- ② Keep firearms locked out of the reach of children;
- ② Store firearms and ammunition in separate places;
- ② Keep keys of firearms and ammunition in separate places.

In conclusion, security measures adopted while storing firearms and their ammunition in a home occupied by children and youth have a direct impact on reducing children's access to firearms, thereby decreasing the associated risks, including firearms possession at school.

Both normative frameworks that regulate civilians' access to firearms and interventions from other sectors, such as health and education, can have a positive impact on preventing and reducing children's access to firearms by promoting secure storage measures.



Source: UNLIREC

## 4.4 PROTOCOLS AND GUIDELINES FOR ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESENCE OF FIREARMS IN SCHOOLS

The phenomenon of firearms in schools includes different aspects: firearms located in a certain area of the school, the possession and carrying of firearms in the school, and the use of firearms by students in school compounds.



TO MEET THE CHALLENGES POSED BY THIS PHENOMENON AND TO KNOW WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO FACE THEM, SOME STATES IN THE REGION HAVE DEVELOPED PROTOCOLS AND/OR SPECIFIC GUIDELINES TO DEAL WITH SITUATIONS THAT ENDANGER THE LIVES OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND THAT THREATEN THE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE OF THE STUDENT COMMUNITY.

.....

The experiences of Costa Rica, Argentina, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama, countries in which specific procedures have been developed to deal with the presence of firearms in schools, are presented below.

### 4.4.1 COSTA RICA

#### **Protocol of Action in situations of detection, possession and use of weapons and firearms (2016)**<sup>28</sup>

As part of the range of resources that have been developed in Costa Rica to deal with conflict at schools, such as bullying, drugs and violence, in general, the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) has a Protocol of Action to deal with situations of detection, possession and use of weapons and firearms, which is made available to primary and secondary schools. This protocol forms part of the National Programme for Coexistence in Schools (Programa Nacional de Convivencia en los Centros Educativos).

This Protocol is put into action if an incident involving weapons and firearms occurs inside schools. Although this protocol favours differentiated interventions for each of these situations, six general steps must be applied by the school community when any of these incidents occurs:

## Step 1

### Detecting the presence of a weapon or a firearm

As a starting point, the protocol highlights the need to differentiate the type of incident depending on whether it is considered:

- a. **Detection:** when a weapon or a firearm is found in the school, without anyone having it in his/her possession, for example, a firearm found in a locker, desk, rubbish dump, etc;
- b. **Possession:** when a person of legal age or a minor carries a weapon or a firearm inside the school;
- c. **Use or threat:** when an armed person intends to use the weapon or the firearm against himself/herself or others.

## Step 2

### Communicating to the school authorities

In any of the above-mentioned situations, the individual who identifies the situation must notify the school authorities.

## Step 3

### Addressing the situation

A series of intervention guidelines have been established according to the type of incident in question:

When a weapon or a firearm is **detected** inside a school, the ensuing procedure consists of notifying the school's principal's office and calling the police emergency system (9-1-1), so that they proceed with its removal. When appropriate, it is recommended that the area be isolated until the authorities arrive. The person in charge (teacher, principal, administrative personnel, school assistant) must verify that the police remove the weapon or the firearm within a maximum of 24 hours. If the police do not show up, the principal - in the presence of two witnesses - must keep the weapon or the firearm in a secure place. Subsequently, the firearm must be delivered to the law enforcement agencies. Afterwards, a report on how the situation was addressed must be prepared.

In the case of an incident involving **possession or suspicion of the carrying of a weapon or a firearm**, in addition to notifying the corresponding authorities, the individuals (parents, legal guardians) responsible for the student involved in the situation must be notified. The person in charge must invite the student to enter a classroom or an office to ask him/her to submit the weapon or the firearm (preferably in the presence of at least two witnesses). If this is not possible, it is recommended that those involved remain in place and apply the evacuation plan to minimize the risk to other students.

At this stage, the protocol states that when the individuals responsible for the student are present, they may request him/her to show and hand over the weapon or the firearm. In case there is no police presence, the person in

charge from the school, in the presence of the individuals responsible for the student, must request the student to hand over the weapon or firearm. If it is handed over, the student must be asked to place it on a firm and smooth surface, "avoiding as much as possible passing it from one hand to another." The protocol indicates that school personnel must never handle firearms, nor any type of weapon that could endanger their physical integrity or that of third parties.

Subsequently, the weapon or the firearm must be stored and guarded until the police arrive. If the police do not show up, the principal - in the presence of two witnesses - must keep it in a secure place. Subsequently, the firearm must be delivered to the law enforcement agencies. At this stage of the process and in order that everything is duly registered, the protocol suggests completing all the corresponding documentation and records, such as the items collection and storage record.

In cases of **possession or carrying of weapons or firearms**, the protocol distinguishes whether the person who is (or presumably is) armed is a minor or of legal age. When it concerns a person of legal age from outside the institution, the police are immediately notified, and the armed person is requested to leave the school immediately. In case of refusal, one must wait for the police to arrive. The protocol recommends keeping students away from the armed person. In case of **use or threat with a weapon or a firearm**, as in the previous situations, an immediate warning is sent to the police emergency number indicating that it is an imminently hazardous situation; school authorities must be informed; the individuals responsible for the student involved are contacted and the evacuation plan is put into action. Immediate medical care must be requested in the event of injured persons. Once the situation is under control, a record detailing the process of action is prepared.

If a crime is suspected, the protocol suggests notifying the Public Prosecutor's Office. When a student must be transferred by officials from the school to other public institutions, such as the National Children's Institute (PANI), the law enforcement agencies, or the Judiciary, a written record documenting the transfer must be completed and, the individuals responsible for the student must be informed thereof.

## Step 4

### Reporting the actions

Regardless of the situation, the person in charge must prepare an action report, which must then be presented to the school's principal so that he/she may consider the appropriate disciplinary measures and actions. If any type of risk factor is identified, such as domestic violence or negligence by the student's parents, the PANI must be notified. To this end, an application form must be prepared to request the intervention of this institution in the event of alleged violation of the child's rights.

## Step 5

### Monitoring the event

Once the situation is under control, a post-incident monitoring must be considered. The protocol indicates that the incident must be treated within a risk context that requires the subsequent action by the school and the corresponding authorities.

## Step 6

### Taking measures/actions to restore school coexistence

In order to address the negative consequences arising from the situation of weapons and firearms in schools, measures must be established to promote assertiveness, strengthen self-esteem, empower people who have been subjected to violence, raise awareness of the damage caused by violence to the educational community among those who promote violence, as well as other measures.

It is important to note that this Protocol, in order to facilitate the implementation of the previous steps, incorporates a series of forms - as part of its annexes - of the different records and reports that must be prepared in order to document the process of action in response to a certain incident. These annexes include: written communication to the school's principal's office before activating the Protocol; the form to call the parents or guardians of the student; the record of transfer (of the student); items collection and storage record; action report for situations involving the presence or use of firearms; PANI intervention request form; the complaint form addressed to the Public Prosecutor's Office in case of suspicion of a crime being committed involving a minor; among other forms.

The Protocol also includes a directory with the contacts of the most relevant institutions, both at the central and provincial levels (Police, Public Prosecutor's Office, Ombudsman, National Children's Institute).

This Protocol of Action is available to all schools nationwide and has become a key tool of public policies for school coexistence and violence prevention inside schools.

In order to share this Protocol with all members of the school community, the MEP has designed and made available a series of graphic and visual resources to ensure that this instrument is widely known. Promotional and didactic materials, such as videos and posters, have been developed using simple language so that the school community is aware of the main steps proposed by the Protocol.



Source: UNLIREC

#### 4.4.2 ARGENTINA

In response to a series of unfortunate events of firearm-related violence taking place in schools in Argentina in recent decades<sup>29</sup>, the debate on how to prevent and respond to this type of situation has become a priority for society and schools. It should be noted that the first responses to this problem were promoted at the provincial and local levels. In 2002, the Bureau of Schools of the Government of Mendoza issued two resolutions dealing specifically with firearms in schools. On the one hand, Resolution 00137 (detailed in item 4.1) introduced the absolute prohibition on firearms in schools, identifying the types of firearms to be controlled and establishing a series of preventive and disciplinary actions for offenders<sup>30</sup>, as well as an annex with the criteria and procedures to be followed by the school's principal when a firearm is found within their jurisdiction. On the other hand, Resolution 00158 of the Government of Mendoza defined the specific protocol to be followed when a firearm is located within the school.

Based on this background and with a greater awareness of the need for the specific tools to prevent and control gun-related incidents, a decade later, in 2012, the Department of Education of the Province of Buenos Aires developed **Orientation guidelines for intervention in rights violations and conflicts at schools**, as a tool for the education inspectors and the institutional teams from the different education levels and modalities in this Province.

#### **Orientation guidelines for intervention in rights violations and conflicts at schools - Government of the Province of Buenos Aires (2014)**<sup>31</sup>

These Guidelines establish a series of procedures and principles for actions with the aim of responding to different conflicts taking place in schools that affect both children and other institutional actors<sup>32</sup>. Both the Guidelines and its Protocol (which appears as an annex) contain a specific module on the presence of firearms and provide a variety of considerations and recommendations in the case of incidents involving students with firearms in schools. Basically, the procedure to be followed in such cases is divided into immediate and subsequent actions.

Specifically, the Guidelines provide a series of actions to be followed when one of the school's personnel is informed by a third party of the alleged or actual presence of a firearm. As part of the Guidelines, the following actions are mentioned:

- Protect C&A and adults present, designate spaces for the students to stay within classrooms accompanied by an adult responsible for the group or someone else from the school<sup>33</sup>.

- Call on the institutional personnel that has the closest relationship with the C&A to try to persuade him/her to hand over the firearm. At the same time, notify the adults responsible for the C&A and the corresponding school authorities (Education Inspectors and District Headquarter).
- Immediately after the firearm is in the possession of the school personnel, it is necessary to call 911. This also applies to cases in which, despite attempts to dissuade the C&A, the latter refuses to hand over the firearm, or when it is an adult wielding a firearm with a threatening attitude towards a member of the school community.
- Police authorities will be responsible for safekeeping the firearm and delivering it to the police station in case an adult provides a firearms registration and claims the weapon.
- Police personnel will not be able to contact the C&A allegedly responsible for the possession of a firearm until a family member or responsible adult arrives at the school.
- Safeguard the identity of the C&A involved by upholding the principle of discretion vis-à-vis the community. Information will only be provided at the request of the participating Judge of Adolescent Criminal Liability.

Subsequently, the following actions must be implemented<sup>34</sup>:

- Inspectors from the community psychology and social pedagogy departments, jointly with the District Headquarters, shall supervise and guide the institutional intervention.
- The option of school guidance counsellors accompanying the C&A and their family in the proceedings with the relevant authority must be considered.
- Interventions must be identified with other community bodies within a framework of co-responsibility in order to safeguard the rights of C&A.
- Review the suitability of the school's environment and promote improvements in safe spaces for reflection and participation of families, teachers and students.

In addition, there are also some guidelines on police procedures and actions in this type of situation, and also on managing confidentiality and the information shared with the media. These guidelines directly link the presence of firearms with the carrying of firearms by the student. It does not include actions to be taken when firearms are found at the school.

These guidelines aim to serve as a management and public policy tool that provides essential direction and protocols for action by schools facing instances of violence and as a resource for ongoing support and consultation for teachers in taking action in the classroom. It is a tool that favours the construction of good practices when faced with this problem.

**Federal Guidelines for Educational Intervention in Complex School-Life Situations - Ministry of Education of Argentina (2014)<sup>35</sup>**

Based on the Guidelines developed in the Province of Buenos Aires, in 2014, the Ministry of Education of the Nation presented the **Federal Guidelines for Educational Intervention in Complex School-Life Situations** as a tool to enable teams of teachers in public and private, early childhood, primary and secondary schools to know what to do and how to intervene in cases of violence in schools.

Similar to the Guidelines of the Province of Buenos Aires, these Federal Guidelines contain and provide specific guidance with respect to firearms, offering an framework of action to be applied before, during and after the incident. The development of these Federal Guidelines was made possible through consultations and meetings of ministerial teams whereby agreements were reached on the intervention procedures proposed by these Guidelines. The 2009 Provincial Guidelines of the Province of La Pampa<sup>36</sup>, among others, were used as input for the development of these Federal Guidelines.

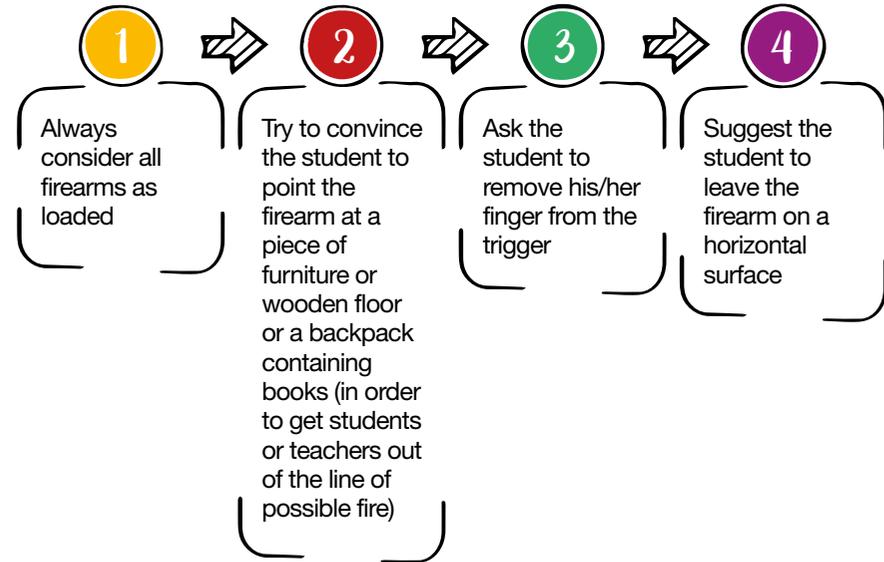
These Guidelines also incorporate some specific recommendations on what to do when a student is suspected of having a firearm at school, following much of the same procedures as the Guidelines of the Province of Buenos Aires, but complementing them with some additional aspects:

Firstly, the student must be persuaded to be taken to a space (such as the school Principal's Office) that allows for isolation from the other students. At the same time, the family (or an adult responsible for the student) and the corresponding authorities must be immediately called for a joint approach. At this stage, while awaiting the arrival of the family and the authorities, it is recommended that school personnel engage in conversation with the student and avoid addressing the situation as a crime. It should rather be made clear that the carrying of firearms is a concern to the school due to the inherent risk involved to him/her and to the institution as a whole.

These Federal Guidelines suggest that the family or the person responsible for the youth be the ones to search among the student's belongings where the firearms is presumably located. If a firearm is found, it must be removed by the corresponding law enforcement agency.

In situations in which a student shows the firearm to a teacher, these Guidelines specify four basic rules:

**CHART 14. BASIC RULES WHEN A STUDENT SHOWS A WEAPON TO THE TEACHER**



Once the above actions have been carried out, the classroom must be evacuated or the student must be removed from the premises. Subsequently, the person in charge must proceed to call the family or person responsible for the student, as well as the police so that they may remove the firearm, and - finally - other relevant institutions for follow-up work with the student.

As part of the subsequent actions to be taken, these Federal Guidelines propose that priority be given to pedagogical work, which is based on the System for Promotion and Comprehensive Protection of Child and Adolescent Rights, and to the vulnerability to which not only the student carrying a firearm, but also his/her classmates and teachers, may be exposed. In this follow-up phase, the importance of networking among the different institutions in post-incident treatment is also highlighted. Health, childhood, justice, and other institutions are included as essential allies in executing this approach.

Primary actions

Subsequent actions

#### 4.4.3 MEXICO

For some years now, the school safety manuals in Mexico have been identifying the presence of firearms in schools as a risk factor that should be addressed. Thus, in 2011, the school safety manual prepared by the Department of Public Education, as part of the guidelines provided for prevention, reaction and care in crisis situations, included confrontations with firearms at school, as well as the presence of a firearm inside the school, whether it is being held by a student or an adult. To this effect, the manual provides recommendations on the actions that must be taken before, during and after such incidents<sup>37</sup>. As well, additional guidance documents have been elaborated at the state level in response to the presence of firearms in schools.

Since its political system is of a federal nature, Mexico has decentralized Secretaries of Education that have their own normative frameworks for school coexistence from which different initiatives and tools to confront the presence of firearms in schools have emerged.



Source: UNLIREC

#### **Protocol of Action in the possession, carrying or use of firearms or drugs in the school environment - Secretary of Education of the State of Guanajuato (2016)**<sup>38</sup>

Within the framework of the law for a coexistence free of violence in schools, this Protocol has been developed with the purpose of anticipating and preparing the school community for possible contingencies that may occur and affect the best interests of C&A.



THE PROTOCOL IS A TOOL THAT PROVIDES GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL MANAGERS AND TEACHERS VIS-À-VIS THE PRESENCE OF DRUGS OR FIREARMS AT SCHOOL (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS).

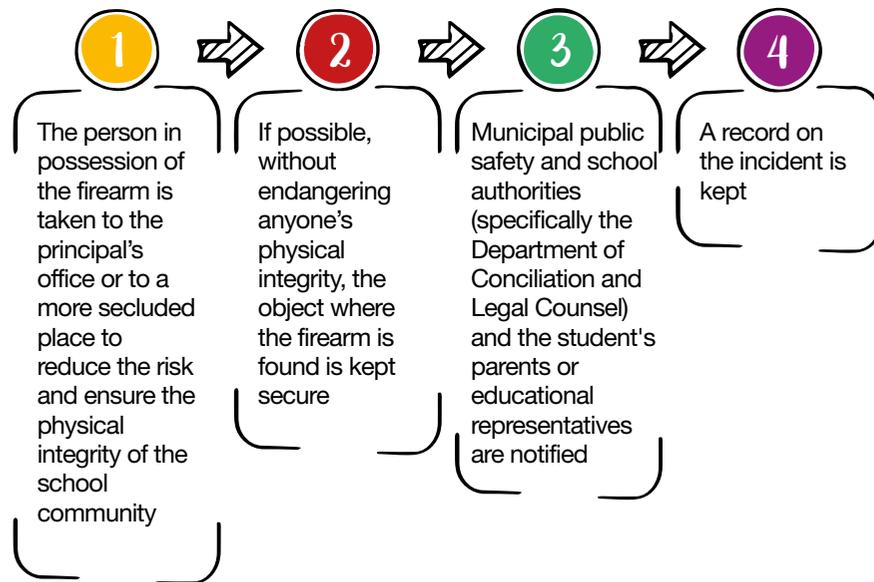
This Protocol was approved in June 2016 by the State Body to Prevent, Address and Eradicate Violence at Schools of the Secretary of Education of the State of Guanajuato. Its application is complemented by the federal, state and municipal regulations governing security and prevention in schools.

Similar to the Costa Rican experience, this Protocol acknowledges distinctions and provides for a differentiated treatment depending on the nature of the incident in question. Thus, the following concepts are differentiated: **possession**, when the firearm is located, for example, in the backpack, lunchbox, or other item; **carrying**, when the firearm is attached to the person's body; and **use**, when the firearm is used for threat or detonation. A few procedures have been defined for each of these situations.



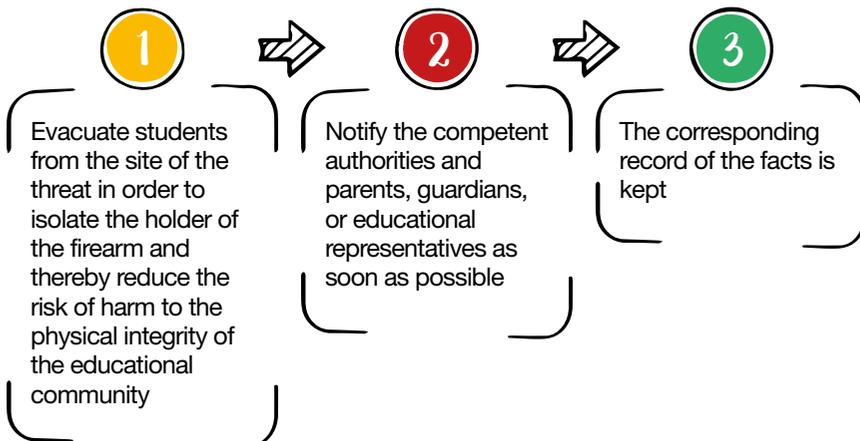
In response to the **possession** of a firearm, the following steps are followed:

**CHART 15. STEPS TO BE TAKEN WHEN CONFRONTED WITH FIREARM POSSESSION**



In response to the **carrying** of a firearm, this Protocol defines the following steps:

**CHART 16. STEPS TO BE TAKEN WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE CARRYING OF A FIREARM**



In the case of an incident involving the **use of a firearm** in the school, as in the previous situations, the authorities and other designated actors should be contacted, and students should be evacuated as far as possible from the site of the threat.

According to the Protocol, in the event of an attack with a firearm, there are two options: (a) shelter the students; or (b) evacuate them.

- If the decision is to **shelter** students, they need to be kept away from the aggressor by safeguarding them in classrooms or rooms, and by placing obstacles by the doors or windows. School personnel may proceed with evacuation as soon as it is possible to remove them from danger.
- If the decision is to **evacuate**, all backpacks, belongings or personal accessories should be left where they are, and the physical integrity of the C&A should be prioritized. Evacuating students not only involves taking them out of the building, but also bringing them to a safe place. The Protocol underlines the importance for all schools to have a school community evacuation and/or shelter plan in place that is “properly designed, researched and tested so that it is possible to react promptly and appropriately during any risk situation<sup>39</sup>.”

This Protocol also states that - in any of the three types of situations mentioned above (possession, carrying or use of firearms) - the school authorities must collaborate unreservedly with the police and other authorities and - depending on the nature of the incident - are obligated to submit appropriate complaints<sup>40</sup>.



IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PROTOCOL OF THE STATE OF GUANAJUATO HAS BECOME A REFERENCE DOCUMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. IN FACT, THE PROTOCOL DEVELOPED SERVED AS REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR A SERIES OF INSTRUMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN RECENT YEARS AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL, SUCH AS THE GUIDE FOR PREVENTING, DETECTING AND RESPONDING TO THE PRESENCE OF FIREARMS IN SCHOOLS, WHICH IS DESCRIBED BELOW.



**Guide for preventing, detecting, and responding to the presence of firearms in schools - Secretary of the Interior (2017)<sup>41</sup>**

This Guide, prepared by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Public Education within the framework of the Action Plan for the Social Prevention of Violence and the Strengthening of School Coexistence, offers a series of

recommendations on how to deal with the presence of firearms in schools. This is a consultation tool for school authorities, students and parents that incorporates basic concepts about firearms, their uses, and the signs that should alert teachers when observing atypical behaviour in students.

This Guide emphasizes the need for the schools' managers, teaching staff, and administrative body to have an action plan in place based on three levels:

- 1. Prevention:** at this level, priority is given to aspects of a more formative nature and to the promotion of positive values, attitudes, and practices. The Guide recommends that schools establish a model for working with parents so they can effectively communicate with their children, as well as reinforce the school as a safe and violent-free space through communication strategies that advocate for the prohibition of firearms on school premises. To promote this work and monitor the presence of firearms, the Guide establishes that collegiate and multidisciplinary working groups - made up of different actors - should be set up.
- 2. Detection:** it is recommended that the school have mechanisms in place to make parents aware of the importance of periodically checking their children's backpacks before leaving home and preventing them from carrying prohibited items, such as firearms. At this level, only in extraordinary cases should the checking be carried out at school, and only after an evaluation by the school authorities in strict adherence with human rights laws<sup>42</sup>.
- 3. Response:** the corresponding plan or protocol is put into action when the presence of a firearm in the school is suspected, reported, or confirmed. At this level, it is recommended that the entire school community be familiar with the protocol of action for these specific cases.

In addition, this Guide provides a series of recommendations and steps to be followed in the different situations that the schools may face (possession, carrying or use). These guidelines, which to a large extent coincide with the provisions of the action protocol applied in Guanajuato, are complemented by certain specific actions, such as the following:

- ⊗ When a student carries a firearm, the school authority must take care not to scold, judge, or attempt to remove the firearm by force (avoid aggressive movements).
- ⊗ If the offender is persuaded to surrender the firearm, he/she should immediately be placed in a safe area and kept in sight, because - aware of the vulnerable situation they find themselves in - may wish to incur damage.
- ⊗ The teacher or director must contact the local Office of the Attorney General for the Protection of C&A in order to ensure the full restoration of vulnerable or restricted rights.

