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Acronyms

ANUC	National Association of Campesinos
AUC	United Self-Defense Group of Colombia
CCAI	the Coordination Center for Comprehensive Action
CCR	Regional Coordination Center
CDC	Community Development Committee
CDP	Community Development Plan
CIFIN	Credit Bureau
CIDEA	Inter-institutional Committee of Environmental Education
CR-MdM	Colombia Responde-Montes de Maria
CTJT	Transitional Justice Committees
DAFP	Administrative Department for Civil Service
DPS	Department of Social Prosperity
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GoC	Government of Colombia
HALR	Historical Analysis of Land Rights
HPO	Popular Housing Organizations
IGAC	Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi
INCODER	Colombian Institute of Rural Development
INCORA	Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform
INVIAS	National Institute for Roads
JAC	Community Action Board
MDP	Municipal Development Plans
MSI	Management Systems International

NDI	National Democratic Institute
OCAD	Government Management and Decision-Making Bodies
ODP	Organizations of the Displaced Population
PACE	Participatory Engagement for Community Enhancement
PBOT/EOT	Basic Plans and Outlines of Land Management
PIU	Sole Comprehensive Plans
PNCRT	National Policy for Territorial Reconstruction and Consolidation
PPTP	Land and Property Protection Program
PPP	Public Policy Program
RIP	Rapid Impact Projects
SENA	National Learning Service
SIGA	Environmental Information and Environmental Management System
TBP	Trust Building Projects
UACT	The Administrative Unit for Territorial Consolidation
UMATA	Municipal Office for Agricultural Technical Assistance
URT	Land Restitution Unit
UARIV	Unit of Assistance and Reparation to Victims of the Conflict
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

Executive Summary

In 2010, Global Communities (formerly CHF International) was awarded $31,993,452 by USAID to implement the Colombia Responde program to support the Government of Colombia Consolidation Plan in Montes de María, working collectively with state entities and community and private sector stakeholders to establish a sustainable state of peace and security. The program had three main objectives: build capacities to effectively respond to the needs of constituents by delivering essential social services and guaranteeing formal land tenure and return of property rights to those affected by conflict; increase community cohesion and re-establish the social fabric in conflict-affected regions, resulting in greater support for the state, increased political accountability, and participation in licit economic activities; implement rural development strategies and public-private partnerships to foster sustainable economic growth.

For decades, the impoverished Montes de María region in Northwestern Colombia had suffered extreme violence and instability perpetrated by illegal armed forces and narcotrafficking, forcing thousands of displacements and leaving communities paralyzed in fear. Upon arrival, Colombia Responde-Montes de María implemented a comprehensive strategy to initially address the more critical needs in the territory – mistrust among community members and their local governments and food insecurity. Utilizing a participatory methodology, the program brought communities together through open dialogue and the creation of safe spaces, restoring trust among citizens and officials while building communities' capacity to organize and voice their priorities. Activities addressing psychosocial issues and community dynamics were critical to the transformation of the territory. As citizens began to openly communicate with one another and build trust, they became empowered and proactive in defining their future goals. Increased participation and collaborative project implementation created ownership among communities and confidence in their leaders.

As community members became more active and consolidated their efforts, the program increased local governments' ability to provide services for their citizens through improved skills and knowledge of applicable laws, contributing to further legitimizing their presence in the region. Municipal officials learned the importance of utilizing planning tools to prioritize activities and facilitate sustainable development while incorporating the needs of their citizens. Simultaneously, the program fortified efforts of regional-level national agencies responsible for land formalization, facilitating the identification of lands throughout the region and further contributing to the government's capacity to fulfill its responsibilities.

Collaborating with communities, local governments and private partnerships, the program targeted obstacles to economic growth in the region while creating sustainable agricultural practices. Through the formation of productive alliances, improved knowledge of agricultural practices, and the facilitation of access to credit, local producers strengthened their ability to grow sustainable crops while generating increased income.

Introduction

Decades of violence and forced migration perpetrated by two of Colombia's largest illegal armed groups, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the United Self-Defense Group of Colombia (AUC), and fueled by narcotics trafficking have resulted in widespread disruptions to society throughout Colombia. In addition to displacing thousands of families, the conflict resulted in the destruction and deterioration of critical social and productive infrastructure.

The Montes de Maria region along the northwestern Caribbean coast and comprised of 15 municipalities (eight in the Sucre Department and seven in the Bolívar Department), has been one of the areas most affected by Colombia's conflict. The region has long been a strategic area for illegal armed groups for a variety of reasons. Historically, Montes de María was home to one of the largest farmers' movements, the National Association of Campesinos (ANUC), which advocated for the application of agrarian reform by the Government of Colombia (GoC). However, guerrillas infiltrated and forcibly manipulated the group to carry out their political work and instilled intimidation, taking advantage of the strong existing community organizations. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, under the guise of eliminating the guerrillas' "social foundations" but with the real intention of generating terror and removing territorial control, paramilitary groups systematically exterminated all forms of the farmers' organization, wiping out their leaders and obstructing free mobility and dialogue efforts between communities and municipal governments. In more recent history, Montes de Maria's location along the northern coast has made it a key transit route for narcotics and other illegal goods which fund the conflict. The continuous dispute between armed actors in the region has affected the civil population and resulted in the cooptation of state organizations on an enormous scale compared to other regions. The impact of the conflict in this region has been so great that according to the reports of the Victims' Unit, 378,011 cases of affected people[1] have been reported, out of a total of 347,761 residents in the region[2].

Government of Colombia Consolidation Plan

Recognizing the disproportionate effect that the conflict has had on particular regions of the country, the Colombian government structured the National Territorial Consolidation Plan in 2009 as "... a coordinated, progressive and irreversible process, with the aim to reinforce the coordination of state forces to sustainably ensure an environment of peace and security that allows the strengthening of democratic institutions to the benefit of the free exercise of citizen rights and the generation of conditions for their human development." The Plan seeks to increase the government's presence in these regions by funding initiatives that would eventually allow the region to address the affectation caused by the conflict, and is based on coordinated work between all of the State organizations with support from the United States Government (USG) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This Plan established consolidation zones in

[1] Source: Red Nacional de Información (National Information Network). Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas (Victims Assistance and Comprehensive Reparation Unit). Date: November 1, 2014. Note: one person could be a victim of more than one crime, and more than one time.

[2] Observatorio del Caribe Colombiano (Colombian Carribbean Observatory). Visión prospectiva Montes de María 2032 (Montes de Maria Prospective Vision 2032). www.ocaribe.org.

different regions of the country in order to focus the intervention of the government in the most affected regions of the country and facilitate greater impact in such vulnerable regions. In the Montes de Maria region, the Plan focused on the municipalities of San Jacinto and Carmen de Bolívar in the Bolívar Department and San Onofre and Ovejas in the Sucre Department.

One of the ways in which USAID supported the Consolidation Plan was by funding foreign assistance programs that would work collectively with multiple local stakeholders to establish a sustainable state of peace and security. Under this vision, civilian state entities would provide basic services, citizens would earn their livelihoods through licit activities, the private sector would invest in the regional economy, and local government would be transparent and accountable to its citizens. Global Communities (formerly CHF International) was awarded a cooperative agreement from USAID in order to implement the Colombia Responde Montes de Maria Program (initially called Consolidar) in support of the GoC Consolidation Plan in Montes de Maria. Implementation of the Colombia Responde Program (CR-MdM) began in April 2010, coordinating with strategic partners from the national government, the Coordination Center for Comprehensive Action (CCAI) and the Regional Coordination Center (CCR) responsible for ensuring the implementation of the National Territorial Consolidation Plan.

At the end of 2010, after the change in presidency, the Consolidation Plan was redesigned, resulting in the restructuring of the National Policy for Territorial Reconstruction and Consolidation (PNCRT). The policy aims to "generate the necessary institutional capacity to ensure access to and protection of the population's fundamental rights in the regions historically affected by the armed conflict and illegal crops"[3]. PNCRT has three strategic objectives: Institutionalization of the Territory, Citizen Participation and Good Governance, and Regional Integration.

The Administrative Unit for Territorial Consolidation (UACT) was created to implement the PNCRT in replacement of the CCAI. UACT is headquartered in Bogotá with regional offices in the consolidation zones. In the Montes de Maria region, the office is located in Sincelejo in the same building as CR-MdM's program office, thus facilitating coordinated work between the two teams (UACT and CR-MdM).

Regional Context at Program Start-Up

Global Communities' knowledge and understanding of the effects of armed conflict in Montes de Maria was critical to developing CR-MdM's strategy to lead communities and municipal governments on the road to consolidation. Some of the more visible results of the armed conflict included murders of important leaders, massacres of civilians, displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, abandonment of land, deterioration of public property such as roads, schools and health posts, and a dramatic drop in productive activity resulting in decreased income generation for rural families. Initial program activities also revealed less evident consequences that have had a profound impact on the region's ability to recover, including:

Institutional weakness: The governments of the four consolidation municipalities were extremely weak and inefficient, as officials lacked the necessary tools and skills to manage municipal affairs. They also still suffered from high levels of corruption.

[3] www.consolidacion.gov.co.

Generalized distrust: Rampant local government cooptation resulted in citizens viewing their governors and mayors as involved or infiltrated by illegal groups and perceiving local advocacy efforts as pointless and dangerous. Additionally, illegal groups formed unofficial territories under their influence, which led to innocent local residents being accused by Colombian armed forces, local governments and even other communities, as supporters simply because they lived in a particular unofficial territory. As a result, citizens severely restricted their mobility between areas, straining social relations, community processes and coordination with government entities while threatening citizens' physical integrity.

Breakup of social organizations: One of the main strategies of the paramilitary groups to take territorial control away from the guerrillas had been to disintegrate community cohesion by murdering community leaders and forbidding any kind of organization and any social, community, cultural or sports event. Additionally, displacement had greatly contributed to social and family disintegration, leaving communities void of any type of organization.

Feeling of insecurity: Despite the fact that the presence of illegal armed groups had almost become non-existent in the region (with some exceptions in San Onofre, especially those related to the emerging criminal gangs), there was constant residual fear among the residents to communicate with one another and their governments. This pervasive insecurity threatened the sustainability of the return of displaced people, many of whom had not been supported by the government.

Approach

Global Communities implemented an approach that included several intervention tools and strategies to overcome the social fragmentation, institutional weakness, regional isolation and vulnerability of the population. The strategy consisted of:

Rapid response to community and government needs as a mechanism to overcome vulnerability and to recover trust: Global Communities responded quickly to the communities' needs identified by the national government (through the CCAI), municipal mayors and the communities through the Participatory Engagement for Community Enhancement (PACE) methodology (see text box). Additionally, CR-MdM received requests for support from the municipal governments to improve their capacity to serve their citizens. As will be further explained in the following sections, this strategy not only addressed the

Training on access to housing programs as part of the PACE process, Pijiguay, Ovejas

urgent needs of a region devastated by violence, but also began the process of rebuilding trust through its inclusion of municipal governments, national government and communities.

