

## Executive Summary

Title:           Reparation for internal displacement in Colombia: Towards the construction of inclusive and equitable public policies and social practices.

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Colombia has suffered one of the most prolonged and sustained internal conflicts in Latin America. One of the most recurrent manifestations of this violence can be traced to the many breaches of international humanitarian law. In addition to the trauma it produces for victims, forced displacement, as one of the most widely used military strategies by parties to the conflict, gives rise to the violation of a series of substantive economic, social and cultural rights. The forced displacement of Colombians is one of the most critical humanitarian crises currently taking place in the western hemisphere, not only because of its magnitude, but also because of its geopolitical and social impacts. It is estimated that more than 1 million Colombians are internally displaced within their country

The ongoing internal displacement of indigenous, afro-Colombian, peasant and rural people, and the absence of sustainable solutions for both prevention and recovery continue to have a fundamental impact on the continuity, reconstruction and long-term development of entire communities who have been uprooted and then exiled within or beyond their own country. Women, children, the indigenous and afro-Colombians account for the largest proportion of displaced populations in Colombia. Although the Colombian State has struggled to provide humanitarian assistance to its growing displaced population, policies have been inconsistent and ineffective, rendering them, short-term, stop gap measures in a context in which people who have been displaced more than once do not receive the assistance they need to re-build their lives. Similarly, receptor communities are not equipped with the human or financial resources needed to ensure the provision of social services.

The Universidad de San Buenaventura and NGO Corporacion Volver a la Gente, are proposing an action research project that seeks to shed light on the non-linear (and often interrupted) process of transition from conflict to post-conflict situations, from a perspective of "restorative and gender justice", in which the proponents will delve into the consequences of displacement and traumatization and the processes of differential and generally asymmetric subjectivization among men and women in the face of that condition. The project will also investigate the underlying assumptions ("discourse") about the gendered, generational and racial differentiation of rights that may be present or not in institutional policies and programs to assist the displaced.

This project is one of two final awardees selected in the context of a research competition on "Gender Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies", jointly organized and funded through PCD and the Gender Unit. The competition which took place between July 2004 and May 2005 was run in Colombia and Guatemala and aims to support research that will document and analyze models, mechanisms, public policies and practices for gender-differentiated access to and delivery of justice. Specifically, the competition privileges research on the linkages between formal state mechanisms and policies for justice and informal or traditional mechanisms and practices. The competition was aimed at

experienced researchers in Guatemala and Colombia, who may choose to work in teams with rights organizations and/or with colleagues less experienced in research.

Through three case studies to be developed in three different geographic zones and the consolidation of this information into a single, publishable study, the proposed research will scope the possible policy scenarios for the restoration of what people recognize as losses and damages (reparation) and of what people consider irreparable (memory). The proposal includes a solid review of some of the most important literature and raises a number of tensions and key questions around reparation for displacement from the legal, philosophical, psycho-social and political perspectives. An initial conceptual framework is proposed in addition to a list of eight research questions that will be answered in the course of the project.

The proposed research will adopt a political anthropology orientation. While the proponents do emphasize documentation and analysis of inter-subjective understandings of displacement (with a particular emphasis upon IDPs own views on reparation in public policy), this is balanced by an initial “actor mapping” or stakeholder analysis of the players involved in humanitarian assistance and reparation policymaking in order to acquire a better understanding of the political and institutional constraints under which the State operates (and around which civil society groups can organize their agenda).

The methodology includes a combination of comprehensive, interpretive (“hermeneutic”) analytic tools that will be employed in combination with and to contrast ethnographically constructed information about IDPs, analysis of constructed discourse on forced displacement, and scenarios for its reparation. As mentioned, the project makes provision for research teams to undertake three regional studies in three strategic zones (Western Antioquia-Choco; Central Cundinamarca; the Caribbean coast-Montes de Maria). This will be drafted into a single, consolidated report that will be presented at a national conference scheduled during the last months of project execution. While the final report will be underpinned by a more traditional review of the primary and secondary literature and semi-structured interviews with policymakers, the majority of research is based upon an action research approach that will engage victim’s groups through a series of workshops and in-depth interviews (life experiences).

In addition, the research design makes provisions for the development of a series of didactic tools that will be an integral part of the research process and designed in collaboration with displaced populations, so that IDPs might better understand their rights and be better positioned to visualize options for reparation when they engage in policy and assistance program discussions with State authorities.

The project has both a strong capacity building and policy influence orientation, particularly amongst social organisations that work with the displaced and with the victims of displacement themselves. Firstly, because the proponents hope to break new conceptual ground by pushing the political boundaries of forced displacement as an issue traditionally tied to social policies for humanitarian assistance (basic housing and food assistance) to a rights-based issue in which the legal or compensatory dimension of

displacement comes to be recognized as a legitimate avenue for discussion between policy makers, victims and victim-support groups.

Second, it is hoped that the action research approach and the didactic strategy that will be integrated into the research process will serve in empowering affected populations through a more thorough discussion of (a) assistance as reparation, and (b) interpretation of historic memory and loss, social practices, expectations and existing and /or prospective options for reparations for displacement.

Thirdly, it is hoped that more in-depth and differentiated analysis using the lenses of gender, race and generation of the experience of displacement will generate new knowledge for policy makers at the national and local level on options for reparation for the victims of displacement.

The project is expected to produce the following outputs:

- A series of preliminary reports of results in the regions.
- Three regional reports
- A final report to be published as a book.
- 6 educational booklets on issues of reparation including institutional arrangements, options for assistance, etc.
- 5 videos on community experiences in displacement and reparation.

The prevention of displacement and the provision of sustainable solutions for Colombia's internally displaced is increasingly being understood as a rights-based issue by policymakers, civil society organisations, academics and by the victims of internal displacement. While there does exist a body of research in Colombia that analyses the shortcomings of public policy in this area, debates have largely been framed in terms of humanitarian assistance to "vulnerable populations" most often transforming these populations into "the new urban poor" in need of poverty alleviation, and thus denying their status as rights-holders and ignoring historic tendencies of social exclusion towards specific populations.

This growing realization comes at any interesting time. Colombians are currently discussing options for reparation within the context of the draft Law for Peace and Justice. And yet discussions by victim support groups, policymakers and other interested parties have been marked by a limited understanding of the legal parameters and policy options (both national and local) available on issues of reparation. Alarming, discussions on reparation to victims (including victims of internal displacement) have been inextricably linked to amnesty for perpetrators and the recovery of stolen or illegally acquired assets such as peasant lands or profits from drug-trafficking. In this scenario, further research and debate on policies, practices and program options for reparation and its relationship to humanitarian assistance will not only break new conceptual ground, but also presents itself as a public policy priority for Colombians today.