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UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA



Atención a las Víctimas de Minas Anti-personales Afectadas por el Conflicto en Colombia

Landmine Activities for Victims of the Conflict in Colombia

Funding provided by the
United States Agency for International Development
Award No. 514-A-00-08-00311-00

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT AUGUST 28, 2008 – DECEMBER 31, 2008

Submitted by implementing agency:

MERCY CORPS

USAID/Colombia

Program Summary

Grant Amount: \$3,799,935

Program Period: Aug. 28, 2008 – Aug. 27, 2011

Geographic Coverage: 22 departments total of which six priority departments include Antioquia, Norte Santander, Nariño, Caquetá, Cauca, Meta

Number of Beneficiaries: 600 landmine survivors, 60,890 total including PWDs

Partner Organizations: Main Partner - Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM); Other Partners and Cooperation Organizations - International Committee of the Red Cross; Corporación Paz y Democracia; Hospital Universitario de Nariño; Hospital María Inmaculada; Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA); Universidad Don Bosco (El Salvador)

This report was prepared with funds provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

The period under review in this report may be characterized as a period of inception entailing preparations and adjustments in technical, methodological and administrative areas. Key alliances and partnerships were consolidated in this first quarter to establish a solid platform for the development of the program.

First, it is important to highlight that the technical team for the implementation of strategic program components was successfully formed and initiated its work in the first quarter.

In methodological terms, the conceptual framework and work plan for all strategic components and overall implementation were designed in a participatory way, including all key actors. This process will ensure the "buy-in" of key stakeholders to the Program at all levels and will facilitate communication, monitoring and implementation of the Program activities.

Furthermore, Mercy Corps made an important effort to socialize the Program among stakeholders, including national and departmental authorities. This effort resulted in the creation of strong partnerships that have positioned the Program and its objectives with relevant actors, particularly at the departmental level. An example of partnerships that have been established by Mercy Corps is in the department of Nariño, where key members of the Governor's Office have been appointed and are actually participating in all stages of the planning, implementation and monitoring processes.

The Program has made significant advances regarding the development of activities related to Objective 1. In this sense, the Rehabilitation and Socioeconomic reintegration strategies have been formulated and the results are manifested by several activities. This quarter activities implemented by CCCM's departmental coordinators for integrated assistance reached 117 landmine survivors in the six priority departments.

An important highlight for the first quarter is the progress achieved in construction and set-up of Nariño's Rehabilitation Center which is located on the premises of the Hospital Departamental Universitario de Nariño in Pasto. The significant advances toward this program output will make possible the assistance of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities of the Southeast region of Colombia by June 2009. Advances in terms of agreements, technical specifications and modifications to the hospital's infrastructure were also made in Florencia, Caquetá, where the second Rehabilitation Center will be located on the premises of the Hospital María Inmaculada.

A strong partnership built with SENA, Universidad Don Bosco and ICRC allowed the Program to develop relevant activities for enhanced prosthetics and orthotics capacity at the national level. Currently, three students are participating in formal education processes in San Salvador and will become SENA's trainers upon completion of their studies.

Mercy Corps also established relationships with several organizations supporting the socio-economic integration of landmine survivors and their families at the departmental level, specifically in Caquetá, Nariño and Antioquia. Three organizations that are actively working in this field have accepted Mercy Corps' invitation to form a committee devoted to information sharing, knowledge transference, capacity building and financial aid to landmine survivors. Fundación Mi Sangre, Pastoral Social and ICRC will then become Mercy Corps partners in the effort to provide better assistance to beneficiaries in comprehensive processes that include assessment of capacities and opportunities, training, technical assistance and financial aid.

Last, but not least, the Program serves as an opportunity for coordination of key actors in the areas of integrated landmine action and survivors' assistance. The Program empowers partner organizations by providing a relevant platform to search for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach on the framework for rights of landmine victims and other people with disabilities.

1. Implementation of Program Activities

1.1. Coordination with Key Actors

Efforts by Mercy Corps during the first quarter began with the negotiation and signing of cooperation agreements with key partners, beginning with Compañía Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM). In this sense, a sub-agreement was signed that includes action plans and timelines which form part of the comprehensive work plan for the Program.

A partner agreement was also negotiated and signed with Corporación Paz y Democracia, which includes a work plan and timeline for the development of first aid and emergency training at the community level. Corporación Paz y Democracia will start activities in the departments of Nariño and Antioquia in February 2009.