Needs identified and solutions adapted to the local context through the PACE methodology: Through a participatory planning process, the communities identified how to overcome their immediate and long-term vulnerabilities, presenting their priorities to the mayors to ensure their incorporation in the Municipal Development Plans. At the national level, CR-MdM facilitated the implementation of GoC programming, ensuring a focus on the earlier-identified community needs, local government priorities and on market-driven production projects.

Through this strategy, community members began to recover trust in one another – old leaders reengaged and new ones appeared while vulnerable groups such as those of women and young people became active in the decision-making processes. Citizens began to recover trust in their local governments as residents realized that their leaders agreed with them on development priorities and prioritized community-identified solutions.

Constantly seeking sustainability of achievements and impact: Recognizing that building foundations for lasting change was equally as important as resolving immediate needs, Global Communities further utilized the participatory characteristics of the PACE methodology as a mechanism to continuously generate best-practice learning processes for communities and the government. A few examples include the use of democratic processes in the election of community

PACE is Global Communities' methodology to promote participatory and inclusive community planning and development. Community members establish Community Development Committees (CDC) which represent all the different groups within each community. The CDC elaborates a Community Development Plan (CDP) which includes a prioritization of the main needs of the community and identification of the obstacles that impede the achievement of their long term vision.

During the planning process, the community recovers trust among its members, renovates leadership, and starts working together to resolve their main problems. Municipal Development Plans elaborated by the local government are taken into account during the community prioritization process, thus facilitating the participation and involvement of the mayor in the solution of the community needs.

Action plans include a set of concrete actions to be taken by the community to solve their problems and address their needs. As a result of these action plans, CR-MdM:

- supported the community in the development of proposals to be submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture or Ministry of Commerce,
- facilitated the formation of Popular Housing Organizations as a mechanism to access GoC housing programs,
- improved productive activities of producers associations to make them more profitable and sustainable,
- increased access to credit and other financial services, and
- Repaired deteriorated tertiary roads with Instituto Nacional de Vìas (INVIAS) and the Consolidation Unit, etc.

leaders, inclusion of minority groups in organizational structures, transparent hiring processes, strict follow-up of laws, rules and regulations, and application of the "We All Contribute" principle to generate the commitment and appropriation of all the parties. Additionally, the program placed emphasis on local capacity-building actions for public officials as well as communities so that in the future, as local actors of development, they would have the capacity and knowledge to continue on the road to consolidation and land recovery.

Implementation Activities and Results by Program Objective

IR 1.1: Institutional Development Strengthened[4]

Objectives under this intermediate result supported the National Consolidation Policy through increasing the effective presence of the State in the region. Activities focused on institutional capacity building and facilitating access to national government programs.

Sub-IR 1.1.1: Local government response improved

As a result of a set of planned and coordinated activities under this component targeted municipal governments now have better financial capacity and therefore more funds to invest in the development of the municipality. Additionally, municipal governments have improved planning, management and administrative capacities which has resulted in more efficient performance. Finally they have increased awareness of the importance of being accountable to their constituents and driven by community needs. This improvement in local government response increased communities' trust in their authorities and thus has increased the involvement, participation and mutual collaboration between citizens and government in the solution of their problems.

Institutional Coordination

CR-MdM's coordination with the municipal governments, which occurred under two different municipal administrations (2008-2011 and 2012–2015), was based on the following principles: a) political resolve to achieve identified commitments for improvement; b) the municipalities' active participation in the development of actions they are responsible for; and c) responsibilities for information management, meeting deadlines and making institutional resources available. Mayors from each municipality nominated a liaison knowledgeable in municipal issues to coordinate activities between the program and the administrations. While the initial set of municipal liaisons did not play as great a role because the first administrations were ending, these roles became critical in developing and maintaining relationships with the second set of municipal administrators.

CR-MdM used three sources to identify the key areas of local government strengthening:

[4] Originally Objective 1: "Improve governance and strengthen coordination mechanisms that allow interventions guided by the civil entities with the participation of civil society."

1. Results from USAID's CIMIENTOS[5] program, which highlighted weaknesses in the legal defense area and, in particular, labor formalization plans;
2. Initial workshops with CR-MdM and local governments, during which municipalities analyzed their needs and discussed the main challenges of complying with their Municipal Development Plan goals;
3. The national government initiatives in support of the municipalities and the legal obligations that required specific actions from the local governments. This resulted in CR-MdM advising the mayors on the preparation of the Municipal Development Plans (2012-2015 period) in updating the Outlines of Land Management (EOT in its Spanish acronym) and Basic Plans for Territorial Management (PBOT in its Spanish acronym).

Municipal Development Key Focus Areas

1. Legal Defense
2. Territorial Planning
3. General Royalties System – Project Design and Submission
4. Public Administration Accountability
5. Democratic Governance
6. Municipal Councils
7. Health Services
8. Education Services

The program incorporated information collected from these sources to develop activities focusing on eight key areas.

Legal Defense: *CR*-MdM found that the four municipalities poorly planned their expenditures, failed to comply with legal regulations governing budget allocations and failed to comply with legal or contractual obligations, as well as suffered from internal and external corruption. In response to this situation, and continuing with the efforts of the CIMIENTOS program, CR-MdM designed a strategy to improve the municipalities' legal defense capacity so they could better respond to the large number of lawsuits against them and free public funds that had been seized and made inaccessible pending legal actions. CR-MdM focused its support in the following areas:

1.1. Legal assistance for the most important lawsuits against the four municipalities: Comprehensive legal support to address critical cases focused on seeking settlements with the claimants, reducing the amounts of the claims, lifting seizures of the resources ordered by the judges, and when possible, dismissing judicial actions that were considered illegal.

Through legal assistance, Carmen de Bolívar effectively recovered more than USD $835,000 that had been illegally withheld in the municipal courts.

1.2. Identification and organization of judicial processes against them and the assistance of adequate legal defense: CR-MdM found that the municipal administrations did not keep records of judicial processes, including the number of filed lawsuits, the amounts of each lawsuit, or how much of their budget's resources were seized. The lack of information on the financial impact caused by these liabilities further limited municipalities' capacity to respond opportunely to the multiple judicial actions against them. In response to this situation, CR-MdM hired accountants experienced in judicial processes who worked with municipal lawyers and employees to inventory and categorize the cases in order to analyze the information. Their analysis showed that the greatest

[5]Funded by USAID and implemented by Management Systems International (MSI), the CIMIENTOS program, which ended in 2010, focused on institutional strengthening and shared with CR-MdM information gathered from surveys of municipal officials.

number of lawsuits against the municipalities resulted from labor claims, pending cases to be nullified, contractual disputes, class action lawsuits, direct reparations matters and a multiplicity of *tutela*s (legal action for the protection of constitutional rights). In addition to training municipal staff on proper record-keeping, the legal accountants made a set of recommendations on the necessary actions to be taken by municipalities. Officials have been able to use the analysis and the set of recommendations to determine how to project associated legal expenditures and the amount of time required to address these issues. Armed with the knowledge of their legal inventories and a better understanding of judicial processes, municipalities have a greater possibility of avoiding further lawsuits and preventing the freezing of public funds.

Table 1: Final Outcome of the Legal Inventory in 2013[6]

Municipality	Estimated Number of Lawsuits (Prior to Inventory)	Estimated Debt Value (Prior to Inventory)[7] in US$	Number of Lawsuits in the Inventory	Debt Value in USD$
San Jacinto	300	2,922,756	827	14,743,813
Carmen de Bolívar	800	14,613,779	123	7,503,432
San Onofre*	227	Not available	197	3,465,122
Ovejas*	Not available	Not available	30	2,731,761

*San Onofre and Ovejas municipalities could not provide estimated numbers of lawsuits and/or debts as a baseline.

1.3. Support for the four municipalities in building capacity for legal defense and the prevention of damages attributable to illegal action: Despite the achievements made in identifying judicial cases and pending debts, the municipalities required additional support to strengthen their legal defense capabilities in order to generate sustainable positive impact on their finances. CR-MdM facilitated trainings with municipal and judicial officials on the recently passed Law 1551/2012, which included a series of tools designed to address the municipalities' legal situation so that actors would be able to interpret and effectively apply the new law. Additionally, CR-MdM supported the municipalities in coordination with the Ministry of Labor and the Administrative Department for Civil Service (DAFP, Spanish acronym) to resolve the problems resulting from labor disputes, which, as mentioned, were some of the main causes of lawsuits against the municipalities. The following results stand out:

[6] The number of lawsuits and their estimated value prior to the inventory corresponds to the information delivered verbally by the municipalities' officials. After CR-MdM submitted the analysis report, the municipalities committed to keep contributing to the information and work on the real financial forecasts of debt payment.

[7] The reference values are forecast according to the current exchange rate of $ 2,395 for January 2015.

Montes de María Mayors Signed Labor Formalization Agreements

September 11, 2014

Before the Vice-Minister of Labor Relations and Inspection, Enrique Borda Villegas, the municipal mayors Francisco Vega of Carmen de Bolívar; Edwin Mussy of Ovejas and Nelson Pineda de San Onofre signed labor formalization agreements that will be implemented with the consultancy of the Ministry of Labor and the DAFP.

- The Ministry of Labor designed a program to support the municipalities in all of the consolidation zones with the development of public employment labor formalization agreements, which establish guidelines for hiring individuals as full-time formal employees (rather than unofficial contractors), ultimately reducing labor contingency costs.
- Three of the four consolidation municipalities signed public employment formalization agreements with the Ministry of Labor, being the first municipalities in the country to do so. These agreements include the implementation of a formalization plan by the municipality accompanied by the Ministry and the DAFP.
- The municipalities of San Onofre and Ovejas began the formalization of some employees who were hired using service orders, and others who worked without any contract in the San Onofre Municipality.

Territorial Planning: After finding that one of the municipalities' greatest weaknesses was their lack of utilization of participatory planning tools using a territorial approach, CR-MdM supported the municipalities in two key areas to lay the foundations for better development planning through a participatory effort between local governments and communities. As will be described under IR 1.2 below, these particular activities with local governments were complemented by simultaneous activities with communities, enabling the program to achieve great impact in governance and participatory community planning.