Among other measures recently promoted in Mexico at the federal level as part of the National Action Plan for the Social Prevention of Violence and the Strengthening of School Coexistence, and with the purpose of strengthening interventions to prevent the entry of weapons into schools, other technical documents have also been prepared. This includes the **Recommendations for the design and establishment of strategies for the prevention and detection of the entry of firearms into basic education schools**<sup>43</sup> applicable to both public and private schools.

This consultative reference material guides local school authorities in designing and/or updating protocols and other types of instruments that are being promoted. As part of its content, this document identifies several rights and principles that should be considered in the development of such instruments. It is important that the protocols to be developed are based on guaranteeing the full exercise, respect, protection and promotion of the human rights of C&A, as well as prioritizing the school as a peaceful and safe place, free from violence, within a context of co-responsibility and co-participation by the different actors making up the school community and those institutions linked to the protection of C&A rights.

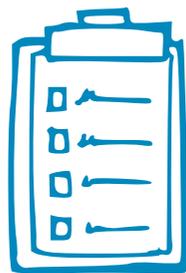
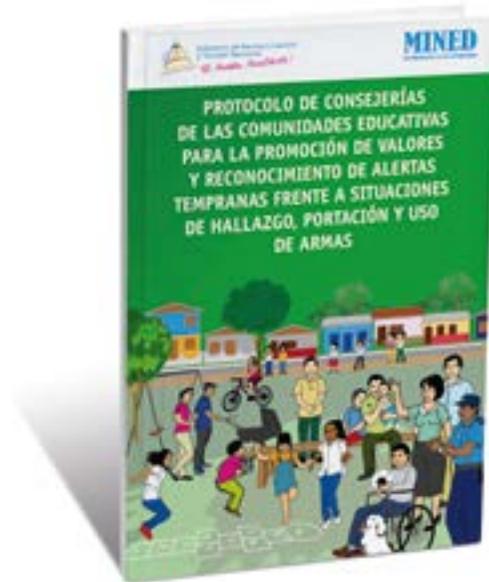
With respect to firearms, it is recommended, for example, that restrictions and disciplinary measures against the carrying or use of firearms on school premises must be incorporated into school coexistence and security rules. The importance of considering that violent acts with firearms constitute exceptions that should be prevented and dealt with in a timely (and differentiated) manner, offering dignified treatment without discrimination; and the need to carry out diagnoses regarding the carrying of firearms in these environments, among other aspects.

**This document also emphasizes the need for the entire educational community to support the prevention and detection of firearms on school premises.** To this end, differentiated responsibilities are defined for each of the actors and institutions that form part of the school community: local school authorities, principals, teachers, administrative personnel, parents and guardians, among others.

Finally, as in the Guanajuato Protocol, it is recommended that multidisciplinary groups be set up to develop and monitor protocol implementation and other measures being promoted. These groups should be made up of at least one representative of the state and/or municipal education authority, and of the regional delegation of the Department of Public Education; as well as a parent representing the Municipal Council for Social Participation in Education, and a representative of the municipal body or any Office of the Attorney General of C&A protection.

#### 4.4.4 NICARAGUA

In 2018, the Ministry of Education of Nicaragua, within the framework of the Councils of Educational Communities<sup>44</sup> and as part of a series of tools aimed at ensuring the well-being of students and the safety of schools, drew up the **Protocol of the Councils of Educational Communities for the promotion of values and recognition of early warnings in the event of detection, carrying and use of weapons**<sup>45</sup>, applicable to public schools of pre-, primary and secondary education.



THIS PROTOCOL PROVIDES A SERIES OF RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY, IN GENERAL, TO ADDRESS THIS PHENOMENON IN A TIMELY MANNER. AS PART OF ITS CONTENT, THIS PROTOCOL PROVIDES A SERIES OF KEY CONCEPTS, AMONG WHICH THE FOLLOWING STAND OUT: THE DEFINITION OF WEAPONS; TYPES OF WEAPONS, INCLUDING FIREARMS AND HOMEMADE WEAPONS; AND THE DEFINITION OF DETECTION, POSSESSION AND USE OF FIREARMS.

#### Step 1

##### Detection of firearms

- ⦿ Detection is based on the observation and active listening of warning signs at school entry and exit, during breaks, recreational activities, cultural and sports activities or when a specific conflict arises among school members.
- ⦿ Detection may also take place if a member of the school reports the situation or if the weapon is found inside the school.

#### Step 2

##### Communication to the school principal

- ⦿ Anyone who detects or receives information about a situation of possession or use of firearms must immediately report it to the school principal.
- ⦿ School management prepares a written incident report and immediately sends it to the corresponding district or departmental delegation of the Ministry of Education (MINED), which in turn must report it to its headquarters. At the same time, management notifies the Chief of National Police responsible for the relevant sector.
- ⦿ At this stage, school management holds a meeting with those involved in cases of detection, possession and use of firearms to promote reflection and commitment to avoid harm to themselves and others. In addition, a meeting will be held with the Representative Commission of the Councils of the Educational Communities, the Chief of National Police from the relevant sector and the family members of the student involved to establish a prevention plan. A record is drawn up with the commitments and agreements to provide support and follow-up to the student involved.

#### Step 3

##### Communication to the family

- ⦿ In all situations, the family or persons responsible for the child, adolescent or young person involved are summoned to come to the school immediately to inform them of the events that occurred and to offer their support (if applicable) in getting the student to hand over the firearm. Then, a letter of commitment is drawn up with the student and the family.

#### Step 4

##### Educational support

- ⦿ This support should be carried out in a comprehensive manner through awareness talks on prevention and on engaging students involved in cases of firearm possession or use. The family shall participate in these spaces.
- ⦿ The responsibility of the Educational Institution is to guarantee that the student is involved in all the academic activities and regularly attends classes.
- ⦿ If the student faces legal charges, a differentiated evaluation process is established, making use of short tests, exams, homework assignments



and small-scale educational projects. In these cases, it is advisable to promote an atmosphere of respect and solidarity for the student involved, encouraging him/her to participate in socio-cultural activities that take place at the school.

**Step 5**

**Referral and follow-up**

- ⦿ Should a situation arise in which a firearm is used, and people are injured, an ambulance must be called and the injured person transferred - under the responsibility of the principal - and the family and police must be informed as part of the complaint process.
- ⦿ School management will coordinate with the police to offer follow-up as part of the support process.
- ⦿ The classroom teacher or guide will follow up on the student's behaviour, maintaining constant communication with the family to prevent other situations of detection, possession and use of firearms.

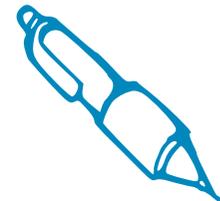
It should be noted that this Protocol includes several qualitative aspects as **warning signs that the school community should consider to prevent incidents of students with firearms in schools.** Some of these signs include the following:

warning signs

- ⦿ When a student carries a protruding sack in which he or she can carry a firearm.
- ⦿ Difficulties in walking are observed, as if the student were uncomfortable taking steps.
- ⦿ The student makes gestures and presents a challenging attitude and behaviour, making verbal threats and intimidating his or her classmates or teachers.
- ⦿ The student is anxious or nervous when approached by a teacher, inspector or principal.
- ⦿ The student clings to the backpack or sack.
- ⦿ Violent student behaviour or conduct during breaks, entry and exit times, recreational, cultural, and sports-related activities.

**4.4.5 PANAMA**

Among the measures promoted in recent years by the Ministry of Education of Panama to address the various risk factors present in schools, the Protocol for detecting, addressing, referring and following-up on cases of children and adolescents in particularly difficult circumstances within the Panamanian education system was established in 2018<sup>46</sup>.



THIS PROTOCOL IS AIMED AT MANAGERIAL STAFF, TEACHERS, COUNSELLORS, TECHNICAL STAFF OF PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL OFFICES AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICE GROUPS OF ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE. AMONG THE SET OF SITUATIONS AND RISK FACTORS THAT ARE COVERED IN THIS PROTOCOL, A SERIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS ARE PROVIDED IN RELATION TO "THE POSSESSION AND USE OF FIREARMS IN AND AROUND SCHOOLS"<sup>47</sup>.



In this regard, the Protocol provides a series of criteria and guidelines for detecting, addressing, and following up on events involving firearms presence and possession (including sharp weapons, firearms, among others). The most relevant aspects of each of these stages are outlined as follows:

**Detection**

- At this stage, the Protocol identifies criteria to detect firearms at school:
- ⦿ Declaration of firearm possession, made by the student who is in possession of it, or by another student who is aware of it.
  - ⦿ Detection of the firearm through direct observation by a member of the educational community.
  - ⦿ Presumption of firearm possession following its use at school or in its vicinity, deduced from the nature of the victim's injuries or from the sound of shots fired, or from any other evidence that gives rise to suspicion.

**Addressing and following-up**

Once the incident of firearm possession is detected, the safety of the members of the educational community must be guaranteed by carrying out actions that reduce the opportunities to use the firearm. As a starting point, this Protocol highlights the importance of recording the incident. To this end, there is a form for detecting, addressing, referring and following up on cases involving firearm possession in or near schools. The information recorded on the form should include confirmation of the type of firearm and its parts and components, including ammunition:



**FIGURE 2: SUMMARY OF THE FORM FOR DETECTING, ADDRESSING, REFERRING AND FOLLOWING UP ON CASES OF SUSPECTED WEAPONS POSSESSION AND/OR USE IN OR NEAR THE SCHOOL**

Check the box(es) of the indicator(s) you observed

---

Attended school in possession of the following without justification nor authorization:

<input type="checkbox"/> Blunt object (stone, hammer, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Firearm (handmade, revolver, pistol, shotgun, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Puncturing object (nail, awl, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Parts of a firearm
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp object (multiuse blade, utility knives, shaving blades, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ammunition
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharp weapon (knife, dagger, machete, etc.)	

Source: Ministry of Education of Panama

Once the event is recorded, the procedure below is followed:

- The suspected or confirmed firearm carrying situation must be reported to the school principal, the parent or guardian of the carrier and to the nearest police unit, preferably a C&A Police unit.
- In the case of an armed student, the carrier of the firearm should be asked to go to an office where he/she can be kept isolated from the rest of the school community until the firearm can be removed by the police.
- In these situations, there is also a requirement for school personnel to assume, for safety reasons, that the firearm is real, that it uses live ammunition, and that the firearm is in working condition.
- If the carrier refuses to move to an isolated office, he/she is asked to remain where he/she is (room, courtyard, corridor or other unit), while his/her schoolmates and school staff are asked to evacuate in a preventive manner until the police can safely remove the firearm.
- It should be noted that in the event that a student is presumed to be carrying a firearm, the regulations in force that establish the internal regime of public and private schools allow for the inspection of students' belongings, as well as for body searches, to the extent that the latter is carried out by personnel of the same sex as the inspected student<sup>48</sup>.
- In cases in which teachers or other school personnel remove firearms from students, they should simply place these firearms in a safe place in the school, for subsequent surrender to the police. It is further stated that under no circumstances should these objects be handled or taken out of the school, even with the intention of handing them over to a police unit.
- Once the firearm is handed over by the student, it is kept in a safe place and handed over to the police specialized in C&A who will elaborate and submit the police report to the corresponding judicial authority<sup>49</sup>.
- Subsequently, follow-up is requested from the psycho-pedagogical office, guidance department, discipline committee or teacher-counsellor.

Similar to the protocols and guides described in this section, as part of the follow-up provided to the case, there is a multidisciplinary office to provide guidance and support to the student(s) who are affected by the situation. To this end, teams of facilitators have been established, made up of managers, technical staff and the institutions involved in C&A protection.

#### 4.4.6 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although the protocols and guides presented in this section respond to different contexts and realities, it is possible to note that their approaches, principles of action and procedures share certain characteristics, as well as relevant aspects that are worth highlighting for the design and strengthening of these types of tools:

##### Public policies

The protocols and guidelines outlined in this study have been drawn up in accordance with the provisions of national regulations on the promotion, protection and defence of human rights of C&A, as well as of laws and policies on education, school coexistence and provisions aimed at combating and preventing violence in all its forms in schools. In other words, the protocols are not isolated initiatives, but rather respond to a broader public policy or national strategy on the prevention of school violence and the promotion of a culture of peaceful coexistence in the school community, based on which special attention is paid to the prevention of firearm violence in schools.

##### Approaches

The approaches from which the protocols have been developed are based on the best interests of C&A, and the respect, protection and promotion of their human rights, avoiding judging or criminalizing the minor in question. From this perspective, there are similarities in the approach when a student who is a minor is armed. The protocols adopt as a starting point that the armed minor is in a vulnerable<sup>50</sup> situation and that this approach must take precedence over mere punitive responses.

On the other hand, the protocols emphasize the importance of the actions to be taken after the incident and the follow-up to be done both with the student who originated the situation and with the rest of the student community. Likewise, as part of the proposed approach and follow-up, the protocols also promote aspects of gender-awareness, respect for differences, coexistence and a culture of peace.

##### Differentiated responses

The outlined instruments set out specific procedures and guidelines according to the incident in question. The protocols of Costa Rica and Mexico are very similar in distinguishing between situations of detection, carrying, possession, use and threat with firearms. In Argentina, the Federal Orientation Guide provides a series of general guidelines based on three moments in time: before, during and after the firearm-related incident.

However, regardless of the situation in question, all the protocols coincide with the need to guarantee the physical integrity of the school community in general; to convene the public forces, parents and, as appropriate, other institutions; and to document the process and provide psycho-pedagogical follow-up to the incident.

These procedures provide step-by-step actions to be taken when dealing with different scenarios involving firearms on campus. Depending on each case, the steps must be taken by the management and administrative staff, teachers, as well as by the students themselves, as appropriate.

With respect to the role of the police or other law enforcement agencies, which are the first institution to be notified in the event of a case involving firearms, the protocols and guidelines coincide that their intervention must be adjusted so as to uphold human rights. In this regard, the experiences presented indicate that when police intervention is required, there should always be an adult accompanying the student during the intervention, until his or her parents or guardians arrive.

Furthermore, the protocols and guidelines emphasize that these procedures should be handled with due discretion and confidentiality to safeguard the integrity and privacy of the individuals involved.

### Co-responsibility and inter-institutional coordination

The involvement and participation of different members of the school community (principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents) and of other institutions is vital to prepare, implement and ensure a comprehensive approach in dealing with the presence of firearms in schools. To this end, the protocols presented place special importance on the participation not only of education and police authorities, but also of institutions specialized in C&A, human rights offices, prosecutors' offices, among other relevant actors, so that they can follow the corresponding process and ensure respect for and comprehensive protection of the human rights of C&A<sup>51</sup>.

In fact, the development of the protocols, with variations in each country, involved various government sectors, such as education, justice, government, public security, health, as well as other non-state sectors, such as unions or parents' associations.

### Follow-up actions

Regardless of the situation addressed, the tools presented include a follow-up stage or phase (or subsequent measures) as part of the procedure for the student who was found with the firearm, for his or her schoolmates and for the school community as a whole. In every case, a comprehensive follow-up is established, including psychological support for both the student and his or her family.

In these situations, the Federal Guide in Argentina states that - after the customized treatment received by the student who was in possession of the firearm - it is important to remember that "the presence of the firearm is not an isolated event in the relationships, bonds and coexistence that characterize the students of that community and therefore the case should not be treated in isolation from the group in which it occurred". To this end, workshops and full-day sessions of reflection and group exchange are proposed.

In Costa Rica, similar activities are carried out to restore coexistence. It is recommended that qualified staff are involved to guide these activities. This process of awareness and prevention of future incidents implies the involvement of the school community to ensure the restoration of coexistence and to reinforce the school's main values.

In sum, the protocols and action guidelines for dealing with the presence and use of firearms in schools are one of the most concrete measures for dealing with this type of situation that puts the entire school community at risk. In countries with such tools, these protocols and guidelines have become managerial and consultative tools useful for school authorities, students and parents to know how to act and prevent incidents involving firearms inside schools. It should be noted that as part of the implementation of these tools, socialization processes have been developed so that all members of the school community are aware of them. In addition, they have gradually been complemented by other education and awareness-raising initiatives aimed at strengthening schools as spaces for peaceful coexistence, in which firearms have no place.



# 4.5

## TOOLS FOR INFORMATION COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

In recent decades, in order to delve deeper into the dynamics of school violence and the different factors associated with it, a number of specialized studies and diagnoses have been carried out in various countries of the region. In addition, a series of resources and tools have been created to collect information and statistics to strengthen decision-making processes and responses to the violence that takes place in schools.

From these responses and mechanisms, various resources have been identified through which some countries collect and manage information on the phenomenon of firearms in schools. Although no specialized studies or tools were found on this issue, **the experiences described below can serve as a guiding framework on how to incorporate and address the firearms variable within the framework of mechanisms and/or information systems on school violence that are already in place in many countries of the region:**

### 4.5.1 COMPLAINT PLATFORM

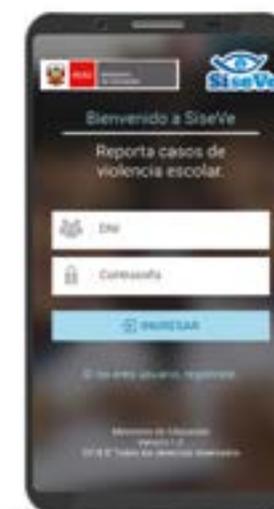
Taking into account the levels of under-registration (dark figure) that could characterize the dynamics of school violence, some countries - with the help of technology - have established tools and resources to facilitate filing complaints of events and situations that affect coexistence in schools.

#### Peru

Since 2013, the Ministry of Education has been implementing the Specialized System for Attention to Cases of School Violence (**Sistema Especializado en la Atención de Casos de Violencia Escolar**), known as SiseVe. This virtual platform allows any member of the school community to anonymously report any type of school violence incident through an online form available on the platform's web portal, as well as through the application for Android mobile phones (see Figure 3)<sup>52</sup>.

Through this platform, students, teachers, parents, and any member of the school community- who have been direct or indirect victims (or witnesses) - may report any type of school violence incident, including events in which firearms are involved.

FIGURE 3. SÍSEVE PLATFORM (MOBILE APP)



Source: SiseVe - Government of Peru mobile App through which the public can register and report incidents of school violence.

Incident reporting form on the SiseVE mobile app, asking for geographical data of the school. In order to make the complaint effective, the user must record his/her name, last name and personal identification number. Once that information is completed, a form must be filled out that collects information about the school; details of the alleged victim(s); information about the alleged perpetrator(s), as well as the type of violence suffered or witnessed (in case someone witnesses the incident).

On this last aspect, the form includes a field in which the complainant is asked about the type of violence experienced. Here, the complainant must mark the type of violence he or she was a victim of or a witness to, as well as report the frequency of such violence. As shown in Figure 4, a category for violence with weapons is included in the type of violence.

FIGURE 4. COMPLAINT FORM. SÍSEVE PLATFORM

4. Violence (Required):

What type of violence did you suffer or witness? You can select more than one option

Type of violence	Frequency
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical	In the last month < To Select
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	In the last month < To Select
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual	In the last month < To Select
<input type="checkbox"/> Psychological	In the last month < To Select
<input type="checkbox"/> Through internet and/or phone	In the last month < To Select
<input type="checkbox"/> With firearms	In the last month < To Select
<input type="checkbox"/> Theft	In the last month < To Select

Source: SiseVE online form

While only a generic category on type of weapons is included in this section, in the next field of the form, the complainant can provide additional details of the case, indicating whether the incident involved firearms<sup>53</sup>, bladed weapons or any other relevant information.

There is also a field for the complainant to state the reasons or causes for which he or she considers the event to have occurred. Once this information is completed, the system automatically provides a series of guidelines and indications on what to do about the reported violence and a list of relevant protection establishments, such as Municipal Defenders of C&A, police stations, health facilities and some suggestions to prevent similar victimization. The platform generates a code for each reported incident, allowing the complainant to verify the status of their case (i.e. if it was attended to or rather referred to the corresponding authorities).

It should be noted that since the implementation of SiseVe, the Ministry of Education has strengthened the processes of registration, attention and follow-up that it grants to cases of school violence through the work coordinated with the Regional Education Directorates and the Local Education Management Units and other State institutions<sup>54</sup>.

**Colombia**

A similar platform is in place in Bogota. Since 2010, the Department of Education of the District has implemented the **Alert System**, a technological tool that allows all public schools and a percentage of private schools<sup>55</sup> to report and monitor situations of alleged violation of human, sexual and reproductive rights of children and young people that occur inside or outside schools (either in the family, social or educational environment).

**FIGURE 5. ALERT SYSTEM - DISTRICT OF BOGOTA**



Source: Alert System <sup>56</sup>

This system groups the situations affecting the school climate into six main modules: abuse and violence; accident rate; drug use; suicidal behaviour; learning disorders; and early maternity and paternity. Within the abuse and violence module, it is possible to report, among other facts, the possession of weapons<sup>57</sup>.

Unlike the platform implemented in Peru, which allows any member of the educational community to report violence in schools, the Alert System of the district of Bogota has restricted access. The Secretary of Education provides an access code to each school through its president (or director) who, in turn, administers it or delegates it to the professional in charge of school guidance, who, in turn, is responsible for keeping records of the different events affecting the school climate and coexistence in the school<sup>58</sup>.

This type of technological platform has not only made it easier for school community members to report any type of incident that occurs in the schools, but also allows authorities to have real-time diagnoses and timely information on the various problems taking place in schools. **In recent years, thanks to these type of tools, the authorities have been able to detect the presence and use of firearms as a problem that is present in the schools of the region.**



Source: UNLIREC

### 4.5.2 RECORDS OF INCIDENTS

Some countries collect and process information on the phenomenon of firearms in schools through mechanisms of recording incidents and statistical compendiums that serve to periodically monitor different variables related to school climates and violence in schools.

In the Province of Buenos Aires, between 2013 and 2015, the Directorate of Community Psychology and Social Pedagogy coordinated a series of quarterly surveys on conflict situations and rights violations in the 135 educational districts of that province at the pre-, primary and secondary levels, including technical, agricultural, physical education, artistic education, special education and community psychology, among other modalities and institutions<sup>59</sup>.

Through a form, which must be completed by each school, information is collected on different situations that have been registered in schools. The problems that schools can report range from situations of violence in family contexts, sexual abuse, violence in the school environment to deaths, suicides, and drug use, among others. As shown in Table 3, among the violence-related problems that take place in schools, a subcategory on the presence of weapons has been included.

It should be noted that these surveys, as well as the form used, are based on the “Orientation Guide for Intervention in Conflict Situations and Violation of Rights in the School Setting” referred to in section 4.4.2.

Every three months, the district and regional education headquarters collect the forms from the schools and consolidate the information on the problems reported on by the different educational levels. Once the information on the problems requiring intervention has been consolidated, these inputs are sent to the appropriate authorities. Subsequently, authorities consolidate all the information on situations requiring intervention, which is then sent to the main office of the Provincial Directorate of Educational Administration for follow-up.

Argentina

TABLE 3. FORM USED TO REPORT CONFLICTS

**FORM A**  
**General Directorate of Culture and Education**  
**Sub-secretary of Education**  
**Department of Community Psychology and Social Pedagogy**  
**Quarterly survey of conflicts: institutional summary**

Region: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Modality supervisor CP and SP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Level: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Educational institution: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Period: March-April-May; June-July-August; September-October-November

Problems that require intervention	Number of situations
1. Domestic violence and child abuse	0
2. Presumption of sexual abuse	0
2a. Intrafamilial	0
2b. Extrafamilial	0
2c. At school	0
2d. In the media	0
3. Violence in schools	0
3a. Violence in the strict sense	0
3b. Transgression	0
3c. Harassment	0
3d. Presence of weapons	0
3e. Violence by an adult of the institution towards C&A	0
3f. Violence towards the teachers	0
3f1. Between adults of the educational institution	0
3f2. Violence towards a teacher by C&A	0
3f3. Violence towards a teacher by a parent/legal guardian or other	0
4. Deaths	0
4a. Death of a student	0
4b. Death of a school staff member	0
4c. Death of a student at school	0
4d. Death of a school staff member in school	0
5. Student suicides	0
6. Attempt to commit suicide	0
7. C&A with street life experience	0
8. Child labour	0
9. Missing C&A	0
10. Psychoactive substances	0
10a. Presence in schools	0
10b. Use	0
10c. Sale in schools	0
11. Children in trafficking situations	0
12. Others	0
Total	0

\*\* The values in red and orange cells are generated automatically. No need to enter data here.

