

**WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN INTERNATIONAL
ASSESSMENT REPORT:
TRANSFORMING PROTRACTED CONFLICTS
THROUGH WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:
COLOMBIA**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASFADDES	Association of Friends and Families of the Disappeared
ASFAMIPAZ	Association for Families and Peace
AUC	United Self-Defense of Colombia or <i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i>
CBO	community-based organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIASE	Research Corporation on Social Action and Economy or <i>Corporación de Investigación y de Acción Social y Económica</i>
CSO	civil society organization
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Rehabilitation
ELN	National Liberation Army or <i>Ejército Liberación Nacional</i>
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or <i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i>
FENACON	Federation of Colombian Councils
FUNDAC	Community Support Foundation or <i>Fundación de Apoyo Comunitario</i>
GTZ	German Technical Corporation
IDP	internally displaced person
IMP	Initiative of Women for Peace or <i>Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz</i>
LIMPAL	WILPF or Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
MSI	Management Systems International
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	non-governmental organization
SIPAZ	The "Yes" to Peace Association
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
WCI	Women's Campaign International

Summary

Women's Campaign International (WCI) has chosen Colombia as a potential site to implement its US government-funded (grant awarded through authorization in H.R. 5631; House Report 109-676 – Making Appropriations for The Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007) “Transforming Protracted Conflicts through Women's Empowerment” program. WCI made this determination by conducting desk research and two assessments, one in Washington, DC, and the other in Colombia. Based on these assessments, WCI has determined that Colombia is suitable for this project and has developed several program possibilities described in this document.

Background

In August 2007, WCI was awarded a grant by US Congressional allocation through the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2007 to build the capacity of women in two or three countries plagued by protracted conflicts. Specifically, WCI will work to build women's capacity in becoming effective community and political leaders and to participate meaningfully in conflict prevention, transformation, management and resolution at local and national levels. WCI chose Colombia, Jammu and Kashmir in India and Sri Lanka as potential sites for program implementation.

WCI's selection criteria for program sites are as follows:

1. Identification as a state or territory plagued by protracted conflict;
2. Demonstrated local interest in enhancing women's involvement in conflict transformation processes;
3. Local network of existing, effective state and non-state actors whose goals complement those of WCI;
4. WCI possesses the organizational capacity to effectively address relevant needs;
5. Articulated interest in collaborating with WCI by local stakeholders;
6. Logistical and financial feasibility.

WCI recently completed an in-country needs assessment in Sri Lanka and is currently considering program possibilities in that country. After conducting desk research and an assessment in Washington, DC, WCI concluded that Jammu and Kashmir would be a poor choice for program implementation as it does not fulfill criterion 3¹ and criterion 6². WCI is currently in the process of conducting initial research on the feasibility of Liberia as an alternative site for program implementation.

Methodology

WCI began its assessment of a potential program in Colombia by conducting desk research in May 2007. WCI then conducted a two-day assessment in Washington, DC, on July 16 and 17, 2007. Finally, WCI conducted an in-country assessment from October 8th- October 15th, 2007. The purpose of WCI's assessment was to:

¹ A relatively weak network of relevant organizations exists in Kashmir, resulting in a scarcity of potential partners.)

² The volatile relationship between Pakistan and India would make it difficult for WCI to position itself as a neutral entity rendering a program logistically unfeasible

1. Determine current program coverage and gaps in enhancing women's participation in conflict transformation processes;
2. Obtain an overview of issues/themes of importance to women and women's groups, especially as they relate to the conflict;
3. Gain a greater understanding of the current political atmosphere, security situation and conflict dynamics, especially as they relate to women;
4. Identify potential in-country partners, resource persons, consultants and/or hires;
5. Obtain logistical and security advice.

While in Colombia, WCI traveled to Bogotá and Medellín and met with 37 local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), media entities, government officials, political candidates and scholars. The detailed list of these individuals and organizations can be found Appendix A of this document.

Findings

Country Selection Findings

1. Identification as a state or territory plagued by protracted conflict:

Since its founding as a republic in 1819, Colombia has been plagued by periods of political violence. Power-sharing arrangements between liberals and conservatives decreased violence in the 1960s, but excluded other political forces that contributed to the creation and emergence of Marxist guerilla groups. Other contributing factors to the rise in the guerilla movement include the marginalization of rural poor, the influence of communist/socialist ideologies and the ineffectiveness of the judicial system.

In the 1980s drug trafficking prospered, owing to an inefficient security system and the shift of coca cultivation from Bolivia and Peru to Colombia. The enormous wealth amassed by cartels involved in the drug trade increased violence and corruption, further fueling guerilla attacks against the wealthy and spurring the reactionary creation of the conservative paramilitary forces. Kidnapping and extortion helped the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), the largest guerilla group to grow to an estimated 18,000 active combatants and 5,000 urban militia members at its height in the early 2000s. The National Liberation Army or *Ejército Liberación Nacional* (ELN), with around 5,000 members, was the second largest guerilla group.

Several groups abandoned the armed struggle in favor of democratic participation in the late 1980s and early 1990s, leaving the FARC and the ELN as the two main armed guerilla forces. Right wing paramilitaries grouped under the United Self-Defense of Colombia or *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), an umbrella body that emerged in the 1980s as the land-owning elite and drug traffickers created armed groups to protect their interests against the guerillas. The paramilitaries were never a homogenous organization but rather a marriage of interests between powerful local warlords, drug barons, organized crime, members of local political and economic elites and counterinsurgent groups.

At least 3,000 people in Colombia lose their lives each year as a result of the conflict. Though instances of kidnapping have recently decreased, Colombia continues to see the highest prevalence of kidnapping in the world. Over three million people have been displaced over recent years as a result of the conflict, losing their land, their property, their homes and communities. While gains have been made in the area of conflict management, negotiation and demobilization, progress significant enough to yield a comprehensive peace settlement remains a challenge.