An important relationship was established between Mercy Corps and Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje – SENA, regarding capacity building processes towards the improvement of the national capacity in prosthetics and orthotics. This can be extended in future to initiate a relationship with Universidad Don Bosco in San Salvador, with the same purpose.

Mercy Corps presented the Program to the Government of Colombia, specifically to the Presidential Program for Integrated Landmine Action – PAICMA. From this, a regular mechanism of coordination and monitoring the Program with the National Authority was set, including bi-monthly meetings and information sharing agreements.

Departmental Hospitals, namely the Hospital Departamental Universitario de Nariño, in Pasto, and Hospital María Inmaculada of Florencia, in Caquetá, were visited three times each and cooperation agreements were initiated through memorandums of understanding. These MOU's will be followed by formal agreements to be finalized and signed in February 2009. Departmental Governor's Offices and Health Institutes of both Nariño and Caquetá were included in the negotiations and will be signatories to the agreements.

Another important actor engaged in the process of rehabilitation is the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ICRC participated in regular discussions and technical assistance to SENA for the implementation of a Technological Training Program on prosthetics and orthotics; the ICRC provided technical and financial support for the design and set-up of this P&O Training Center.

Fundación mi Sangre, a Colombian NGO oriented toward the assistance of landmine survivors with emphasis in psychosocial recovery and socioeconomic reintegration, has also been included as a cooperating entity in the Program. This was achieved through meetings and exchanges on methodologies, with the purpose of building a relationship that will enable both parties to improve and enhance the socioeconomic reintegration activities with a different focus.

Finally, regarding public policies, the Program coordinated with IMMAP for the purpose of departmental capacity building in terms of information management. This relationship includes an important component of local diagnosis and training for the Departmental Committees for Integrated Mine Action.

2.3 Principal Obstacles and Solutions

The main obstacles have arisen due to a general lack of information sharing and coordination between mine action and health organizations, both within and between these sectors. It is evident that efforts for coordination made by the Presidential Program for Integrate Landmine Action are yet insufficient and need to be developed in a more structured way at the national, departmental and municipal levels. This situation has resulted in the need for a more extensive process for cooperation and information sharing, given the fact that important institutions such as Social Protection and SENA do not participate in, nor are they informed of questions regarding mine action and victims' assistance. Mercy Corps' approach for the solution of this situation has been to promote the Program extensively with PAICMA and to link technical members of the PAICMA team to training events and activities.

Another important obstacle has been a lack of information available to support the decision-making and policies for integrated landmine action. Essentially, much of the information already gathered by different organizations in the field has not been systematically analyzed, therefore information gathering efforts are frequently duplicated in the field, and this is not well received by communities. This gap is clearly evident at the departmental level, where authorities do not have clear mechanisms and means to understand their own operating context, and are thus unable to develop public policies to address the integral assistance to landmine survivors. Mercy Corps is currently proposing improved and frequent interaction between PAICMA and the Departmental authorities, and is designing information gathering tools with partners that have expertise in this field.

2. Monitoring & Evaluation

2.1 M&E Activities

The main effort on Monitoring and Evaluation this quarter was the revision and refinement of indicators. The purpose was to define a unified monitoring and evaluation approach for all levels of the Program, starting from field coordinators to management. In this sense, the following activities were developed:

1. Training of Mercy Corps – CCCM field coordinators: In November 2008, six field coordinators from the departments of Antioquia, Caquetá, Cauca, Meta, Nariño and Norte de Santander gathered for three days in Bogota, with the aim of becoming familiarized with the Program and defining the work plan detailing the various components and strategies. The group included participants from the Hospital Departamental Universitario de Nariño, Hospital María Inmaculada of Caquetá, Corporación Paz y Democracia, Gobernación de Nariño, SENA, ICRC and PAICMA. The training was conducted by members of the Mercy Corps Landmines team and CCCM.
2. A series of orientation and planning meetings were held between the Mercy Corps Landmines team and representatives of CCCM. This included sessions with the CCCM the information systems coordinator to discuss information systems for tracking landmine survivors by key variables and measuring Program impacts, as well as monitoring and evaluation over the life of the program. A key element discussed was how to synchronize the various landmine survivor information systems (CCCM, PAICMA, IMSMA, and IMAPP). In addition, information systems discussions focused on survivor information management, communications structures with the 22 departments in general (with more specific attention given to the six priority departments), as well as focusing on information gaps and strategies for unified and more effective M&E systems.