Source: Government of the Province of Buenos Aires and UNICEF, 2014

## Costa Rica

In **Costa Rica**, since 2006, the Office of Institutional Planning of the Ministry of Education, as part of the statistics it collects at the national level vis-à-vis school coexistence and violence, also records the number of students found with firearms at the different grades, levels and types of educational settings: preschool education; I and II cycles; III cycle and diversified education; and night schools<sup>60</sup>.

Akin to the experience of the Province of Buenos Aires, this information is collected through instruments distributed to each educational institution nationwide at the beginning and end of each school year. These records and other collected data constitute key inputs for decision-making processes and subsequent qualitative and quantitative studies pertaining to the Costa Rican educational system<sup>61</sup>.

### 4.5.3 OBSERVATORIES

Specialized observatories on school violence represent additional resources that the educational sectors at the governmental level and other social actors have established to generate timely and reliable information on the various phenomena occurring in schools. In general, these observatories are dedicated to the study, collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical data and key information on climate, coexistence, and violence in schools.

#### Argentina

As part of their work agenda, some observatories have been monitoring and generating information about firearms in schools. One such case is the **Argentine Observatory on Violence in Schools**, established in 2004 by the Argentine Ministry of Education in conjunction with the National University of San Martín, in response to widespread concern about violence in schools, which became more pronounced in the years following the shooting at the secondary school in Carmen de Patagones<sup>62</sup>.

Since its establishment, one of the main objectives of this Observatory was to install frameworks for reflection, analysis and production of information and knowledge about problematic situations arising in the school environment. This was achieved through the development of a series of qualitative and quantitative studies on violence in schools, the establishment of a network of experts in the field and the promotion of coexistence and the construction of democratic educational spaces<sup>63</sup>.

As part of its research agenda, this Observatory paid particular attention to the complexity of factors impacting violence in schools, including the presence and use of firearms in schools. This variable has been addressed in the statistical

surveys on school climate, violence and conflict carried out by the Observatory since 2005, in which data is collected on students' perceptions of the different manifestations of violence they face.

#### El Salvador

With a different format and scope than the Argentine Observatory on Violence in Schools, since 2015, the Planning Directorate of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in El Salvador has been preparing the MINED Observatory every year, which consists of a report containing statistical data on different areas in more than 5,000 subsidized schools in the country<sup>64</sup>. The main source of information for this Observatory is the opinion of principals of both public and private educational institutions in rural and urban areas nationwide. A form is used to consult (principals) on general aspects ranging from the location of the school, its infrastructure, capacity, management, information on current social programmes and their coverage, and on aspects related to the contexts of violence in educational communities<sup>65</sup>.

On these latter aspects, this Observatory collects information on types, modalities, and prevalence of violence within schools, as well as on other crimes and problems within the schools, including the presence of firearms. This problem is identified as part of the set of social risk factors that most affect the educational community. Specifically, principals must report annually if the internal security of schools has been affected - among other factors - by the possession of firearms. For example, the Observatory, in 2016, identified that more than 5% of schools (of the 5,132 included in the sample for that year) reported being affected by firearm possession, as shown in the table below:

**TABLE 4. INTERNAL SECURITY OF SCHOOLS AFFECTED BY RISK FACTORS (EL SALVADOR, 2016)**

Risk factor	Quantity	%	Risk factor	Quantity	%
Gangs	1420	27.67	Extortions	413	8.05
Robbery	950	18.51	Firearm possession	294	5.73
Drugs	868	16.91	Rape	134	2.61
Thefts	867	16.89	Human trafficking	95	1.85
Carrying of bladed weapons	508	9.90	Other	156	3.04

Source: MINED Observatory (2016)

This Observatory also records information on weapons when principals are asked to indicate the risk factors in the communities where the schools are located. Among the set of risk factors that can be reported, firearms stand out<sup>66</sup>. All this information collected through these questionnaires is useful to the authorities responsible for the different programs and projects executed by MINED. In fact, this type of risk factor, such as firearm possession in schools, is one of the variables taken into account in the Prioritization Index on Educational Centres, a tool that serves to focus and prioritize schools that demand greater attention.

Therefore, it is possible to note how useful this type of tool is in strengthening decision-making processes and in formulating concrete responses to the various problems present in schools, such as firearms, which is one of the variables surveyed in this type of observatory.

#### 4.5.4 SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

Surveys have also become fundamental tools for diagnosing violence in schools. In recent years, a series of surveys have been carried out in different countries of the region with the aim of finding out the perception of students and other members of the school community vis-à-vis school climate, levels of coexistence and violence in schools.

Surveys provide data on frequencies, prevalence, trends, causes, effects, and other relevant information to understand the complex dynamics of violence in schools. While it is possible to identify a variety of such surveys in the region, not all of them address the firearms phenomenon.

However, those surveys that do address firearm issues as part of their set of questions are characterized by their heterogeneous methodological approach. These surveys focus primarily on whether students have entered or been in possession of firearm in schools, as well as on identifying levels of firearms exposure and victimization in these settings. There are also other surveys that seek to go beyond firearms possession and victimization by attempting to collect more information on this issue. Some examples of surveys and questionnaires are found below.

#### Argentina

As noted above, some surveys focus primarily on identifying whether students have entered or been in possession of a firearm at school. At this level, we can mention the Quantitative Surveys on Violence in Schools from the students' point of view, carried out in Argentina within the framework of the National Assessment Program (ONE, in Spanish), and coordinated by the National Directorate of Information and Assessment of Educational Quality of the National Ministry of Education<sup>67</sup>.

In addition to the tests carried out by ONE to investigate what and how much students learn at school, in 2005, 2007 and 2010, a questionnaire developed

by the Argentine Observatory of Violence in Schools was applied with the aim of collecting statistical data on students' perceptions of violence in schools. Through these questionnaires and with a sample of about 50,000 students in 2nd, 3rd and 5th year of high school in public and private schools nationwide, they sought to gauge the opinion about conflict and violence experienced in schools. Some closed-ended questions and simple choice questions regarding firearms were included as part of the survey to students. It is important to highlight that in these surveys, the firearms phenomenon was addressed individually, dedicating a specific section to it as part of the different situations of violence experienced in schools.

The three surveys corresponding to these three years compiled information to identify the frequency with which students brought firearms to school. In the questionnaire from 2007, in addition to inquiring as to whether the students were in possession of firearms, the students were asked if they had ever seen another student go to school with a firearm.

These three surveys are considered the first systematic approaches to the problem of school violence and that also paid attention to the firearms phenomenon in Argentina. The information collected allowed authorities to access periodic and comparable measurements vis-à-vis the presence of firearms in schools according to gender, grade and school modality (private or public).

Another subsequent effort that also focuses on investigating the entry and/or possession of firearms in Argentine schools is the **study entitled "Climate, Conflicts and Violence in Schools"** prepared in 2011 by UNICEF and FLACSO-Argentina<sup>68</sup>. Through this study, information was collected on the climate and coexistence in schools in that country. The survey was applied to middle school students, in which, among other aspects, two firearm-related questions were included in order to deepen the understanding of different conflicts in schools. The first question asked the students if they "knew or heard" that someone had brought a firearm to school at some point during the year. The second question asked students whether they "saw" anyone with a firearm at school that year.

This study also sought to learn the opinion of the managerial staff. As part of the survey aimed at this sector, they were asked to indicate how often a student came to school with a firearm.

In 2014, unlike the surveys previously coordinated by the Argentine Observatory of Violence and to which reference was made in this section, this survey sought to broaden the perspective and explore issues not only related to the measurement of violence and conflict, but also to institutional functioning and the way in which associations are made at school. Based on these **statistical surveys on school climate, violence and conflict in secondary schools, a question regarding firearms in schools** was

included as in previous editions. However, for the 2014 edition, the question asked to 2nd and 5th year high school students no longer focused on asking how often students reported bringing a weapon to school, but rather on identifying whether students had been threatened or attacked with firearms (revolver or pistol), as well as the period of frequency they had been victims of such an incident<sup>69</sup>.

### Brazil

Another survey that investigates the opinion of other actors in the school community is the National Evaluation of School Performance, better known as **Prova-Brazil**, conducted every two years since 2005. This evaluation, developed by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), aims to assess the quality of education in Brazilian public schools<sup>70</sup>. It includes a questionnaire on the context of schools addressed to school principals and teachers. In addition to collecting information on aspects of school life, socio-economic status, and issues related to violence in schools, a question on firearms is also included.

Specifically, principals and teachers are asked to report on a list of events that occurred in the current year at their school. Among the options they can choose from, besides witnessing some kind of verbal or physical aggression at school or if they were victims of an attack, threat, theft or robbery; they are asked about students who brought firearms into the classrooms.

It should be noted that the data collected in relation to firearms in schools is included in the Brazilian Yearbooks on Public Security published annually by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security<sup>71</sup>.

In the **Participatory Diagnosis of Violence in Schools: Young People Speak**<sup>72</sup>, elaborated by FLACSO in 2015, information was collected from around 6,700 students in the final years of basic and secondary education from 129 public schools distributed in the capitals of seven Brazilian states (Belem, Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza, Maceio, Salvador, Sao Luis and Vitoria) to learn about their perceptions of the various types of school violence. The instrument used for this study included a series of questions regarding the presence of firearms in schools.

References to firearms first appear when students are asked about the types of occurrences (events) and violence that occur at school. From a list of problems that occur in schools, such as gangs, threats, murders, fights, cyberbullying, including firearm possession, among others, students are asked to check off those events that took place within the last 12 months. Another question asks students to report on the types of violence they know happens or has happened in the last 12 months inside the school. As part of the options, they can check off the “carrying of firearms”.

This survey also asks students if they have observed weapons at school over the past year or if they have entered the school with any kind of weapon.

Although, in both questions, the reference to weapons is dealt with in a generic way, if the answer is “yes” to the question about the entry of weapons into the school, they are asked to indicate the type of weapon. Revolver/pistol, canes/sticks, daggers, and others are among the weapon options they can choose from. This study also gathered qualitative information by inquiring as to young people’s opinions on the situations that bother them the most and their reasons, including the possession of firearms at school.

### Chile

In Chile’s 2010 National Survey on Bullying, 225,027 second year high school students were asked about the frequency of firearm attacks in their schools in the past year, choosing from the following options: always; sometimes/nearly always; never or hardly ever<sup>73</sup>.

Other surveys aim to go a little bit deeper than the aspects of possession/entry and victimization by seeking to obtain more information about the reasons that incite students to bring firearms to schools and about the students’ perception of firearms.

### Colombia

The **School Climate and Victimization Surveys in Bogota**, prepared by the Department of Education of the District of Bogota<sup>74</sup>, in 2006, 2011 and 2013, compile the opinions of students from 6th to 11th grade on the different manifestations of violence present in the city’s schools, and include a section dedicated to “weapons in schools”, which pose a series of specific questions on firearms.

Like other surveys reviewed in this study, this survey pays attention to firearm possession in schools since its 2006 edition. First, students are asked in a general way: “Did you bring a weapon to school this year?” Those who answer affirmatively are then asked about the type of weapon, to which students can indicate whether it was a firearm, a bladed weapon, or “both”<sup>75</sup>.

On the other hand, the 2013 survey, unlike those of 2006 and 2011, also investigated the reasons why the students brought a weapon to school. The following options are provided:

- ⊗ To defend oneself on way to school
- ⊗ To defend oneself at school
- ⊗ To get revenge
- ⊗ To defend another person
- ⊗ To feel stronger
- ⊗ None of the above

Surveys conducted in 2006 and 2011 also investigated the contexts in which students live. Some of the questions included in this section pertain to the presence of weapons in their communities. For example, students are asked “where can you get firearms in your neighbourhood”; “not including watchmen

or police, are there people in your neighbourhood who carry firearms?"; "how many of your friends carry firearms from time to time"; or "are there people in your home who have firearms?"

### Venezuela

Another study that analyses the reasons why students bring firearms to school is the Violence in Schools (**Violencia en las Escuelas**) Survey conducted by the Gumilla Centre between 2008 and 2009 in schools in Catia, Petare and Caracas<sup>76</sup>.

In this survey, in addition to asking about the reasons why students "bring weapons to school", students were asked if "at the time of the fight, were you carrying any type of weapon?" and were also asked to indicate the type of weapon. Furthermore, there was no explicit reference to firearms, as such, in the list of weapons and other objects (knives, chains, bottles) that students could report on. Handmade firearms, known as "chopos" in the country, were also included.

### Guatemala

In Guatemala, the Institute of Education for Sustainable Development (IEPADES) has been monitoring and studying the problem of firearms in schools throughout different studies in recent years. As part of this approach, a survey developed in 2011 to explore the attitudes and perceptions of young people about different social aspects of their environment<sup>77</sup> included questions about firearms. Basically, the student questionnaire included three questions.

In the first semi-open question, students are asked whether they believe that "young people should be allowed to have a firearm". Next, they are asked if they think it is "easy to get a firearm". Finally, they are asked to indicate whether "any of the students have brought a firearm to school"<sup>78</sup>.

In another study, in order to explore the levels of recruitment of students by gangs, IEPADES applied a series of instruments to find out the students' perception of the phenomenon of 'maras' or gangs, but also included some questions about firearms in schools. Specifically, these surveys included three questions on firearms<sup>79</sup>.

In this survey, students were asked what they considered to be "the reason a person has a firearm". Respondents could choose among the following options:

- For protection and a means of defence
- Due to the insecure situation in the country
- To have power over others and to intimidate them
- To commit crimes
- Other (explain)

In a second question, students were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the following statements:

- "Firearms are only good for committing crimes"
- "Having a firearm makes its owner more violent or prone to violence"
- "Firearms contribute to building a culture of violence"
- "A firearm provides its holder with added security"
- "The availability of firearms contributes to making the country safer"

Finally, students were asked whether they would use a firearm.

This study also included surveys and focus groups with teachers to learn about their perception of the gang phenomenon in schools. Among other aspects discussed with teachers, some questions on firearms were included. An initial reference to firearms was made when teachers were consulted about the forms of violence that were most prevalent in schools. Among the modalities that teachers could choose from were "threats and attacks with weapons". Teachers were then asked to respond to the question on "what kinds of weapons are most common in their communities", firearms being one of the options to choose from.

In addition, in order to gather inputs to explore and strengthen measures aimed at preventing armed violence in schools, a series of questions were included on institutional capacity to respond to this type of situation. Specifically, teachers were consulted about which institutions they felt "could support them in handling these situations"<sup>80</sup>, and if they knew "any regulations related to the prevention and/or control of firearms in schools". Among other questions, teachers were asked to share some "experience related to the presence of firearms in their school". Finally, they were asked: "What would you do if a firearm or an armed student appeared in your classroom or institution?"

According to IEPADES, the information collected from this survey and the focus groups with teachers will contribute to the elaboration of a guide for prevention, identification, addressing and referencing cases of armed violence in schools, which is being prepared by IEPADES in coordination with the Ministry of Education of Guatemala.

### Other tools

Other initiatives have also been identified as part of broader measures vis-à-vis citizen security and violence prevention, which have also investigated the problem of firearms in schools and communities.

Within the framework of the project entitled **Measuring Illicit Trafficking and Community Security through Participatory SDG 16-based Indicators**<sup>81</sup>, which was implemented in 2018 by UNLIREC in Medellín (Colombia) and Trujillo (Peru), young volunteers from these cities applied a survey on citizen's perception of safety in their communities.

UNLIREC's  
Project in  
Colombia  
and Peru

The young volunteers, through a mobile application developed exclusively for this project, surveyed more than 5,000 people in both cities on different aspects related to SDG 16 and security at the community level.

FIGURE 6. MOBILE APP



Source: UNLIREC

The questionnaire included some questions about weapons in schools such as: “while you were at school, did other students bring firearms to school?” and “how often did you see other students in possession of firearms?”

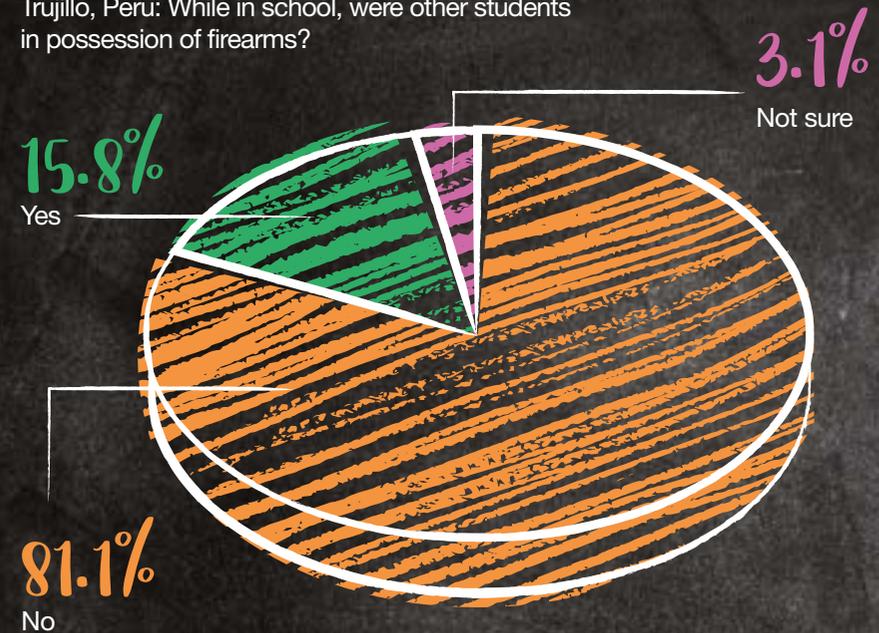
While these surveys were not carried out strictly at the level of schools or with students, but rather within broader community contexts, they allowed for a retrospective analysis of the phenomenon of firearms in schools. Responses were based on the opinion of a group of adults and youth who were former students.

Results indicate that the phenomenon of firearms has been present in the schools of the region over the past few decades. In Trujillo, 15.8% of those surveyed stated that they were aware that other students were in possession of firearms in school, while in Medellin, 21.5% responded affirmatively.

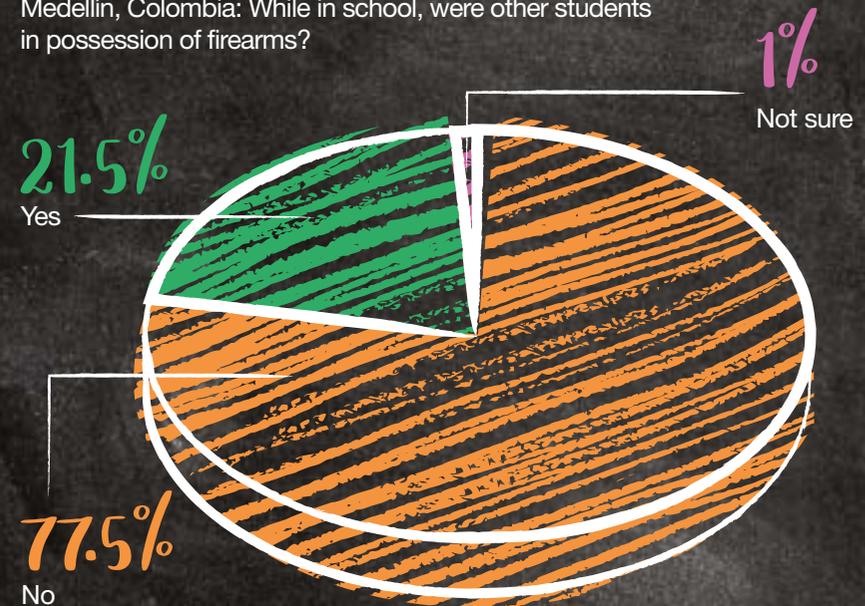
Throughout this section, different tools have been identified that aim to collect and manage information on the phenomenon of firearms in schools. The input obtained allowed the authorities and the other actors involved in school violence prevention efforts to identify and monitor the presence and possession of firearms and contributes to a broader understanding of the problem, thus providing decision makers with useful information to design policies that seek to address this problem.

CHART 17. RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS IN TRUJILLO AND MEDELLIN (2018)

Trujillo, Peru: While in school, were other students in possession of firearms?



Medellín, Colombia: While in school, were other students in possession of firearms?



Source: UNLIREC

# 4.6

## EDUCATION AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

C&A and young people associate firearms with **power, respect, authority, and control** as a result of the predominant narrative that is largely fed by cultural and consumer industries. In order to change these perceptions and work on the symbolic and cultural dimension of the problem, a series of campaigns have been implemented in some countries of the region in recent years to raise awareness among students about the risks and impact of firearms.

The following are some of these campaigns that specifically address the issue of firearms in schools. Through various methodologies and formats, these campaigns seek to have a positive impact on the collective and individual imagination revolving around firearms. These campaigns are led and implemented by state institutions, as well as civil society organizations<sup>82</sup>.

### NATIONAL LEVEL

#### Argentina

For some years now, different initiatives have been implemented in Argentina to raise public awareness about the impact of firearms on society. These initiatives were originally developed as part of the National Programme for the Voluntary Surrender of Firearms (2006)<sup>83</sup>, which aims to reduce the use and proliferation of firearms; to raise awareness of the associated risks; and to promote a culture of non-possession and non-use of firearms (Law 26.216)<sup>84</sup>.

As a background to these initiatives, the then National Registry of Weapons and Explosives (RENAR, in Spanish) - now the National Agency of Controlled Materials (ANMaC)<sup>85</sup> - carried out the **“Guns...Not even as toys!” (Armas ni de Juguete)** campaign. This initiative was aimed at children and their parents, which consisted of exchanging war toys for toys that do not promote violence<sup>86</sup>; and **“Disarming Myths” (Desarmando Mitos)**, aimed at adolescents, which consisted in workshops for reflection in high schools<sup>87</sup>, sports days, the creation of murals and the printing of T-shirts with slogans to promote disarmament<sup>88</sup>.

Both initiatives were supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) within the framework of the Project “Promoters of Disarmament” (Promotores del Desarme). Support to the campaign for the “Promotion of Disarmament and Peaceful Conflict Resolution in the Municipalities of Greater Buenos Aires” (Apoyo a la Campaña de Promoción del Desarme y Resolución Pacífica de Conflictos en Municipios del Conurbano Bonaerense) in 2014 and 2015<sup>89</sup>. Moreover, in 2014, RENAR, together with UNICEF Argentina, carried out the communication campaign **“What you see as protection is seen**

**by your children as a toy”** - of the aforementioned campaign **“Guns...Not even as toys!”**<sup>90</sup> aimed inter alia at raising awareness among adults about the risks of keeping firearms in their homes.

Also, as part of the **“Disarming Myths”** initiative, the Argentine Observatory on Violence in Schools of the Department of Education, together with RENAR, produced the booklet entitled **“Proposals for Disarmament. Dismantling myths by building arguments”**<sup>91</sup>.

The purpose of such publications was to provide teachers, principals, parents and other members of the educational community with practical and theoretical tools to raise awareness and promote a critical view among the student community vis-à-vis the problem of firearms and their impact on society, as well as the importance of using words and dialogue and constructing a culture that resolves conflicts peacefully in schools. This material is based on the premise that in order to work on issues, such as disarmament in the classroom, “it is necessary to deconstruct the discourse that arms protect those who carry them and other beliefs that legitimize the presence of firearms in society”<sup>92</sup>.

*Disarming Myths objectives*

Moreover, ANMaC has been developing a series of awareness-raising workshops to prevent and address the presence and use of firearms. Although the workshops are held within different institutional contexts, special emphasis is placed on high schools. The workshops are entitled: a) ‘Beliefs that Kill’; and b) ‘Armed Masculinities’<sup>93</sup>.

#### a. Workshop: Beliefs that Kill. Reflections on beliefs about firearms and the risks involved.

The methodology followed in this workshop is based on the use of different didactic resources, such as images of a culture of consumption, news, short videos<sup>94</sup> and infographics with statistical information, with the aim of reflecting, debating and developing critical thinking about common sense beliefs and dominant social representations that promote the use of firearms, either as symbols of status, power and authority (especially among young people) or as safety and protection in the home.

As part of the methodology followed in these workshops, the ANMaC team asks participants to complete a short survey, in which young people are asked if they would keep a firearm in their home, as well as to indicate what they consider to be the main cause of firearm killings in the country. This is followed by a discussion and presentation of some of the results of these surveys.