While pervasive conflict has characterized the majority of Colombia's official history, it is not for a lack of willpower nor an inactive civil society that the armed conflict persists. A Gallup poll conducted in April 2007 found that 79% of those surveyed in Colombia favored negotiations with the ELN. A similar percentage, 79%, favored talks with the paramilitaries. Those who favored a dialogue with the guerillas over a military solution rose from 39% in an April 2003 Gallup poll to 64% in April 2007. Up to five million demonstrators have taken to the streets of the capital city this year alone to protest botched military actions taken against FARC rebels which resulted in the deaths of 11 abducted Colombian lawmakers. Colombian civil society is characterized by an undying will and an urgent sense of activism as it tries to transform conflict, include marginalized groups in the transformation process, negotiate peace with armed actors, secure humanitarian accords, and move towards peace.

2. Demonstrated local interest in enhancing women's involvement in conflict transformation processes

There exists in Colombia a wealth of organizations dedicated to increasing and maintaining women's effective political participation on both regional and national levels. Notable political gains for women include a 30% quota for women installed in 2000 for appointed cabinet officers. In addition, a woman, Dilian Francisca Toro Torres, serves as the President of the national Senate, and women account for 8.4% of the lower House of Congress and 11.8% of the Upper House or Senate. While Colombia does not have a quota requirement for representation in Congress or in political parties, it does have a quota for appointed Cabinet members and has one of the highest percentages at 38% of women ministers in Latin America as reported by Georgetown University's Political Database of the Americas.

However, many organizations have expressed concern that political parties do not support women members. In addition, despite the fact that similar mechanisms exist for Indigenous and Afro-Colombian candidates, neither the party system nor the national Congress legislate quotas or caucuses for women candidates/officials.

On the theme of conflict transformation, individual women and women's organizations have been at the forefront of Colombian civil society's quest for peace building throughout the country. Women in Colombia often are motivated to confront this challenge through the loss or disappearance of male family members who have been captured, held hostage, or killed by either paramilitary or guerilla forces. For example, many women's organizations have turned to both the Colombian electorate and the international community to pressure President Uribe to secure the release of the hostages held by the FARC. In response, President Uribe appointed Liberal

Senator Piedad Cordoba as a facilitator of the humanitarian accord. Senator Cordoba made overtures to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez who met with members of the hostage families, flew to Bogotá for a summit with President Uribe on the topic, and agreed to facilitate discussions between the parties. Senator Cordoba then met for two days in an undisclosed location in Southern Colombia with Raul Reyes, spokesman for the FARC. For the first time, there is discussion of a possible meeting between the commander of the FARC, Manuel Marulanda Velez, and President Uribe.

In addition, President Uribe appointed two women to serve on the National Commission for Reconciliation and Reparations, which oversees the process of paramilitary demobilization. These two women are Patricia Buriticá, also the President of Initiative of Women for Peace or *Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz* (IMP) and Ana Teresa Bernal, a social activist who has written and advocated extensively for the Colombian peace process.

Women have also been active in informal peace processes. For example, since the expansion of the armed conflict in the 1990s women have negotiated directly with warring factions to avoid conflict escalation, they have established informal peace agreements with armed actors and some local women leaders have informally declared their communities “peace communities.” This activism, however, came at a price. By 2002, 17% of assassinated or disappeared leaders throughout Colombia were women. Today, a wide variety of efforts are underway to both continue women’s efforts to transform the conflict, while seeking justice for those who have suffered through displacement or violence and those who have been killed or disappeared.

3. Local network of existing, effective state and non-state actors whose goals match those of WCI

Colombia has a sophisticated network of civil society organizations working to promote women’s involvement in conflict transformation and resolution. In addition, as stated above, in response to pressure by international actors and Colombian civil society, the state has shown a strong willingness to engage in new approaches to conflict resolution, and has appointed trusted Colombian women leaders as lead negotiators in formal conflict management processes.

WCI met with several local and international NGOs who also aim to enhance women’s participation in decision-making processes, including conflict transformation. Many of these organizations are currently working to build the capacity of the extensive network of local organizations that work to empower women within their communities. Some of the most notable examples of Colombia-based women’s organizations include:

- *UNIFEM Colombia* focuses all of its work in country on women, conflict transformation, peace and security. Their main objectives are to solidify and build the capacity of local women’s networks working towards peace in Colombia, to increase the visibility of the conflict and how it impacts women, and to promote greater implementation of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and

Security (UNSCR 1325)³, both of which Colombia has signed but failed to properly implement.

