

COLOMBIA | DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO DISPLACEMENT

Context: Protracted displacement

Colombia has the world's second highest population of displaced persons, with more than 6.7 million persons officially registered as displaced.

In recent years, the numbers of displaced people have reduced due to peace talks and the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by FARC-EP, the major guerrilla force. However, clashes between Colombian armed forces and non-state armed groups, and/or post-demobilization armed groups over control of territories and illicit economies (including coca production) continue, placing rural populations, especially indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in remote areas, at risk of displacement.

Colombia issued legislation in 2011 supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs) and land restitution, and developed an ambitious plan for reparation. However, many communities do not have access to the registration process due to pressure, threats and social control imposed by the armed groups, geographical dispersion, low local institutional presence and low awareness about their rights.

Land restitution is one of the main unresolved grievances for this population. The long-term challenges of reparation, reintegration and reconciliation cannot be underestimated when addressing the protracted displacement situation.



Beneficiaries at 'Resilience House', constructed with earnings from UNDP's cash for work programmes
(Photo: Sandra Alvarado, UNDP Colombia)

RESULTS

UNDP Colombia's programmes on displacement have reached approximately 57,000 people over the last five years.

The Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI) has reached over 38,700 people across 17 locations, and has highlighted the importance of coordination between agencies.

The Transitional Justice Programme (TJP) has shown how important it is to place victims at the centre of initiatives, and ensure their active participation and full recognition of their rights. It will continue promoting the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms as well as the participation of victims in such mechanisms, in a post-agreement context.



Women attending UNDP supported livelihoods training.
(Photo: Sandra Alvarado, UNDP Colombia)

UNDPs main thematic areas of work

IDPs are key beneficiaries of UNDP Colombia's socio-economic development programmes, as internal displacement is not only related to armed conflict, but also a cause and consequence of multidimensional poverty and inequality. IDP-focused economic development programmes aim to re-establish and guarantee the right to work and increase opportunities for victims of armed conflict. For example, UNDP's Inclusive Economic Development Programme helps to generate employment and rural entrepreneurship through productive agricultural projects. In addition, the UNDP Suppliers Development Programme supports micro-entrepreneurs in creating sustainable businesses and networks with larger companies.

UNDP also works on protection, victims' rights and early recovery, for example through the Transitional Justice Programme which supports the rights of victims, most of whom are IDPs. The programme has promoted specific initiatives on strengthening victims' organizations, access to justice, access to reparation, community reintegration and land restitution.

Humanitarian partnerships

UNDP and UNHCR have worked together to develop the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI), which aims to solve longstanding protracted situations and effectively integrate displacement issues into the development agenda. Colombia has been one of the pilot countries for TSI, with a focus on encouraging the consolidation of a comprehensive State strategy which encompasses all options for return, relocation and local integration.

The initiative collaborates with other UN agencies such as FAO, and NGOs such as Mercy Corps. UNDP's partnerships with UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and local organizations under CERF have led to a multisectoral protection strategy focused on indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities affected by displacement, particularly youth and women. The strategy mainstreams an early recovery approach that aims to increase the resilience of affected communities and prevent gender-based violence. UNDP also works closely with Colombian state institutions on various displacement-related programmes, such as the Ministry of Justice, National Victims Unit, Ministry of Labor, Land Restitution Unit and Center for Historical Memory.

UNHCR and UNDP have also agreed to create a subworking group for inter-agency coordination on sustainable solutions for IDPs that aims to build on experiences, facilitate knowledge transfer, monitor displacement conditions, and ensure dignity and human security in post-conflict contexts.

Way forward

UNDP is negotiating a second phase of TSI that will integrate learning and good practices into public policy processes, emphasizing that solutions need to be sustainable and holistic.

For TJP, UNDP will particularly support the design and implementation of transitional justice instruments related to the "agreement on victims of the conflict" (point 5 of the peace negotiations), focusing on issues like a truth commission, special criminal justice institutions, individual and collective reparation programmes and non-repetition initiatives, working with corresponding state institutions and victims' organizations.

Victims should become protagonists, leading solutions as active citizens with full rights, building a joint vision along with host communities on community reparation – through reintegration and implementation of the peacebuilding process.

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