According to the diagnostic survey that ANMaC carried out at the beginning of these workshops, six out of 10 young people - between 13 and 24 years of age - responded that they would have a firearm, and, of that proportion, 88% indicated that the main reason would be for “personal and family security”<sup>95</sup>. This suggests that such representations underestimate the risks and effects caused by the presence and use of firearms.



Source: ANMaC (UNLIREC unofficial translation)

This workshop also reflects on the impact that firearms have on homicides, interpersonal conflicts and other crimes. In fact, the surveys, conducted by ANMaC, indicate that eight out of 10 young people believe that the main reason for committing murder with a firearm is “due to a robbery”; however, the statistics of the Judicial Branch indicate that the main reason for intentional homicides with firearms is the product of “Discussion/Dispute”, which represents 44%, as opposed to “robbery”, which represents 14%<sup>96</sup>. This reveals a lack of knowledge on the part of adolescents and young people on the real-life prevalence of firearms in interpersonal conflicts.

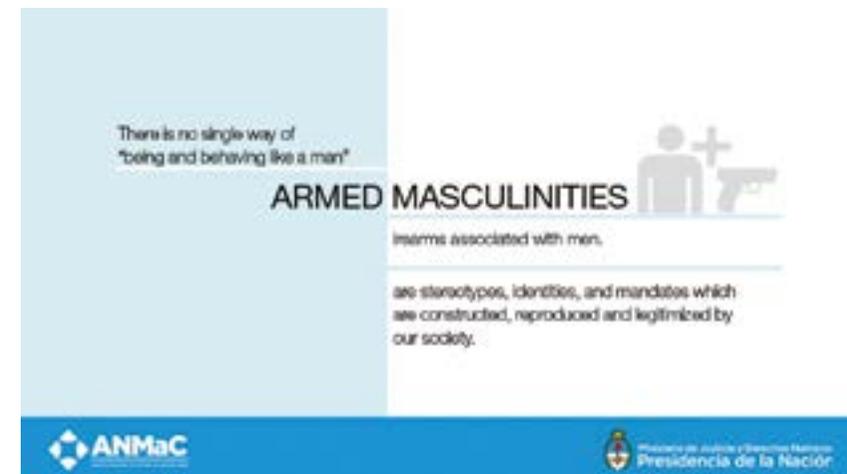
**b. Workshop: Armed Masculinities. Reflections on firearms from a gender perspective<sup>97</sup>.**

This workshop focuses on the influence of cultural stereotypes and mandates present in “hegemonic masculinity”<sup>98</sup> that encourage the presence and use of firearms, and therefore, the consequences that this produces in men and women. Like the workshop “**Beliefs that Kill**” (**Creencias que matan**), this workshop seeks to develop critical thinking in relation to firearms, but also to incorporate a gender perspective.

This is done by reflecting on contextual information and statistics that warn of the link between firearms and gender. For example, the participants reflect on why 98% of the legitimate users of firearms, registered in ANMaC, are men<sup>99</sup>, or why 90% of firearm deaths<sup>100</sup> and 89% of perpetrators in intentional firearm-related homicides are male<sup>101</sup>. Based on this contextual information, participants are asked: what happens to women, how does

violence with firearms affect them taking into account that according to official studies, one out of every four femicides<sup>102</sup> are committed with firearms, and that 70% of them occur inside the victim’s home and in 80% of the cases the femicide is perpetrated by someone in their closest environment (partner, ex-partner or family member)<sup>103</sup>.

The name of the workshop - Armed Masculinities - takes into account three issues: “masculinities” in plural, reflecting that there is no single way of being and behaving like a man; “armed” has a double meaning, on one hand, it accounts for the historical-cultural link between hegemonic masculinity and firearms, while, on the other, it warns of gender stereotypes and representations vis-à-vis violence against women and other men that they are “armadas” (meaning ‘constructed’ in Spanish). These stereotypes can be “deconstructed” to give rise to new masculinities based on tolerance, respect, and non-violence.



Source: ANMaC (UNLIREC unofficial translation)

To promote debate, reflection and the participation of young people, journalistic news, images of a consumer culture and videos are used, as well as the campaign #GirlsCan (#LasNiñasPueden) by the NGO Community Woman (Comunidad Mujer)<sup>104</sup>.

At the end of the workshop, other public policies and programmes that contribute to preventing and denouncing violence against women are shared.

Armed masculinities

### Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, the problem of firearms and the actions aimed at preventing armed violence have been addressed through various projects, campaigns and preventive public policies, both through public institutions (Ministry of Justice and Peace, Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of Public Security) and in partnership with various non-governmental organizations and international agencies. Some of the most important initiatives are highlighted below:

#### a. Gun-Free Schools (“Escuelas Libres de Armas”)<sup>105</sup>

Between 2010-2014, the Vice-Ministry of Peace and the Foundation for Peace and Democracy (FUNPADEM), with support from the Ministry of Public Education, implemented the “**Gun-Free Schools**” programme with a focus on Costa Rican primary schools. **In this programme, a series of awareness-raising days and educational activities were held for students to reflect on peaceful coexistence, the negative impacts of firearms and what to do if they find a firearm at home or at school<sup>106</sup>.**

A video on the prevention of the use of weapons was also shown during these days, and later a space was opened for dialogue with the students on the material watched, followed by the development of recreational, cultural and artistic activities (for example, the creation of collective murals). To conclude this programme, at the end of each day, the authorities of the Vice-Ministry of Peace proceeded to certify the participating schools as “Gun-Free Schools”.

#### b. To school without guns (“Al Cole sin Armas”)

Continuing the previous programme, between 2013 and 2014, within the framework of the project “**Protection of children and adolescents**



Source: UNVMC

**against violence and the use of weapons”,** executed jointly by the Ministry of Justice and Peace, FUNPADEM and UNICEF<sup>107</sup>, the campaign “To school without guns” was launched in Costa Rica. **Within this campaign, several tools and resources have been developed to raise awareness among students and communities about the risks posed by firearms.**

As part of the campaign’s flagship products, a hip-hop music video entitled “How you’ve changed” (“Cómo has cambiado”) was produced. Throughout this video, scenes that allude to school life and students’ free time are presented, highlighting the conflicts that take place in schools and the impact of the use of firearms on the lives of adolescents<sup>108</sup>. The video was performed by two national musicians, and included adolescents from different communities to play the main characters. The video was shared on Internet, social networks, and other media sources<sup>109</sup>.

**FIGURE 7. “HOW YOU’VE CHANGED” (“CÓMO HAS CAMBIADO”) VIDEO ( CAMPAIGN: TO SCHOOL WITHOUT GUNS ‘CAMPAÑA AL COLE SIN ARMAS’)**



Source: Ministry of Public Education (Costa Rica)

In 2015, within the framework of the Preventing Violence, Promoting Peace Policy, promoted by the Ministry of Justice and Peace and the Ministry of Public Education, the facilitation guide entitled **Gun-free School: our place for coexistence** (“Escuela sin armas: nuestro lugar para convivir”) was published. This guide serves as a pedagogical tool for working with high school students at the national level to raise awareness about the risks posed by firearms, and to promote alternative forms of conflict resolution, as well as the implementation of the Protocol of Action in situations of detection, possession and use of firearms in schools (explained in section 4.4.1). Within this context, teachers, students and representatives of the Department of Student Coexistence of the Ministry of Education at the national level<sup>110</sup> were widely targeted and offered training.

The guide consists of five thematic modules that include various teaching tools and learning exercises to encourage students to contribute with concrete actions to eliminate firearms in schools<sup>111</sup>, thus including students as part of the solution.

**TABLE 5. MODULES OF THE FACILITATION GUIDE “GUN-FREE SCHOOL” (“COLE SIN ARMAS”)**

Modules	Description
1	Increase awareness of, commit to and initiate the means of eliminating arms in schools. This module recommends activities for students to acknowledge their responsibility in creating peaceful coexistence at school and committing to eliminate arms in schools.
2	Coexistence and conflict resolution in the educational community. This module consists of four learning activities that focus on non-violent conflict resolution and the presentation of weapons as objects that inhibit peaceful coexistence and encourage violence.
3	Elimination of weapons in schools. This module invites students to reflect critically on the causes and implications of using weapons to resolve conflict in schools.
4	Nine actions of the Protocol on the Prohibition of Possessing and Use of Weapons in Secondary Schools. This module aims to strengthen the understanding and implementation of the Protocol on the Possession and Use of Weapons in Educational Institutions developed by the Ministry of Public Education in 2012 <sup>112</sup> .
5	Socialization of learning to eradicate weapons in schools. Finally, the students share their learning and decisions made with other young people and their families in order to raise awareness among members of their communities.

Source: UNLIREC (based on the Facilitation Guide)

Teachers will find concrete instructions, and didactic tools in each of the modules to assist them in carrying out the exercises and practical dynamics.

## LOCAL LEVEL

In some countries of the region, campaigns are being implemented at the local level. Some of these campaigns that were analysed as part of this study range from very specific campaigns that take place in specific areas, in a given period (often of short duration) to campaigns that respond to a national regulation or policy that empowers local authorities in coordination with national authorities.

In **Argentina**, for example, within the framework of the government programme “**The State in your Neighbourhood**” (“**Estado en tu barrio**”), which is organized in different municipalities of the province of Buenos Aires and in the interior of the country and that brings together different public bodies in the same space, the National Voluntary Surrender of Firearms and Ammunition Programme is being implemented<sup>113</sup>.

In the Province of Buenos Aires, the General Directorate for Culture and Education developed various support materials aimed at inspectors, principals and teachers, which provide them with a series of tools and methodologies for the development of awareness-raising sessions targeting students<sup>114</sup>. Overall, these activities reflect on the risks of firearms, the importance of voluntary disarmament and dialogue as the best way to resolve conflicts<sup>115</sup>.

In **Peru**, authorities report that between 2015 and 2017, the National Council for Criminal Policy (CONAPOC) promoted a series of prevention strategies against violence and the use of firearms, through the organization of fairs, games, workshops and talks aimed at high school students in the departments and provinces of Lima, Callao, Arequipa, Ancash, Lambayeque, Piura, Cusco, La Libertad and Ayacucho<sup>116</sup>.

There are also other campaigns that have been promoted in other regions (for example in Piura) by the Local Education Management Units (UGEL) with the support of the municipalities, the National Police, and other institutions<sup>117</sup>. During these campaigns, talks, theatrical activities and socio-dramas were developed to make students aware of the dangers of firearm possession in school.

Since 2015, the National Regulatory Entity for Security Services, Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives for Civil Use (SUCAMEC) has been carrying out campaigns aimed at preventing the use of arms in schools in different departments of Peru<sup>118</sup>. The aim of these campaigns is to make the school population aware of the risks, dangers and consequences of using firearms, as well as to reinforce these values among students so that they become a multiplying dissemination tool extending to their family and friends, thus promoting peace and the rejection of all forms of violence. Through this campaign, SUCAMEC has benefited more than 10,000 students in different regions of the country<sup>119</sup>.

FIGURE 8. CAMPAIGN “DON’T KILL YOUR DREAMS” (SUCAMEC, PERU)



Source SUCAMEC

In **Brazil**, in the municipality of Uberlandia, within the framework of the Municipal Day of Children’s Disarmament, celebrated on 15 April, delivers a series of awareness-raising activities aimed at students and community members in general. These week-long campaigns feature films, talks and other activities to reinforce the slogan “no violence, no kidding” and to raise awareness in schools about the danger of guns<sup>120</sup>.



Source: ANMaC

a. **Toy Guns Swap**

Other campaigns registered in the region are those that promote the exchange or swapping of toy guns or war toys for educational material, books, candy, plants, or other types of “non-war” toys. This campaign works under the premise that toy guns contribute to the acceptance of the use of real guns.

The following are some of the campaigns that have been implemented in countries and localities in the region:

TABLE 6. TOY WEAPON EXCHANGE CAMPAIGNS

Country/Town	Name
Argentina	Swap campaigns within the framework of the National Voluntary Surrender of Firearms Program (Campañas de canje en el marco del Programa Nacional de Entrega Voluntaria de Armas de Fuego)
Brazil / Uberlandia	Campaign for child disarmament (“Campanha pelo Desarmamento Infantil”)
Colombia / Meta	It is Better to Love Yourself than to Arm Yourself (“Es Mejor Amarse que Armarse”)
Colombia / Bogota	Violence, not a game (“La violencia, ni de juego”)
Mexico	Let’s play without violence (“Juguemos sin Violencia”)
Mexico/ Guanajuato	War toy exchange campaign within the framework of the School Week for Peace (Campaña de intercambio de juguetes bélicos en el marco de la Semana Escolar por la Paz.)
Peru	“Dad, I don’t want toy guns, give me a toy that I can build with” (“Papá no quiero armas de juguete, regálame un juguete para armar”)
Venezuela	Guns...Not even as toys (“Un arma ni de juego”)

Source: UNLIREC

In some countries, these campaigns even go beyond collection of toy guns to include a process of destruction by students. In Mendoza, Argentina, one of the pioneering provinces with this type of campaign, “toys are melted down and plastic is used in mosaics and works of art for display in schools”<sup>121</sup>. In other instances, the hydraulic presses - normally used by the authorities to destroy firearms - are even used.

Some of these campaigns are complemented by other types of recreational, sporting, and educational activities aimed at raising awareness among students on issues of disarmament, school coexistence and a culture of peace. In Argentina, for example, disarmament is promoted through sport, such as the “**Football for Disarmament**” campaign. Under the slogan “more sport and peace, less violence”. As well, activities in primary schools include handing out books in exchange for toy guns<sup>122</sup>.

### CAMPAIGNS PROMOTED BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND COOPERATION AGENCIES

In **Argentina**, in 2007, the Civil Association “Alfredo Marcenac”, developed the Educational Program for Disarmament and Peace-Building, which was implemented in public and private schools at the pre-, primary and secondary levels, addressing different contexts and engaging approximately 2,000 students in the city of Necochea and in the Province of Buenos Aires. In addition, awareness-raising campaigns and campaigns to exchange violent toys were carried out in which the risks involved in the use of violent and sexist video games by children were also addressed. Among other initiatives, this association held street congresses for peace in which teachers and primary and secondary school students from Necochea were given a participatory voice vis-à-vis the problem of firearms, harassment and treatment among peers and partners, using public squares as meeting places. About 700 children and young people gathered at these congresses.

In 2009, the Association designed an Open Chair in coordination with the Universidad Nacional del Centro of the Province of Buenos Aires, based in Quequen, to carry out research, develop materials and deliver capacity-building on issues related to education for peace. In 2012, this Chair delivered a series of training sessions for teachers in order to raise their awareness and turn them into multiplier agents to prevent the use of firearms among students. This Chair envisions schools as educational spaces that also become strategic places of intervention in which transdisciplinary activities are also carried out to address disarmament<sup>123</sup>.

The relevance of this programme was revealed due to the reported cases of students who brought knives and firearms to schools. In addition, while violence is addressed in schools as a general and disturbing issue for the student community, there is not necessarily a focus on violence in terms of the use of firearms and the importance of disarmament in society.

These training activities are also aimed at students who have an interest in this type of activity since, to date, the issue of armed violence was only addressed outside the classroom. Thanks to the fact that the debate was taking place in schools, a pedagogical perspective was linked to everyday reality and knowledge acquired at school. During these debates, other related issues emerged, such as: the use of alcohol and firearms, gender and firearms, violence experienced in the streets, the value and care of life, and youth’s citizen participation.

In sum, many of the campaigns being implemented in the countries of the region, in addition to including the component of awareness on disarmament and the risks posed by firearms, also touch on other issues related to the prevention of school violence, promotion of values, aspects of coexistence, the importance of dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, among other

issues. Moreover, different campaigns make use of different tools to convey these messages to students, including dance, music, theatre, and exchanges of war toys.

In Sao Paulo, **Brazil**, the Sou da Paz Institute has developed a guide for the elaboration of projects and actions in the field of disarmament with a focus on children. This guide is intended to help school principals, NGOs, community associations and other groups in organizing projects in communities and schools.

In **Guatemala**, as part of the IEPADES “**Children and Youth for Peace**” programme, a series of activities are being implemented in schools to raise awareness among children and youth about the negative effects of violence, as well as about the use of firearms, the importance of disarmament and the construction of a sustainable culture of peace. Among the actions carried out are: training on a culture of peace, leadership, violence prevention, as well as recreational, cultural and sports activities with students<sup>124</sup>.

In **Honduras**, as part of the initiatives accompanying the regional campaign “**Life Instinct**” (**Instinto de Vida**)<sup>125</sup>, la organización Jóvenes Contra la Violencia en Honduras ha implementado, en años recientes, la campaña **Desarmados y Educados**, dirigida a estudiantes de entre 10 y 14 años de las escuelas de educación básica de las ciudades más afectadas por la violencia.

This campaign is developed through participatory and dynamic workshops that raise awareness among students about the harm caused by armed violence and the importance of education as a means of violence prevention.

As part of the methodology of these awareness-raising workshops, a video is presented on the link between the violence affecting Honduras and the problem of firearms<sup>126</sup>. Later, a fictitious case of “**Memo**” was presented about a 16-year-old boy, who was forced to drop out of school to work in order to put food on the table. In this scenario, he lost his job and the young people who claim to be his friends try to convince him to be a real “macho” by using a gun to instil fear and exert power over his neighbourhood<sup>127</sup>.

Fictitious case of “Memo”

Once the case of “Memo” is presented and dramatized by the students, the participants are asked to form a ‘positive’ team and change the character of Memo, and his weapons for figures that represent art, culture, sports, education, helping him to improve his life showing that he is capable of getting ahead in life despite the challenges<sup>128</sup>.

Students are broken up into working groups and asked to make projective drawings of how violence affects their communities. Some of the participants are then selected to write a letter to the decision makers asking for greater attention to be paid to arms control regulations.

At the end of the day, a symbolic exchange of war toys for school supplies takes place. To make these workshops visible, the organizers share photos and information about the activities on social networks.



Source: Youth Against Violence Association (Asociación Jóvenes contra la Violencia) - Honduras

In **Nicaragua**, within the framework of the programme **“Prevention of violence in adolescents caused by firearms”**, implemented by UNICEF, a series of workshops on communication techniques have been held targeting adolescents. Through these workshops, the goal is to empower adolescents in the field of human rights and teach them how to disseminate information through different communication techniques. During these workshops, participants were asked to apply these techniques vis-a-vis firearm-related violence prevention in schools, based on creative ideas that could contribute to a positive vision of adolescence<sup>129</sup>.

In **Peru**, within the framework of the Joint Programme **“Strengthening Human Security and Community Resilience Through the Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence”**, implemented by UNLIREC and four other United Nations agencies<sup>130</sup> in the city of Trujillo, between 2014 and 2017, a series of activities took place to raise awareness among youth about the risk posed by the use of firearms and their impact at the social and community level through a series of artistic initiatives.

As part of these activities, in 2016, the theatrical piece entitled “Histories of Fire” was presented in different districts in the city of Trujillo. This work was produced by the Angeles D1 Cultural Association and performed by young artists. Through dance and urban music, the piece recreates a series of situations showcasing the impact that firearms and their misuse have on communities.

Throughout this artistic production, the stories of pain, frustration and fear are intertwined with hope, brotherhood and solidarity, creating an environment for reflection by sending a clear message to students about the risks of firearms and the impacts of armed violence.



Source: UNLIREC

In short, awareness and education campaigns are key tools for dealing with the subjective dimensions surrounding the presence of firearms in schools. These campaigns seek to raise awareness about the risks of the improper use of firearms and the impact they have on communities, deconstructing culturally accepted roles, patterns and beliefs associated with firearms. Through simple language and artistic expressions, such as dance, urban music, theatre, among others, formats and messages can be adapted to different target groups.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ley de Control de Armas de Fuego, Municiones, Explosivos y otros Materiales Relacionados (Act on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials). Law 400 (2013).
- <sup>2</sup> Dispõe sobre registro, posse e comercialização de armas de fogo e munição, sobre o Sistema Nacional de Armas (Provision for the registration, possession and commercialisation of firearms and ammunition under the National Weapons System). Law 10.826 (2003).
- <sup>3</sup> Ley de Armas y Explosivos (Firearms and Explosives Law). Law 7530 (2005).
- <sup>4</sup> Ley de Control y Regulación de Armas, Municiones, Explosivos y Artículos Similares (Law on Control and Regulation of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Similar Articles) (1999).
- <sup>5</sup> Ley especial para el Control y Regulación de Armas de Fuego, Municiones, Explosivos y Otros Materiales Relacionados (Special Law on Control and Regulation of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials) (2004).
- <sup>6</sup> Ley para el Desarme y Control de Armas y Municiones (Firearms and Ammunition Control and Disarmament Law) (2013).
- <sup>7</sup> Ministry of Education (2010). Manual para el Funcionamiento de Centros Educativos Privados y Subvencionados (Manual for the Operation of Private and Subsidized Educational Centres). Managua, Nicaragua.
- <sup>8</sup> Ministerial Agreement No. 01-2011 - Normativa de convivencia pacífica y disciplina para una cultura de paz en los centros educativos de Guatemala (Peaceful Cohabitation and Disciplinary Rules Towards a Culture of Peace in Educational Institutions of Guatemala) (2011).
- <sup>9</sup> Executive Decree No. 162 (1996) that establishes the internal regime for students in public and private schools.
- <sup>10</sup> Minutes No. 47 Resolution No. 2 - Secondary School Student Statute (2005).
- <sup>11</sup> Resolution No. 00137, General Directorate for Schools, Government of Mendoza (Argentina) (2002).
- <sup>12</sup> Firearms of any kind or range, such as gun, revolver, rifle, shotgun, and even explosives.
- <sup>13</sup> Pffifner, Sabrina and Sutton, Heather (2013). The Gun-Free Zone—A Tool To Prevent And Reduce Armed Violence, NODA Occasional Papers No. 25. 25. New York: Office for Disarmament Affairs.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>15</sup> Gun-Free Zones in Schools (n.d.) Available at: Safer Spaces: working together for a safer South Africa. <https://www.saferpaces.org.za/be-inspired/entry/gun-free-zones-in-schools>
- <sup>16</sup> It is important to mention that this measure is not applicable to government police forces, who must take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the educational community. However, when they carry out prevention or formative activities within schools, they must not carry firearms.
- <sup>17</sup> Hardy, Marjory S. (2006). Keeping children safe around guns: pitfalls and promises. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, Volume 11, Issue 4: 352-366.
- <sup>18</sup> Public Safety and Good Order, Chapter 140, Section 131L, Massachusetts. Available at: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXX/Chapter140/Section131L>
- <sup>19</sup> Firearms Act of Jamaica, Section 29 (4b), 16 March 1967, amendment of 13 June 2008.
- <sup>20</sup> Firearms Act of Barbados, Article 23, 1 November 1998.
- <sup>21</sup> Firearms Act of St. Lucia, Article 23, 20 January 2003.
- <sup>22</sup> Decree. 9.685 dated 15 January 2019, Law No. 10.826, 22 December 2003.
- <sup>23</sup> Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, Dowd MD, Villaveces A, Prodzinski J, Nakagawara J, Howard J, Thiersch N, Harruff R. (2005). Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional firearm injuries. *JAMA*, February 9, 2005—Vol 293, No. 6: 714.
- <sup>24</sup> For instance, load indicators in the chamber of the firearm; mechanisms for disconnecting the cartridge in order to prevent a firearm from being triggered with removable magazines when the magazine is removed; as well as firearms that work with biometric, magnetic or radio-frequency identification.
- <sup>25</sup> Pan American Health Organization (2013). Violence prevention: The evidence. Series of guidelines on violence prevention. PAHO: El Paso
- <sup>26</sup> Albright TL, Burge SK. (2003) "Improving firearm storage habits: impact of brief office counselling by family physicians." *Journal of the American Board of Family Practice*, 16:40-46
- <sup>27</sup> Milwaukee Public Schools, Family and Education Resources, See it, Say it, Available at: <https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/Families/Education-Resources/See-It-Say-It.htm> Accessed on 27 September 2019.
- <sup>28</sup> Ministry of Public Education (2016), Protocol of Action in situations of detection, possession and use of firearms. 1st Edition. San José <https://www.mep.go.cr/sites/default/files/protocoloarmasvers14042016.pdf>
- <sup>29</sup> There were two media cases in the 2000s: the incident reported at a school in Rafael Calzada in 2000, known in the press as the Pantriste case, and the shooting at a school in Carmen de Patagones in 2004, considered one of the first incidents of this nature in the region.
- <sup>30</sup> This resolution also forced schools to implement psychological support measure for students who brought firearms to school and defined a series of disciplinary measures such as immediate preventive suspension (see Normative and Regulatory Frameworks section).
- <sup>31</sup> Government of the Province of Buenos Aires and UNICEF (2014). Guía de orientación para la intervención en situaciones conflictivas y de vulneración de derechos en el escenario escolar (Orientation guidelines for intervention in rights violations and conflicting situations in school setting). Buenos Aires, Argentina. [http://www.codajic.org/sites/www.codajic.org/files/Guia\\_de\\_orientacion\\_WEB\\_0.pdf](http://www.codajic.org/sites/www.codajic.org/files/Guia_de_orientacion_WEB_0.pdf)
- <sup>32</sup> Conflicting situations include violence in the family setting, child abuse, child sexual abuse, harassment, suicide, and presence of firearms, among others.