- *Más Mujeres Más Política* or “More Women More Politics” is the centralized initiative in Colombia dedicated to increasing the number of elected women in the Colombian political system. It is coordinated effort between NDI, USAID, UNIFEM, GTZ, FESCOL, the Colombian Federation of Municipalities, and the Federation of Colombian Councils (FENACON). Through the coordinated efforts of its members, *Más Mujeres Más Política* distributes information to foster women’s better understanding of politics throughout the country, and runs capacity-building workshops for women candidates.
- *Red Nacional de Mujeres* or “The National Network of Women” consists of 45 regional and local organizations that work to promote legislative processes that are favorable to women, build the capacity of local women’s grassroots organizations, promote women’s active participation in decision-making processes, and to demand action and social movement to curb the effects that armed conflict has on Colombian women. The National Network of Women functions at the local level in 12 different regional areas, notably the cities of Bogotá D.C., Cali, Cartagena, Medellín, Bucaramanga, and the department of Chocó.
- *Ruta Pacífica* or “Peace Route” consists of 315 organizations and individual members and defines itself as a nonviolent, feminist organization that works towards increasing the visibility of how women are affected by Colombia’s armed violence as well as advocating for a negotiated end to the conflict. They function in nine departments, notably Antioquia (Medellín), Bogotá D.C., Valle de Cauca (Cali), and Chocó. This network’s main activities include coordinating the activities of its members to advocate for negotiation between the State and armed actors, the urgent need for a humanitarian accord, a ceasefire, and compliance with international human rights law.
- *Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz (IMP)* or “Initiative of Women for Peace” is an alliance of 22 women’s organizations and 246 regional representatives that incorporates the perspectives of indigenous peoples, unionists, youth, academics, feminists, farmers, and those of Afro-Colombian descent. The establishment of IMP was inspired with the passing of UNSCR 1325 and works to achieve the representation of multifarious women’s groups and the interests of their members in all aspects of conflict transformation, especially in the process of creating dialogue between armed groups at the negotiation table.
- *Management Systems International (MSI)* MSI is an implementing partner of USAID for a 5-year Regional Governance program to improve citizen security, health, education and public administration at the municipal, departmental and national level. Through the creation of linkages with local partners and investments in their capacity strengthening, MSI is working in 5 departments declared by the Government of Colombia as “Stable

³ UNSCR 1325 was passed in 2000 to mandate states to pay special attention to women’s rights in conflict situations and to ensure their participation in conflict resolution efforts.

Zones” due to a two-year program involving the presence of the military to maintain public order. These departments are Chocó in the West, and Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Magdalena and Cesar in the North. MSI’s program works to strengthen governance to support a more stable security situation by working with government, civil society and community leaders, including Afro-Colombians, indigenous people and women. Colombia has prioritized nine regions for its anti-guerilla strategy, three of which feature an MSI program through partnerships with local organizations. MSI’s activities include social auditing training (60% of participants are women), promoting programs of cooperation between citizens and public officials, community policing/neighborhood watch, conducting trainings and workshops to help communities understand the role of the state and civil society, strengthening local women’s networks by linking them to national-level efforts conducted by and efforts GTZ, UNIFEM and Colombia-based organizations, promoting outreach to IDP women and women-headed households

- *International IDEA* a Stockholm-based inter-governmental organization, supports sustainable democracy worldwide. It launched its operations in Colombia in early 2007. IDEA entered into a partnership with UNDP with which it shares an office and a program portfolio focused on promoting electoral reform free of armed-group influence, fostering dialogue and consensus among the country’s key political players, encouraging broad-based discussion of existing studies on poverty and politics in Andean countries, strengthening political parties through national and international seminars on party activities in parliament, reform of the political parties law, party financing, internal democracy, the development of party platforms on policy issues. International IDEA has high capacity in the area of gender and democracy and is recognized as a leader in the field of gender-conscious policy reform and political theory.

In addition, international organizations such as Mercy Corps are working in various capacities to strengthen women’s participation in the public arena in Colombia. WCI met with various women running for local office in Bogotá and Medellín, CBO leaders, and professors of political science and women’s studies.

4. WCI has the organizational capacity to effectively address relevant needs

Many of the groups contacted by the Colombia assessment team requested grants and technical assistance in areas well within WCI’s organizational capacity. Areas of mutual interest include organizational development, gender and conflict.

5. Articulated interest in collaborating with WCI by local stakeholders

Each of the organizations involved in the programs described below expressed interest in partnering with WCI. The WCI team did not have an opportunity to meet with MSI local partners or the Women’s Caucus. If WCI has an interest in pursuing program partnership with those entities, it will need to follow-up through local partners to establish relationships with these organizations.

6. Logistical and financial feasibility

The projects proposed below by the WCI team are all logistically and financially feasible, particularly if local partners are utilized to leverage resources and expertise. Travel to conflict-affected areas would necessitate careful planning in coordination with local partners and security advisors to ensure the safety of WCI staff and partners.

Assessment Findings

1. Determine current program coverage and gaps in enhancing women's participation in conflict transformation processes

WCI worked to obtain as much detail as possible about each organization's relevant programs and needs in order to gain an accurate understanding of current program coverage. WCI also inquired about other relevant programs that the organizations were aware of during each meeting. The following needs emerged:

Increasing women's political representation in conflict transformation processes

As the Colombian armed conflict has existed throughout the entirety of Colombia's official history, the transformation and resolution of this conflict maintains a constant place at the top of Colombia's political priorities. Women's ability and capacity to discuss and transform conflict on a policy level in Colombia is inherently tied to their ability to serve as public officials.

The main initiative that works towards increasing the number of women in politics in Colombia is *Más Mujeres Más Política*. This initiative has been responsible for coordinating the majority of pre-election trainings in preparation for the October 28, 2007 local elections. *Más Mujeres Más Política* expressed to WCI a need for more capacity-building workshops for women on budgets as well as more post-election work to support gender perspectives within Colombia's political parties.

WCI also found that a notable dichotomy exists between women elected officials and the programs that support them on the national and local level. According to many civil society organizations in Bogotá, the majority of women serving in politics on the national level are relatively wealthy, well-educated, and elite women who do not or cannot relate to local women or their direct experiences with Colombia's conflict. In addition, different factions of Colombian society sympathize with and fuel the operations of the various armed actors. For example, many politicians from conservative backgrounds or the wealthy elite solely criminalize leftist guerrillas and are accused of supporting paramilitary activities financially or through political and business connections. Conversely, most grassroots or liberal organizations mainly criminalize the paramilitary forces and focus on addressing their involvement with the drug trade, use of forced disappearances, and forced displacement, while ignoring the illegal activities of the leftist guerrillas.