3. Monitoring and evaluation technical reference documents and tools were compiled and distributed to the Landmines team members. These documents and tools were developed by Mercy Corps' Monitoring and Evaluation technical team at the headquarters for use in its 35 countries of operation, to effectively capture program processes, outputs and impacts. These resources will be utilized with the Socio-Economic Integration, Rehabilitation and CCCM Departmental Coordinators as a primary guide to build core M&E capacity in the team, and for effective M&E over the life of the Program.
4. The Mercy Corps Landmines team developed a detailed work plan outlining key Program objectives, results, activities, indicators and methods of measurement. Modifications were made per USAID recommendations, including the clarification of activities and the modification and reduction of indicators for more streamlined and effective M&E. The Program logframe was updated with the relevant changes from the work plan and disseminated to the Mercy Corps, CCCM and partner teams.
5. A meeting was held with the Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator and the representative of the Universidad Don Bosco about Program M&E related to the three P&O students, and to identify key Program indicators related to P&O capacity-building.

Another important activity was the presentation of the Program to the main actors involved in health and mine action sectors. The program was presented to the following municipal, regional and national actors:

- Presidential Program for Integral Mine Action
- Nariño departmental authorities
- Caquetá departmental authorities
- Antioquia departmental authorities
- Fundación Mi Sangre
- Hospital San Vicente de Paul
- International Committee of the Red Cross

3. Progress Towards Objectives

The two primary program objectives are outlined below. After each objective, the indicators and outputs are specified along with a statement on progress made to date.

Objective 1 *Increased access to and availability of quality assistance services for beneficiaries.*

R.1.1 Formulation of public policies that provide timely and quality emergency assistance, rehabilitation services and the social and economic integration of beneficiaries

Activities

1.1.1 Information Management for Integral Victims' Assistance

Departmental Committees for Integral Mine Action in Antioquia, Nariño and Caquetá have been approached in order to start a process of data collection and standardize variables related to assistance of victims. This activity will be further developed during the next quarter in these departments as well as in Cauca, Meta and Norte de Santander. In particular, in Nariño CCCM made progress working with department authorities and PAICMA to review the

Program work plan, information management tools, and to develop program component reporting formats. In coordination with PAICMA orientation sessions were provided to the 22 CCCM department coordinators on the use of these formats and information collection techniques.

To complement information management activities, CCCM undertook awareness-raising and advocacy activities with authorities in the six priority departments, including orientation sessions about the program and key elements of the log frame. In the 16 other departments CCCM coordinators met with relevant authorities to position landmine assistance and issues on the agenda of department governments.

R1.2. Expanded coverage of emergency services for beneficiaries in high risk areas (Nariño, Caquetá, Antioquia, Norte de Santander, Cauca and Meta)

Activities

1.2.1 Emergency Assistance and First Aid training at Community Level

The departments of Nariño and Cauca have been selected as pilot areas for the development of First Aid and Emergency Training. Selection of municipalities will be made in consultation with departmental authorities, taking into consideration the levels of risk to communities and the complementation of actual efforts in this sense.

The coordinators of CCCM are currently undertaking preparation activities with local partners to organize the first round of first aid training activities. Implementation will begin at the end of February with communities in Cauca and Nariño.

R1.3. Access to rehabilitation services for beneficiaries is increased in the departments of Nariño and Caquetá

Activities

1.3.1 Support to Regional Capacities on Integral Rehabilitation

Mercy Corps and CCCM established a relationship with the Hospital Universitario Departamental de Nariño (HUDN) that included the participation of the Departmental Governor's Office in technical and administrative issues. In this sense, the Peace Councilor of Nariño and the director of the Nariño's Health Institute actively participated in the process.

The hospital started construction of the Rehabilitation Center premises with technical assistance for proper attention to persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors. This assistance was provided by the Mercy Corps Rehabilitation Coordinator and CCCM departmental coordinator.

Hospital staff members, including the physiatrist and hospital manager, together with the Mercy Corps Rehabilitation Coordinator, visited the premises of Clínica Teletón in Bogotá, Clínica Valle del Lily and the Imbanaco Medical Center. These visits served as a base for decision making on the design of the Rehabilitation Center premises.