- <sup>33</sup> This may be the principal, school guidance team personnel, teachers, preceptors, assistant or administrative personnel.
- <sup>34</sup> Government of the Province of Buenos Aires and UNICEF (2014). Guía de orientación para la intervención en situaciones conflictivas y de vulneración de derechos en el escenario escolar (Orientation guidelines for intervention in rights violations and conflicting situations in school setting). Buenos Aires, Argentina. [http://www.codajic.org/sites/www.codajic.org/files/Guia\\_de\\_orientacion\\_WEB\\_0.pdf](http://www.codajic.org/sites/www.codajic.org/files/Guia_de_orientacion_WEB_0.pdf)
- <sup>35</sup> National Ministry of Education (2014). Guía federal de orientaciones para la intervención educativa en situaciones complejas relacionadas con la vida escolar (Federal Guidelines for Educational Intervention in Complex School-Life Situations). Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- <sup>36</sup> Ministry of Culture and Education of La Pampa (2009). Guía de Orientaciones para la Actuación Institucional en situaciones relacionadas con Violencia en las Escuelas (Orientation Guidelines for Institutional Action in Situations Involving Violence in Schools)
- <sup>37</sup> Department of Public Education of Mexico (2012). Manual de Seguridad Escolar. (School Safety Manual) Recomendaciones para protegernos de la inseguridad y la violencia (School Safety Manual. Recommendations to protect us from insecurity and violence). City of México. <http://www.seslp.gob.mx/pdf/Manual%20de%20Seguridad-Web%20290212.pdf>
- <sup>38</sup> Department of Education of the State of Guanajuato (2016). Protocolo de actuación ante la presencia, portación, o uso de armas o drogas en el entorno escolar (Protocol of Action against the detection, possession or use of firearms or drugs in the school environment). <http://www.seg.guanajuato.gob.mx/AConvivir/Paginas/dctos/Protocoloactuacionpresenciaarmasdrogasentornoescolar.pdf>
- <sup>39</sup> According to the Protocol, municipal or state civil protection units may provide appropriate advice in these areas.
- <sup>40</sup> As an annex to this Protocol, the "Safe Backpack" programme was adopted in 2017 as a complementary preventive measure for the protection of the educational community. In general terms, this measure consists of checking students' backpacks with the aim of discouraging the introduction of weapons and drugs into schools. Based on the principle of progressive autonomy, the check of backpacks - which is the responsibility of the school authorities - must always be carried out with the consent of the student, parents or person responsible for the child, and be implemented within a framework of respect for the human rights of children. See: Department of Education of the State of Guanajuato (2016) Safe Backpack Review. Annex to the Protocol for Action in the event of the presence or use of weapons or drugs in the school environment. [http://www.seg.guanajuato.gob.mx/AConvivir/Paginas/dctos/Recursos/PROTOCOLO\\_ACTUACION.pdf](http://www.seg.guanajuato.gob.mx/AConvivir/Paginas/dctos/Recursos/PROTOCOLO_ACTUACION.pdf)
- <sup>41</sup> Department of the Interior and Department of Public Education (2017). Guide for preventing, detecting and responding to the presence of weapons in schools. Mexico. [https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/342152/Guia\\_preencion\\_de\\_armas\\_en\\_las\\_escuelas.pdf](https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/342152/Guia_preencion_de_armas_en_las_escuelas.pdf)
- <sup>42</sup> In 2015, the National Human Rights Commission of this country considered that the review of students' belongings is, in essence, a human rights intervention, and therefore raised the need for an assessment of the positive or negative impact it will have on their lives in the short, medium and long term. This is why the Guide stresses that "only in extraordinary situations should the review of belongings be carried out after a diagnosis of the prevalence of cases of carrying weapons or dangerous objects in schools".
- <sup>43</sup> Department of the Interior and Department of Public Education (2017). Recommendations for the design and establishment of strategies for the prevention and detection of the entry of weapons into basic education schools. Mexico [https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/335150/Estrategias\\_de\\_preencion\\_deteccion\\_armas.pdf](https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/335150/Estrategias_de_preencion_deteccion_armas.pdf)
- <sup>44</sup> These departments promote a comprehensive education for children, adolescents and young people in schools with an emphasis on values, prevention and identification and support in risk situations through a strategy based on volunteerism and the participation of parents, students, principals and teachers. For more information: <https://www.mined.gob.ni/consejerias-de-las-comunidades-educativas/>
- <sup>45</sup> According to the definition in this Protocol, "homemade weapons" refers to "improvised pistols" and "mortar tubes".
- <sup>46</sup> Established by Ministerial Resolution 2588-A of May 30, 2018.
- <sup>47</sup> Besides the weapons issue, this protocol also refers to other situations such as: physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse; school violence and school harassment (bullying); possession, use and/or sale of psychoactive substances; joining criminal groups; commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and risky sexual behaviour; suicide risk and self-harm.
- <sup>48</sup> According to Articles 16 and 17 of Executive Decree 162 which establishes the internal regime of official and private schools (Chapter II. Inspection of belongings), if there is a reasonable basis, teachers or inspectors, with the prior authorization of the school principal, may proceed to the registration and inspection of students and their belongings.
- <sup>49</sup> If the student involved in a weapon incident is up to 11 years old, he or she must be brought to the attention of the Child and Adolescent Court. If the student is 12 years of age or older, the case should be referred to the Prosecutor's Office for Adolescents.
- <sup>50</sup> In Argentina, for example, the Federal Guide states that "in the case of suspicion that a student has a firearm at school, the issue should not be raised as a crime, but as a concern of the school staff about the carrying of weapons and the risk it implies for the student and the rest of the institution (...) such a person should not be considered as a dangerous and strange being who appeared at school, but as a being of the community (...)". de la comunidad (...)."

<sup>51</sup> The Federal Guide in Mexico stipulates, for example, the creation of a multidisciplinary group in charge of following up on the strategies established to prevent and deal on the presence of weapons in schools, in which at least the following participate: a representative of the Regional Delegation of Education, a parent representing the School Council for Social Participation in Education, a representative of the municipal body for preventing, addressing and eradicating violence in the school environment; a representative of the municipal level; an element of the Department of Public Security and/or a representative of Human Rights or any other body or person that each entity has.

<sup>52</sup> Link to the platform's website: <http://www.siseve.pe/>. The app may be downloaded via Google Play through <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=minedu.digc.dige.cce.siseve>. It should be noted that since March 2019, the Ministry of Education set up a national toll-free hotline (0800-76888) to report this type of incidents, and it will be available at Spanish and Quechua.

<sup>53</sup> Since the implementation of this tool and according to official data from the Ministry of Education, between September 2013 and August 2018, 153 cases of firearms that were found in public and private schools nationwide were reported.

<sup>54</sup> Ministry of Education (2017). Safe and Violence-free Schools: analysis of information from the SiseVE platform. Peru. <https://peru.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/INFORME%20SISEVE%20-%20FINAL%20-2017.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> With regard to private schools and as indicated by the Department of Education of Bogota through its website, "linking processes and continuous training are being carried out in order to achieve 100% coverage" in these establishments. Department of Education of Bogotá. Alert System. [https://www.educacionbogota.edu.co/portal\\_institucional/gestion-educativa/sistema-de-alertas](https://www.educacionbogota.edu.co/portal_institucional/gestion-educativa/sistema-de-alertas)

<sup>56</sup> See Alert System website: <http://alertas.educacionbogota.edu.co>

<sup>57</sup> Department of Education of Bogota. School climate and victimization in Bogota. School coexistence survey, (Bogota: Department of Education, 2013) p. 18

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>59</sup> General Directorate for Culture and Education of Buenos Aires Statistical Survey of Conflict Situations and Violation of Rights in the School Setting Communication No. 7/15, (Buenos Aires: Buenos Aires. Government of the Province of Buenos Aires).

According to this Department, 533 cases of students found with firearms in their schools were reported between 2006 and 2018. Ministry of Public Education (2017). *Violencia en Centros Educativos, curso lectivo 2016* (Violence in Educational Institutions, school course 2016). Boletín 01-17, Costa Rica; Castro, Katherine (2019). The Department of Public Education does not rule out the use of metal detectors in schools. At [crhoy.com](http://crhoy.com) 16 May 2019.

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.crhoy.com/nacionales/mep-no-descarta-usar-detectores-de-metales-en-centros-educativos/>

<sup>61</sup> Ministry of Public Education. Education indicators. [https://www.mep.go.cr/indicadores\\_edu/index.html](https://www.mep.go.cr/indicadores_edu/index.html)

<sup>62</sup> Kornblit, Ana L. (2008). *Violencia escolar y climas sociales* (Violence in school and social climates). 1a Edition, Editorial Biblos, Buenos Aires.

<sup>63</sup> RENAR and the Ministry of Education (2014). *Propuestas para el desarme: Desarmando mitos construyendo argumentos*. (Proposals for disarmament: Dismantling myths by building arguments) Buenos Aires. [http://www.anmac.gob.ar/pdf/desarme\\_web.pdf](http://www.anmac.gob.ar/pdf/desarme_web.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> See MINED website: <https://www.mined.gov.sv/index.php/estadisticas-educativas/item/8015-observatorio-mined>

<sup>65</sup> The information collected annually by these observatories has not only allowed the authorities to identify that there is not just one type of violence, and therefore not just one type of school, but also that there are different contexts of insecurity and conditions within the educational institutions. UNDP (2018). *Human Development Report El Salvador 2018. ¡SOY JOVEN! ¿Y ahora qué? (I'm young. Now, what?)* [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/el\\_salvador/docs/IDHES%202018%20WEB.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/el_salvador/docs/IDHES%202018%20WEB.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> In 2016, the observatory reported that almost 50% of schools were affected by the carrying of firearms and bladed weapons in their community.

<sup>67</sup> National Ministry of Education (2007). *La Violencia en las escuelas. Un relevamiento desde la mirada de los alumnos* (Violence in schools. A Survey from the students' point of view). 1st Edition, Buenos Aires. <http://www.bnm.me.gov.ar/giga1/documentos/EL001832.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> D'Angelo, L. A., y Fernández, D. R. A., & Fernández, D. R. (2011). *Clima, conflictos y violencia en la escuela* (Climate, conflict and violence in schools). UNICEF/FLACSO.

<sup>69</sup> The options are: usually (3 or more times per month); occasionally (1-2 times per month); more than once per year (less than once per month, but more than once per year); once per year and never

<sup>70</sup> This evaluation assesses the performance of 5th and 9th grade students in the Portuguese language, focusing on reading and math, with an emphasis on problem solving. See: *Presentation Prova Brasil*. <http://portal.mec.gov.br/prova-brasil>

<sup>71</sup> Brazilian Forum on Public Security. <http://www.forumseguranca.org.br/>

<sup>72</sup> Abramovay, M. (coord.) (2016). *Diagnóstico participativo das violências nas escolas: falam os jovens* (Participatory Diagnosis of Violence in Schools: The Youths Talk). Rio de Janeiro: FLACSO Brasil-OEI-Ministério da Educação do Brasil.

<sup>73</sup> Ministry of Education (2010). *Encuesta nacional de estudiantes* (National survey of students). Chile: SIMCE

<sup>74</sup> Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá (2013). *School climate and victimization in Bogota. Encuesta de convivencia escolar* (School coexistence survey). Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá.

<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that the questionnaires used in the 2006 and 2011 studies also asked students if in the

last twelve months "any of your classmates brought firearms to school". The 2013 questionnaire did not include that question.

<sup>76</sup> The study was carried out in Fe y Alegría schools, schools of the Venezuelan Association of Catholic Education (AVEC) and in public schools. Machado, Jesús y Guerra, José (2009). *Investigación sobre Violencia en las Escuelas - Informe final*. (Research on violence in schools: Final report) Venezuela: Gumilla Center

<sup>77</sup> Encuesta elaborada para el Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2011-2012. (Survey developed for the National Human Development Report 2011-2012).

<sup>78</sup> Information provided by IEPADES, 23/08/2019

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>80</sup> Regarding firearms in schools.

<sup>81</sup> The indicators to be monitored were proposed in a participatory manner in 2017 by young volunteers who were trained in topics such as the SDGs, peace, disarmament and security within the framework of the Project "Youth Volunteerism for Peacebuilding and Disarmament: Youth Measuring Community Security Through Participatory Indicators" implemented by UNLIREC and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in Colombia, Honduras, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>82</sup> Some of these campaigns have received support from international cooperation agencies and organizations.

<sup>83</sup> This Programme seeks to encourage the voluntary surrender of arms and ammunition in exchange for economic incentives. The delivery is made anonymously without any legal consequences. It should be noted that this Programme received the Future Policy Silver Award in 2013 from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the World Future Council and the Parliamentary Union. See: <https://www.futurepolicy.org/culture-of-peace/argentinas-national-programme-for-the-voluntary-surrender-of-firearms/> (consultado 7 enero, 2019)

<sup>84</sup> Infoleg, Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos, Ley N°26.216.

<sup>85</sup> The National Agency of Controlled Materials (ANMaC) was created by Law 27.192 in October 2015 and took on the role of former RENAR.

<sup>86</sup> RENAR, Department of Justice and Human Rights, Spot "Guns...not even as toys" available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmvDa5mutk>

<sup>87</sup> National Registry of Weapons and Explosives (Argentine), "Desarmando Mitos sobre las armas: jornadas del RENAR en colegios" (Dismantling myths about weapons: RENAR days in schools" <http://www.archivoinfojus.gob.ar/nacionales/desarmando-mitos-sobre-las-armas-jornadas-del-renar-en-colegios-2106.html>

<sup>88</sup> Actividades de los Promotores del Desarme (Activities for Promoters of Disarmament), available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RlaaMj6pLhw>

<sup>89</sup> UNDP Project: ARG 14/007 "Promoters of Disarmament Support to the Campaign for the Promotion of Voluntary Disarmament and Peaceful Conflict Resolution carried out in municipalities in the Greater Buenos Aires area": [https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/ARG/82020\\_prodoc.pdf](https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/ARG/82020_prodoc.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Former RENAR and UNICEF Communication Campaign, available at <http://www.archivoinfojus.gob.ar/nacionales/armas-lo-que-vos-ves-como-proteccion-tus-hijos-lo-ven-como-un-juguete-6250.html>

<sup>91</sup> RENAR and Department of Education (2014). *Proposals for Disarmament: Dismantling myths by building arguments*. Buenos Aires. See: [http://www.anmac.gob.ar/pdf/desarme\\_web.pdf](http://www.anmac.gob.ar/pdf/desarme_web.pdf)

<sup>92</sup> RENAR and Department of Education (2014). *Proposals for Disarmament: Dismantling myths by building arguments*. Buenos Aires. See: [http://www.anmac.gob.ar/pdf/desarme\\_web.pdf](http://www.anmac.gob.ar/pdf/desarme_web.pdf) (pp. 41)

<sup>93</sup> Information provided to UNLIREC by the National Directorate of Strategic Planning, Citizen Prevention and Institutional Cooperation (ANMaC). 24/09/2019.

<sup>94</sup> Video "Stop the bullets. Kill the gun" de la ONG IANSA", available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0GJphntI5I>; video "Los likes no hacen nada, tu sí" (Likes don't do anything, you do" by ONG Jóvenes de Puerto Rico en Riesgo, available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_fP8WxJ-9As](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fP8WxJ-9As)

<sup>95</sup> Survey *Creencias que matan* (Beliefs that Kill) from ANMaC Citizen Prevention. Sample: 2251 young people between 13 and 24 years old who participated in the Workshop *Beliefs that Kill* in 2018-2019.

<sup>96</sup> Research Institute of the National Judicial Council. Reports: "Homicide in CABA" 2015-2017.

<sup>97</sup> Information provided to UNLIREC by the National Directorate of Strategic Planning, Citizen Prevention and Institutional Cooperation (ANMaC). 24/09/2019.

<sup>98</sup> UNDP ARG; NGO Trama (2012) "Masculinidades Plurales. Reflexionar en clave de géneros" (Plural masculinities. Reflecting from a gender perspective) Available at: [https://www.ar.undp.org/content/argentina/es/home/library/womens\\_empowerment/masculinidades-plurales-reflexionar-en-clave-de-generos-.html](https://www.ar.undp.org/content/argentina/es/home/library/womens_empowerment/masculinidades-plurales-reflexionar-en-clave-de-generos-.html)

<sup>99</sup> Information provided to UNLIREC by the National Directorate of Strategic Planning, Citizen Prevention and Institutional Cooperation (ANMaC). 24/09/2019.

<sup>100</sup> Department of Health Statistics and Information (DEIS), Department of Health "Vital Statistics" years 2014-2017.

<sup>101</sup> Research Institute of the National Judicial Council (2018) "Homicidios Dolosos 2017 en la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires" (Intentional homicides in the City of Buenos Aires in 2017)

<sup>102</sup> Registry of Systematization and Monitoring of Femicides and Homicides aggravated by gender. Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, 2012-2019.

<sup>103</sup> Oficina de la Mujer de la Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación (Women's Office of the Supreme Court of Argentina), 2017. *Femicidas 2017*

<sup>104</sup> Video #LasNiñasPueden available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MI-Lq8lzFXg>

<sup>105</sup> Although the name of this campaign is “Gun Free School”, this concept is much broader and not reduced to an awareness campaign. For more information on the concept of “Gun Free Schools” see the chapter on policy frameworks in this document.

<sup>106</sup> See <http://www.funpadem.org/Headline/detail/36>, accessed 18 September 2019.

<sup>107</sup> Mena, Fabio (2014). ‘Al Cole Sin Armas’ seeks to eliminate violence in schools through dance and music,” *Crhoy*, 3 April 2014. <https://www.crhoy.com/archivo/al-cole-sin-armas-busca-eliminar-la-violencia-en-los-colegios-por-medio-baile-y-musica-8244179x/>

<sup>108</sup> The video was performed by the musicians Jaguar and Dinamita, and was attended by adolescents from the communities of Barrio Cuba, San Sebastian, La Carpio, Alajuelita and Hatillo.

<sup>109</sup> Video available through the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AppbeExUfdw>

<sup>110</sup> Information provided by the Department of Justice and Peace of Costa Rica.

<sup>111</sup> Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy and UNICEF (2018). Catalogue of Costa Rica’s Technical Cooperation on Children’s and Adolescent’s Programmes. San José. Pp. 161.

<sup>112</sup> See section on Protocols and Guidelines for Action and Prevention in the Event of the Presence of Firearms in Schools.

<sup>113</sup> ANMaC (n.d.). Awareness and Voluntary Disarmament Programmes. [http://www.anmac.gob.ar/index\\_seccion.php?seccion=info&m=0&id=136](http://www.anmac.gob.ar/index_seccion.php?seccion=info&m=0&id=136)

<sup>114</sup> Directorate-General for Culture and Education. Use of firearms, the violation of the right to life and other rights. Working document No. 2, Buenos Aires, 2015.

<sup>115</sup> Info Quilmes (2018). Disarmament Plan: approximately 400 weapons were delivered for destruction. InfoQuilmes, 25/09/2018. <http://www.infoquilmes.com.ar/2018/09/plan-desarme-unas-400-armas-fueron-entregadas-para-su-destruccion/>

<sup>116</sup> Official response to the Survey on the impact, treatment and challenges of firearms and armed violence in schools in Latin America and the Caribbean, conducted by UNLIREC in 2018.

<sup>117</sup> Andina (2015). Campaign on non-use of firearms among students in Piura launched,” *Andina*, 30 agosto, 2015. <https://andina.pe/agencia/noticia-lanzan-campana-sobre-no-uso-armas-fuego-entre-alumnos-piura-572816.aspx>

<sup>118</sup> Respuesta oficial a la Encuesta sobre el impacto, tratamiento y desafíos ante la presencia de armas de fuego y violencia armada en centros escolares en América Latina y el Caribe, realizada por UNLIREC en 2018 (Official response to the Survey on the impact, treatment and challenges of firearms and armed violence in schools in Latin America and the Caribbean, conducted by UNLIREC in 2018).

<sup>119</sup> National Regulatory Entity for Security Services, Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives for Civil Use (SUCAMEC), presentation made during the International Seminar “Initiatives for Prevention and Action against the Presence of Firearms in Schools”, Trujillo, 6 December 2017.

<sup>120</sup> Mineiro, Triangulo (2017). Ações sobre o desarmamento infantil são feitas em escolas de Uberlândia (Actions on child disarmament are carried out in schools in Uberlandia). *G1 Globo*, 03/04/2017. <http://g1.globo.com/minas-gerais/triangulo-mineiro/noticia/2017/04/acoes-sobre-o-desarmamento-infantil-sao-feitas-em-escolas-de-uberlandia.html>

<sup>121</sup> In the first edition of this campaign in Mendoza, psychologists recommended not to destroy the toys because it could be seen as a “violent act”, so it was decided to melt the plastics and incorporate them into mosaics and artwork to be displayed in schools. See: Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Protection of Children and Adolescents Affected by Armed Violence in the Community, United Nations: New York, 2016.

<sup>122</sup> Belgrano Córdoba (2015). “Fútbol por el Desarme” fue un éxito”. *Belgrano Córdoba*, 14/07/2015. <https://www.belgranocordoba.com/noticia-belgrano/1025/>

<sup>123</sup> Information provided by the “Alfredo Marcenac” Civil Association, November 2019.

