

# Colombia: Peacebuilding and violence prevention through sport

## Context

For more than 50 years, Colombia was subject to armed conflict between guerrilla organisations, paramilitary groups and the country's army. Consequently, more than 14 per cent of the population are now internally displaced. Almost eight million people have been affected by the conflict, including a disproportionately large number of children and young adults. These young internally displaced persons are much more likely to be either perpetrators or victims of violence than other Colombians of a similar age. The peace agreement signed with the FARC guerrilla group at the end of 2016, and its implementation, with a clear focus on support for the conflict-torn regions of the country, have been key in setting the course for Colombia's future development.

## The 'Sport for Development' approach

The United Nations recognise sport internationally 'as a means to promote education, health, development and peace'. German development cooperation also uses the opportunities offered by 'Sport for Development'. Sport allows children and young people to lead healthy lives, and it teaches them to take on responsibility, behave fairly and resolve conflict peacefully. These are key skills that will later help them gain a foothold in the working world. German development cooperation trains coaches for this purpose. They are role models and figures the young people can trust. The coaches give the children and young people a stronger sense of self-esteem and help them develop prospects for the future. During training, they address

health-related topics such as HIV prevention and alcohol abuse. Sport is not just physical exercise, it is part of their education. Together with local and international partners from the fields of policy-making, civil society, business and academia, German development cooperation has built up a sustainable sport portfolio that also helps strengthen civil society and promote democracy. In this way, sport serves as an innovative instrument that drives change and sustainable development – for each individual child and for society as a whole.

Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Partners	Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Coldeportes; NGO Talentos; NGO GIP; University of Córdoba; German Football Association (DFB); etc.
Overall term	January 2015 – June 2019

## 'Sport for Development' in Colombia

The Colombian Government already uses sport as an instrument for development policy in the context of its peace and reconciliation activities. For this reason, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has selected Colombia as a partner country for the 'Sport for Development' programme. The programme builds on the government's measures as well as the activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and it involves close cooperation with partners at the policy level, in research and from civil society, working together to use the potential of sport. It aims to use sport in order to strengthen the skills children and young people need to coexist



*While playing "football with principles" children and young people do not only practise to score goals. They also learn to take on responsibility, behave fairly and resolve conflict peacefully.*

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peacefully in a democratic society, and to contribute to the social (re)integration of internally displaced people; above all, children and the young. The priority areas are regions affected by conflict, violence and displacement. In the context of the ongoing peace process, the integration of formerly active participants in Colombia's armed conflict also plays an important role.

Collectively, the partners have developed a method called 'Fútbol con Principios' ('football with principles'). It uses sport to teach children and young people values like respect and team spirit, and to give them social skills. The method draws on concepts of football for peace that already exist in Colombia, as well as international 'Sport for Development' approaches, modern sports teaching methods and findings from the field of youth psychology. Through the three stages of training in a course of several weeks' duration, which it provides to coaches, teachers and social workers, the programme underpins positive behavioural changes among the children and young adults.

The 'Sport for Development' programme is closely linked to existing programmes of German development cooperation which the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is implementing on behalf of BMZ. These include the 'RETORNO' programme, supporting returning internally displaced persons and host communities with regard to food security and reconstruction, and the 'PROPAZ' programme to support peacebuilding in Colombia. It is also a partner of the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in implementing the 'Paz en Movimiento' programme, which trains ex-combatants to be coaches for the 'Fútbol con Principios' approach. This supports their integration in their community and enables them to perform important social functions.

## Partners

German development cooperation activities in the field of 'Sport for Development' in Colombia are carried out in cooperation with the following organisations:

- Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Coldeportes

- Regional education ministries
- NGO Talentos; NGO GIP
- German Football Association (DFB)
- University of Córdoba

## Success to date

- 500 teachers, coaches and social workers from different NGOs and state organisations, and local community leaders have received training in applying 'Sport for Development'. The courses were held in each of the regions in cooperation with partner organisations. Around 35,000 children and young people are now reached by these multipliers
- According to estimates by the programme's partner organisations, at least 3,500 of the children and youth who participated in 2016 were internally displaced people. Moreover, a large proportion have been affected by violence, some of them as formerly active participants in the country's armed conflict.
- For many of the participants, the training in 'Fútbol con Principios' ('football with principles') methods has had a positive impact on their employment situation. In many cases, for example, trained participants from the local and regional administrations, or from NGOs, have been placed in positions related to social work or sports.
- To mainstream the 'Fútbol con Principios' method in existing structures, 30 of the participants were selected for a three-week course of further training to become 'master trainers'. They are now active throughout Colombia, working as trainers, passing on their knowledge as multipliers and ensuring that the 'Sport for Development' approach is widely disseminated.
- The teaching materials developed in Colombia formed the basis for an international course on the subject of 'Sport for Development'. This was implemented in collaboration with the DFB at the sportcentrum Kamen-Kaiserau in June 2016. Almost 30 trainers from twelve partner countries of BMZ took part in this course. In 2017, the course was successfully continued and further developed.

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