Improving policymakers' awareness of women's issues and women's effectiveness as advocates

Many organizations, most notably the Office of Women and Gender in Bogotá and UNIFEM, are implementing extensive programs where they work with women's secretariats at the local level, to encourage the development of nonpartisan, gender-focused peace agendas, and facilitate the presentation of these agendas to local levels of government. However, only UNIFEM discussed its promotion of gender-specific conflict tools such as their Women, Peace, and Security Handbook, which reviews women's rights under CEDAW and UNSCR 1325.

In addition, it appears that much more work is needed to incorporate local women's views on the National Commission for Reconciliation and Reparations. One issue in this challenge is the skepticism on the part of national umbrella organizations towards government and its willingness to make changes. For example, when Patricia Burtitica, director of IMP, was appointed to President Uribe's National Commission for Reconciliation and Reparations, many organizations dropped out of the IMP umbrella due to Burtitica's participation on a government commission.

On the level of national politics, bringing women together to form political blocs for peace advocacy has been a difficult task for the following reasons: the national women's caucus is not official and thus far has no funding or staff to facilitate regular meetings, most Congresswomen are reportedly not supported by their respective political parties, and the Congresswomen have a reported tendency to make gains and alliances when working together with other women, but revert back to stubborn party-politics when they are away from the caucus.

Incorporating women around the country, particularly the marginalized and IDPs into policy planning and implementation related to the conflict

WCI found that a wealth of work in Colombia has been devoted to internally displaced women. The majority of this work is implemented in the Northern coastal town of Cartagena and primarily focuses on helping women IDPs connect to direct rehabilitation and reintegration services, financial support, and psycho-social counseling. A small fraction of IDP women migrate to Bogotá in search of work and housing.

However, organizations such as the main networks of women's organizations listed above do maintain a commitment to re-integrating IDP, Afro-Colombian, and indigenous women as much as possible. Incorporating these women in conflict transformation or political participation depends on the organization's ability to function in areas populated by those groups. Specifically, IDP work is centralized in Cartagena, work with Afro-Colombian populations is mainly concentrated in Chocó, and work with indigenous women takes place mostly in rural areas of the country (notably the southwestern region). IDP, Afro-Colombian, and indigenous women, who inhabit rural areas sought after by warring paramilitary and guerillas groups, are arguably the populations most affected by Colombia's violence.

Skill building for local women's organizations

Network groups such as *Red Nacional de Mujeres*, *Ruta Pacífica*, and IMP incorporate skills building for local women's groups into their missions. Issues of advocacy work seem to be the most popular among these groups, although few outlined plans that strengthened women's abilities to bridge their advocacy issues to the national level. While local women's peace secretariats or gender agendas may address specific problems of DDR programs or government policy, few grassroots organizations have the ability to bring these agendas to the policy-making level nor do they believe that the Colombian government would consider making their suggested changes.

Training in gender analysis for communities, civil society and public officials

There is an active base of women ready to make change in Colombian politics and conflict dynamics. The challenge is in bridging the efforts of individual women and women's grassroots organizations to policy-making and governance mechanisms. Martha Burítica at the Bogotá Mayor's Office for Women and Gender illustrated this issue when she expressed her frustration in getting the Mayor and City Council's approval for various gender reforms and programs.

2. Obtain an overview of issues/themes of importance to women and women's groups, especially as they relate to the conflict

Many of the issues important to groups in Colombia reflect WCI's priorities.

- Human rights:
 - Raising public's awareness of their rights, especially among marginalized populations
 - Addressing violations, especially against IDPs
 - Promoting idea of women's rights as human rights
 - Resources for victims of domestic violence and other forms of VAW
 - Preventing the rape of women by armed groups in conflict areas
- Political:
 - Training for women in politics
 - Gender sensitization for public officials
 - The possibility of establishing a quota for women in Congress
- Conflict Transformation / Peace Building:
 - Creating conflict awareness/education
 - Promoting public discussions and forums on both war and peace
 - Community problem solving
 - Gender awareness and addressing how the conflict specifically affects women
- Direct Social Services:
 - Providing women affected by violence, especially IDP women, with financial, community, and psycho-social programs to help them reintegrate into society

3. Gain a greater understanding of the current political atmosphere, security situation and conflict dynamics, especially as they relate to women

Women are voluntarily and forcibly recruited into armed groups in Colombia. In addition, women account for the majority of people displaced by Colombia's violence. Internally displaced women have often lost their male family members, land and livelihoods to Colombia's armed conflict and violent drug trade. While government legislation such as the 2005 Justice and Peace Law (or Law 975) and the subsequent creation of the National Commission for Reconciliation and Reparations have been established to monitor the demobilization process in Colombia, these laws maintain limited provisions and perspectives on gender. Demobilization, disarmament, and rehabilitation programs for paramilitary forces offer little support or protection for the female family members of demobilizing soldiers, who often suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome and engage in domestic violence.

4. Identify potential in-country partners, resources persons, and consultants

WCI identified several promising potential in-country partners as well as several potential resource people who would be able to provide WCI with strategic advice, recommendations and contacts during the process of program design and implementation. Appendix B contains a detailed chart of the potential partnerships identified during the assessment.

5. Obtain logistical and security advice

The two Marxist groups, the FARC and the ELN have been active for over four decades, but do not have the military strength or public support to assume power or pose a serious challenge to constitutional order. The FARC has a vast presence in the South and Southeast. The ELN has a presence in the mountains of the Antioquia and Bolivar departments in the Northwest. The guerillas have traditionally targeted government figures, police and military installations and the country's infrastructure, principally oil pipelines. Guerilla attacks and kidnappings have declined since 2002, while the number of captured, dead, or surrendered guerillas has risen sharply. As a part of President Uribe's efforts to improve public security, the police presence in rural areas has increased to 95% of the country's municipalities. Under the Consolidation Plan, 22,000 Colombian troops are confronting the FARC in its southern strongholds. The government's aim is to weaken the FARC sufficiently to eventually persuade the group to agree to a conclusive peace settlement. The ELN has been holding peace talks with the government since the second half of 2006 in Cuba.