2.1. Consultancy for the preparation of 2012-2015 Municipal Development Plans (MDPs): Furthering the GoC's 'Plan 500',[8] CR-MdM provided technical assistance to municipal officials in the use of participatory planning to develop their MDPs. For the first time in many years, government officials, rather than external consultants, prepared the MDPs while meeting legal requirements, especially in relation to key issues such as the implementation of Victims Law[9] and Royalty

Community Needs Included in the Municipal Development Plans

1. San Jacinto: 94.31 %
2. El Carmen de Bolívar: 98.65 %
3. Ovejas: 97.80 %
4. San Onofre: 98.55 %

[8] Plan 500 was an initiative by the GoC's National Department for Planning to support municipalities in the preparation of their Municipal Development Plans.

9 The Victims Law was passed in 2011, and sets out the GoC's legal responsibility to all victims of Colombia's armed conflict. Municipalities are responsible for the provision of some of the state services required under the law.

Funds[10]. Equally important, the municipal officials took into account the communities' prioritized needs as evidenced in a comparison of the initiatives included by the communities in their Community Development Plans (CDPs) versus those included by the new local governments in their MDPs. The process highlights the collaboration between community members and officials to elaborate a collective road map to achieve their goals, bringing the two closer together while also developing a sense of ownership.

Working sessions with municipal government officials, El Carmen de Bolìvar.

2.2. Support in updating the four municipalities' Land Use Plans: In addition to MDPs, municipalities must also update their Basic Plans and Outlines of Land Management (PBOT/EOT), which are fundamental long-term territorial planning and land use tools. These plans provide a larger picture for municipalities and serve as the basis for the use of the land in the territory, including which lands can be used for urban expansion and which areas carry environmental risks. While the four municipalities had formulated their plans in 2000 and 2004, none had adjusted them to account for evolving territorial dynamics. Using a specialized firm, CR-MdM provided technical assistance to the municipalities to carry out the process of review, analysis and preparation of recommendations to adjust their PBOT/EOT to incorporate more recent social and environmental dynamics in each municipality. Through trainings for public officials on the updating process and through awareness raising events about the importance of land use and territorial management planning, the municipalities succeeded in gathering all the supporting documents necessary to update the PBOT/EOT and incorporate the necessary recommendations. As with the MDPs, for the first time community members actively participated in the development of the plans along with municipal officials, highlighting the importance of jointly planning development between the local government and its citizens. Furthermore, because PBOT/EOTs are long-term plans, the future administrations will be able to use them in elaborating their MDPs.

Technical assistance for the municipalities in the preparation of projects that use the General Adjusted Methodology for their submission to the General Royalties System: In order to strengthen local government capacity, the program provided technical assistance and training to municipal officials in the preparation of projects to submit to the Government Management and Decision-Making Bodies (OCAD, Spanish acronym), which are responsible for approving projects financed with royalty resources. As a result of the interventions, public officials acquired knowledge on

10 Royalty funds are central government funds generated through royalties paid by extractive companies. A portion of the royalties should be transferred to municipalities that meet certain criteria for administrative and financial capacity.

preparing projects using the General Adjusted Methodology, and successfully submitted projects to the OCAD, as shown in the following table.

Table 2: Projects Submitted to OCAD

Municipality	No. of Projects	Total Amount
San Onofre	3	US$229,176
Ovejas	**3**	US$1,500,223
Carmen de Bolívar	3	US$3,614,678
San Jacinto [11]	0	US$0

Accountability and Strengthening of Public Administration: Because of their distrust in the municipal governments, citizens did not hold them accountable or exercise their legal responsibility to demand information. To address the lack of social control and raise citizen awareness about their responsibility in municipal development, CR-MdM supported the four municipalities in the preparation and implementation of accountability exercises, such as public hearings, which served as a mechanism to bring the citizens closer to their local governments and generate conditions for better performance. Through these exercises, the program sought to change local government practices however results varied greatly based on the level of cooperation on the part of officials. San Jacinto carried out accountability exercises every year; Carmen de Bolívar submitted several management reports by sectors but with limited citizen participation; Ovejas carried out its first ever accountability exercise for citizens; and San Onofre only held one public accountability hearing, partly due to the mayor being suspended for several months. In turn, citizens became aware of local government's obligation to them and began to demand information.

[11] San Jacinto did not submit any projects because the mayor did not form the municipal committee responsible for preparing submissions.

Complementary to building citizen's demand for accountability, the program addressed the municipalities' administrative management weaknesses that limited updates of essential information systems, as identified during the initial needs assessments. The program assisted the four municipalities in improving their filing systems by building organizational skills and providing equipment and furniture to maintain files, further facilitating consistent access to information for citizens. Through the installation, updating and strengthening of information and search engines, the municipalities were able to more efficiently manage systems and provide greater access to information, which further lead to greater trust among citizens as expressed through informal conversations with communities.

Administrative Software Strengthens Access to Information

Through the installation of financial, administrative and tax software, San Onofre and Carmen de Bolívar have improved their institutional response capacity in service provision.

In Carmen de Bolívar, the tax software operates as a web system and allows taxpayers to consult the status of their taxes online and directly download the bills to pay in the bank without having to go to the mayor's office.

Democratic Governance Strengthening: One of the main weaknesses identified by CR-MdM through continual discussion groups was local governments' lack of awareness of democratic processes to exercise governance – they were not open to citizens and lacked planning, budget preparation and political control processes. In response, CR-MdM executed the Democratic Governance Strengthening Project as a strategy for training and generating discussion and democratic agreement between the communities, municipal governments and other entities present in the region. The communities, who had constructed their development agendas based on priorities identified through the PACE methodology, prepared an artistic show to demonstrate situations where governance was weak and presented alternatives for improvement to municipal officials at Governance Fairs. The mechanism of showing community needs through artistic shows allowed communities to creatively present their concerns while avoiding the risk of perceived affiliation with any particular political candidates. Additionally, CR-MdM provided training to public officials about political control, public hiring, participatory budgeting, *Ley de Bancadas* (Political Affiliation Law) and accountability. In this way, for the first time in many years, communities and governments came together to begin a discussion about problems and needs, which opened space for further dialogue and allowed them to begin to work together in a democratic manner towards implementing solutions.

Strengthening of Municipal Councils: The councils, which are elected at the same time as the mayor and are a determining factor in a municipal administration's performance, discuss and analyze the municipality's problems and provide economic, administrative and political guidance to attend to the population's basic needs. Through various discussions, CR-MdM and the municipalities identified barriers preventing effective coordination between the mayor's office and the councils, such as the councils' lack of official strategies for public information and community outreach.

To respond to some of these problems, CR-MdM worked in partnership with local and international entities such as FUNCICAR, a local organization based in Cartagena, and National Democratic Institute (NDI) to train, educate and strengthen council members. They offered workshops for each council about political parties, technical regulations, political control, political reform, State hiring, disqualification regulations for public officials and the General Participation System; communications, accountability, public hearings and *cabildos abiertos* (open councils). Additionally, thanks to program-funded trainings on political advocacy, communities developed reports on their priorities to submit and register with the councils. As a result, the councils of Carmen de Bolívar and San Onofre (for the first time ever) opened their sessions to citizens, generating a larger discussion among communities. The exercises provided the councils with the technical skills and tools to institutionalize these practices in the future

Health: Initial program assessments identified that conditions for health care and service provision in the region were deficient – centers lacked statistical information on populations, medical equipment and human resources. One of the main obstacles to adequate provision of the service in rural areas has been the lack of access to the urban centers where most of the services are located. As a means to jumpstart support, CR-MdM collaborated with the mayors' offices of San Onofre and San Jacinto to carry out several decentralized health brigades in which doctors, dentists, nurses and vaccinators provided medical assistance.

After establishing that one of the rural communities' largest problems is the high rate of teenage pregnancy through meetings with communities, CR-MdM, collaborated with the municipalities and Profamilia, a local organization that supports health and reproductive services, to train on sexual and reproductive health rights, expanding community-wide knowledge and building capacity among municipal officials to guarantee these rights. At the end of the intervention, the teachers of the rural schools and parents related their satisfaction with the guidance received, especially the adolescents and adults aged over 30 years who expressed the greatest reservations regarding the topic. As an unexpected positive outcome, activities served as a means for empowerment among the approximately 284 youth trained as sexual and reproductive health promoters who were then able to train others. Over the course of these activities the communities started to recognize youth as active citizens, which would later result in their assuming a leadership role in the community, as will be discussed in IR1.2.

Increasing Community Awareness - Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

- Over 300 activities
- Over 19,000 participants, including youth, parents, teachers, health service providers, and public officials
- Approximately 284 youth trained as sexual and reproductive health promoters

Artistic Governance Workshops

37 training workshops and 41 follow-up workshops were carried out to create artistic shows for the governance fairs and development agendas. 1,213 people participated, exceeding the planned participants by 457.8%.

San Onofre- Integrated Casas Amigas Strategy

Developed by the municipality, the strategy supports vulnerable populations, particularly malnourished children, by training community health promoters. Complementing the municipality's initiative, CR-MdM contributed medical supplies and equipment to *Protective Environments*, emergency health care centers located in 12 districts providing care to children under five.

Additional health provision activities included support for two Colombian Family Welfare Institute homes through the provision of furniture and equipment, as well as logistical facilitation (transport for beneficiaries) to train their employees on child nutrition. Finally, CR-MdM provided supplies to establish home vegetable gardens in vulnerable homes to ensure the food security of families with malnourished children or children at risk of malnutrition. It benefited 151 homes distributed in 12 localities of the San Onofre Municipality.

Education: Like health, education services in Montes de Maria are very weak, especially in terms of infrastructure.

Opening ceremony of a new school built with a joint effort between the Mayor of Ovejas and CR MdM

As the displaced population began to return home, existing schools, which has already suffered physical destruction during the conflict, became overcrowded. As will be described in Sub IR 1.3 below, CR-MdM responded by identifying the legal situation of the land where the schools were located so that the municipality could begin to legalize the land and further invest in the infrastructure with government resources. The program's educational strategy focused on *Recreos Dirigidos* by providing productive activities to students during their free time. Identifying that a lack of adequate recreation areas and activities during recreational breaks decreased students' engagement in school and contributed to their risky behavior by leaving them more susceptible to join common criminal gangs, municipal governments and CR-MdM developed the project. The strategy sought to reduce school and gang related violence among children during school breaks by providing 2,277 students from 48 rural, primary schools with healthy educational and recreational materials.

With the support provided by CR-MdM through these eight activities, the municipal governments were able to respond better to their citizens' immediate needs while strengthening their capacities to more effectively govern their municipalities. With better planning capacities and tools, increased awareness of their responsibilities and of their accountability, improved financial situations, and closer relationships with their citizens, these local governments will address can more efficiently address the communities' needs and problems, facilitating the recovery process of such vulnerable regions.

