



April, 2008
U.S. Embassy – Bogotá, Colombia
Public Affairs Section: (571) 315-0811 Ext.2625
U.S. Agency for International Development
USAID Information: (571) 383-4102

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Displaced and Vulnerable Groups Assistance Program

SUMMARY

Decades of widespread violence by guerrilla groups and paramilitary forces competing for land and drug trafficking routes have caused millions of Colombians to flee their homes in search of safety. Many displace to nearby villages and towns, while others displace immediately to one of Colombia's five largest cities. Colombia has one of the largest internally displaced populations (IDP) in the world. The Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES), a prominent Colombian nongovernmental organization, estimates that there are approximately 4 million persons displaced in Colombia, out of a total population of 44.4 million. However, given the complexity of the problem and the difficulty in fully accounting for this population, there are typically discrepancies in statistics related to displacement. As of February 2008, some 2.4 million IDPs had formally registered with the Government of Colombia (GOC).

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The GOC receives support for internally displaced persons programs from two U.S. Government agencies: the Department of State's Office of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). PRM provides funding for emergency assistance to families and individuals during their first 90 days of displacement. Once this emergency phase has concluded, USAID's assistance program dovetails to provide medium- and longer-term assistance to the displaced. Since 2001, the USAID program has focused on the following objectives:

- Generate income and employment through job training, business development, and complementary activities.
- Institutional strengthening of Colombian NGOs and government entities at all levels that provide services to IDPs and other vulnerable groups.
- Technical assistance, training and follow-up for housing improvements and construction subsidies from the central government.
- Increase access to quality education at all levels, but especially at the primary level.
- Improve access to health care, potable water, and sanitation for IDPs and vulnerable groups.
- Facilitate reintegration, resettlement, and/or return of internally displaced families with sound livelihood options and access to critical social services.
- Strengthen and improve the coordination between institutional and community efforts in support of IDPs and receptor communities.
- Improve food security for IDPs and vulnerable groups.
- Provide health education to educate families in food preparation, nutrition, child-care, and sexual and reproductive health issues.
- Improve viable land market access for IDPs and vulnerable groups.

RESULTS ACHIEVED UNDER THIS PROGRAM (as of 04/30/08)

- Activities reached 181 municipalities in 25 departments.
- More than 450,000 vulnerable and displaced people benefited from USG assistance.
- 6,900 families participated in food security programs.
- Educational opportunities were provided to 51,000 children and 241,000 people received healthcare services.