Common crime in Colombia is a more significant contributor to personal insecurity for the majority of the population than the violence related to the internal conflict. In 2002 homicides reached a historical high of almost 30,000 (this includes an estimated 3,000-4,000 killings directly related to the internal conflict), but security has since improved. By 2006, homicides were down to 17,300. The murder rate in the capital Bogotá is currently lower than in Caracas, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, but the murder rates in Medellín and Cali are still among the

highest in the world according to the 2007 Economist Intelligence Unit Country Profile for Colombia.

Rates of kidnapping have also decreased. After exceeding 3,700 reported cases in 2000, kidnapping has since declined in response to improved law enforcement to under 700 in 2006. Around three quarters of kidnappings were carried out by guerilla and paramilitary groups in the early 2000s, but this proportion has been reduced as a result of the government's offensive against the guerillas and the demobilization of the paramilitaries.

When visiting offices in Bogotá, one can expect to pass through metal detectors and have personal belongings such as bags and briefcases examined. A few offices also take photographs of those entering the building or use electronic fingerprinting technology to register and identify visitors.

If WCI chooses to set up a part-time office in Bogotá, it is advisable to share an office with a partner organization that can advise on security both in the city and when traveling to the surrounding departments.

PROGRAM POSSIBILITIES

These program ideas and initiatives are consistent with the overall goals of WCI's Concept Plan: Transforming Protracted Conflict through Women's Empowerment. The ideas and suggestions described in this section aim to:

- Increase the number of qualified women who are interested, qualified and poised to serve as elected and appointed officials at the local, regional and national levels
- Increase women's abilities to participate effectively in political decision-making at all levels
- Build women's capacity to advocate for conflict transformation-related reforms
- Enhance women's capacity to develop, lead and participate in conflict prevention, conflict transformation, negotiation and peace building projects
- Improve women's teaching, communication and outreach skills so that they may build the capacity of other women to engage in conflict resolution activities as a means to ensuring that their impact is sustainable
- Build the capacity of local organizations to develop stronger financial and organizational management to effectively manage WCI's sub grants and future grants from other donors in an effort to improve financial sustainability

The ideas follow the technical efforts as described in the Concept Plan. They:

- Build upon past and current conflict transformation efforts by women, NGOs and governments within each country

- Involve action groups and individuals that will benefit from a WCI training program, such as women with a strong, demonstrated interest in and personal commitment to increasing women's participation in political decision making and conflict transformation
- Target women who have connections to both higher level leadership and grassroots level organizations
- Encourage women's participation in official conflict negotiations. This component will require efforts to spread the message that women can be effective negotiators and offer a unique contribution to conflict resolution efforts
- Partner with local organizations to effectively tailor and integrate conflict transformation efforts to cultural and political needs
- Provide sub grants to finance action plans and/or advocacy campaigns and ensure that new skills are grasped and employed

In addition to the goals in the Concept Plan, the suggestions narrated in this section aim to create and enhance programming and sustainability of results through the creation of strong partnerships and linkages between similar efforts, while leveraging WCI's impact to increase programming efficiency and effectiveness.

As a result of this assessment, the WCI Colombia assessment team developed four categories of programming ideas. The program ideas described in this section can be carried out as separate initiatives or through a combination of efforts. The assessment team recommends that WCI use a combined approach wherever possible. This approach will include a combination of sub grants, technical expertise and skills training. The second section narrates program ideas that WCI could support through the provision of small grants.

As WCI engages in decision-making regarding its Colombia program, it will need to consider whether it has a long-term commitment to the country or whether the funding it holds currently will be spent on women and conflict, with no further commitments in the areas of funding or technical assistance when the current funding line expires. The WCI team proposes a variety of programmatic interventions. While some of our suggestions will position WCI as a partner on national strategic initiatives toward a peace settlement, others involve WCI serving as a small player in grant-making and civil society development via technical and financial support with little operational involvement by WCI.

The following proposed programs will be possible to implement without a full-time staff presence in country. With that in mind, those organizations with experience engaging with international organizations and strong knowledge and experience of the Colombian context have been selected as possible partners. However, in order to ensure appropriate oversight, relevant WCI staff for the Colombia program will need to be engaged with partners regularly, remotely via e-mail, and in-country at various times, particularly if a more operational program is selected.

Comprehensive Programs

Capacity-building Workshops

Overview

Several organizations in Colombia expressed a keen interest in and need for providing women with capacity building workshops and trainings. Specific topics for workshops include capacity building for nonpartisan work towards creating gender-sensitive legislation in Congress, good governance strategies in conflict areas, advocacy trainings to promote humanitarian accords with armed groups, campaign skills and strategies for women candidates, budget analysis and implementation, and the rights of indigenous women in conflict areas. Many organizations expressed a need for capacity building on the aforementioned topics at both the local and national level, with women and men, citizens and public officials, and specifically in areas of or topics relating to Colombia's armed conflict.