Social Infrastructure

One of the biggest problems caused by the armed conflict and the abandonment of the territories in the Montes de María region was the deterioration of social and communications infrastructure, particularly housing. As a response, CR-MdM implemented infrastructure projects to support the communities and municipal governments in their recovery, which served as a mechanism to facilitate access to social services, to bring rural communities closer to their urban centers, and to improve the competitiveness of economic activities through opening road accessibility. The achievements in this field went beyond that of strengthening the relationships between the members of the communities and their municipal governments towards that of strengthening those between the latter with the national government. Through the social infrastructure component, the government was able to provide better social services such as health and education and the communities acquired the capacity to implement their own projects and to administer their resources.

Housing Popular Organizations (HPO)

When formulating their Community Development Plans during participatory planning processes as part of the PACE methodology, all of the communities identified access to housing as one of their most important needs, their houses either being destroyed or having deteriorated during displacement and abandonment. Additionally municipalities lacked the technical capacity to present rural housing projects. In response, CR-MdM created HPOs[12] as a mechanism to access housing in the communities and further build organizational capacity. The approach was two-fold and focused on 1) utilizing the composition of HPO to demonstrate to community members how rural housing programs function and how they are funding through various sources such as Banco Agrario and royalties; and 2) supporting the municipalities in the formulation of projects and the development of designs. By establishing their own HPOs, community members strengthened their knowledge of the government's rural housing program, including eligibility requirements, application process, criteria of approval, and implementation process. In turn, HPOs act as a partner to the municipality by collecting the necessary information on beneficiaries, enhancing project proposals and increasing the municipalities' chances of obtaining approval from the Banco Agrario. Being composed of community members who have a vested interest, the HPO facilitates transparent processes to ensure successful project implementation and compliance with goals. Once the HPOs were established, MdM coordinated with them and the local governments to develop projects to submit to the Banco Agrario and the OCAD. In total 13 out 14 developed rural housing projects were approved (12 by the Banco Agrario, and one by Royalties).

In addition to these tangible results, the development and presentation process of the projects resulted in collaboration between the communities and the municipal governments in order to achieve a common objective. The mayors' offices also recovered some of their trust with the national government, as a key actor in the contribution towards the development of their municipalities, and in the community as an ally in this process.

[12] HPOs are community organizations that are established by community members to access government housing programs. They have legal standing and in practice enormously facilitate the process of development of the projects and in their implementation.

Project Design Support

CR-MdM supported the municipal governments through funding designs for the development of projects prioritized in the MDPs that could be financed by the national government. These studies allowed municipal officials to better understand the national resources available to them to accomplish MDP goals and projects, which are often constrained by budgetary restrictions. As municipal officials became more familiar with the processes in obtaining external resources, they began to recover their trust in the national government and better able to provide for their citizens through expanded opportunities.

As a result of the coordinated work with the mayors' offices and the UACT, CR-MdM supported the development and design of nine projects. As a result of this negotiation, 980 families were able to have access to drinking water and basic sanitation; 2,500 students had better accommodations to receive their education thanks to the construction of 23 classrooms and four sanitary facilities. The projects were financed by the Ministry of Housing City and Territory (Ministerio de Vivienda Ciudad y Territorio); funds from Royalties of the Municipality of Ovejas; and the Department of Social Prosperity (Departamento para la Prosperidad Social – DPS). These projects have improved the quality of life of the inhabitants of these communities through strengthened basic sanitation and educational infrastructure.

Rapid Impact Projects (RIP) and Trust Building Projects (TBP)

The RIP and TBP were mechanisms utilized by CR-MdM to generate trust between the national government, the municipal governments and the communities and to establish a positive work relationship with the regional UACT. Originally, CR-MdM coined the term Rapid Impact Projects because the main objective was to generate a short-term impact while solving a critical need of the community. However, after recognizing that the implementation of the project had a great effect in the recovery of the trust in the communities, as they became implementers of their own projects, CR-MdM created the name Trust Building Projects.

- RIP identified by the RCC

On the arrival of CR-MdM the Center of Regional Coordination (RCC, Spanish acronym) in charge of implementing the consolidation plan had already begun working with the communities in the region to identify and address the most pressing needs while strengthening the legitimacy of the government among the communities. The criteria to identify which projects to support were: ability to be rapidly implemented; located in communities where RCC had been advancing actions, demonstrated needs prioritized by the community.

- Projects identified by the municipal governments

When CR-MdM began contact with the mayors' offices there was much mistrust in the region with respect to the national government since local authorities felt they had not been supported sufficiently in the consolidation process. For this reason and to fortify the Consolidation Plan, CR-MdM supported priority projects so that the mayors could comply with their goals in their MDP. In this way the program gained trust with the mayors' offices, which allowed for further involvement and collaboration in support projects like legal defense and the formulation of development plans.

- Projects identified by the communities.

The implementation of the TBPs identified by the communities was framed within the methodology of participatory planning and served several purposes. First, activities recovered trust between the municipal government and the community by ensuring as much as possible that the community-identified project was also included in the MDP so that the mayor's office would contribute matching resources. Secondly, the TBP resolved a tangible community need important in the process of social and/or economic recovery following the conflict. Thirdly, the TBP helped to maintain the community active in longer-term initiatives such as participatory planning and the management of resources and programs with the government. Finally, the TBPs were a mechanism through which the community recovered democratic, inclusive and participatory practices. The community decided which project to implement by establishing and applying democratic processes as well as utilizing concrete criteria, all of which served to unite the community as they worked collectively towards a common objective. These processes also helped communities establish trust in their leaders, and demonstrated transparency of the decision-making process, increasing ownership.

Among the TBPs approved by CR-MdM are the renovation or construction of classrooms, health centers, child care centers, the installation of solar panels, rain water collection systems, the construction of power lines, the construction of community halls, the improvement of houses, the installation of recreational parks, among others.

Community center built as a TBP in Rincón del Mr, San Onofre

While initially, CR-MdM implemented these projects through private local contractors, the program redesigned its approach to implement the projects through the communities themselves. Local contractors had become accustomed to not being held accountable given regional instability and officials' fear of potential reprisals from armed actors. For this reason, CR-MdM found that in the majority of cases contractors were not willing to work collaboratively with the communities or to present adequate progress reports. As a result, and in an effort to further strengthen the communities, the program began to utilize a methodology created under a previous USAID program (Cimientos), in which the communities themselves implemented the projects. For this it contracted a group of professionals in the social, administrative, and architecture areas who carried out a capacity building process with each one of the four communities in project preparation and management, including development of designs and the implementation of each one of the projects that had been prioritized as part of the PACE methodology.

Table 3: Number of Persons Benefitted per Project

Activity Type	Number of Beneficiaries
Construction of Septic Systems	2,019
Installation of Playgrounds	4,087
Rehabilitation of Roads	11,175
Construction/Rehabilitation of Classrooms	3,994
Construction/Rehabilitation of Community Salons	6,262
Construction/Rehabilitation of School Kitchens	1,392
Construction of Library	1,700
Construction of School or Cemetery Fences	2,665
Construction of Health Centers	9,904
Installation of Solar Panels	108

Now, not only have the communities resolved a critical need but they have also gained knowledge of the entire project cycle, including planning and design, procurement of government matching contributions, implementation and follow-up. This has allowed the communities to feel greater ownership for these projects and has enabled them to carry out a more thorough follow-up on projects implemented by other entities like the municipality, the governorship, the Banco Agrario, royalties' office, and any entity that implements projects in their territory. Similarly, the members of the community acquired knowledge about environmental mitigation measures, and the use and management of personal protection elements, among others. Lastly, the members of the community organizations and the leaders were able to demonstrate to their communities that if they are committed to the progress of the community and they work honestly for the common good the goals proposed can be achieved.

Sub-IR 1.1.2: Property rights formalized

Sub-IR 1.1.3: Victims' property rights cases processed

CR-MdM managed these two intermediate results in tandem and has reported on them together throughout the life of the program.

One of the illegal armed groups' fundamental objectives in the conflict has been territorial control, the pursuit of which caused abandonment of farms and dispossession of millions of hectares of land. In Montes de Maria, this phenomenon had an enormous impact, taking into account that the area was in constant dispute between guerrilla and paramilitary groups. In light of this problem and in recognition that the land issue had become a priority for the country's public agenda, USAID requested that CR-MdM support the national government in its land protection efforts, and later, the restitution and legalization of land for victims and the vulnerable rural population.

The *Historical Analysis of Land Rights (HALR)* project, which served as the basis for a majority of the program's land component interventions, set the foundations for regional inter-institutional coordination, including follow-up to protection measures, support for the Land Restitution Unit (URT, Spanish acronym) initial interventions in the region, and support for the Colombian Institute of Rural Development (INCODER, Spanish acronym) in the legalization of lands. Based on the importance of this initiative, CR- MdM elaborated a thorough analytical report that presents the outcomes of the HALR and how implementation directly influenced the land restitution and legalization processes in the region. The publication sets an important precedent for the Montes de Maria region and for the country in general as far as a path to land justice[13]

As a result of CR-MdM's support and with information provided through the HALR project, the two regional offices of the Restitution Unit in Sucre and Bolivar were able to take the lead in a number of restitution cases processed during the first year of the implementation of the Victims Law and have continued using the information to process cases. The two INCODER regional offices have been updated through organization and digitalization of files and are now fully functioning and better able to provide information to the Restitution Unit and more effectively process formalization cases.

Equally important, since the intervention in the land component also had a community approach, the communities in the rural areas of the four municipalities now have better knowledge of their rights related to land, are more willing to submit restitution and formalization claims, and are less vulnerable to those who would like to take advantage of land tenure informality in the region.

CR-MdM's coordination of actions with the relevant land entities had two main phases. First, CR-MdM worked in partnership with the Land and Property Protection Program (PPTP, Spanish acronym)[14], INCODER, the Registry Offices of Public Instruments and the Instituto Geográfico Agustín Codazzi (IGAC, Spanish acronym). The aim of this coordination was to support the PPTP to organize existing and issue new land protection declarations in the four municipalities[15]. The second phase started after the Victim and Land Restitution Law passed, which transformed the PPTP into the URT. Upon USAID's request, CR-MdM helped start up the URT through logistical support and the hiring of professionals to provide staff to the agency to help it meet its responsibilities as it built operating capacity.

During these two stages, CR-MdM also coordinated with the municipal and departmental governments, particularly with the committees that supported the displaced population, which later became Transitional Justice Committees (CTJT in its Spanish acronym) responsible for making decisions on land protection declarations.

When CR-MdM arrived in the region, there were hundreds of abandoned lots due to the displacement of rural communities and many problems arising from informal land tenure and lack

[13] See annex.

[14] The PPTP was created to generate land protection mechanisms for dispossession or abandonment because of the conflict, according to the Decree 2007 of Law 387, which regulated all the matters regarding forced displacement.

