ProPaz
Support for peacebuilding in Colombia

Background
Colombia is a country with two faces. On the one hand, it boasts steady economic growth, a burgeoning middle class living in modern cities, resource wealth, and stable, internationally oriented economic policy. However, this contrasts sharply with the extreme social inequality that has been fuelling armed conflict for more than 50 years, a conflict which still claims human lives on a daily basis.

Despite the progress made with the provision of state services, a humanitarian crisis persistently prevails: the national register for victims of the armed conflict now lists over 8.6 million people. Against this background, the Victims and Land Restitution Law of 2011 is one of the most ambitious legislative projects of the Colombian state. After more than four years of negotiations, the Colombian Government and the former guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) signed a peace agreement in November 2016. FARC-EP laid down its weapons and re-established itself as a political party. Beyond that, the Colombian Government continues official negotiations with the guerrilla group Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), which have been initiated in February 2017.

Despite initial achievements over the first one and a half years since the peace agreement with FARC-EP was signed, the government’s peace policy has a long way to go. The country’s institutions at the regional and national level require further strengthening in order to make progress on the key elements of the peace agreement. While some crucial steps concerning political participation have already been taken, i.e. FARC-EP’s transformation into a political party and its first participation in national elections, arrangements to surrender weapons and the reintegration of former FARC-EP combatants, major challenges remain, especially with regard to the issues of agricultural reform and the comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition. In addition, dialogue between civil society and the state must be intensified further still, particularly in the light of the different levels at which decisions are taken, between based on the peace accord newly established institutions and agencies as well as civil society organisations.

Objective
Peace policies have been implemented efficiently and in a participatory manner at national, regional and local level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commissioned by</th>
<th>German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German contribution</td>
<td>Up to EUR 34,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead executing agency</td>
<td>Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC – Colombia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing organisations</td>
<td>Territorial Renewal Agency (ART), National Planning Department (DNP), High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), Unit for Victim Support and Reparation (UARIV), Land Restitution Unit (URT), departmental governments in Meta and Norte de Santander, public prosecutor’s office (FGN), National Centre for Historical Memory (CNMH), National Network of Regional Peace and Development Programmes (Redprodepaz), among other entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project areas</td>
<td>Norte de Santander, Meta, Caquetá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned overall term</td>
<td>March 2015–January 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method
Acting on behalf of ProPaz in the Regional Peacebuilding area of activity, the Como-Berghof consortium offers advice to regional governments and civil society organisations on the formulation and participatory implementation of territorial development initiatives as a contribution to the peace process. The consortium also advises on joint...
processes to prevent violence and in the field of conflict transformation.

With its componente Criminal Justice and Historical Truth the project supports the public prosecutor’s office and further entities in reaching and implementing verdicts based on the Justice and Peace Law (Ley de Justicia y Paz). This law formed the legal basis for the mass disarmament of paramilitary groups from 2005 onwards. In collaboration with the National Centre for Historical Memory (CNMH), the programme provides support to both government and civil society in their joint efforts to come to terms with the conflict, with the goal of laying the foundations for a culture of peace. Since the beginning of 2018, the programme cooperates with the newly established Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) and the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition Commission (CEV).

Regarding Victim Reparation and Land Restitution, the programme supports the coordination between the state and victim groups for a more efficient implementation of the reparation and restitution processes.

The area of activity Strengthening the Capacities of Local Governments and Civil Society Organisations for Local and Regional Peacebuilding (ForPaz) is being implemented by ProPaz within the parameters of cofinancing with the European Union. More information about ForPaz can be found on a separate fact sheet.

In the end of 2017, ProPaz established a new componente, Search for Disappeared Persons, which supports the recently constituted Special Unit for the Search of Persons Deemed as Missing, further state institutions and civil society organisations that are involved in the search, identification and, in case of deceased, dignified delivery of the over 80,000 disappeared persons in Colombia according to the Centre for Historical Memory.

Additionally, the programme has expanded its intervention area in 2018 and is now active in the province of Caquetá.

Results

Provincial governments and communities in the programme regions of Norte de Santander and Meta have integrated peacebuilding into their regional and local development plans. With support from the programme, the Round Table of relevant authorities has developed common guidelines for mayors and provincial governments so as to facilitate the integration of key peacebuilding issues into regional and local development plans. The departmental government of Norte de Santander is working with the local authorities in Ocana and Teoramo and with representatives of civil society to implement a new initiative designed to prevent violence.

Actors involved in implementing the Justice and Peace Law, such as the central public prosecutor’s office and civil society organisations, have enhanced skills to conduct and accompany this process. Furthermore, new strategies to speed up judicial proceedings under the Justice and Peace Law are helping to ensure that victims of paramilitary groups receive reparations such as in the case of the Casa Castaño.

The historical reappraisal of the armed conflict is of growing importance in Colombian society. Youth organisations in Norte de Santander are working with public and civil society stakeholders to address the legacy of the conflict in their region. Teachers in Norte de Santander and Meta are familiar with the toolbox for remembrance work produced by the National Centre for Historical Memory and know how to integrate it in their educational programmes.

Interinstitutional articulations realms have now the capacity and knowledge to implement the Victims and Land Restitution Law with more efficiency. With the programme's support, the indigenous community of the Bari in Norte de Santander has initiated reclamation processes to enforce the community’s land rights and become a beneficiary of collective reparations. ProPaz continues to support these procedures through the facilitation of dialogue between regional and national actors as well as accompanying of relevant state institutions.

ProPaz predecessors

German cooperation has been supporting Colombia as it implements peacebuilding measures since 2003. ProPaz builds upon the findings and lessons learned by the previous projects CERCAPAZ (2007–2015), SerMaracrena (2011–2015) and ProFis (2008–2015). CERCAPAZ helped to bring civil society and government together at one table at the national level and in the provinces of César, Caldas and Norte de Santander. The SerMacarena programme assisted dialogue between farmers and authorities on spatial and environmental planning in the province of Meta. And ProFis supported transitional justice measures in Colombia.