<sup>124</sup> IEPADES (n.d.). Childhood and Youth for Peace. <http://iepades.com/ninez-y-juventud-por-la-paz-2/>

<sup>125</sup> More information about this campaign can be found at: <https://www.institodevida.org/#block-4395>

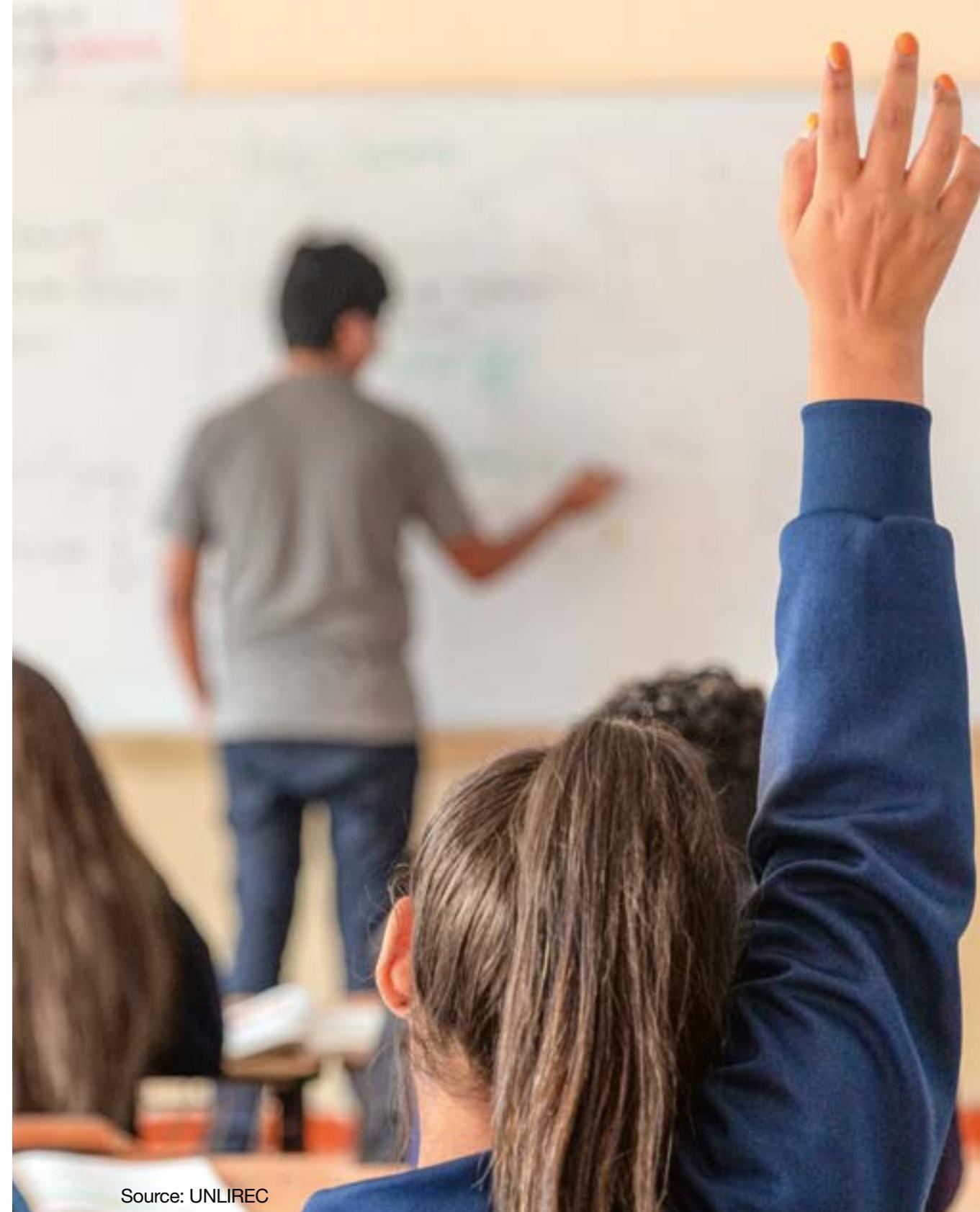
<sup>126</sup> Video available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_SQQ8N8wDCA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SQQ8N8wDCA)

<sup>127</sup> ASJ Honduras (2017). “Unarmed and Educated”, an initiative to prevent violence from schools. <http://asjhonduras.com/webhn/desarmados-y-educados-una-iniciativa-para-la-prevencion-de-la-violencia-desde-los-centros-escolares/>

<sup>128</sup> Information provided to UNLIREC by Youth Against Violence - Honduras. 08/SEPT/2019.

<sup>129</sup> See: <http://www.unicef.org/ni/prensa/242/>

<sup>130</sup> The agencies that were part of this Joint Programme were the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations Regional Center for Peace, Disarmament and Development (UNLIREC).



Source: UNLIREC



# CHAPTER **FIVE** *Conclusions and recommendations*



The presence of firearms in schools is a complex phenomenon that draws on different factors. Young people who are directly or indirectly involved or who are exposed to environments and dynamics of violence and criminality may be prone to come into contact with firearms and bring them to school. The proliferation and availability of firearms in the countries of the region, as well as structural factors, such as social acceptance and the cultural justification that gravitates around weapons, have also permeated school spaces.

On the other hand, many of the analysed incidents indicate that the presence of firearms in schools occurs, because children and young people find them in their homes and bring them to school to show them off to their classmates without the intention of using them. In these cases, many times the weapon can enter and leave the school without being used and without anyone noticing, thus there is a dark figure around this type of incident.

It is not possible to ignore that the presence of firearms in schools and their potential use, in addition to its physical effects (injuries, deaths) and serious social impacts vis-à-vis access to education, school dropout rates and psychological effects. The various expressions, modalities, motivations, as well as the profile of the victims and perpetrators, highlight the complexity and heterogeneity of a phenomenon that requires a comprehensive and focused approach.



Source: UNVMC

Firearms use and possession in schools is very serious. Its importance must not be minimized, especially when the potential consequences are always nefarious. The mere presence of a firearm at school - whatever the reason may be to have brought it there - represents the transgression of a limit, because there is no justification for it. A firearm has no place in a space of coexistence and learning in which girls, boys, adolescents and youth are taught to be stand-up citizens and where values are transmitted and tools for adult life are taught.

The scope and impacts of the presence of firearms in schools are difficult to measure due to the lack of information systems and databases that record these incidents. Therefore, we must be cautious in the interpretation of available data to avoid hasty analysis, distorted tables and even stigmatize or criminalize the youth population.

As mentioned throughout this study, in the last two decades, the persistence of different types of incidents (detection, carrying, threat, use of firearms) in schools in Latin America and the Caribbean have been observed. While responses have been increasingly generated by federal/national and local governments - often in collaboration with civil society and international partners - to address this challenge, there are still disjointed efforts between different sectors of the State (education, justice, citizen security), which means the problem has not yet received the attention it deserves.

For example, research and programmes on school violence identified the presence of firearms as a risk factor within schools. However, with the exception of some countries, this issue has not received a timely approach within the framework of school violence prevention programmes. On the other hand, the sectors with responsibilities in the control of firearms and in the design of programmes for the prevention and reduction of armed violence have not permanently included schools nor the different actors of the student community in their public policies and initiatives.

There is hence a need to link various sectors and actors involved in gun control, citizen security, education, public health, and youth issues, among others, to address and jointly and comprehensively prevent the challenge posed by firearms in schools.

Based on the findings presented in this report and taking into account the challenges posed by firearms in schools in terms of citizen security, peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution, role play, public health, quality of education and spaces for safe learning, **UNLIREC presents the following recommendations to take into account when addressing this phenomenon.**



## Regulatory frameworks and public policies

- ② **Adopt legislative measures** that control and restrict the possession and carrying of firearms in school settings. Strengthen these measures with standards within schools through internal regulations and codes of conduct.
- ② **Incorporate and specifically address the firearms component in school violence prevention programmes**, as well as involve the education sector and the school community in general in the design and implementation of public policies and weapons control programmes, as well as armed violence prevention and reduction.
- ② Consider the **development of rules on the safe storage** of firearms in homes where C&A live. These should be aimed at those who legally own firearms (parents) to prevent easy access to firearms by C&A. Complement these rules with adult education programmes on the risks of access to firearms by minors.
- ② **Declare schools as 'Gun Free Zones'** in order to avoid conflicting interpersonal confrontation with firearms and positively influence individual and collective security perceptions among members of the student community.
- ② Design and implement **protocols and action guides in situations of detection, carrying and use of firearms in schools.** Periodically train school staff in the implementation of protocols.
- ② Establish information systems and tools (reporting platforms, **incident records**, databases, statistics, surveys, among others) that allow a better understanding of school incidents, contexts and climates with respect to firearms, including their expressions, modalities, motivations, profile of victims and perpetrators, and access to firearms by C&A, among others.



## Dialogue and multi-sectoral coordination

- Establish **inter-institutional coordination** mechanisms (among the education, public security, health, childhood, among others sectors) to exchange and cross information, design policies and periodically monitor the measures and plans implemented. Consider the creation of specific working groups to address the problem or to incorporate the issue into established inter-institutional coordination mechanisms on arms control, as well as into armed violence prevention and reduction.
- Encourage **dialogue and participation** of different actors, including parents and students regarding the impact of firearms on schools.
- Develop **education and awareness campaigns** in schools and communities on the risks of firearms and armed violence prevention.
- Make visible the firearms issue in schools** through a proactive perspective, without falling into an alarmist approach, sensationalism, or stigmatization. Involving the media in these efforts is essential.



## Approach to children and young people

- Ensure that, in case the authorities must carry out registration interventions and inspections of students, **always give priority to the child's welfare and respect their human rights**, trying not to judge, stigmatize or criminalize minors and young people.

- Respond differently** to each case involving a firearm at school. A firearm in the hands of C&A does not mean that there is an intention to use or misuse it. It is important to try to understand why the child/adolescent took the gun to school.
- Protect the identity and privacy of youth** involved in gun incidents inside the school. Contact the parents or legal guardians immediately.
- Generate mechanisms to identify **early warning signs** about events, patterns and trends that indicate the likelihood of students bringing a firearm to school.
- Ensure that messages addressed to C&A** about the risks posed by firearms are tailor-made and that **the most propitious means of dissemination are used**, such as art and music. Avoid an adult-centric approach.
- Include a gender perspective** in initiatives and responses to tackle the presence of firearms in schools, with special emphasis on non-violent masculinities.
- In line with Resolution 2250 of the United Nations Security Council on Youth, Peace and Security, **empower children as active subjects of rights and agents of change** and involve them in all stages of design, planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes that address firearms in schools.

UNLIREC, as part of its mandate to strengthen national firearms control mechanisms, as well as to support the efforts of States towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, will continue to promote dialogue around these issues with the purpose of contributing to their understanding and thus generating tools that strengthen the responses that States and societies provide to such expressions of violence.

UNLIREC hopes that this study will contribute to deepening the debate on firearms in schools and is willing to work with Member States, UN System agencies, civil society and other stakeholders to formulate strategies that prevent and reduce the presence and use of firearms in schools in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Comments and opinions on this study can be sent by e-mail to: [programme@unlirec.org](mailto:programme@unlirec.org).

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"PEACE is being in love and tranquility and living with our partners. Peace is living with our friends and families, because if we did not have peace, we would be mean and this is why we must live in harmony, love and tranquility and not use violence. This is why peace exists. PEACE is the best thing in the World!"



Source: UNLIREC

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# ANNEXES

Firearms Incidents Records in Schools (by country) - Media Monitoring conducted between 2010 and 2019



## ARGENTINA

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
30	1	19	10	4	1

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
24/OCT/18	Villaguay	An 11-year-old boy brought a gun to school.	An 11-year-old student brought a revolver to school. The child's mother was immediately summoned by the school's principal. The Public Defender and police intervened to confiscate the 22-calibre revolver firearm.	<a href="http://www.apnoticias.com.ar/secciones/ampliada.php?seccion=locales&amp;id=38351">http://www.apnoticias.com.ar/secciones/ampliada.php?seccion=locales&amp;id=38351</a>
05/OCT/18	Cordoba	A student took a weapon to a well-known school in Cordoba.	A teacher discovered a firearm among a student's belongings. The teacher notified the school's principal who called the police. The police confiscated the gun. It is important to note that the teaching staff acted in accordance with school protocol and notified both the student's family and the police.	<a href="https://eldoce.tv/sociedad/alumno-llevo-arma-conocido-colegio-cordoba-educacion-primario_73674">https://eldoce.tv/sociedad/alumno-llevo-arma-conocido-colegio-cordoba-educacion-primario_73674</a>
28/SEP/18	Esquel	Student had problems with a classmate and went to school armed.	This morning someone said that one of the children had a homemade gun in his backpack. In this situation, the authorities turned to the Community Police who came to the school to intervene.	<a href="https://www.elpatagonico.com/tenia-problemas-un-companero-y-fue-al-colegio-armado-n3089661">https://www.elpatagonico.com/tenia-problemas-un-companero-y-fue-al-colegio-armado-n3089661</a>
16/SEP/18	Santiago del Estero	Student went to school with a gun.	An adolescent, angry because of the fire caused to his grandmother's house, took a 22-calibre revolver he found at his home to school. The mother noticed her son left the house with the gun and informed the school.	<a href="https://www.lmneuquen.com/fue-al-colegio-un-arma-n606005">https://www.lmneuquen.com/fue-al-colegio-un-arma-n606005</a>
23/AUG/18	Santo Tome, Santa Fe	A weapon was discovered in a student's backpack.	School authorities called the police after finding a gun in a student's backpack. Officers found a 22-calibre revolver with no ammunition in the possession of a 14-year-old student.	<a href="https://www.ellitoral.com/index.php/id_um/177330-descubrieron-un-arma-en-la-mochila-de-un-alumno-en-una-escuela-de-santo-tome-sucesos.html">https://www.ellitoral.com/index.php/id_um/177330-descubrieron-un-arma-en-la-mochila-de-un-alumno-en-una-escuela-de-santo-tome-sucesos.html</a>

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
03/AUG/18	Rio Grande, Malvinas Argentinas	A student from Rio Grande entered the school armed.	A high school student in Rio Grande had a gun in his backpack. A teacher took it from him and put it away until it was handed over to the police. The minor, meanwhile, was taken out of school by his parents before the security staff arrived.	<a href="http://www.eldiariodelfindelmundo.com/noticias/2018/03/08/76149-un-estudiante-de-rio-grande-ingreso-armado-a-establecimiento-escolar">http://www.eldiariodelfindelmundo.com/noticias/2018/03/08/76149-un-estudiante-de-rio-grande-ingreso-armado-a-establecimiento-escolar</a>
02/AUG/18	Neuquen	Conflict in EPET 17 after high school student handles a weapon.	A second-year student took a gun to school and showed it to a classmate who grabbed and manipulated it. There was also a third party involved. The incident reached the school officials who, due to the seriousness of the case, met with the parents to explain what happened and to inform them that the students would be suspended.	<a href="https://www.lmneuquen.com/conflicto-el-epet-17-luego-que-chicos-segundo-ano-manipularon-un-arma-n601018">https://www.lmneuquen.com/conflicto-el-epet-17-luego-que-chicos-segundo-ano-manipularon-un-arma-n601018</a>
03/JUL/18	Santos Lugares, Buenos Aires	Student with learning disability went to school armed.	A 16-year-old teenager took a revolver to school to show it to his classmates. The officials - upon learning of the situation - called the police. The police, in the company of the teacher, approached the boy, who suffers from a learning disability and, after talking with the minor, managed to get him to hand over the gun to the teacher, who handed it over to the security personnel.	<a href="https://www.cronica.com.ar/policiales/Pibe-con-retraso-madurativo-fue-armado-a-la-escuela-20180703-0104.html">https://www.cronica.com.ar/policiales/Pibe-con-retraso-madurativo-fue-armado-a-la-escuela-20180703-0104.html</a>
13/JUN/18	San Rafael	Armed student: family suspected of putting the gun in the backpack.	An 8-year-old student brought a 9-millimetre gun to school. The gun detected by teachers among the 8-year-old's belongings had been stolen last December. The serial number proved that it belonged to a police officer from Mendoza who was the victim of an assault at the end of 2017. An investigation was initiated to look into the background of the student's father and another family member.	<a href="https://www.elsol.com.ar/alumno-armado-senalan-a-la-familia-por-meter-el-arma-en-la-mochila">https://www.elsol.com.ar/alumno-armado-senalan-a-la-familia-por-meter-el-arma-en-la-mochila</a>
15/MAY/18	Manuel Alberti, Pilar	A 14-year-old student was armed at school.	A student took a 38-calibre revolver to a private school to show to his classmates. The police received a call from the school. The principal handed the gun over to the police when they arrived. The gun had no ammunition and had its serial number removed.	<a href="http://www.pilaradiario.com/policiales/2018/5/16/alumno-aos-armado-colegio-81873.html">http://www.pilaradiario.com/policiales/2018/5/16/alumno-aos-armado-colegio-81873.html</a>



Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
10/ MAY/18	Allen, Rio Negro	A teenager went to school in Allen with a gun.	The principal of High School 149 found a 38-calibre revolver in a student's backpack. According to police sources, the gun was detected when students entered their classroom. Police and Criminalistics Cabinet arrived at the scene and confiscated the weapon.	<a href="https://www.rionegro.com.ar/policiales/un-adolescente-fue-al-colegio-en-allen-con-un-arma-de-fuego-AJ4964031">https://www.rionegro.com.ar/policiales/un-adolescente-fue-al-colegio-en-allen-con-un-arma-de-fuego-AJ4964031</a>
20/ APR/18	Parana, Entre Rios	Student was threatened with a firearm in a school and classes were suspended.	One student threatened another student with a gun. A third student notified a teacher who called the police.	<a href="https://www.elonce.com/secciones/parana/545191-alumno-fue-amenazado-con-un-arma-en-una-escuela-y-suspendieron-las-clases.htm">https://www.elonce.com/secciones/parana/545191-alumno-fue-amenazado-con-un-arma-en-una-escuela-y-suspendieron-las-clases.htm</a>
24/ NOV/17	Melchor Romero, La Plata	Student with learning disability was armed at school.	A 14-year-old student with a learning disability went to school armed with a 22-calibre pistol and ten bullets. The teachers managed to convince the student to drop the gun, calmed him down and called his relatives and the police station at 911.	<a href="https://www.cronica.com.ar/policiales/Alumno-con-retraso-madurativo-llevo-pistola-a-la-escuela-20171124-0019.html">https://www.cronica.com.ar/policiales/Alumno-con-retraso-madurativo-llevo-pistola-a-la-escuela-20171124-0019.html</a>
12/ OCT/17	Mendoza	12-year-old student was carrying a gun inside the school.	A student brought a gun to school in his backpack. The authorities reported the incident. The police found a 22-calibre revolver in the child's backpack.	<a href="https://viapais.com.ar/mendoza/232789-alumno-de-12-anos-andaba-con-un-arma-dentro-de-la-escuela/">https://viapais.com.ar/mendoza/232789-alumno-de-12-anos-andaba-con-un-arma-dentro-de-la-escuela/</a>
10/ OCT/17	Ramos Mejia, La Matanza	He went to school with two guns, filmed himself and said he was going to "kill everyone".	A 14-year-old boy went to school with two guns, dozens of bullets and a hunting knife. He made a video of himself saying he was going to "kill everyone." Then he called the police and said he was armed. Police and school authorities were involved in the incident. When a policeman was handling one of the weapons, he fired an involuntary shot in the principal's office.	<a href="http://www.lanacion.com.ar/2070776-fue-con-dos-armas-a-la-escuela-se-filmo-y-dijo-que-iba-a-matar-a-todos">http://www.lanacion.com.ar/2070776-fue-con-dos-armas-a-la-escuela-se-filmo-y-dijo-que-iba-a-matar-a-todos</a>
15/ SEP/17	Rodeo de la Cruz, Mendoza	A firearm and drugs were found at a school in Guaymallen.	At the Cordon del Plata School, a teacher found weapons and drugs behind a cistern. Police personnel found a bag with 40 bags of marijuana, a bulletproof vest, a dismantled shotgun in working condition and two 9-mm pistol magazines.	<a href="https://www.elnueve.com/hallan-un-arma-y-drogas-en-una-escuela-de-guaymallen">https://www.elnueve.com/hallan-un-arma-y-drogas-en-una-escuela-de-guaymallen</a>
15/ SEP/17	Cordoba	A student took a 22-calibre revolver to a private school.	A student brought a firearm to school in his backpack. He showed the gun to a classmate, who reported it to the authorities. The gun was not loaded, police reported.	<a href="https://lmdiarario.com.ar/noticia/20618/cordoba-un-alumno-llevo-un-revolver-calibre-22-al-colegio">https://lmdiarario.com.ar/noticia/20618/cordoba-un-alumno-llevo-un-revolver-calibre-22-al-colegio</a>

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
14/ JUN/17	Buenos Aires	A student at San Juan Bautista went to school carrying a firearm to kill himself.	An 18-year old youth hid a revolver in his backpack. In the school bathroom the young man took out his gun, showed it to his classmates and told them that he wanted to kill himself. They warned the authorities, who called the police. When the principal tried to calm the young man down, he shot at the floor. When the police arrived, the young man handed over his gun.	<a href="http://varelaaldia.com.ar/un-alumno-del-san-juan-bautista-fue-armado-al-colegio-paramatarse/">http://varelaaldia.com.ar/un-alumno-del-san-juan-bautista-fue-armado-al-colegio-paramatarse/</a>
23/ MAY/17	El Talar	Shots in the school.	A 19-year-old student fired five shots inside the No. 13 high school after an argument with a classmate. The student "fired two shots at the boy he had fought with, which, fortunately, hit the wall. Then he went out and shot three more times in the corridor: one shot hit a wall, another one hit an access staircase and the last one hit the preceptory".	<a href="https://www.pagina12.com.ar/39482-a-los-tiros-en-el-colegio">https://www.pagina12.com.ar/39482-a-los-tiros-en-el-colegio</a>
14/ MAY/17	Mar del Plata	Five-year-old girl carries gun to school in Argentina.	A five-year-old girl carried a 22-calibre revolver in her backpack to school. Her teacher found it and confiscated it.	<a href="https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/internacionales/Nina-de-5-anos-lleva-arma-a-la-escuela-en-Argentina-20150514-0026.html">https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/internacionales/Nina-de-5-anos-lleva-arma-a-la-escuela-en-Argentina-20150514-0026.html</a>
13/ MAY/17	Salta, Oran	Salta: a young man shot his classmate in the face in the middle of class.	A 16-year-old man shot a female classmate in the face in the middle of class. The girl was taken to the hospital and the teenager was arrested.	<a href="https://lmdiarario.com.ar/noticia/14005/salta-un-joven-le-disparo-en-la-cara-a-su-companera-en-plena-clase">https://lmdiarario.com.ar/noticia/14005/salta-un-joven-le-disparo-en-la-cara-a-su-companera-en-plena-clase</a>
05/ MAY/17	Santiago del Estero	A 13-year-old brought a homemade gun to school in Santiago del Estero.	The "tumbera" (homemade firearm) was detected by a classmate who handled the weapon. The student informed a teacher of the situation. The school authorities notified Section 2, with jurisdiction in the area where the school is located.	<a href="https://www.eldiario24.com/nota/tucuman/398803/con-13-anos-llevo-pistola-casera-escuela-santiago-estero.html">https://www.eldiario24.com/nota/tucuman/398803/con-13-anos-llevo-pistola-casera-escuela-santiago-estero.html</a>
08/ APR/17	La Plata	A 15-year-old girl shoots herself in the head in class and leaves a mysterious message in Argentina.	A 15-year-old girl shot herself in the head in front of her classmates and a professor at the National College of the city of La Plata. The shot caused severe brain damage which left her in a coma. A few days later she died in the hospital.	<a href="https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/policiales/2017/08/07/murio-la-joven-de-15-anos-que-se-habia-disparado-en-una-escuela-de-la-plata/">https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/policiales/2017/08/07/murio-la-joven-de-15-anos-que-se-habia-disparado-en-una-escuela-de-la-plata/</a>
30/ APR/15	Guaymallen, Mendoza	Commotion erupted when 13-year-old boy brought a gun to school.	Moments of tension in a school in Guaymallen, after authorities detected a firearm in the possession of a 13-year-old student. The boy, whose identity is protected, because he is a minor, had a 32-calibre revolver, with five cartridges among his belongings.	<a href="https://www.ciudadanodiario.com.ar/la-violencia-en-las-escuelas/">https://www.ciudadanodiario.com.ar/la-violencia-en-las-escuelas/</a>



Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
23/ APR/15	Barrio San Lorenzo, Santa Fe	Student armed with a 32-calibre revolver at the Echagüe School.	During the early afternoon, investigative agents confiscated a 32-calibre revolver inside an 11-year-old student's backpack in 5th grade. His classmates refused to enter the classroom at the end of recess and told one of the teachers that one of his classmates had a gun inside his backpack. The teacher informed school authorities who removed the student's backpack and reported the incident to the police.	<a href="https://www.unosantafe.com.ar/policiales/alumno-arma-do-revolver-32-la-escuela-echa-ge-n2061042.html">https://www.unosantafe.com.ar/policiales/alumno-arma-do-revolver-32-la-escuela-echa-ge-n2061042.html</a>
04/ JUL/14	Bahia Blanca, Buenos Aires	A 15-year-old student went to school with a gun.	A student brought a gun to school in his backpack. A group of students notified authorities that the child had shown the gun. The authorities called the police, who went to the school to confiscate the gun. According to police, the gun allegedly belonged to the minor's uncle.	<a href="https://www.lanueva.com/nota/2014-7-4-0-34-0-un-alumno-de-15-anos-fue-con-un-arma-a-su-colegio">https://www.lanueva.com/nota/2014-7-4-0-34-0-un-alumno-de-15-anos-fue-con-un-arma-a-su-colegio</a>
09/ NOV/13	Merlo, Buenos Aires	He brought a gun to school and fired three shots inside the classroom.	A 5th year student took a gun from his bag and pointed it at his head. He said he had seen a message telling him that he had to kill everyone. He shot the heater and the wall in front of him. After three shots he passed out.	<a href="https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1636712-llevo-un-arma-de-fuego-a-la-escuela-y-disparos-tres-tiros-dentro-del-aula">https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1636712-llevo-un-arma-de-fuego-a-la-escuela-y-disparos-tres-tiros-dentro-del-aula</a>
27/ SEP/13	San Miguel de Tucuman	A teenager was hit by a bullet fired by a classmate at school.	A teenager was shot in the head by a classmate who was handling a gun at recess. The provincial police are investigating whether it was an intentional act or an accident. The student who was shot was taken to the hospital for a serious injury without risk of death.	<a href="https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1623878-un-adolescente-recibio-un-impacto-de-bala-disparada-por-un-companero-en-la-escuela">https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1623878-un-adolescente-recibio-un-impacto-de-bala-disparada-por-un-companero-en-la-escuela</a>
16/ NOV/11	San Justo, La Matanza	Student brought a gun to school and caused injuries to a classmate.	A 13-year-old boy wounded a sixth-grade classmate yesterday, in the middle of class, by accidentally firing a gun owned by his father. The student had brought the gun to school to show it to his friends. The child suffered a minor injury, as he only received the impact of a splinter from the ricochet of the shot.	<a href="https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1423642-llevo-un-arma-a-la-escuela-y-causo-heridas-a-un-companero">https://www.lanacion.com.ar/1423642-llevo-un-arma-a-la-escuela-y-causo-heridas-a-un-companero</a>