Partnering Organizations

Seven organizations expressed interest in partnering with WCI to provide capacity-building activities on the following topics:

- a. International IDEA and *Fundación Mujeres por Colombia* separately expressed interest in working further with the unofficial Women's Congressional Caucus on strategies to promote gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, and peace agendas at the legislative level. Capacity-building workshops would target Congresswomen and potentially incorporate male members of Congress to share in the gender mainstreaming process and discussion. In addition, *Fundación Mujeres por Colombia* expressed a desire to use a capacity-building workshop to connect the newly-elected women leaders at the local level to their respective party representatives in the national women's caucus.
- b. MSI made clear its desire to partner with WCI on incorporating a gender perspective in its capacity-building workshops and trainings on good governance, community policing, and social auditing in regional conflict areas. MSI specifically would like to target Chocó, a poverty-stricken, conflict ridden, and predominantly Afro-Colombian department in the Northwest of Colombia. These workshops would target and promote dialogue between both citizens and public officials of Chocó.
- c. Two separate human rights-based organizations, ASFAMIPAZ and ASFADDES articulated a need for capacity-building workshops for their predominantly female member base on advocacy strategies. Both organizations are human rights based but advocate for different causes. ASFAMIPAZ is specifically advocating for the

establishment of a humanitarian accord between the Colombian government and FARC guerillas for the exchange of hostages. Their target audience is the FARC guerillas, the Colombian government, and international community – which they in turn hope will pressure the Colombian government. ASFADDES is advocating for the Colombian government to investigate the over 1,500 cases of forcibly disappeared persons and to follow investigations with physical searches for the victims of these crimes. These disappeared persons were mainly left-wing activists or combatants that have allegedly been taken by the right-wing paramilitary groups. ASFADDES would like to advocate the public to maintain a sense of urgency in investigating these crimes as well as press the Colombian government to punish these acts.

- d. IMP would like to provide capacity-building workshops for women in Colombia to prepare for the 2010 Congressional and Presidential elections. IMP and other organizations such as *Congreso Visible* expressed a need for training more women far in advance election dates rather than waiting until the immediate pre-election and campaigning period. IMP would like to partner with WCI on providing capacity-building workshops for fundraising, public speaking and campaign skills specifically in areas plagued by the armed conflict. By targeting areas of armed conflict, IMP hopes to empower women candidates to change the voice and perspective of conflict dialogue at the national level.
- e. FUNDAC and its “School of Government” Program would like to partner with WCI specifically to hold capacity-building workshops on how women leaders can better analyze, address, and implement budgets and plans for economic development in their communities. These School of Government classes for women are located in Cali and the University of Antioquia, the department which hosts activities for the city of Medellín. WCI could specifically promote the incorporation of IDP women affected by Colombia’s armed conflict in these communities to participate in the classes as they are in urgent need of help on issues of income and economic revival.
- f. CIASE, the *Corporación de Investigación y de Acción Social y Económica* or the “Research Corporation on Social Action and Economy”, is interested in running capacity-building workshops for indigenous women on their legal and tribal rights within the context of Colombia’s armed conflict and issues of displacement. CIASE specifically wants to focus on three tribes that reside in the Northwestern department of Magdalena. These groups have suffered ethnocide at the hands of paramilitary forces, who demand control of their land and resources. The workshop would focus on discussing with indigenous women their human rights, national rights and tribal rights. The workshops’ participants could potentially create their own platform for action or conflict agenda.
- g. The Bogotá Mayor’s Office of Women and Gender would like to expand their already-extensive gender-mainstreaming program by developing two distinct

capacity-building workshops. The first of these workshops would target public officials and the city administration as places that need leadership changes after the October 28, 2007 election. The Office of Women and Gender is concerned that the induction of newly elected officials and possibly a newly elected Mayor could result in the loss of critical advances in gender-focused legislation that took place in the last term. The Office would like to run a workshop for these new officials on the importance of maintaining current gender legislation and continuing with new gender reforms in the next term. The second workshop targets women officials and women grassroots leaders in Bogotá to build their capacity for analyzing, addressing, and implementing budgets, economic development plans, and public finance policy at the city level. WCI could promote the incorporation of women ex-combatants and IDPs residing in Colombia into this process to bring a conflict-affected perspective to the policies being reformed.

Program Impacts

The majority of these workshops address developing critical skills for women as informed leaders on issues of advocacy, policy analysis, good governance and human rights. The development of these skills is crucial for the women's ability to be heard and respected at official tables of debate and discussion, especially those that focus on Colombia's armed conflict. Women leaders' ability to demonstrate a command of skill sets that fortify women's input on practical, legal and economic issues relating to the armed conflict is critical to their meaningful participation in Colombian politics. In addition, the majority of these workshops will connect women participants and their potential platforms for action to the policy-making process on local and national levels.

WCI's role

WCI would primarily support these workshops through funding, recruitment and payment of trainers, collaboration on workshop content and materials, and workshop facilitation. WCI could also provide technical assistance when necessary and use its established contacts to potentially link workshop efforts to other organizations or networks with similar goals in Colombia.

Create new networks

Overview

Networks of organizations and individuals working towards conflict transformation and women's empowerment have a long-standing tradition in Colombian civil society. Some "meta-networks" such as *Ruta Pacifica* boast of over 300 member organizations that coordinate efforts to work as powerful, civil society blocs with the aim of achieving greater impacts in peace and women's increased participation. However, some connections among agencies for change could use further development. These gaps mainly fall under the categories of 1) connecting smaller, less centrally located networks to larger participant bases

and 2) connecting civil society and grassroots organizations and networks to the government and policy-making level.

