



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

COLOMBIA

COUNTRY PROFILE



Photo PADF by Kari Grob

Beneficiaries from an Alternative Development project located in the municipality of Trinidad in the north-central department of Cordoba prepare palm seedlings for planting.

USAID's alternative development activities have supported roughly 298,000 families

OVERVIEW

Rich in natural resources and with a long history of democracy, Colombia's development challenges are exacerbated by decades of violence fueled by widespread illicit crop production and narco-trafficking. Numerous rural municipalities, isolated by poor infrastructure and fragile institutions, remain prone to aggression from illegal armed groups, illicit crop cultivation, forced displacement, and human rights abuses.

Approximately half of Colombia's citizens live below the poverty line, suffering from income disparities, and inadequate social services. The Government of Colombia (GOC) is exerting pressure on illegal armed groups, but their presence and propensity for violence continue to pose a threat. The GOC is working to consolidate a legitimate state presence throughout the country, revitalize the economy, and combat corruption. As a partner in Colombia, the U.S. Government, through USAID, supports GOC, private sector, and citizen efforts to achieve peace, promote economic prosperity, improve the living conditions of Colombia's most vulnerable groups, develop economic and social alternatives to illicit crop production, and strengthen the presence and effectiveness of the state.

PROGRAMS

Democracy and Human Rights

USAID assists the GOC as it combines broader and fairer justice with more representative and responsive governance, particularly to address the needs of traditionally underserved regions and populations. USAID supports victims, civil society, and the GOC to prevent and protect human rights violations, as well as promote a culture of human rights. In remote and conflict-affected areas, USAID works with the government and civil society to expand access to justice services and alternative dispute resolution, support the effective implementation of the new criminal accusatory justice system, strengthen governance, improve health and education services, and promote citizen participation and oversight.

Economic Growth

USAID assistance focuses on supporting the GOC's key public policy efforts to improve the overall business environment, facilitate trade and investment, and improve local capacity to address the country's development challenges. Policy issues include land tenure, access to financial services, and labor rights. Priority is given to policies addressing displaced, Afro-Colombians, and indigenous populations.

Environment

For vulnerable communities that live in and around Colombia's ethnic territories, national parks, protected areas, or other biologically or climate-sensitive ecosystems, natural resource-based livelihoods are a way of life. Conservation of these livelihoods, ecosystems, and the valuable en-

COLOMBIA SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1810
Population: 45.644 million
GDP (PPP): \$399.4 billion
GDP per capita (PPP): \$8,900

Source: CIA, *The World Factbook*

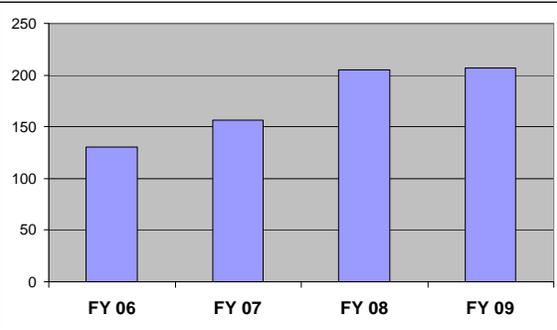
<http://colombia.usaid.gov>



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USAID Assistance to Colombia
(Dollars in Millions)



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Environmental services they provide are threatened by deforestation, habitat conversion, invasive species, climate change, illicit crops, armed conflict, and weak state presence. In partnership with the GOC, USAID’s environmental programs use a “threats-based approach” to reduce or mitigate the negative impacts of these hazards on Colombia’s rich biodiversity and ecosystems. The overall goals of USAID’s environment program include strengthening environmental governance for the conservation of protected areas and ethnic territories along with preserving, restoring, or improving ecosystem services. Programs also work to ensure the sustainability of natural resource-based livelihoods, as well as mitigating, adapting to and/or reducing vulnerability to the long-term impacts of global climate change and promoting the use of renewable and clean energy.

Consolidation and Livelihoods

Starting in 2010, USAID’s Alternative Development interventions support the U.S. Government’s Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) and the Colombian Government’s National Consolidation Plan. Interventions under the CSDI will be integrated and regionally focused in areas affected by the illegal economy and conflict. Activities seek to strengthen state presence with short-term interventions to meet urgent economic and social needs in previously ungoverned areas. As the regions become more consolidated, the programs focus on support for longer term interventions such as sustainable economic opportunities, the stabilization and reintegration or return of conflict-affected populations, improved governance, and increased access to justice. In these more consolidated areas, interventions will continue to facilitate the provision of basic services, increase licit livelihoods, and strengthen local institutions.

Vulnerable Populations

USAID provides social and economic development opportunities to Colombians who have been affected by the conflict. USAID is addressing both the causes and consequences of conflict. USAID supports GOC efforts to institutionalize state presence in parts of the country that have experienced significant conflict, but have been recently recovered. In addition, USAID assists with the demobilization and peaceful reintegration of ex-combatants, reconciliation and reparation of victims, and prevention of child recruitment by illegal armed groups. Assistance to vulnerable populations is primarily focused on providing adequate housing and income generation opportunities, as well as expanding access to social services (i.e. health care, education, social infrastructure, and community-level institution building) and preventing displacement. Many of these initiatives target Afro-Colombians and indigenous, who are especially vulnerable.