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
07/ NOV/11	Moreno, Buenos Aires	Student shot a classmate.	A student injured a classmate when he accidentally shot her in the foot while handling a gun at recess at a school in Moreno, Buenos Aires. The aggressor escaped from the scene and was pursued by the police.	<a href="http://www.lavoz.com.ar/ciudadanos/estudiante-hirio-ba-lazo-companera">http://www.lavoz.com.ar/ciudadanos/estudiante-hirio-ba-lazo-companera</a>



Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
1	1	0	0	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
1/FEB/ 2017	Nassau	Weapon found in high school.	A gun was found at a high school in Nassau. The police arrested two students for questioning.	<a href="https://www.bahamaslocal.com/newsitem/168645/Gun_found_in_junior_high_school.html">https://www.bahamaslocal.com/newsitem/168645/Gun_found_in_junior_high_school.html</a>



Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
2	0	2	0	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
4/DEC/ 2013	Belize City	Gwen Liz's 14-year-old student told police he needed the gun for personal safety.	The police were informed that a 14-year-old student was carrying a gun. Officers intervened when the student was about to get into a van. They searched his backpack and found a 9mm calibre CZ pistol. The student was placed under arrest.	<a href="http://www.7newsbelize.com/sstory.php?nid=27262">http://www.7newsbelize.com/sstory.php?nid=27262</a>
23/FEB/ 2011	Belize City	Wesley College student accused of bringing a loaded weapon to school.	A student brought a loaded gun to school. School authorities called the police. Police officers detected a 9mm-calibre pistol in his backpack.	<a href="http://edition.channel5belize.com/archives/49456">http://edition.channel5belize.com/archives/49456</a>



**BRAZIL**

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
13	0	6	7	37	25

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
13/MAR/19	Suzano, Sao Paulo	Massacre in Brazil: school shooting leaves at least ten people dead.	Two former students wearing masks entered their former school in Brazil and began shooting, leaving at least 10 people dead and 17 injured. The attackers committed suicide.	<a href="https://www.france24.com/es/20190313-masacre-brasil-tiroteo-escuela-raul">https://www.france24.com/es/20190313-masacre-brasil-tiroteo-escuela-raul</a>
28/SEP/18	Medianeira, Parana	Student opens fire in a school in Brazil; two students are injured.	"A student from a state network school in Medianeira fired a gun at a classmate and wounded him in the back", reported the Parana State Education Secretary. He then "shot randomly around the place and wounded another student", he added.	<a href="https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/2018/09/28/nota/6975095/estudiante-abre-fuego-escuela-brasil-hay-dos-alumnos-heridos">https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/2018/09/28/nota/6975095/estudiante-abre-fuego-escuela-brasil-hay-dos-alumnos-heridos</a>
10/ABR/18	Ceilandia Norte	A student armed with a gun and machete is arrested at school.	A 16-year-old student was apprehended by the Military Police for entering the classroom with a 32-calibre revolver and ammunition. The school principal reported that the student had threatened another student with a knife.	<a href="https://www.metropoles.com/distrito-federal/seguranca-df/aluno-armado-com-revolver-e-facao-e-detido-em-escola-do-df">https://www.metropoles.com/distrito-federal/seguranca-df/aluno-armado-com-revolver-e-facao-e-detido-em-escola-do-df</a>
22/MAR/18	Manaus	Student enters school armed during Sociology class and takes a picture pointing a gun at the teacher.	A student from a state school in downtown Manaus was suspended after posting a photo on social network showing him pointing a gun at a teacher inside the classroom.	<a href="https://correiodamanha.com.br/site/noticia/aluno-entra-armado-em-escola-de-manaus-e-posta-foto-apontando-pistola-para-professor">https://correiodamanha.com.br/site/noticia/aluno-entra-armado-em-escola-de-manaus-e-posta-foto-apontando-pistola-para-professor</a>
16/MAR/18	Mossoro	Student is apprehended with a gun inside a school in Mossoro.	Student is found with a homemade gun, capable of firing one shot at a time. Authorities called the police.	<a href="http://www.catoleagora.com/aluno-e-apreendido-com-arma-de-fogo-dentro-de-escola-em-mossoro/">http://www.catoleagora.com/aluno-e-apreendido-com-arma-de-fogo-dentro-de-escola-em-mossoro/</a>
20/FEB/18	Pernambuco	Police arrest student in a classroom in the municipality of Escada.	A student was arrested by the Military Police for carrying a 6.35-millimetre Taurus pistol and a clip.	<a href="https://www.folhape.com.br/noticias/noticias/cotidiano/2018/02/20/NWS,59565,70,449,NOTICIAS,2190-POLICIA-PRENDE-ALUNO-PORTANDO-PISTOLA-SALA-AULA-MUNICIPIO-ESCADADA.aspx">https://www.folhape.com.br/noticias/noticias/cotidiano/2018/02/20/NWS,59565,70,449,NOTICIAS,2190-POLICIA-PRENDE-ALUNO-PORTANDO-PISTOLA-SALA-AULA-MUNICIPIO-ESCADADA.aspx</a>
06/NOV/17	Alexania	Man enters school armed and kills student in Alexania.	A 16-year-old girl was shot dead inside a school in Alexania by a 19-year-old. According to testimonies, the author of the crime wanted to date the girl, who did not accept his advances.	<a href="http://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/app/noticia-brasil/2017/11/06/interna_brasil,729719/homem-entra-armado-em-escola-e-mata-estudante-em-alexania.shtml">http://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/app/noticia-brasil/2017/11/06/interna_brasil,729719/homem-entra-armado-em-escola-e-mata-estudante-em-alexania.shtml</a>

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
24/OCT/17	Parana	16-year-old student is apprehended with a weapon and ammunition inside the school.	A 16-year-old girl was arrested by police for carrying a 32-calibre revolver and 20 bullets. The student told authorities that she took the gun to school to show it to her friends.	<a href="http://www.bandab.com.br/seguranca/estudante-de-16-anos-e-apreendida-com-arma-e-municoes-dentro-de-escola-no-parana/">http://www.bandab.com.br/seguranca/estudante-de-16-anos-e-apreendida-com-arma-e-municoes-dentro-de-escola-no-parana/</a>
20/OCT/17	Goiania	Two killed and four injured in a shooting at a school in Brazil.	Two schoolchildren were killed and four others injured in a shooting at a school in Goiania. The act was attributed to a classmate of the victims who was reportedly suffering from bullying, according to official sources. The assailant carried the hidden weapon in his backpack and used it inside a classroom that he shared with about 30 colleagues, against whom he fired indiscriminately, according to witnesses.	<a href="https://www.efe.com/efe/america/sociedad/dos-muertos-y-cuatro-heridos-en-un-tiroteo-una-escuela-brasil/20000013-3414701">https://www.efe.com/efe/america/sociedad/dos-muertos-y-cuatro-heridos-en-un-tiroteo-una-escuela-brasil/20000013-3414701</a>
11/JAN/17	Palmas	Student is arrested with homemade firearm in Palmas public school.	A 16-year-old student is arrested by the Military Police for being in possession of a homemade firearm inside the school premises. His classmates allegedly saw that the student was carrying the gun in his waistband and notified the school authorities who notified the Military Police.	<a href="http://primeirapagina-to.com.br/noticias/aluno-e-detido-com-arma-de-fogo-caseira-em-escola-publica-de-palmas/">http://primeirapagina-to.com.br/noticias/aluno-e-detido-com-arma-de-fogo-caseira-em-escola-publica-de-palmas/</a>
04/NOV/15	Caxias, Maranhao	Student enters school armed, shoots and injures himself in the abdomen, causing panic in Caxias.	An 18-year-old student entered the school armed, firing several shots, one of which hit him in the abdomen. He tried to kill himself. Police reported that the student had good relations at school and that he must have been suffering from depression.	<a href="https://cidadeverde.com/noticias/206014/aluno-entra-armado-em-escola-atira-e-se-ferre-no-abdomen-causando-panico-em-caxias">https://cidadeverde.com/noticias/206014/aluno-entra-armado-em-escola-atira-e-se-ferre-no-abdomen-causando-panico-em-caxias</a>
23/NOV/11	Sao Caetano, Sao Paulo	A 10-year-old boy shoots his teacher several times and then kills himself.	A 10-year-old student shot himself in the head after shooting and wounding his teacher at a public school in Sao Caetano do Sul, in the Sao Paulo metropolitan area. The child was treated by the emergency services, but died an hour later in a hospital.	<a href="https://www.cuatro.com/noticias/nino-10-anos-dispara-a-su-profesora-y-se-suicida-brasil_0_1289400043.html">https://www.cuatro.com/noticias/nino-10-anos-dispara-a-su-profesora-y-se-suicida-brasil_0_1289400043.html</a>
08/APR/11	Realengo, Rio de Janeiro	Massacre of 10 students at a school in Rio de Janeiro.	At the municipal school of Realengo, a former student entered the school by presenting himself as someone who was going to give a lecture. After entering a room with 40 students between the ages of nine and 12, where the teacher was teaching Portuguese, he took out two 38-calibre revolvers and fired more than 100 shots, killing 10 girls and a boy and injuring 18 other students, some in "very serious condition," according to the governor of the state of Rio.	<a href="https://www.nacion.com/el-mundo/masacre-de-10-estudiantes-en-escuela-de-rio-de-janeiro/MKGZH6E7IREX5KKZDKS-LS3TDU4/story/">https://www.nacion.com/el-mundo/masacre-de-10-estudiantes-en-escuela-de-rio-de-janeiro/MKGZH6E7IREX5KKZDKS-LS3TDU4/story/</a>



**CHILE**

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
3	0	1	2	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
27/ MAY/19	Puerto Montt	Student would have shot a schoolmate in Puerto Montt.	A first-year middle school student shot his classmate. The student came dressed as a soldier with a mask similar to those used in the Spanish series "Money Heist". The student fled, but was apprehended by police.	<a href="https://www.soychile.cl/Puerto-Montt/Policial/2019/05/27/597506/Estudiante-le-habria-disparado-a-companero-de-colegio-en-Puerto-Montt.aspx">https://www.soychile.cl/Puerto-Montt/Policial/2019/05/27/597506/Estudiante-le-habria-disparado-a-companero-de-colegio-en-Puerto-Montt.aspx</a>
11/ OCT/18	Los Andes	Student arrested while handling an 8mm gun at his school.	A teacher observed the student handling a firearm inside the school. The teacher informed the high school principal who immediately contacted the police. Detectives went to the school to interview the student, and when they searched his belongings, they found a gun with a magazine, but no ammunition.	<a href="http://www.eltrabajo.cl/2017/?p=88660">http://www.eltrabajo.cl/2017/?p=88660</a>
31/ MAY/18	Conchali	A 16-year-old boy was arrested after threatening a classmate with a gun at Conchali High School.	A 16-year-old boy was arrested Thursday afternoon after threatening another young man with a gun as a result of a fight.	<a href="https://www.cooperativa.cl/noticias/pais/policial/menorde-16-anos-fue-detenido-tras-amenazar-a-companero-con-arma-en/2018-05-31/233035.html">https://www.cooperativa.cl/noticias/pais/policial/menorde-16-anos-fue-detenido-tras-amenazar-a-companero-con-arma-en/2018-05-31/233035.html</a>



**COLOMBIA**

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
2	0	2	0	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
11/ OCT/15	Cucuta	Armed student is caught in a school in Cucuta.	As part of a requisitioning plan carried out by the National Police in seven secondary schools in the city of Cucuta, a 32 mm calibre revolver was seized, along with 55 sharp objects and three toy weapons. The firearm was found in a student's backpack.	<a href="http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16426749">http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16426749</a>

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
05/ JUN/11	Cauca	The pen gun, a new dangerous weapon in Colombian schools.	Colombian authorities found a pen turned into a gun, camouflaged among school supplies in a briefcase belonging to a 14-year-old student at a public school in Cauca. The gun was camouflaged amidst school supplies.	<a href="http://www.elmundo.es/america/2011/05/06/colombia/1304715120.html">http://www.elmundo.es/america/2011/05/06/colombia/1304715120.html</a>



**COSTA RICA**

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
4	1	1	2	1	1

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
26/ JUN/19	Desamparados	22-calibre revolver confiscated after alert for student with gun at Desamparados High School.	After a call reporting the alleged presence of a student with a firearm inside the school, the Public Force, in the presence of the principal, counsellor and teacher, proceeded to ask the students to show their belongings and search the classroom, finding a 22-calibre revolver in a drawer of an unoccupied desk.	<a href="https://www.ameliarueda.com/nota/decomisan-revolver-calibre-22-alerta-alumno-arma-lliceo-desamparados">https://www.ameliarueda.com/nota/decomisan-revolver-calibre-22-alerta-alumno-arma-lliceo-desamparados</a>
24/ AUG/18	Alajuela	15-year-old schoolboy comes to class with a gun!	A 15-year-old boy brought a gun to school. Teachers found the gun during an inspection after receiving an anonymous call. They called the police who confiscated the gun.	<a href="https://amprensa.com/2018/08/colegial-de-15-anos-llega-con-arma-de-fuego-a-clases/">https://amprensa.com/2018/08/colegial-de-15-anos-llega-con-arma-de-fuego-a-clases/</a>
06/ MAR/15	Limon	Brothers aged 13 and 14 brought guns to their school.	Two brothers aged 13 and 14 took a 9-millimetre gun to school. One of them threatened another classmate with the gun. The police arrested them.	<a href="https://www.nacion.com/sucesos/seguridad/hermanos-de-13-y-14-anos-llevaron-pistola-a-su-colegio/UP2LVV6V6FG-C3HCDKLN5YM5ZOM/story/">https://www.nacion.com/sucesos/seguridad/hermanos-de-13-y-14-anos-llevaron-pistola-a-su-colegio/UP2LVV6V6FG-C3HCDKLN5YM5ZOM/story/</a>
19/ JUL/11	Orotina, San Jose	A student was killed in class at a school in Costa Rica.	A high school student was shot dead while in class by an armed teenager who then shot himself and was seriously injured.	<a href="https://www.univision.com/noticias/noticias-de-latinoamerica/un-estudiante-fue-asesinado-en-clase-en-escuela-de-costa-rica">https://www.univision.com/noticias/noticias-de-latinoamerica/un-estudiante-fue-asesinado-en-clase-en-escuela-de-costa-rica</a>



**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
3	0	3	0	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
18/09/17	Tenares	A firearm is found in the backpack of a 14-year-old girl at an educational centre in Tenares.	In a routine check, the principal of a high school in the municipality of Tenares found a firearm and a magazine with 9 bullets among the 14-year-old student's belongings.	<a href="https://cdn.com.do/2017/09/18/encuentran-arma-fuego-mochila-una-menor-14-anos-centro-educativo-tenares/">https://cdn.com.do/2017/09/18/encuentran-arma-fuego-mochila-una-menor-14-anos-centro-educativo-tenares/</a>

15/SEP/17	Jarabacoa	13-year-old girl went to school with a gun.	Yesterday, School Police seized a pistol with several capsules, a box of cigarettes, and a box of matches from a 13-year-old student during a surprise backpack search at the Palo Blanco school in the municipality of Jarabacoa	<a href="https://www.listindiario.com/la-republica/2017/09/15/482532/nina-de-13-anos-iba-a-la-escuela-con-una-pistola">https://www.listindiario.com/la-republica/2017/09/15/482532/nina-de-13-anos-iba-a-la-escuela-con-una-pistola</a>
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Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
10/ABR/17	Barahona	Police arrest 16-year-old student who smuggled a gun into a school in Barahona.	A 16-year-old student was caught with a 9 mm pistol with a clip in his backpack. The principal's office called the police who arrested the student.	<a href="https://noticiassin.com/pn-detiene-estudiante-de-16-anos-que-introdujo-un-arma-a-una-escuela-en-barahona?fb_comment_id=1477857645571230_1478203252203336">https://noticiassin.com/pn-detiene-estudiante-de-16-anos-que-introdujo-un-arma-a-una-escuela-en-barahona?fb_comment_id=1477857645571230_1478203252203336</a>



**ECUADOR**

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
3	0	2	1	1	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
12/OCT/18	Machala	Student arrested for having a gun at school!	A student showed a gun to his classmates, raising his t-shirt, causing fear and panic among a group of students. They notified the school's principal, who called 911, to request police presence.	<a href="https://mpnoticias.com.ec/2018/10/12/retienen-a-estudiante-por-tener-un-arma-de-fuego-en-el-colegio/">https://mpnoticias.com.ec/2018/10/12/retienen-a-estudiante-por-tener-un-arma-de-fuego-en-el-colegio/</a>

20/APR/18	Cuenca	Police seized a gun from a student at a school in Cuenca.	Educational authorities find a firearm and a handmade pipe inside the backpack of a 16-year-old student.	<a href="https://ecuadorwillana.com/2018/04/20/policia-incauto-pistola-a-estudiante-en-colegio-de-cuenca/">https://ecuadorwillana.com/2018/04/20/policia-incauto-pistola-a-estudiante-en-colegio-de-cuenca/</a>
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Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
06/JUN/10	Quito	Violence in schools, a reality that remains hidden.	The sound of a gunshot alerted students and teachers at a school in the capital. When the authorities arrived at the site, they found a student from the campus on the ground in the courtyard in a pool of blood and his right leg wounded by a bullet. "While he was showing the gun to his friends, he mishandled it causing the gun to fire, injuring his classmate", said one student who was present at the incident.	<a href="https://www.eluniverso.com/2010/06/06/1/1422/violencia-colegios-realidad-permanece-oculta.html">https://www.eluniverso.com/2010/06/06/1/1422/violencia-colegios-realidad-permanece-oculta.html</a>



**GUATEMALA**

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
5	1	2	2	3	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
22/MAY/17	Guatemala City	Teenager gets caught with a gun at a school.	A 16-year-old boy was sent to juvenile court after being caught with a firearm inside his backpack on the premises of a school in zone 14.	<a href="http://www.prensalibre.com/ciudades/guatemala/adolescente-es-sorprendido-con-una-pistola-en-un-colegio">http://www.prensalibre.com/ciudades/guatemala/adolescente-es-sorprendido-con-una-pistola-en-un-colegio</a>

03/MAY/17	Quetzaltenango	Firearm found at school in Quetzaltenango.	School authorities found a gun in one of the classrooms and alerted the police of the situation.	<a href="https://www.publineas.gt/gt/noticias/2017/05/03/localizan-arma-fuego-escuela-quetzaltenango.html">https://www.publineas.gt/gt/noticias/2017/05/03/localizan-arma-fuego-escuela-quetzaltenango.html</a>
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13/MAR/17	Fraijanes	Investigan incidente armado en colegio Solalto (Armed incident at Solalto school under investigation).	A student brought a firearm to school in his backpack. When he removed it, the gun went off. The shot hit the floor. No one was hurt.	<a href="http://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/comunitario/una-pistola-y-un-estudiante-que-ocurrio-en-el-colegio-solalto">http://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/comunitario/una-pistola-y-un-estudiante-que-ocurrio-en-el-colegio-solalto</a>
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05/AUG/15	Chiquimula	Three students are shot in attack in high school.	Three students from the Telesecundaria de Jocotan Institute were shot by unknown assailants at school.	<a href="https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/chiquimula/atacan-a-balazos-a-tres-estudiantes-en-una-escuela-de-jocotan">https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/chiquimula/atacan-a-balazos-a-tres-estudiantes-en-una-escuela-de-jocotan</a>
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30/JAN/15	Guatemala City	Student caught carrying gun to Zone 1 school.	A 19-year-old student, hiding a 38-calibre revolver in his backpack, was apprehended by police from the Safe Schools programme after receiving an emergency call.	<a href="http://www.soy502.com/articulo/capturan-zona-1-estudiante-escondia-pistola-mochila">http://www.soy502.com/articulo/capturan-zona-1-estudiante-escondia-pistola-mochila</a>
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**HONDURAS**



Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
4	1	1	2	2	1

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
14/ JUL/19	Sector Planeta, La Lima, Cortes	Weapons are found at a school in Planeta colony.	Police found large-calibre weapons, ammunition and military clothing hidden in the roof in the bathroom of Mirtha Torres School in Mejia.	<a href="https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1301611-410/allanan-escuela-planeta-san-pedro-sula-">https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1301611-410/allanan-escuela-planeta-san-pedro-sula-</a>
24/ APR/18	Tegucigalpa	Teacher killed in front of his students at a school in Olancho	An elementary school teacher was killed by subjects who shot him without saying a word in front of other students. During the event, the teacher's son (10 years old) who is also a student at the school was injured.	<a href="https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1165286-410/violencia-asesinato-maestro-escuela-erick-banegas-olancho-honduras">https://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/1165286-410/violencia-asesinato-maestro-escuela-erick-banegas-olancho-honduras</a>
01/ SEP/15	Municipality of Choloma	A firearm was found at a school in the Bijao sector.	A student took the gun from his father, wrapped it in a sock and brought it to school. The police received an anonymous tip that the student was carrying a weapon.	<a href="http://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/875176-410/encuentran-arma-en-una-escuela-del-sector-de-bijao">http://www.laprensa.hn/sucesos/875176-410/encuentran-arma-en-una-escuela-del-sector-de-bijao</a>
24/ JUL/14	Yoro, El Progreso	Honduras: Insecurity in schools causes fear in Yoro.	A 13-year-old student asked for three lempiras to buy water from a student who was doing her homework in the cafeteria. The female student refused to hand over any money. In the light of her refusal, the student took a revolver out of his bag and shot the student in the leg.	<a href="http://www.tribuna.hn/2014/07/24/alumno-de-12-anos-dispara-pistola-y-hiere-a-companera/">http://www.tribuna.hn/2014/07/24/alumno-de-12-anos-dispara-pistola-y-hiere-a-companera/</a>

**JAMAICA**



Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
1	0	1	0	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
11/MAY/2016	Linstead, St Catherine	Student arrested with weapon and ammunition at school.	Security guards find an 18-year-old student's gun inside his backpack. The guards stopped the student and called the police. The student was arrested for possession of an illegal firearm.	<a href="http://jamaica-star.com/article/news/20160511/student-held-gun-ammo-school">http://jamaica-star.com/article/news/20160511/student-held-gun-ammo-school</a>