[15] These declarations were issued in the past by the Municipal and Departmental Displacement Committees under the Law 387 in order to protect lands of displaced people or at risk of being displaced.

of understanding of property rights. CR-MdM's approach toward the land issue included several areas of action that were interrelated with a common goal: help the land entities to effectively apply public policy instruments for land formalization and restitution while improving victims and vulnerable populations' access to land.

With the HALR project, CR-MdM collected valuable information that had never been collected in the region before. Through the implementation of a survey, community-wide meetings and analysis of historical documents, CR-MdM was able to obtain information including family demographics; characteristics of lands, such as boundary lines and geography; and any existing legal documentation in order to construct a report on the respective land plots. The results of the analysis allowed for the closure of land protection declarations; supplied valuable data for legalization and restitution processes; and provided the first detailed analyses to be used to initiate the URT's work.

Additionally, through the HALR project CR-MdM facilitated the access of land to 2,745 families by providing updated information and land formalization procedural support to responsible entities such as INCODER. These processes allowed for the creation of land formalization methodologies which could be applied by public authorities including INCODER, Registry Offices, and Public Notaries.

Finally, organization of the INCODER archive allowed land entities to have relevant information available to facilitate and accelerate formalization and restitution processes. Support to URT allowed it initiate activities and support to INCODER accelerated the achievement of their targets for legalization and restitution.

Historical Analysis of Land Rights (HALR)

The HALR's starting point was the need to carefully analyze and identify the land tenure situation, as well as gain awareness of the farmers' legal connection to the land, especially victims of the conflict. Obtaining this information was crucial to both stages of the intervention mentioned above. In the first stage, the data collected by CR-MdM would complement the reports that the PPTP had prepared so far, which included some information from various agencies on land rights in the communities but was by no means thorough due to the inability of the PPTP to obtain data (especially community information) during the armed conflict. In the second stage, the information was important to the URT starting operations in the region to such an extent that the first detailed analyses that the URT office carried out in Carmen de Bolivar was made possible by the data CR-MdM provided. Similarly, in the second stage, the information served to identify lands subject to formalization through INCODER, Law 1561 and other legalization routes, which was applicable to farmer families' land, as well as land where state schools are located.

The HALR's methodological approach was very similar to that designed and applied by the PPTP and consisted of preparing rights reports from 1991 to 2011 of land with property protection measures issued by the Municipal or Departmental Committees for Displaced People. These reports were made after comparing institutional information on the land (Sources: INCODER, IGAC, Registry Offices, etc.) with community information collected in large-scale sessions held in the rural and urban areas of Montes de María. Additionally, CR-MdM outsourced the preparation of a multi-temporal study that used images to analyze changes to the territory from 2000 to 2011 such as land use and coverage as well as geographic features. The results of this study were also used as information for the rights reports, to compare the change in the use of land through the years and

thus support eventual changes in land tenure. In total, rights reports were prepared on 9,782 plots of land with a total area of 350,489 hectares.

Once the rights reports had been prepared[16], CR-MdM was able to establish a roadmap to either legalize land without property deeds or provide restitution. For the latter option, CR-MdM prepared three detailed analysis proposals (two in Bolívar and one in Sucre), which were delivered to the respective regional URT offices. Throughout the process CR-MdM worked with the regional IGAC, INCODER and Registry of Public Instruments offices to carefully review information each entity had in order to select, filter, standardize and document everything. From then on, every entity had organized information on the plots of land that were studied.

The rights reports also complemented information on land rights in the areas that have property protection measures. In this way, the reports on a specific protected area could be presented by the mayors to the CTJTs to be endorsed; this being a legal requisite that many mayors had not been able to fulfill. Once the reports are endorsed, the information they contain becomes official and must be taken into account for legalization or restitution processes.

During various community-wide meetings the program held to gather information, CR-MdM also trained the farmers on land rights, possible legal connections to the land, the institutional service of the relevant entities, and land and gender, during sessions to collect community information. These sessions represented one of the first times individuals spoke about land issues in public and served as a jumping ground for further community-wide initiatives.

Improvement of the INCODER Archive

Since the 1970s, the Montes de Maria area has been subject to the intervention of the Agrarian Reform Program, which designated a large number of plots of land to farmers in the four municipalities.[17] A majority of the land information had been housed in the two regional INCODER offices in Bolívar and Sucre and was in a poor state – physical documents were incomplete, disorganized, improperly stored and had not been digitized.

In order for INCODER to utilize information to efficiently carry out legalization processes and provide information to the URT for restitution processes, CR-MdM improved the two regional offices' archives, including inventory, organization, classification and digitalization. The employees responsible for each office participated in the whole process so that the archives were organized according to institutional needs and to ensure that they continue to be managed properly in the future.

CR-MdM support in organizing INCODER's land archives went far beyond the original scope of work. After various consultations with the agency about its needs, the program provided additional support to organize, classify and digitalize 950 linear meters (383 in Bolívar and 567 in Sucre), which correspond to 64,500 folders. Additionally, 235 blueprints (124 in Bolívar and 111 in Sucre) were organized and digitalized. As a result of the digitalization process, 27,664 records were delivered to the two regional offices. Through this support, INCODER was able to analyze its procedures in formalization and better administer services.

[16] Each rights report contains physical identification (including spatialization) and legal characteristics of the land, a record of the property deeds, length of connection to the property and legal characteristics of the property.

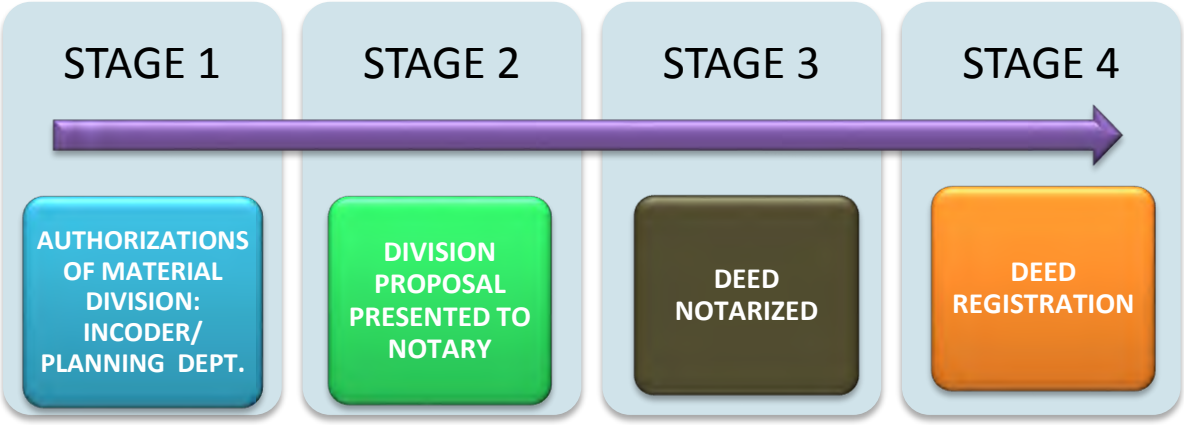
[17] The Agrarian Reform Program, implemented by the Government of Colombia from 1970-90s redistributed large plots of land from large landowners to smaller holders.

Driving the Rural Property Legalization Process

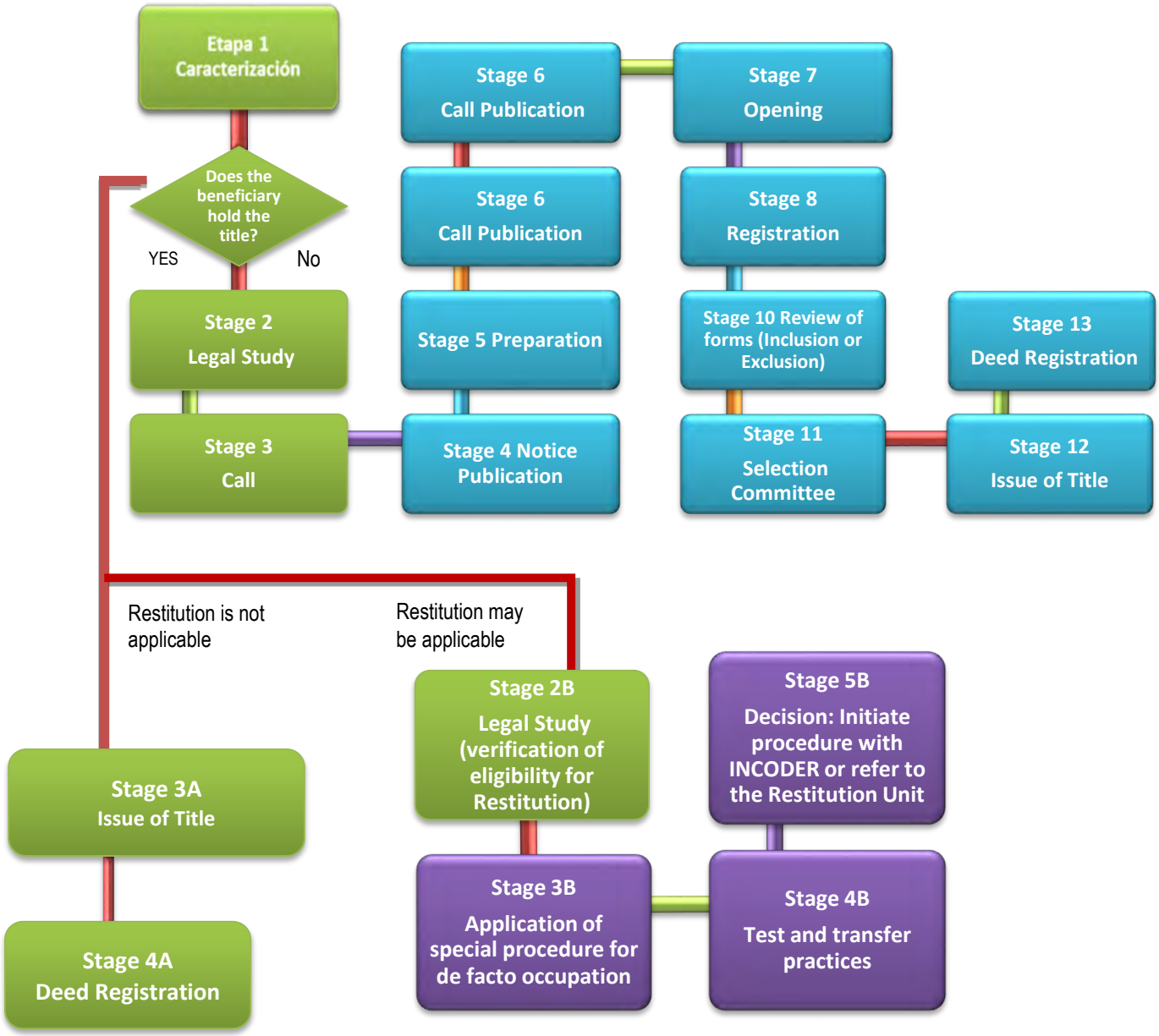
In order to help the different responsible entities increase their understanding of land issues to become more effective in legalization processes, better support the implementation of new public policy instruments, and raise awareness among citizens about the importance of legalizing their land, CR-MdM designed and implemented methodologies for property legalization, communications and educational campaigns directed at the communities and victims' organizations. The program structured various roadmaps and methodologies for legalization so that responsible entities could outsource certain stages such as topographic surveys, geo-referencing and preparation of preliminary studies since many did not have the capacity to carry out the entire process. It is important to note that the identification of cases for legalization and establishment of the roadmaps were possible thanks to the previously mentioned Historical Land Rights Project

