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ForPaz – Local and regional peacebuilding in Colombia

Where and how we work

The **Colombian peace process** is an emblematic example of how protracted violent conflicts can be resolved through **dialogue and negotiations**.

Following its **peace agreement** with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP), Colombia asked Germany and the European Union for **assistance to overcome its violent past and ensure recognition of the rights of the victims**, including developing mechanisms for dialogue and **cooperation between state institutions and civil society**.

The peace process in Colombia faces major challenges. Progress in the implementation of the agreement has been steady but has been advancing slowly, not least because of a lack of solid political consensus. New and old armed groups vie for control of the shadow economy (illicit crop cultivation, illegal gold mining, etc.). One of the consequences of this situation is a rise of violence against **local peace activists** and human rights defenders.

Within the framework of support for peacebuilding, component **Strengthening Capacity for Planning and Peacebuilding -ForPaz** is a cooperation modality delegated from the European Union to GIZ whose general objective is to contribute to the construction of peace in Colombia from its territories.

ForPaz arises to contribute to the **consolidation of a vision of territorial development and peace building according to the characteristics of the regions**, their diversity, their experiences built over several years; where **citizens play a central role** and cooperation with local institutions will allow greater guarantees for well-being and joint construction.

ForPaz is part of the ProPaz project. Its overall goal is to play a part in building peace in Colombia at the local and regional level with the aim of achieving the following five results:

- strengthening of the spatial planning capacities of local government;
- involvement of social organisations in local policymaking;
- conflict transformation through dialogue;
- support for peace and development programmes in sustainability and peacebuilding;
- contribution to formulating Land Management policy and the National Development Plan.

Our work contributes to the achievement of the **2030 Agenda** Sustainable Development Goals 5 (**gender equality**) and 16 (**peace, justice and strong institutions**) and to the implementation of United Nations Security Council **Resolution 1325/2000** on the **participation of women in peace, security and conflict resolution processes**.

Commissioned by	European Union (EU)/German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Funding	EUR 11,000,000 (EU) EUR 500,000 (BMZ)
Lead executing agency	Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation (APC)
Implementing organisations	National Planning Department (DNP), National Network of Regional Peace and Development Programmes (Redprodepaz), Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) and the Territorial Renewal Agency (ART), among others
Project areas	Seven areas: the Pacific regions of Nariño and Cauca; the Colombian Massif; San Juan, Chocó; Cañón de las Hermosas, Tolima; Cañón de las Hermosas, Cauca – Valle del Cauca; Nudo del Paramillo and Magdalena Medio
Overall term	November 2016 to January 2021



Left: Dialogue exercise with indigenous in Colombia's Caribbean region



Right: Sport with principles training with African descent children, Guapi, Colombia Pacific Region

Highlights of our achievements so far

- Thanks to the updating of the spatial development plans, **more than 300,000 people** from 14 municipalities now **have access to better environmental conservation services**.
- **More than 230 civil society organisations** increased the political involvement of women, farmers, young people, ethnic organisations, community action boards, educational entities and others.
- **1.175 women** representing social organisations were involved in work to formulate plans and **public agendas with a gender perspective**.
- Around **2.000 people** from 39 municipalities engaged in dialogue to transform conflicts concerning community water management, local socio-economic alternatives and the impact of the mining and energy sectors in their regions.
- **14 Redprodepaz peace and development programmes** have financial and technical sustainability strategies.

Empowerment of women and indigenous traditions

Historically, political decision-making positions in the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) have been held by men. In the words of Nubia Yande, leader of the Nasa community in Cauca: *'Before, there were only men. We've only had one female governor; no other women have held this position, but that's what we're working to change because women can also be leaders.'* Due to the impact of the armed conflict, the role of women had been confined to defending their communities, leaving the issue of female empowerment on the back burner.



Promoting ancestral knowledge along Nariño's Pacific coast

Under the Women and Family Programme, the women involved in CRIC embarked on political training that gave them a voice in the decision-making processes in their communities and in the organisation.

In recognising that they belong to the indigenous Nasa community, these women affirm their commitment to preserving their customs and passing on their knowledge to the next generation through their weaving and their native language Nasa Yuwe. For them, being a woman and being indigenous, brings with it a responsibility to ensure the cultural preservation of their traditions and involvement in the decisions taken about their community. Karen, the leader of this process in CRIC, believes that community work enables 'women to exert influence in other spheres'.

These women teach those in other communities about their own laws, ancestral knowledge and world views, with the aim of extending this process of transformation to others. From his first contact with the initiative, Nubia's partner, David Ulchur Fernandez, has acknowledged the importance of political education: *'I've always had a high regard for what she (referring to Nubia) does because we've both fought very hard. So far things are going well, and we hope to be able to continue to grow stronger.'*



Nubia Yande, leader of the Women and Family Programme run by the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca, Totoró, Cauca

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Registered offices
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ProPaz office, GIZ Colombia
Carrera 24 No. 39a-41
Bogotá, Colombia

Author ProPaz

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BMZ offices

BMZ Bonn
Dahlmannstraße 4
53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 (0)228 99535-0
F +49 (0)228 99535-3500

BMZ Berlin
Stresemannstraße 94
10963 Berlin, Germany
T +49 (0)30 18 535-0
F+49 (0)30 18 535-2501

E poststelle@bmz.bund.de
I www.bmz.de