

Project FORTES

Structural strengthening of support services and the integration of internally displaced persons in Caquetá

Context

Caquetá Department is one of the regions most seriously affected by armed conflict in Colombia. Around 214,000 people are currently registered as victims of internal displacement. The majority are concentrated in Florencia, the Department's capital city. The integration of victims into their new surroundings is made more difficult by a number of factors. These include their limited abilities and lack of opportunities to improve their living conditions themselves, the poor prospects of returning home in the near future and social stigma.

Many do not register as internally displaced persons (IDPs) for fear of once again falling victim to violence and displacement owing to a lack of acceptance on the part of local people, but also due to inadequate information and shortcomings in the support offered by state agencies. Victims must, however, be entered in the IDP registry to take advantage of the services the state is required to provide by law. Even registered IDPs often do not benefit from these services due to insufficient coordination of the institutions involved in the national support system for victims.

The challenge

State and non-governmental organisations offering support to IDPs in Florencia are better coordinated. More victims are taking advantage of the opportunity to register as IDPs, resulting in a considerable increase in state support. IDPs and other disadvantaged groups can find legal employment more easily or can supplement their income through self-employment.

Project name	FORTES - Structural strengthening of support services and the integration of internally displaced persons in Caquetá
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Florencia (Caquetá)
Lead executing agency	Governorship of Caquetá
Duration	15.08.2014 – 14.03.2017

Our approach

Most of FORTES's work is carried out in Florencia, where the majority of IDPs – an estimated 115,000 people – live. The focus of the programme is to establish a victim support service point that is run jointly by the key state actors and overseen by Florencia city hall. Information services and access to state aid and non-state support are organised via this service point.

The programme is working to help victims of the conflict and other disadvantaged groups gain access to legal employment contracts by providing training and facilitating contact with employers. Support is also provided to those wishing to start their own business.



A member of the indigenous Nasa community is carrying wood to construct his new house. FORTES supported the successful relocation of a group of Nasa who displaced by violence six years ago.



State agencies and non-governmental organizations have improved their coordination and thereby offer a better service to internal displaced people in Florencia.

The benefits

Thanks to support from the programme, the implementation of the Victims and Land Restitution Law is now coordinated much more effectively by the departmental and local governments in Caquetá. The committee for transitional justice, which is responsible for victim support and compensation, is fulfilling its mandate and, through training, has improved the services it offers victims of conflict. The victim support service point in Florencia is also providing better service as a result of reorganisation measures that were assisted by the programme.



Over 900 people, two thirds of them women, established facilities for chicken and fish farming as well as urban gardening. This improves diets at their homes. In case of overproduction, they sell their products which generates additional income.

With programme support, a displaced indigenous community has been successfully resettled in accordance with international standards and the Colombian legislation for victim compensation. Some 64 people from the Nasa indigenous community now live in new homes in a location suited to their way of life.

More than 3,500 victims of conflict – two thirds of whom are women or members of women-led households – have increased their income through employment or self-employment. They have successfully taken part in training and employment promotion activities which were supported by the programme. Cooperatives, farmers’ organisations, victims’ associations and also state institutions have gained access to government funding with guidance from the programme. More than 100 young people have found a job in Florencia through a programme initiated by the Ministry of Labour.

Displacement in Colombia

Most victims of the conflict in Colombia are Internally Displaced People (IDP). 6.8 million of the officially registered 8 million victims are victims of displacement (official governmental data, June 2016). About half of the IDP’s are women and girls (Human Rights Watch, 2012), who are especially vulnerable due to exploitation and sexual violence.

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