CR-MdM's legalization categories in this area of support were:

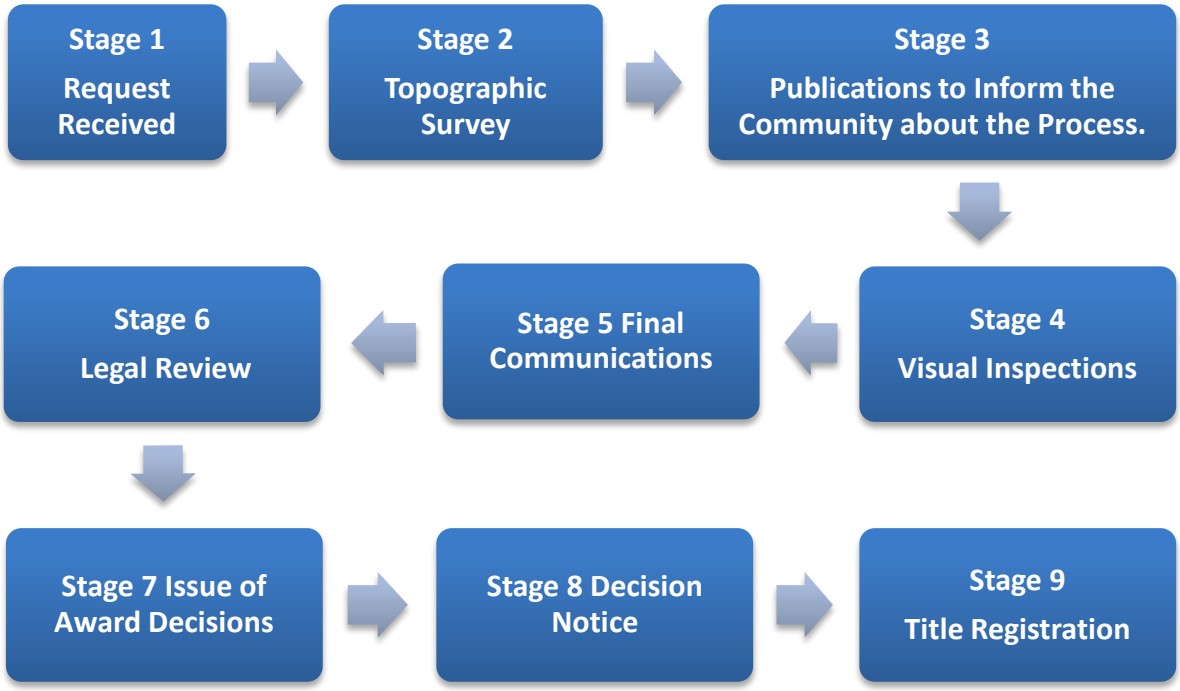
Roadmap 1. Legalization by Material Division of the Land and Later Registration of Deeds: This is applicable to cases in which land (that was previously granted by the Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCORA, Spanish acronym) or INCODER) is communal or jointly owned. In order to divide the communally owned land, the part that corresponds to each beneficiary needs to be identified as well as the respective certificate of identification of the property deed.



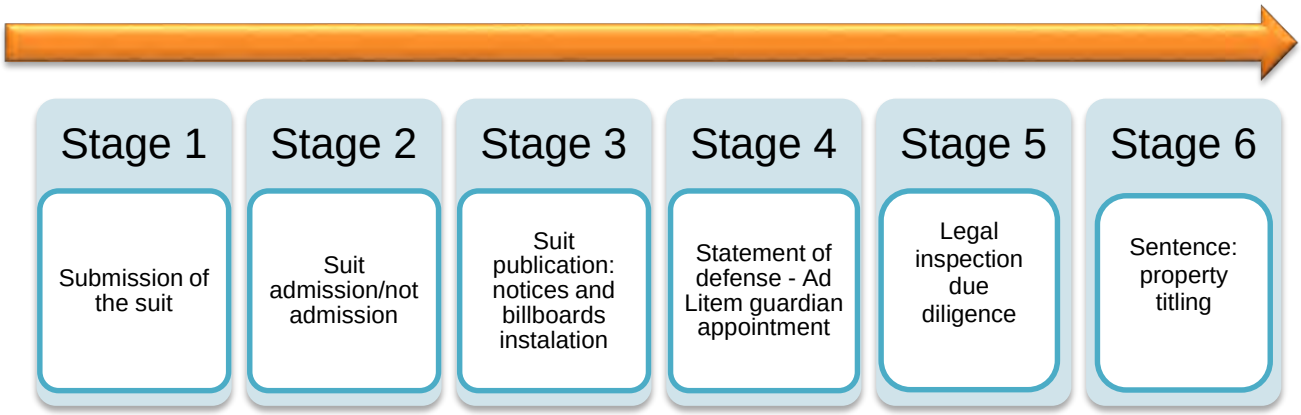
Roadmap 2. New Issue and Registration of Property Deeds of the National Agrarian Fund and New Granting of Land by INCODER: This is applicable to land granted to families by INCORA years ago that was prioritized for new deeds and registration through a collective analysis between the regional INCODER offices (Sucre and Bolívar) and CR-MdM. These cases occur because the initial grantees had not registered the deed; because there are other families occupying the land that had been granted; or in cases where the land has public property, such as schools.



Roadmap 3. Issue of Resolutions to Grant Vacant Lots by INCODER and Registration of the Respective Deeds: This is applicable to areas that were once declared as vacant and that need to carry out the processes order for a plot of land to be granted to one person, this person must have occupied and used the land for at least five uninterrupted years and not possess or be the owner of other rural land.



Roadmap 4. Legalization through Law 1561 of 2012: Law 1561/2012 facilitates access to property through a special process that makes it possible to grant the deed to the material occupant of urban and rural properties of a small economic value, or indemnify the deeds of fraudulent transfer. The legal possibilities opened up by this law allow a new roadmap to be envisaged for land consolidation and improvement of the quality of life of the country's rural population.



Roadmap 5. Liquidation of Inheritance by Notary: This is applicable to cases in which people only exercise the right to inherited possession of a plot of land and still do not have the property deed, because the inheritance has not been liquidated. The basis for this kind of inheritance liquidation is found in Article 1 of Decree 902/1988, amended by Decree 1729/1989, which indicates: "Inheritance of any value may be liquidated before a notary public and partner by marriage, when

applicable, provided that the inheritors, legatees and the surviving spouse, or their assignees, are fully capable, proceed in mutual agreement and request it in writing by proxy, which must be a certified and registered attorney."

Support for Land Entities

Support in this area focused on strengthening land entities, such as the Land Restitution Unit and INCODER, and mainly consisted of logistical support, assignment of professional staff, technical support and the supply of information from the PHDT. CR-MdM collected and prepared information from symbolic cases relevant to the national context (two in Sucre and one in Bolivar) in order to carry out detailed analyses to identify and legalize rights through Law 1448 so that URT could further carry out processes.

To facilitate the start-up of the two regional URT offices in Sincelejo and Carmen de Bolivar, CR-MdM funding the hiring of 25 professionals, furniture and equipment, and logistical support for the first months of fieldwork. With this support, along with the information collected in the rights reports, these two offices were able to process more cases than any others in the country. Since INCODER's offices were already established in the area, CR-MdM's support focused on improving the entity's response capacity for legalization processes and reducing response times to URT requests through standardizations of archives, legal studies, and map analyses.

Sub-IR 1.1.4: Rural development strategy implemented

CR-MdM's intervention under this Sub-IR was based on coordination with the USAID Public Policy Program (PPP) and sought to facilitate the preparation and elaboration of a Contrato Plan, a new legal mechanism created by the GoC. The Plan subscribed an agreement between public entities (ministries, municipalities, departmental governments, etc.) in order to implement a specific set of rural development activities prioritized by the region.

Under this initiative CR-MdM, supported the two departmental governments and the 15 municipal governments of the entire Montes de Marìa region in identifying and prioritizing the projects that would be part of the Contrato Plan.

Unfortunately, after several months of continued coordination with local governments and the PPP, some municipal governments and the Bolivar Department still could not make the commitment to participate. CR-MdM had originally projected high levels of investment from government entities as a result of the Contrato Plan, none of which materialized. Instead, CR-MdM fortified efforts under strengthening alliances between the government and community organizations.

IR 1.2: Social Development Strengthened

Community participation and social development were essential, cross-cutting themes throughout the CR-MdM consolidation strategy. Because years of conflict had silenced citizen voices and any community action groups or civil society organizations that had previously existed, one of the first challenges to overcome was social organization and the active and effective participation of the communities. The second challenge arose as it became evident that an environment of fear, silence and mistrust, in addition to the already weak presence of local institutions, contributed to a low level of governance throughout the region and resulted in feelings of underrepresentation. Within the fractured social environment that remained after the conflict, CR-MdM identified the need to implement a strategy beyond infrastructure services that would also generate the conditions to guarantee rights. This would contribute to a model of community organization for impactful participation public policy and political affairs, promoting and opening spaces of participation and organization of its residents; strengthening the already existing social structures and opening paths to new leadership.

The members of the CDC Network present before the National Government and the Senate of the Republic their "Comprehensive proposal of Rural Development in a Peace Territory"

To achieve this, CR-MdM designed and developed a social empowerment strategy with various components that would positively impact the emotional recovery of residents and the social organizational structure of the communities, allowing them to rebuild capacity in planning and championing their own development. The activities described below sought to develop an educated, conscious, and deliberative citizenship by supporting individuals' recovery of their capacity to be active social agents in their communities and municipalities.

Sub-IR 1.2.1: Civil society organizations strengthened

Sub-IR 1.2.2: Alliance between community and the State promoted

Because activities throughout the program connect community members with their government officials, Global Communities will report on these two Sub-IRs together for the final report. Many of the activities, from accountability events under institutional coordination to productive alliances under economic development effectively connected citizens and communities to their municipal and departmental representatives. As trust was restored and relationships fostered among previously distanced groups, all society members began working toward a common goal of rebuilding the territory.