Partnering Organizations

a. *The Asociación Caminos de Esperanza Madres de la Candelaria* in Medellín is one smaller network that expressed a need to connect to a larger participant base. This organization was founded by the mothers of those forcibly disappeared by armed actors. Current activities involve advocating for the more aggressive application of the National Peace and Justice Law (2005), which establishes the process of demobilization and the application of justice to paramilitary soldiers. While this organization has a strong network and base of activities in Medellín, they seek a partnership that includes funding and technical assistance to expand their programs, connect to networks outside of Medellín, and recruit a new participant base.

b. The creation of a linkage between local, grassroots partners and the national policy-making level could be fostered through a joint partnership among WCI, International IDEA, and MSI. MSI works on good governance trainings on the local level in conflict regions, yet the agendas and perspectives of women in these regions have yet to reach the national level. WCI's potential partnership with International IDEA or *Fundación Mujeres por Colombia* could provide this link, as both of these organizations function at the national level and work closely with the National Women's Caucus. Close work with the Women's Caucus could result in the identification and mobilization of Congresswomen interested in championing the voice of rural women directly affected by Colombia's armed conflict.

c. Another opportunity for the creation of a new network would be for WCI to fully partner with International IDEA during the first phase of its new gender program. International IDEA has a strong, measurement-based program in Colombia with well-established ties to the political realm. IDEA is currently solidifying its plans for a gender component to their activities and expressed interest in developing a gender component to their programs. The gender component would involve working with all political parties on furthering their understanding and use of political quotas for women, creating measurable indicators to monitor each party's institutionalization of gender reforms, and working with the Colombian government to formally recognize the Women's Congressional Caucus and thus set an example for regional governments to do the same. International IDEA welcomed a WCI partnership to help jumpstart their gender program and offered to serve as the administrative support arm to WCI's potential programs in Colombia.

Program Impact

Establishing and strengthening networks within Colombian civil society is arguably the most strategic way for WCI to achieve extensive program reach and impact. Connecting

successful organizations with meaningful trainings to a larger participant base, connecting local conflict work to the policy-making level, and establishing a fresh approach to addressing gender programs with a new, measurement-focused institution would all be valuable services to the goal of furthering women's ability to participate in greater, all-inclusive numbers in Colombian politics and the conflict transformation process.

WCI's role

WCI's role in the creation and extension of these networks would necessitate the provision of funding, liaising between groups, and technical support. These commitments may involve significant presence on the ground in Colombia or at least constant communication between and among groups.

Media Campaigns

Overview

Media campaigns are conducted on a variety of advocacy topics. Campaigns range from town hall posters to billboard displays and are utilized to highlight a large array of themes, including child molestation, human rights and public policy. Media campaigns that focus on the widespread effects of Colombia's armed violence on women could play a vital role in raising the visibility and sense of urgency in addressing the conflict. While the effects of the Colombian conflict ripple throughout the country economically and politically, its direct, physical manifestations mainly victimize marginalized communities. It is often easy for policy-makers and the elite in the capital and other secure cities to turn a blind eye to the real abuse that occurs in lawless regions of the Colombian countryside. A media campaign highlighting the disproportionate effects of violence on marginalized women could revitalize the nation's sense of urgency and responsibility in addressing the effects of conflict, demobilization, and violence against women.

Partnering Organizations

Two organizations specialize in developing media campaigns and diffusing their reach over large networks nationally and internationally. The first of these organizations is *Fundación Dos Mundos*, which seeks to bring a human face to the Colombian violence through photographic media campaigns and magazines. *Fundación Dos Mundos* has focused on issues of child exploitation and child victims in Colombia's violence, but has not yet created a photographic campaign specifically featuring a diverse base of Colombian women affected by war. Pilar Rueda of *Fundación Dos Mundos*, is especially interested in women's social movements in Colombia and would endorse such a media campaign through a WCI partnership.

The second potential partner for a media campaign program is SIPAZ in alliance with *Fundación Multicolor Colombia*. SIPAZ is a nonpartisan organization that focuses on maintaining a sense of Colombian pride and culture. SIPAZ works with a large base of grassroots organizations equally spread throughout various regions of Colombia and provides them with technological, media and

web support for their various campaigns. SIPAZ expressed a desire to work with WCI in conjunction with other local partners to develop a media campaign featuring the effects of war on Colombian women. SIPAZ has extensive experience working with radio, TV commercials, and town hall poster campaigns and related forums.

WCI's role

WCI could best support these media campaigns through trainings or informational sessions with local women and grassroots organizations to help them effectively identify and frame their message. WCI could also bear the cost of media production and promotion. Third, WCI could use its funding and contacts to help promote these local media campaigns over national networks in Colombia as well as potentially share them and raise their visibility among other international organizations.

Sub Grants

Overview

Many organizations have very capable staff and successful formulas for fostering conflict transformation and increased participation of women. However, many small organizations and programs struggle to maintain continued funding for even their successful programs and continue to look for funding to expand some of these programs.

Increase and Institutionalize Women's Political Participation

WCI could help fund the creation of a nonpartisan campaign fund for women candidates through the support and organization of *Fundación Mujeres por Colombia* and/or FUNDAC.

WCI could fund the salary of an elected facilitator and staff for the unofficial National Women's Caucus as well as pay for the leasing costs for a temporary office. Ideally, this sub grant would only be needed in the interim period until the Caucus secures its legal status and funding from the Colombian government. International IDEA and *Fundación Mujeres por Colombia* highlighted these needs and have said that they could provide technical or administrative support for the funds.

Support CBOs in Direct Services for Conflict-Affected Women

1. WCI could fund LIMPAL for one or two of their following program needs: 1) Fund the expansion of their literacy and educational trainings in either Cartagena or Bogotá to increase the effective participation of women in community-driven legal and economic development initiatives, 2) fund the establishment of one of LIMPAL's four programs in Chocó. LIMPAL projected that the expansion of one of their four projects to Chocó would cost approximately \$20,000 to \$40,000.

2. WCI could work with IMP to connect funding to women victims and activists who are attempting to bring the various perpetrators to justice. Many women are threatened or even killed

during the judicial process by those being prosecuted or those who are accused of war crimes in Colombia. Many of these women could benefit from the provision of bodyguards, shelters, and legal advice.

Public Forums

3. WCI could provide sub grants for the establishment of a public forum series that fostered community discussion on the importance of civil society and public officials' role in taking responsibility and appropriate measures to address violence against women and communities. MSI could be a potential partner for such a program by helping to facilitate town hall and panel discussions on these community-based topics.