Regarding the acquisition of medical equipment, Mercy Corps and the CCCM departmental coordinator agreed with hospital staff on a final list of needed equipment, and agreed to use a tender process for the selection of equipment vendors. In this sense, the selection of equipment was designed taking into consideration an analysis of landmine survivors' rehabilitation needs.

The tender process for the selection of vendors took place during the first week of December, parallel to the request of a waiver from USAID. Both processes were successfully completed in the third week of December 2008. Proposals were received by four potential vendors that responded to the public announcement through a newspaper with national circulation. Subsequently, two providers were selected and purchase contracts were defined. The procurement and placement of equipment will take place during the next quarter, when conditions for the installation of equipment are considered to be optimal.

Regarding the Centro de Rehabilitación Hospital María Inmaculada in Florencia, Caquetá, an initial approach was made in October 2008. Mercy Corps and CCCM visited the Governor's Office of Caquetá, the Departmental Health Institute and the staff of the Hospital María Inmaculada. An initial agreement was defined with the Hospital and the Governor's Office in order to establish standards for the construction of the Rehabilitation Center. An initial decision was to move the project from the fifth floor of the hospital to the first floor near the external consultation area to provide better access for landmine survivors and people with disabilities. The Governor's Office of Caquetá assigned US\$ 55,000 for the infrastructure modifications. This commitment will be finalized during the next quarter, through a formal agreement between the Hospital, the Governor's Office, Mercy Corps and CCCM.

The Hospital staff was provided with technical assistance during this period by the Mercy Corps Rehabilitation Coordinator and CCCM's departmental coordinator.

1.3.2. Support for the Development of National Prosthetic and Orthotic Capacity

Mercy Corps developed a relationship with SENA to establish mechanisms for the implementation of a training program for P&O technicians that will result in qualified instructors for SENA's program on Prosthesis and Orthotics. This joint cooperation has received the continuous support of the ICRC.

In reference to the above, the Universidad Don Bosco, in San Salvador, was selected as the education center to provide a professional training to three Colombian P&O technicians. The Committee formed by SENA, Mercy Corps and ICRC selected two Level 2 certificated P&O technicians to start university training in San Salvador to become professionals with a Category 1 certificate from ISPO. Another technician was selected to participate in the technical program and is expected to complete studies to obtain a Category 2 ISPO certification. The students attending Don Bosco have complete scholarships guaranteed for three years, starting in January 2009. A first monitoring visit will take place in conjunction with ICRC during the second quarter of 2009.

The selected students are Alejandra Santos and Jairo Alberto Romero, who will participate in the professional training (Category 1 Certificate) and Ivonne Slendy Jimenez, who is attending the technologist program (Category 2 Certificate).

Regarding the on-line distance courses, SENA, Mercy Corps and the Universidad Don Bosco are preparing a memorandum of understanding and a formal contract, which shall be finalized during the first quarter of 2009, including detailed terms of reference for training participants.

R.1.4. Community leaders ensure that beneficiaries and their families are socially and economically integrated into their communities

Activities

1.4.1 Evaluation of 50 Productive Programs introduced by CCCM during 2007

A first document specifying the framework and methodologies for the development of this strategic component was defined and distributed in November 2008, among all members of the technical team. Four components are outlined, including 1) the assessment of landmine survivor and community capabilities for socioeconomic reintegration, 2) training, 3) technical assistance, and 4) the formulation, implementation and monitoring of socioeconomic initiatives. The document was based upon discussions with the Mercy Corps and CCCM technical team as well as on discussions and interviews with organizations working in this area including Fundación Mi Sangre, Handicap International, Pastoral Social, ICRC, San Felipe Neri and Tejido Humano. An important input for the development of this document was obtained from the Association of Landmine Survivors of the municipality of Cocorná, in Antioquia. The document will be distributed among relevant organizations during the next quarter.

Mercy Corps and CCCM started the review of documents related to the implementation of 50 business ideas that were financed by the CCCM during 2007 and 2008. The purpose of this activity is to identify the current state of these initiatives and to establish an action plan for their evaluation and improvement.

Meetings for sharing the objectives and activities of the Program and key approaches for socioeconomic integration were carried out with key stakeholders in this sector, such as Fundación Mi Sangre, Handicap Internacional, Tejido Humano, Pastoral Social, CICR, and San Felipe Neri. The purpose of this activity is to start the development of a Socioeconomic Reintegration Committee. This committee will allow information sharing and a better distribution of resources towards the improvement in the quality of life of beneficiaries. So far, Pastoral Social, ICRC and Fundacion Mi Sangre have agreed on the proposal and a first meeting for this purpose will take place in the next quarter.