Psychosocial Support and Victims

> *Self-Recovery to Action:* An inter-disciplinary team accompanied the communities for 15 months, benefitting 229 families and training 220 psychosocial promoters to replicate and expand support.

When the CR-MdM team first arrived in the targeted communities, they had to overcome the individual and collective mistrust in the territory; the low level of governance that made coordination with institutions difficult; and poor infrastructure. Their presence was an important first step in generating trust as it demonstrated the commitment and effort of a team of professionals who had walked at least 10 kilometers over washed out roads to reach the communities. Under these circumstances the program began collaborating with the municipal health care provider and the municipalities to coordinate the government's services with the project's activities, especially the clinical assistance to patients with post-traumatic stress as a result of the conflict.

Through extensive experience providing support and assistance to victims of violence, Global Communities has recognized that attention must be paid to the individual in order to achieve any type of social, organizational, or community process. Upon arrival, CR-MdM applied the principle of *Self-Recovery to Action*, a psychosocial project to provide counseling and support to the population affected by the violence in the four municipalities. The approach, which empowered social actors in the transformation of the culture of violence to one of participation, coexistence and peace, was essential for the generation of trust among beneficiaries and critical to initiating program implementation.

The psychosocial support project allowed individuals and communities to recover emotionally from the wounds of the violent events that the armed conflict inflicted on them. Through a methodology that combined group therapies with individual counseling and training of psychosocial promoters, individuals began to let go of the emotional burdens they had been carrying for years and the entire community became united in healing the wounds left by the conflict. These activities allowed the inhabitants to be emotionally prepared to face the challenge of reconstructing their community and address the social fabric broken by the armed actors. Additionally, as an unexpected outcome, many youth who participated in the psychosocial promoter training began to see themselves as key social actors within their communities who deserved a role in the space that was being built for community planning through the CDC.

In addition to focusing psychosocial support at the individual level, CR-MdM also assisted the local governments in improving their response to the communities and, in particular, to victims of the conflict. The first type of support that CR-MdM provided was framed in the Law 387, which regulated all issues concerning population displacement. Through a survey of over 2,000 families, CR-MdM obtained demographic information of the internally displaced persons in the four municipalities in order to update the information about their living conditions. The survey represented a baseline of the first large sample of the displaced population, which contributed to a revision of the national displaced characterization form, as well as with the reformulation and adjustment of the Sole Comprehensive Plans (PIU, Spanish acronym) of the displaced population[18] of the four municipalities and of the two departments. Participating in this process were the Unit of

[18] The PIU, by virtue of the Law 387 were the territorial planning instruments of the actions of prevention and assistance regarding internal forced displacement.

Assistance and Reparation to Victims of the Conflict (UARIV, Spanish acronym), Public Ministry, governorships, mayors' offices, and Organizations of the Displaced Population (ODP acronym), and the institutions that make up the system of assistance to the population victim of the armed conflict.

With the PIUs updated the municipal governments were able to plan and implement more accurate programs focused on the real situation of the displaced communities. At the same time these PIUs were the base for the elaboration of the Territorial Action Plans[19] under the new Law 1448.

In 2011 when Law 1448 (the Victims Law) came into effect, CR-MdM modified its strategy to focus on ensuring the inclusion of victims in the victims registry; improving victims' active participation in planning and implementing the law; and, supporting local governments in the planning processes regarding their new responsibilities under the law. CR-MdM provided technical support to the departments of Sucre and Bolivar, through their Government Secretary Offices, in the formulation of the departmental action plans for the assistance, protection, prevention, and comprehensive reparation of the victims; and to the four consolidation municipalities through consultation workshops for the updating and validation of the aforementioned plans.

Because Law 1448 mandated the participation of civil society and victims in the planning processes, providing support to victims in coordination with institutions, communities, civil society organizations and the victim population in general was critical. CR-MdM facilitated communication between *mesas de participación* (representing victims) and local institutions; supported with the provision of safe spaces in municipal offices for participants. All of the above allowed the victims' organizations to integrate into the communities and fully participate in the community development processes that the program was promoting in the municipalities.

Institutional and Community Capacity Installed

- Four municipal *mesas de participación* established in the four municipalities;
- One departmental *mesa de participación* in Sucre established;
- Municipal legal representatives' offices of Ovejas and San Onofre and the departmental Office of Victims Assistance of Sucre established;
- Local governments technically advised on improving the assistance to the victim population;

Approximately 2,000 families entered the sole registry of victim population at the national level and an equal number received the indemnity on the part of the State.

With the aim of facilitating institutional action, CR-MdM worked jointly with the UARIV in support of two collective reparations processes: Las Palmas in the Municipality of San Jacinto and Libertad in the Municipality of San Onofre. The simultaneous creation of CDPs, through a participatory planning process (explained in the following point) was coordinated with the collective reparation plans – and was mutually reinforcing.

[19] These are plans that include the actions to be taken by either a municipality or a department in order to assist victims in its territory.

In regards to gender based violence, legal support was provided in the specific case of sexual abuse in the township of Libertad, San Onofre. Support was provided for the compiling and documenting of evidence for the legal case against a former paramilitary known as "el Oso" (the Bear), and the commemoration of the international day of "No violence against women."

Neil Fortich, consolidation manager, the victims' associations, the Community Councils Freedom Rebellion (Consejos Comunitario Rebelión de Libertad) – San Onofre (Sucre), Paraíso and San Cristóbal – San Jacinto and the consolidation manager and women of Monte de Maria marched against the violence perpetrated against them.

San Onofre, la agrupación juvenil los Dioses de Libertad, commemorated the international day of "No violence against women." Youth sang asking for respect and the good treatment of women in Montes de Maria.

Social strengthening and participatory planning

One of the pillars on which CR-MdM based its intervention was building local capacity through two strategies: strengthening efficient public management of the delivery of essential services and improving citizen participation. The actions in each strategy sought to combine the efforts of the public, private and community sectors with special emphasis on the local actors as a mechanism to guarantee rights. With respect to citizen participation the CR-MdM intervention was based on the needs, demands, and priorities of the communities, through a participatory process that ensured the legitimacy and validity of the community decisions.

The PACE methodology is Global Communities' process of building the capacity of local communities to mobilize resources to address self-determined priority needs through participatory democratic practices. PACE was a cornerstone of all CR-MdM program actions. Understanding that each country and region is unique, CR-MdM undertook the task of tailoring the PACE methodology to the territory of Montes de María and developed the "Todos Ponemos" ("All Contribute") idea, which became a fundamental message of the PACE methodology and explicitly conveyed that the consolidation and reconstruction process was not solely the responsibility of the National Government but a collective community effort.

PACE: *a participatory and inclusive strategy. First PACE II community outreach, Cerro de las Casas. All the organizations and population groups of the conglomerate.*

As part of this principle of collective community effort, CR-MdM first opened channels of communication with the mayors sharing the methodology and prioritized, via consensus with the program, the communities where the work would be initiated. During more than four years CR-MdM had a constant presence in 37 communities in the four municipalities, implementing the different stages of the PACE methodology. In order to carry out the participatory planning process each community selected a CDC, which is a democratically elected community organization made up of representatives from demographic sectors present in a given territory. CDCs represent the interests of all the groups and community collectives present in a territory (Community Action Groups (JACs, Spanish acronym)[20], Producers Associations, victims, women, and youth, among others) without regard to their ethnicity, their age or their gender. The CDCs plan the development of their communities through a permanent accompaniment that promotes the strengthening of community capacities and empowerment to enable to create and realize their own visions for consolidation, development and prosperity.

Pedagogical process of identification of organizations and population groups, Pelona, San Onofre

As part of the PACE methodology, each community (through their CDC) defines its long-term vision – how they see their community in the future. To make this vision a reality the community develops a plan through which it proposes concrete actions to meet their principal needs and fulfill their vision.

[20] JACs are legally registered representative community groups elected by their peers.

The application of the PACE methodology in 37 communities in the four municipalities, resulted in 37 CDCs established and CDPs created. These serve as a mechanism for improved access to government programs and the recovery of trust among community members and between the community and the government.

"At present this Plan constitutes the navigation route in the face of development and the vision that has been projected from the local perspective."

Using the PACE methodology as the basis for CR-MdM has made two major types of impact:

Direct achievements: Through PACE, the community becomes organized and strengthened; new leaders emerge and work with prior leaders in a process of renovation and learning; the community recovers its capacity to analyze and reflect on priority needs and manage its development; and lastly, the community strengthened its capacity to advocate. Likewise the community has a representative organization through which they can advocate to the Government, and manage the projects that provide solutions to their most pressing needs. The CDCs have become the voice of the community in talking to the Government and other entities that are implementing or that want to carry out any action in their territory.

Methodological model: Through PACE the community recovers democratic values, becomes more inclusive and respectful of differences, and improves its understanding of the culture of legality and of utilizing regular and institutional channels to achieve its objectives. Finally, and most importantly, it recovers trust among its members, in itself and in the Government. This process of recovery starts with the projects that focus on the individual such as that of psychosocial support. The work of community strengthening is made possible thanks to the recovery of the self.

Aside from having led the planning and incidence processes at the local level, the CDCs worked in a process of organizational strengthening that seeks to improve and consolidate even more its capacities to make this process sustainable. On the basis of this outlook the CDCs saw the need to organize in a structure at the regional level, which would allow them to think of themselves as part of a diverse territory, with which they share common needs and contexts, and under which they may collectively construct their development. That is how the CDC Network of Montes de Maria was founded as an organization that gathers 35 of the CDCs established in the territory who project themselves as a regional structure of community integration that promotes meeting, discussion and consensus building. The Network highlights how far the communities have come since CR-MdMs intervention – not only are individuals organizing within their own communities but they are extending their collaboration to other communities, demonstrating trust and confidence. It should be noted that two of the CDCs decided not to participate in the Network because of fear of being threatened by illegal actors still present in the region.

As a result of these meetings, the CDC Network of Montes de Maria developed a community proposal of comprehensive development in a peaceful territory, which allows the presentation of the region's problems and proposes general actions with the aim of minimizing and resolving the needs that the region exhibits. The document was presented at the **REGIONAL MEETING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEACE SCENARIOS IN MONTES DE MARIA: a community proposal for dialogue between**

the civil society and the Government for the post-conflict," which officially introduced the CDC Network to the governments and public and private institutions. The effort established a setting of dialogue and consensus building through which the Network intends to have a say in the development of the National Development Plan. The proposal has as its foundation in three pillars – education, peace and equality – and represents the region's vision for the next four years through consensus building.

