

¿EN QUÉ VA EL APOYO?

Success stories of U.S.- Colombia cooperation



Bogotá D.C.

June 7, 2006

U.S. Embassy

WORKING OPTIONS FOR MORE THAN 2,300 DISPLACED FAMILIES IN COLOMBIA

The U.S. has granted almost \$1.5 million to floriculture school programs in Bogotá and Antioquia.



Through the floriculture school program, financed by the United States and the Colombian national association of flower growers *Asocolflores*, 1,027 displaced families from the Bogota Savannah and eastern Antioquia regions found work that allowed them to reach socio-economic stability. In the second phase, that started in March 2006, 1,300 more families will benefit from these same options.

The program offers new workers the training necessary to cut and care for fresh flowers for export, the possibility to be hired by one of the 36 sponsoring companies, receive psychosocial care and participate in entrepreneurship activities.

In this second phase that will last 28 months, six groups will be trained. The total amount for this second phase is \$3.8 million, of which one million

dollars will be donated by the United States. With this latest investment, the U.S. will have funded a total of almost \$1.5 million dollars to the program.

BENEFICIARIES TALK ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM

On May 4, the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, William B. Wood, participated in the signing ceremony of the agreement between the United States, through USAID, and *Asocolflores* to implement the second phase of the floriculture school.

In addition to signing the agreement, the Ambassador had the opportunity to visit participating flower crops and talk with some of the beneficiaries.

One of the beneficiaries stated, “the program...helped us get settled, to stay in one place and help the family.” He added, “I see that people from other countries are investing in this country, because they believe in the work Colombians do, because Colombia is not just about violence, but about people willing to work for this country.”

Another beneficiary said, “life changes you because through this program, a person meets a lot of people in similar conditions of displacement, and meets very important people in the floriculture business, people willing to support you, to provide assistance to you... the



Ambassador Wood talked to graduates from the Floriculture School's first and second phases.

jobs I used to get were not stable, and we would be hired for a few days at a time. But not now. Now we have stable fringe benefits, we receive a subsidy. We are not worried because we no longer rely on the state to provide us with groceries, or rent money, or aid. We are working.”