Ongoing CCCM activities for integrated landmine survivor assistance

This quarter, in addition to Program start-up activities, CCCM department coordinators continued to provide integrated assistance to landmine survivors. From the moment of the accident, coordinators are providing critical accompaniment and orientation assistance to landmine survivors. From the time of the accident the respective CCCM department coordinator provides support for logistics and transport to the nearest hospital, provides orientation regarding their rights, legal documents and completing paperwork to receive emergency medical, rehabilitation and P & O assistance. A key role played by the CCCM coordinators is to liaise with survivor families and hospital staff follow-up regarding rehabilitation and P & O services, socio-economic integration and psychosocial support.

During the first quarter CCCM coordinators assisted 117 landmine survivors in the six priority departments (Antioquia, Cauca, Caqueta, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Meta). Eight of these survivors were manual coca eradicators.

Assisted Survivors Quarter 1

Departament	Total
Antioquia	28
Cauca	19
Caqueta	30
Narino	33
N. Santander	2
Meta	5
Total	117

Landmine survivors assisted by CCCM during this period in non-priority departments included: Choco (4), Santander (27), Cesar (2), and Cundinamarca (15). For most cases in the remaining Program departments landmine survivors were referred to Handicap International, Pastoral Social and the ICRC with the support of the relevant CCCM coordinator for advice, orientation and connecting survivors to services.

Landmine survivors who were armed members of non-state actors (6 in the case of Caquetá) were referred to the appropriate representatives of the International Commission of the Red Cross and Pastoral Social to coordinate emergency and rehabilitation assistance. These agencies also provided support for inter-municipal and intra-city travel for landmine survivors to receive rehabilitation, housing, and psychosocial support.

8. Activities Planned for Next Quarter

In terms of Monitoring and Evaluation, with the Final Work Plan submitted to USAID, the Mercy Corps and CCCM Landmines team will develop the Program indicator plan. This will define details for: baseline information, process/impact indicators, data collection sources and methods, frequency of data collection and responsibilities amongst Mercy Corps staff and Program partners. The indicator plan will serve to clarify key aspects of M&E activities as well as to hold team members accountable for capturing key results according to Program objectives and targets. The indicator plan will also feed directly into the formulation of the Terms of Reference for the design of the baseline study activities and tool development.

The final set of indicators from the work plan, including those for measuring progress towards USAID mission strategic objectives, will direct the planning and formulation of the baseline study. The team will develop the TOR outlining objectives and activities for the M&E/baseline capacity-building workshops, tool development, logistics and participatory implementation with CCCM Coordinators from the six priority departments, and other stakeholders.

By the end of the second Program quarter, attention will be given to additional core M&E skill and capacity-building activities among the Mercy Corps, CCCM and partner teams. Leaving behind internal M&E capacity is seen as critical to ensure continued effective implementation and modifications over the life of the Landmines Program, as well as to capture key data for Program visibility, lessons learned and systematization.

Regarding Public Policies for landmine survivors' assistance, the departments of Nariño and Antioquia will start a process to assess the level of development, implementation and efficiency of policies, plans and activities related to victims' assistance and landmine action in general. This activity will be developed jointly with IMMAP, an international organization with which Mercy Corps and the CCCM are now formulating agreements.

The technical team will also start a process of identification of capacities, potential and opportunities of the Departmental Committees for Integrated Landmine Action in the six priority departments, in order to assess the needs for capacity building. Results of this activity are expected to be available during the second quarter of 2009.

The Rehabilitation component will focus its efforts in the completion and startup of operations of the Nariño's Rehabilitation center as well as provide support for the design and set-up of the Caquetá's Rehabilitation Center.

The first stage of the evaluation of socioeconomic initiatives in Santander, Antioquia and Cauca will start on March 2009, after the completion of the baseline design. This activity will count on the cooperation of Fundación Mi Sangre and Corporación Paz y Democracia, in Antioquia.

Finally, the teams will strengthen their efforts for the introduction of the Program in those departments where activities have been slower to start. Norte de Santander, Meta and Cauca will be visited during the first quarter of 2009, and agreements will be proposed to departmental authorities in these target areas.