4. ASFADDES and ASFAMIPAZ could benefit from sub grants that funded public discussions on themes related to Collective memory and memorializing events of the Colombian conflict and the plight of the disappeared. In addition, community discussions on processes for justice, reparations, and reconciliation would be relevant given the debate over the National Peace and Justice Law, which many feel inadequately addresses these issues.

WCI's Role

WCI needs to revisit these ideas and obtain more details from these organizations. However, it is projected that WCI's main commitment to these organizations would come in the form of sub grants to plan for and implement the proposed projects. If requested by the recipient of the sub grant, WCI could also provide logistical and technical support before and during the implementation of the projects.

CONCLUSION

The program possibilities proposed by the WCI Colombia assessment team span a spectrum of options with varying degrees of impact, reach and scope. The purpose of proposing a variety of options is to facilitate WCI's ability to choose a program or a combination of programs whose goals could be achieved with the available funding and resources. International organizations have a long history of involvement in Colombia, and many representatives from local organizations expressed frustration with international actors or partners that made promises and did not deliver on them.. It was suggested in various assessment meetings that WCI be cautious as to not overextend itself as well as to focus on specific, achievable goals. WCI's ability to achieve its goals, even if they are small, and keep its promises will help maintain its reputation on the ground and allow it to respect the time and commitments made by the local women participants and partner organizations.

The capacity-building workshops proposed in the program possibilities section could potentially necessitate more demanding levels of funding and coordination on the part of WCI. These workshops could each exist in varying forms: involving many participants or a specific target audience, occurring in local regions, or providing funds for rural women to travel to local urban settings. Workshops could also include a training of trainers (ToT) component, where local

women leaders would be trained to duplicate women's leadership trainings in their respective regions. While capacity-building workshops have a potential for high levels of funding and logistical commitment by WCI, they also seemed to be most popular with local organizations because of their potentially high levels of reach and impact..

The program categories of creating new networks or providing sub grants would allow WCI to focus more on providing funds and support in the form of technical assistance. These categories involve WCI's reliance on specific local partners or recipients of sub grants to determine program planning and preparation, although WCI's involvement in program development could vary according to the partner or organization chosen.

WCI's interest in incorporating women into conflict transformation processes in Colombia comes at a time of new breakthroughs in dialogue and new precedents for women's leadership in the peace process. Both government and civil society actors are striving to create dynamic ways of bringing an end to a conflict that has eluded peace for over four decades. WCI's partnership, support and leadership capacities have the potential to make an important impact in assisting Colombian actors to achieve their goals related to increasing women's leadership and progressing towards conflict transformation.

Appendix A: List of Assessment Meetings

ASFADDES (Association of Friends and Families of the Disappeared), Gloria Luz Gomez, Director

ASFAMIPAZ (Association of Families for Peace in Colombia), Marleny Orjuela Manjarres, President

Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios en Género, CIEG, Margarita Pelaez Mejia, Founding Director

CIASE (Corporacion de Investigacion y Accion Social y Economica), Rosa Emilia Salamanca, Executive Director

Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, Patricia Buriticá, Officer

Congreso Visible, Elisabeth Ungar Bleir, Director
FUNDAC, Aide Hernandez, Director

Fundación Dos Mundos, Pilar Rueda, Joint Initiative Director

Fundación Mujeres por Colombia/Coordinator, Comisión de Mujeres del Congreso, Isabel Lodoño, Director, President

Fundación Multicolor Colombia/Alianza SIPAZ, Mónica Valdés, Program Coordinator

Iniciativa de Mujeres para la Paz (IMP), Angela Cerón, Coordinator

International Crisis Group, Mauricio Angel, Analyst: Colombia/Andes Project

International IDEA-UNDP Political Reform Project, Juan Lodoño, Coordinator

International Rescue Committee, John Sullivan, Country Director

LIMPAL (WILPF) – Colombia, Adriana González, Director

Madres de la Candelaria, Teresita Gaviria, Director

Más Mujeres Más Política, Carolina Amador, General Coordinator

Mercy Corps – Colombia, Karolina Karlsson, Program Officer

MSI - Fundacion MSI Colombia, Cristina Schultz

Office for Women and Leadership, Management School Universidad de los Andes, Maria Consuelo de Santamaria, Director

Oficina de Mujer y Géneros, Mayor's Office, Bogotá, Martha Burítica, Director

Oficina de la Mujer, Mayor's Office, Medellín, Silvana Naranjo,

Polo Democrático - Bosa municipality, Bogotá, Paulina Trivino, candidate for local council

Polo Democrático - Suba municipality, Bogotá, Dora Rodriguez, candidate for local council

Polo Democrático - Teusquillo locality, Bogotá, Silvana Palomnio Bellucci, Candidate for local council

Secretaria de las Mujeres, Alcaldia de Medellín, Flor Maria Diaz Chalarca (on behalf of Lucrecia Ramirez, Medellin Mayor's Wife)

Social Indigenous Alliance/ ONIC (National Indigenous Organization), Director Clemencia H Nemerayema, Congressional Candidate/ Culture Department Director
State Government of Antioquia, Rocio Pineda, Director, Human Rights Unit

UNIFEM- Peace and Security Program, Carmen Rodriguez Losada, National Officer

Universidad de Antioquia- Bienestar Universitario, Ana Lucia Sanchez, Director

Universidad de los Andes Gender Studies Research Area, Suzy Bermudez, Director

Universidad de los Andes Political Science, Dr. Maria Emma Wills, Professor

USAID- Colombia Governance Program, Jaime Arteaga, Gerente

Vigias de la Democracia, Isabel de Avila Benitez, National Coordinator

Appendix B: Potential Partnerships