**MEXICO**



Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
28	1	11	16	10	7

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
13/ FEB/19	El Gavillero	Student is shot at Nicolas Romero High School, Edomex.	A student brought a firearm to school and when he showed it to his classmates, he accidentally fired the weapon, injuring one of his classmates.	<a href="http://gda.com/detalle-de-la-noticia/?article=3890165">http://gda.com/detalle-de-la-noticia/?article=3890165</a>
13/ FEB/19	Matamoros, Tamaulipas	9-year-old boy caused alarm in Tamaulipas by bringing a firearm to school.	A nine-year-old student entered the school with a firearm and several bullets. According to local media, he wanted to distribute the bullets among his classmates so that they could give them to their parents.	<a href="https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2019/02/13/nino-de-9-anos-provoco-alarma-en-escuela-de-tamaulipas-al-ingresar-con-un-arma/">https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2019/02/13/nino-de-9-anos-provoco-alarma-en-escuela-de-tamaulipas-al-ingresar-con-un-arma/</a>
05/ JAN/19	El Mirabal, Guerrero	Sedena and Guerrero Police find weapons inside a school.	The Secretary of National Defense (Sedena) confiscated two AK-47 rifles, magazines, cartridges and two vehicles at a school in the town of El Mirabal in Guerrero.	<a href="https://www.tribuna.com.mx/amp/seguridad/Sedena-y-Policia-de-Guerrero-hallan-armamento-dentro-de-una-escuela-20190105-0036.html">https://www.tribuna.com.mx/amp/seguridad/Sedena-y-Policia-de-Guerrero-hallan-armamento-dentro-de-una-escuela-20190105-0036.html</a>
30/ OCT/18	Chilapa, Guerrero	Student is injured in gunfire inside the Conalep in Chilapa, Guerrero.	An armed person broke into the school and shot a student, who was injured and taken to a hospital. The attacker fled with impunity.	<a href="https://www.proceso.com.mx/557557/alumno-resultado-herido-en-tiro-al-interior-del-conalep-en-chilapa-guerrero">https://www.proceso.com.mx/557557/alumno-resultado-herido-en-tiro-al-interior-del-conalep-en-chilapa-guerrero</a>
20/ OCT/18	Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas	Operation Backpack prevented a student from bringing a gun into COBAT.	In a routine backpack check, a student was found to be in possession of a firearm. The principal indicated that the parents were informed so that they would be aware of the situation.	<a href="https://www.gaceta.mx/2018/10/operacion-mochila-impidio-que-alumno-ingrasara-una-pistola-a-cobat/">https://www.gaceta.mx/2018/10/operacion-mochila-impidio-que-alumno-ingrasara-una-pistola-a-cobat/</a>
10/ SEP/18	Monterrey, Nuevo León	Tec confirms student suicide at high school in Monterrey.	A young man committed suicide with a firearm on the premises of Tec High School Valle Alto. Medical aid protocols were put into action, however, the student lost his life.	<a href="https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/tec-confirma-suicidio-de-alumno-en-prepa-de-monterrey/1264055">https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/tec-confirma-suicidio-de-alumno-en-prepa-de-monterrey/1264055</a>
05/ SEP/18	Pachuca	High school student in Hidalgo entered classroom with a gun.	A student entered the school armed. His schoolmates found out and warned school authorities who called the police.	<a href="https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/estudiante-de-prepa-en-hidalgo-acude-a-clases-con-arma-de-fuego/1237974">https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/estudiante-de-prepa-en-hidalgo-acude-a-clases-con-arma-de-fuego/1237974</a>
31/ MAY/18	Tenancingo	Allegedly, a student detonates a firearm at Tenancingo School.	After a fight, a student pulled the trigger several times, causing panic among the rest of the students and teachers. No one was injured. The police intervened and searched the student.	<a href="https://www.elsoldetoluca.com.mx/policia/presuntamente-un-alumno-detona-un-arma-de-fuego-en-secundaria-de-tenancingo-1729271.html">https://www.elsoldetoluca.com.mx/policia/presuntamente-un-alumno-detona-un-arma-de-fuego-en-secundaria-de-tenancingo-1729271.html</a>



Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
27/ APR/18	Tlalnepantla	13-year-old armed student arrested in high school.	A teenager was detained by representatives from the municipality for getting into a fight and carrying a loaded weapon inside a high school in Tlalnepantla Centro.	<a href="https://www.debate.com.mx/mexico/arrestan-a-estudiante-armado-en-tlalnepantla-en-secundaria-20180427-0288.html">https://www.debate.com.mx/mexico/arrestan-a-estudiante-armado-en-tlalnepantla-en-secundaria-20180427-0288.html</a>
11/ APR/18	Huixquilucan	Student shoots his classmate at school, regrets it and kills himself.	During an argument, a 17-year-old boy shot one of his classmates at a Telesecundaria school and, thinking that he had killed him, ran home, locked himself in his room and shot himself in the head allegedly out of guilt.	<a href="https://www.elsoldepuebla.com.mx/república/justicia/le-dispara-a-su-companero-dentro-de-la-secundaria-se-arrepiente-y-se-suicida-1607867.html">https://www.elsoldepuebla.com.mx/república/justicia/le-dispara-a-su-companero-dentro-de-la-secundaria-se-arrepiente-y-se-suicida-1607867.html</a>
11/ NOV/17	Cadereyta	Student enters school with firearm.	An 11-year-old boy lost his life as a result of an accidental shot. According to investigations, a student took a .45 calibre pistol out of his backpack, with which he began to play with the rest of his sixth-grade classmates. At that time, a girl handling the gun accidentally fired a shot.	<a href="http://www.info7.mx/locales/menor-se-quita-la-vida-dentro-de-escuela-en-cadereyta/2036762">http://www.info7.mx/locales/menor-se-quita-la-vida-dentro-de-escuela-en-cadereyta/2036762</a>
17/ NOV/17	Ciudad Juarez	Armed student enters high school.	A student entered the school with a firearm and faked a fight with one of his classmates. Some teachers intervened and no one was hurt.	<a href="http://netnoticias.mx/2017-11-17-2c7a364e/alumno-ingresa-armado-a-secundaria/">http://netnoticias.mx/2017-11-17-2c7a364e/alumno-ingresa-armado-a-secundaria/</a>
27/ OCT/17	Iztapalapa	A student from the Colegio de Bachilleres 7 was armed at school.	A 17-year-old student pulled a .25-calibre pistol out in the middle of the class to show it off to his friends. In doing so, he accidentally triggered it, shooting himself in the leg. According to students who knew him, the boy used to enter the school armed despite the security filters.	<a href="http://www.elgrafico.mx/la-roja/27-10-2017/estudiante-del-colegio-de-bachilleres-7-iba-armado-la-escuela">http://www.elgrafico.mx/la-roja/27-10-2017/estudiante-del-colegio-de-bachilleres-7-iba-armado-la-escuela</a>
24/ OCT/17	Monterrey	Schoolgirl's gun found in Contry School.	Following a report by schoolmates, a gun was found in the possession of a third-grade student at the Regiomontano Contry School in Monterrey.	<a href="http://www.milenio.com/policia/encuentran-pistola-a-alumna-de-colegio-en-contry">http://www.milenio.com/policia/encuentran-pistola-a-alumna-de-colegio-en-contry</a>
03/ OCT/17	Tijuana	A 13-year-old boy brought a gun into a Tijuana school.	During the operation "Mochila Segura" (Safe Backpack), members of the Ministry of Public Security found a 13-year-old student with live cartridges and a .32-calibre firearm.	<a href="http://sintesis.tv.com.mx/menor-13-anos-traia-una-pistola-escuela-tijuana/">http://sintesis.tv.com.mx/menor-13-anos-traia-una-pistola-escuela-tijuana/</a>
12/ AUG/17	Guadalajara	Gun is confiscated from minor after backpack check.	School police authorities found a .45-calibre COLT pistol with two cartridges in the backpack of a 13-year-old boy.	<a href="http://www.milenio.com/policia/aseguran-pistola-menor-revision-mochila-escolar-secundaria-milenio-noticias-jalisco_0_1081092132.html">http://www.milenio.com/policia/aseguran-pistola-menor-revision-mochila-escolar-secundaria-milenio-noticias-jalisco_0_1081092132.html</a>

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
13/ FEB/17	Celaya	Submachine gun found in student's backpack.	A student from Telesecundaria 29 arrived on campus with a handmade submachine gun and a supplied loader. Some students noticed that their classmate was carrying the gun in his backpack and alerted school authorities, who - after an inspection - confirmed the report and notified the police.	<a href="https://www.am.com.mx/noticias/Hallan-subametralladora-en-mochila-de-estudiante-20170213-0028.html">https://www.am.com.mx/noticias/Hallan-subametralladora-en-mochila-de-estudiante-20170213-0028.html</a>
19/ JAN/17	Mexico City	Weapon found during "Safe Backpack" operation in schools of Mexico City.	A firearm was found inside a student's backpack when performing the "Safe Backpack" operation at a secondary school in Mexico City.	<a href="http://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/encuentran-arma-durante-operativo-de">http://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/encuentran-arma-durante-operativo-de</a>
18/ JAN/17	Monterrey, Nuevo León	A Mexican student shoots at his classmates and a teacher at a school in Monterrey.	A 15-year-old male student opened fire on three classmates and a teacher before shooting himself. The shooting left five injured, three of them severely. The attacker shot himself and died after being hospitalized.	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/es/2017/01/18/un-estudiante-mexicano-dispara-contra-sus-companeros-y-una-profesora-en-un-colegio-de-monterrey/">https://www.nytimes.com/es/2017/01/18/un-estudiante-mexicano-dispara-contra-sus-companeros-y-una-profesora-en-un-colegio-de-monterrey/</a>
08/ NOV/16	Chietla	Student shoots his teacher in Chietla High School.	A telesecundaria student shot his teacher in the back injuring the victim on the shoulder. The attack is presumed to be due to a problem at school. The student fled.	<a href="http://municipiospuebla.mx/nota/2016-11-08/chietla/alumno-dispara-contra-su-maestro-en-telesecundaria-de-chietla/">http://municipiospuebla.mx/nota/2016-11-08/chietla/alumno-dispara-contra-su-maestro-en-telesecundaria-de-chietla/</a>
17/ JUN/16	Mexico City	Student is shot in Conalep's bathroom in Gustavo A. Madero.	After a verbal discussion between two students, a student was injured with a firearm. The victim went to the bathroom and the opponent followed him, shooting him and causing an injury to his abdomen.	<a href="https://www.excelsior.com.mx/comunidad/2016/06/17/1099499">https://www.excelsior.com.mx/comunidad/2016/06/17/1099499</a>
24/ SEP/15	Yucatan	Child threatens elementary school principal in Yucatan with a .22-calibre gun.	"I'm going to kill the school principal," warned an 11-year-old student who brought a loaded gun to his school. In the classroom the student took out the gun and showed it to his classmates. He told them he was going to kill the principal for being a "bad" person who always humiliates and insults the students.	<a href="https://vorticemx.com/con-arma-calibre-22-nino-amenaza-a-directora-de-primaria-en-yucatan/">https://vorticemx.com/con-arma-calibre-22-nino-amenaza-a-directora-de-primaria-en-yucatan/</a>
30/ APR/15	Jiutepec	High school student shoots his principal because he was going to be expelled.	A 13-year-old student shot his principal with a gun after an argument at school. The principal was injured. The student was arrested and a .22-calibre handgun and a live cartridge were confiscated among his belongings.	<a href="https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/2015/04/30/1021752">https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/2015/04/30/1021752</a>
22/ JAN/15	Los Mochis, Sinaloa	Student kills another student at CETIS 68.	A student entered the school with a .38-calibre firearm and killed another student in the school cafeteria.	<a href="https://www.debate.com.mx/losmochis/Estudiante-mata-a-otro-de-un-balazo-en-el-CETIS-68-20150122-0167.html">https://www.debate.com.mx/losmochis/Estudiante-mata-a-otro-de-un-balazo-en-el-CETIS-68-20150122-0167.html</a>



29/ MAY/14	Atizapan, Mexico	High school student shoots his classmate in the State of Mexico.	A student entered the school armed and killed a classmate in a classroom. The attacker was arrested and, in his testimony, he told investigators that the attack had been in revenge for a fight they had had a month earlier.	<a href="https://www.periodicocentral.mx/2014/nacional-seccion/balea-joven-a-companero-en-secundaria-del-estado-de-mexico">https://www.periodicocentral.mx/2014/nacional-seccion/balea-joven-a-companero-en-secundaria-del-estado-de-mexico</a>
15/ MAR/13	El Jiadhi, Actopan	Nine-year-old goes to school armed.	A nine-year-old student brought a .22-calibre revolver to school. He took it out during recess and showed it to one of his classmates. The principal found the armed child and called the police, who took the weapon.	<a href="http://www.tabascohoy.com/nota/116864/con-solo-9-anos-va-armado-a-escuela">http://www.tabascohoy.com/nota/116864/con-solo-9-anos-va-armado-a-escuela</a>
09/ SEP/12	Hermosillo	Boy brings gun to school: police find arsenal in his house.	A large-calibre weapon is confiscated from an elementary school student. This discovery led the police and army to search the student's home to find weapons of various calibres, armoured vehicles, tactical uniforms and radio communication equipment.	<a href="https://www.informador.mx/Mexico/Nino-lleva-pistola-a-la-escuela-Policia-halla-arsenal-en-su-casa-20120908-0184.html">https://www.informador.mx/Mexico/Nino-lleva-pistola-a-la-escuela-Policia-halla-arsenal-en-su-casa-20120908-0184.html</a>
14/ MAR/12	Michoacan	Child threatens schoolmates with a gun in Michoacan.	A student goes to his school with a gun. At recess, he threatened his classmates to hand over their money and food. Some students reported this to the principal who called the police.	<a href="http://wradio.com.mx/radio/2012/03/13/nacional/1331673180_653908.html">http://wradio.com.mx/radio/2012/03/13/nacional/1331673180_653908.html</a>

**PANAMA** 

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
5	0	2	3	1	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
17/ APR/18	Panama City	Gun and ammunition found in child's backpack at school.	A seven-year-old boy was caught with a .40-calibre weapon and 12 bullets in his backpack. The weapon was found by the student's teacher when warned by other students that the child had a weapon. The teacher notified the principal, who immediately called the police.	<a href="http://www.telemetro.com/nacionales/Encuentran-fuego-municones-mochila-escuela_0_1127587827.html">http://www.telemetro.com/nacionales/Encuentran-fuego-municones-mochila-escuela_0_1127587827.html</a>

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
20/ APR/17	Veraguas	Student steals with a gun inside school.	A student pulled out a firearm at school and threatened another student to steal his mobile phone.	<a href="http://elsiglo.com.pa/panama/estudiante-roba-pistola-dentro-colegio/23997025">http://elsiglo.com.pa/panama/estudiante-roba-pistola-dentro-colegio/23997025</a>
07/ APR/17	Colón	Prosecutor investigates a minor for a shooting at the Columbus school.	A student entered the school armed and fired a shot in the classroom. No one was hurt. The police sent units to ensure safety and found the weapon on the roof of the school. The student was arrested.	<a href="https://www.tvn-2.com/nacionales/Fiscalia-investiga-menor-disparos-escuela-Colon_0_4729027089.html">https://www.tvn-2.com/nacionales/Fiscalia-investiga-menor-disparos-escuela-Colon_0_4729027089.html</a>
30/ MAR/16	Colón	Student gets shot at a school in Colón.	A group of students was in the bathroom of the school's gymnasium when one of the young men pulled out a gun and shot himself, injuring another in the leg who was taken to hospital.	<a href="https://www.tvn-2.com/nacionales/provincias/Estudiante-baleado-escuela-Colon_0_4449305083.html">https://www.tvn-2.com/nacionales/provincias/Estudiante-baleado-escuela-Colon_0_4449305083.html</a>
20/ MAR/15	Colón	A student with a gun is arrested in Colón.	After routine checks at the school for preventive measures, a 9 mm calibre pistol, with magazine and ammunition, were found inside a student's backpack.	<a href="http://www.nexpanama.com/noticias/detienen-estudiante-con-arma-de-fuego-en-colon-15955">http://www.nexpanama.com/noticias/detienen-estudiante-con-arma-de-fuego-en-colon-15955</a>

**PARAGUAY** 

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
2	1	1	0	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
21/ MAR/18	Asuncion	A firearm was found at a school in the capital.	School officials found a .22-calibre revolver in the boys' bathroom. The police showed up and confiscated the gun.	<a href="http://www.abc.com.py/nacionales/encuentran-arma-en-una-escuela-1685981.html">http://www.abc.com.py/nacionales/encuentran-arma-en-una-escuela-1685981.html</a>
20/ SEP/17	Capiibary, San Pedro	Student brought a firearm into Capiibary school.	Teachers found a .38-calibre revolver that one of the students was carrying in his waistband and called the police, who seized the weapon.	<a href="http://www.abc.com.py/nacionales/alumno-introdujo-un-arma-de-fuego-en-colegio-de-capiibary-1633581.html">http://www.abc.com.py/nacionales/alumno-introdujo-un-arma-de-fuego-en-colegio-de-capiibary-1633581.html</a>



PERU

Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
8	0	5	3	2	1

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
25/MAY/19	Callao	Callao: Peruvian National Police seize a firearm that was in a schoolboy's backpack.	Members of the National Police seized a firearm found inside the backpack of a 14-year-old student at a school in Callao, as part of the "Tutor Policial" ("Police Tutor") pilot plan, being implemented in 20 schools in the district. The gun seized from the minor belonged to his father who did not have a valid license.	<a href="https://diariocorreo.pe/peru/callao-pnp-incauta-un-arma-de-fuego-que-estaba-en-la-mochila-de-un-escolar-889003/">https://diariocorreo.pe/peru/callao-pnp-incauta-un-arma-de-fuego-que-estaba-en-la-mochila-de-un-escolar-889003/</a>
19/MAR/19	Villa El Salvador	Shots in private school leave one dead and one injured.	One student died and another was injured after an incident with a firearm that occurred at Trilce School. According to police authorities, the fifth-year high school student drew a gun (owned by his father), when he was handling it, it went off and shot two of his classmates.	<a href="https://www.expreso.com.pe/actualidad/villa-el-salvador-disparos-en-colegio-privado-deja-un-muerto-y-un-herido/">https://www.expreso.com.pe/actualidad/villa-el-salvador-disparos-en-colegio-privado-deja-un-muerto-y-un-herido/</a>
15/AGO/18	Imperial, Canete	Two children carry guns to school and cause panic.	Two children aged 12 and 15 took a loaded revolver to school. Initially they said they took it for self-defence, then they said they found it on the public highway. Police and the Prosecutor's Office are investigating the case. The students were arrested.	<a href="https://larepublica.pe/sociedad/1298823-menores-llevan-arma-fuego-colegio-causan-panico">https://larepublica.pe/sociedad/1298823-menores-llevan-arma-fuego-colegio-causan-panico</a>
23/NOV/17	Cusco	Cusco: Students hid a gun and ammunition in a backpack.	A gun was found in a student's backpack at a school in Cusco. It was the assistant professor who noticed that the revolver and a box with 42 .38-calibre cartridges were in her belongings. The real owner was one of the student's classmates who said the gun belonged to him and who had brought it from his home.	<a href="http://www.americatv.com.pe/noticias/actualidad/cusco-escolares-portaban-arma-fuego-y-municiones-n300405">http://www.americatv.com.pe/noticias/actualidad/cusco-escolares-portaban-arma-fuego-y-municiones-n300405</a>
06/AUG/17	Talara	Student carrying a firearm is arrested inside a school.	A student from a school in Talara Alta was about to kill one of his classmates with a gun after being a victim of bullying. He was caught by one of the teachers who notified the Police for their immediate intervention.	<a href="https://larepublica.pe/sociedad/1070290-dentro-de-colegio-detienen-a-escolar-con-arma-de-fuego">https://larepublica.pe/sociedad/1070290-dentro-de-colegio-detienen-a-escolar-con-arma-de-fuego</a>
20/JUL/16	Trujillo	Trujillo: student hid gun among his clothes inside the school.	Fe y Alegria school staff discovered that one of the students was hiding a .38-calibre revolver with six cartridges among his clothes. Upon noticing, the principal called the police immediately.	<a href="https://www.americatv.com.pe/noticias/actualidad/trujillo-escolar-escondia-arma-fuego-entre-su-ropa-dentro-colegio-n239752">https://www.americatv.com.pe/noticias/actualidad/trujillo-escolar-escondia-arma-fuego-entre-su-ropa-dentro-colegio-n239752</a>

09/JUN/16	Pillco Marca, Huanuco	Student in possession of a gun is arrested inside a school.	A 15-year-old student was found with a firearm and a 10 ammunition cartridge inside the Juan Velasco Educational Institution. The gun was later found by the police in the child's waistband.	<a href="https://rpp.pe/peru/huanuco/detienen-a-escolar-con-arma-de-fuego-en-colegio-de-pillo-marca-noticia-969696">https://rpp.pe/peru/huanuco/detienen-a-escolar-con-arma-de-fuego-en-colegio-de-pillo-marca-noticia-969696</a>
22/OCT/14	Pisco	Student shoots classmate in classroom.	A student from Independencia Public School shot his classmate inside the classroom and then ran away with the gun.	<a href="https://diariocorreo.pe/ciudad/estudiante-dispara-a-companero-en-salon-4909/">https://diariocorreo.pe/ciudad/estudiante-dispara-a-companero-en-salon-4909/</a>

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
2	0	2	0	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
27/APR/2018	San Fernando	Adolescent was detained for carrying ammunition and magazine to school.	A 14-year-old student was questioned by the police after he was arrested with a round of .22-calibre ammunition and a magazine at his school.	<a href="http://www.looptt.com/content/teen-held-after-bringing-gun-school">http://www.looptt.com/content/teen-held-after-bringing-gun-school</a>
4/FEB/2011	Trinidad (East)	A student carrying a gun at school was arrested.	In a random inspection, a security officer discovered a student with a .38-calibre revolver in his possession.	<a href="http://www.tobagotoday.co.tt/news/2011/02/04/student-held-gun-school">http://www.tobagotoday.co.tt/news/2011/02/04/student-held-gun-school</a>

URUGUAY



Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
1	0	1	0	0	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
28/MAY/18	Montevideo	Student caused panic upon entering Zorrilla High School armed.	A student brought a gun to school causing panic among those present, although the episode "did not escalate". The situation was controlled by the high school principal and the teaching staff.	<a href="https://www.elobservador.com.uy/estudiante-ingreso-armado-al-liceo-zorrilla-y-genero-panico-n1236230">https://www.elobservador.com.uy/estudiante-ingreso-armado-al-liceo-zorrilla-y-genero-panico-n1236230</a>

VENEZUELA



Total incidents	Detection	Carrying	Use	Injured persons	Fatalities
5	0	2	3	1	0

Date	Place	Headline	Summary of the news	Source
04/OCT/17	Los Teques	Nine-year-old boy was caught with a gun at a school in Los Teques.	A nine-year-old boy went to school with a 9 mm gun. According to school authorities, the child was hiding the weapon inside the backpack when he was surprised by Miranda State Police.	<a href="https://www.analitica.com/sucesos/nino-de-9-anos-fue-sorprendido-con-pistola-en-una-escuela-de-los-teques/">https://www.analitica.com/sucesos/nino-de-9-anos-fue-sorprendido-con-pistola-en-una-escuela-de-los-teques/</a>
18/MAY/17	Tucupita	Two armed students from the Anibal Rojas Perez high school were captured.	After several complaints from other students, two students were detained by the authorities when they were found with a rudimentary firearm with which they were threatening and robbing their classmates in the school bathroom.	<a href="https://tanetanae.com/capturaron-dos-estudiantes-armados-del-liceo-anibal-rojas-perez/">https://tanetanae.com/capturaron-dos-estudiantes-armados-del-liceo-anibal-rojas-perez/</a>
28/FEB/16	San Cristobal	A 12-year-old boy is arrested in Venezuela with a shotgun in his backpack.	A 12-year-old boy was arrested by the police after a .16 calibre shotgun was discovered inside his backpack while he was at school.	<a href="https://www.eleconomistaamerica.com/politica-eAm/noticias/6302313/12/14/Detienen-en-Venezuela-a-un-joven-de-12-anos-con-una-escopeta-en-su-morral.html">https://www.eleconomistaamerica.com/politica-eAm/noticias/6302313/12/14/Detienen-en-Venezuela-a-un-joven-de-12-anos-con-una-escopeta-en-su-morral.html</a>
22/FEB/15	Caracas	Warning of the entry of firearms into schools in Caracas.	A 12-year-old boy who was showing a gun to another 10-year-old student activated the gun several times. Since the gun did not fire, he thought it was safe and placed the gun on his friend's leg. When he pulled the trigger, a bullet hit the child's leg.	<a href="https://www.diariorepublica.com/nacionales/advierten-ingreso-de-armas-a-escuelas-de-caracas#">https://www.diariorepublica.com/nacionales/advierten-ingreso-de-armas-a-escuelas-de-caracas#</a>
28/JAN/15	Isla de Margarita, Caracas	Bolivarian students in Venezuela have fun shooting in the air.	Through a home video posted on the social network YouTube, it can be seen how a student pulls a gun out of his backpack and shoots into the air, while the group around him celebrates and asks him to continue shooting. A second student decides to take the gun and fire it again into the air.	<a href="https://www.diariolasamericas.com/estudiantes-bolivarianos-venezuela-se-divierten-disparando-armas-fuego-al-aire-n2920452">https://www.diariolasamericas.com/estudiantes-bolivarianos-venezuela-se-divierten-disparando-armas-fuego-al-aire-n2920452</a>



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