In this manner CR-MdM worked with a comprehensive and complete approach – first in recovering the persons emotionally; then in renewing leadership and working on democratic and inclusion values. The PACE methodology recovered the inhabitants the sense of community and fostered collective work with respect to a common objective through organizational strengthening. CDC Network, whose constitution embodies these messages, remains proactive and continues to dialogue with State entities so that the solution to its principal needs becomes a reality.

During the last months of the CR-MdM program, the Network has been participating in different initiatives that are being implemented in the region such as the roadmap project (financed by USAID), the proposal of the ARGOS rural development proposal, and the territorial peace proposal of the Office of the High Peace Commissioner. To date, the Network has accomplished the following:

- Active participation of the communities established in the decisions about the programs and projects to be implemented.
- Projects identified in the Comprehensive Proposal of Rural Development were included in the plans,
- Establishment as a valid spokesperson between these initiatives and the communities it represents

To date, the CDC Network has full advocacy capacity with different public and private actors, which allows its local development advocacy work to continue once CR-MdM concludes.

The CDCs have served as a platform for advocacy in public policy, particularly among vulnerable populations whose voice had been silenced for decades, driving communications among all levels

IR 1.3: Economic Development Catalyzed

The economic activity in the rural sector of the Consolidation zone of Montes de Maria is based on agricultural and livestock activities such as cassava, yam, corn, plantain, tobacco, avocado, some vegetables, and to a lesser extent, rice and small scale livestock. The mountainous zone of the region produces a great variety of products to supply the food markets of Cartagena, Sincelejo and even Barranquilla. This entire system was enormously affected by the conflict for two reasons: many of the residents had to displace to urban centers abandoning their productive activities, and those that stayed had many difficulties in commercializing their products due to the limitations in mobility imposed by the armed groups. While economic activities have been reactivated by the return of the displaced population and the free mobility with an improved safety situation, they continue to face diverse problems present in the region. The farmers who returned after years of displacement confronted enormous challenges – they were forced to invest enormous efforts and resources in rehabilitating the land for productive activity, to again obtain good quality seeds in the zone, to acquire supplies, and to recover markets, etc.

Economic Development Strategies to Solve Diverse Needs

- Activities to improve food security,
- Generation of employment and work opportunities
- Facilitation of access to government programs;
- Linkage of producers with the private sector,
- Strengthening of producers' associations,
- Identification of prospective value chains and the support of productive activities geared to solving bottlenecks and the limitations of each value chain.
- Access to financial services

In order to address these problems, CR-MdM developed a comprehensive approach that not only linked the farmers with the State through increased access to the government's resources in the support of economic recovery, but also generated favorable conditions so that the region becomes more competitive in the medium and long term. To implement its strategy, CR-MdM utilized a value chain approach, which guaranteed that the productive activities were efficient while responding to the needs of specific markets, making them profitable and sustainable, both from the economic and the environmental standpoint.

All the activities developed within these strategies were implemented taking into account the communities' priorities identified by their CDCs during the formulation of their Community Development Plan and framed within the USAID structure of Sub-Intermediate-Results. The program prioritized beneficiary communities by those who had identified a need for economic strengthening or the increase of income generation as a critical issue.

Sub-IR 1.3.1: Rural development programs in CSDI zones implemented

Strengthening food security

CR-MdM carried out an analysis of food security in the region in order to assess the current situation and identify possible solutions. As expected, the analysis identified the diversity of local products, given the terrain, with varying levels of productivity. The study also revealed primarily small producers while also many families without access to land to produce their own food. Based on the analysis, CR-MdM implemented the following activities to increase access to food for the most vulnerable inhabitants:

- Implementing quick impact income generation opportunities to the most vulnerable
- Improving the productivity of existing all crops as a mechanism to increase incomes and availability of food items

- Improving the participation of women in economic development projects to increase food availability for households.

Based on the results and recommendations of the study, CR-MdM incorporated food security as an integral component in the design of its economic development activities. The actions in this area were oriented towards increasing availability of food for self-consumption of the agricultural worker families while also improving the quality of the seeds and agricultural practices to increase productivity. Similarly, the use of organic inputs and the implementation of low environmental impact practices were incentivized.

Technical visit of a yucca crop of a Finca Montemariana in Ovejas

Productive Alliances

CR-MdM successfully facilitated access to the Ministry of Agriculture's productive alliances program that seeks to support small farmers so they may sell their products to a commercial ally, in favorable and just conditions. Nevertheless, the access is complex – neither small farmers nor municipal governments had the technical or financial capacity to present proposals to the program's request for proposals, and the departmental governments did not show a willingness to support these efforts despite having some capacity for providing support.

For this reason CR-MdM hired external consultants to work with productive alliances in the design and submission of proposals to the Ministry's request for proposals. CR-MdM identified a number of difficulties that arose out of the way in which the funding mechanism had been established. The standards of access requirements, such as number of associations, matching contribution amount, and level of strength of association, were difficult to meet for small producer organizations. The disbursements of funds did not necessarily coincide with sowing seasons and productive alliances of late yield crops did not incorporate a short cycle crop to generate income in the short-term. Finally, in many cases, despite linkages formed, many remained weak – local municipal and state entities did not contribute to the process and unstable commercial agreements placed the investment at risk.

Montemariana Farms

Working with the Development and Peace Network Foundation, CR-MdM expanded the previously existing initiative of collective, self-sufficient integrated farms that combined crops for consumption, income generation, and the protection of the environment on a small extension of land.

- 60 farms established among the most vulnerable families
- Seeds and tools distributed to farms and other small producers in the communities
- Training in best agricultural practices, production and use of organic fertilizer, and installation and management of small irrigation systems to direct and indirect beneficiaries
- Crops produced enough food for self-consumption and commercialization to generate income

Table 4: Productive Alliances

Productive Alliance	No. Alliances supported	Producers linked			Hectares ESTABLISHED	CR-MdM CONTRIBUTION	DERIVED MATCHING CONTRIBUTION
		Women	Men	Total Participants			
Cassava	2	4	61	65	74	USD 80,451.36	USD 451,382
Cocoa	4	32	164	196	515	USD 85,135.70	USD 874,906
Mango de Hilaza	3	23	116	139	330.4	USD 60,506.05	USD 449,410
Livestock (Pasto)	1	19	66	85	127.5	USD 25,582.46	USD 1,298,491
TOTALS	**10**	**78**	**407**	**485**	**1046.9**	**USD 251,675.57**	**USD 3,074,190**

Organizational strengthening rural development programs

Strengthening producers' associations facilitates the provision of services such as technical assistance, the improvement of the conditions of the commercialization of products, reduces the costs of the purchase of supplies, and as a result improves the profitability of the productive activities while increasing cohesion among producers. CR-MdM developed an organizational and business strengthening process facilitating access to programs of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce (territorial Marketing and business Development Program) (Programa Marketing territorial y Desarrollo empresarial), Ministry of Agriculture (Rural Opportunities program), DPS (Small Business Capitalization program) (programa Capitalización Micro-empresarial), the National Learning Service (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje - SENA) through direct activities with small producer and youth organizations. Various thematic trainings, which sought to strengthen these organizations, included improved production practices and increased knowledge and skills in organizational, administrative, business, financial and commercial topics. Through these sustained capacity building and support processes and with the provision of improved seeds, supplies, equipment, and tools, organizations were able to strengthen their productive capacity.

As a result of these interventions the four consolidation municipalities now have 37 strengthened producers' associations, which improved their productivity, have a better knowledge of their business, provide services to their associates, and some of them make up part of the national networks of producers, as is the case of five cocoa producers' associations.

Table 5: Demographics of Producer Associations

MUNICIPALITY	No. OF ORGANIZATIONS	Members		
		Women	Men	Totals
El Carmen de Bolívar	13	109	654	763
San Jacinto	9	4	72	76
Ovejas	5	43	259	302
San Onofre	10	200	495	695
Totals	37	356	1480	1836

Sub-IR 1.3.2: Competitiveness increased

In Montes de Maria one of the most urgent difficulties for the recovery of production has been access to formal financial services by the associations and small-scale producers in the Consolidation Municipalities' rural area. Without the possibility of resources for the production and commercialization

of agricultural products and the drive of other economic activities, economic development becomes significantly stagnant and cannot be reactivated with subsidy-based programs, as these will always have very limited scope and coverage.

During start-up, CR-MdM carried out meticulous fieldwork to identify and assess the current situation of small-scale producers' access to financial services by meeting with them as well as community leaders and bank representatives. The study identified several barriers limiting access to financial services:

1. Informal land ownership: Land ownership is a source of collateral for access to agricultural loans. Due to the great degree of informal land ownership in the region, a large number of small-scale producers do not have guarantees to support a loan application.
2. Negative report in the credit risk centers: Small-scale producers who previously had agricultural credits to pay for services that were displaced and no longer could pay often fell into negative ratings in the CIFIN (Credit Bureau)
3. Distrust between producers and financial entities: This situation resulted from the default of the portfolio and charging of debts with penalties by the debt payment agencies who acquired this portfolio. On occasions some people used the portfolio to intimidate debtors with false penalties for purchasing at prices much lower than the land's real value.
4. Financial entities, especially Banco Agrario, did not sufficiently promote their formal financial services.
5. Lack of training and support in savings and loan practices: Small-scale producers and other vulnerable population who were unaware of the financial policies, requirements and obligations, and rights regarding a loan.

In order to address these barriers and facilitate the rural population's access to official financial services in the short term, CR-MdM implemented three strategies – promotion of micro-financial services; promotion of rural financing models; and creation of self-managed savings and loans groups.

Promotion of Micro-Financial Services

CR-MdM partnered with the micro-finance entity Crezcamos, S.A., one of Global Communities previous clients in a second tier loan program. As part of this partnership, Global Communities loaned credit resources directly to beneficiaries and promoted micro-financial services (micro-credit loans, savings, micro-insurance policies, transfers, etc.) by opening four Crezcamos offices (one in each municipality). At the same time, the program implemented a financial education process for clients, seeking to restore trust in the financial sector and raise awareness about the importance of micro-financial services as a mechanism to drive economic activity.

Crezcamos Partnership

- CR-MdM invested USD 208,768
- Crezcamos committed USD 2,611,605
- Total micro-credit loans granted for USD 6,337,633.77
- People trained in financial education: 2,039
- Offices installed: 4
- Transfers processed in offices: 848
- Business payments in offices: 1,822
- Decrease of intermediaries in agricultural sales
- Total matching funds of $ 7,355,323.83 marked out.

In order to expand the beneficiary population so that the entire region could access resources to finance their production activities, CR-MdM expanded the range of services through provision of micro-insurance policies and the development of a micro-credit loan product designed to finance various stages of agricultural activity. By identifying characteristics of beneficiaries and their economic activities, CR-

MdM assisted Crezcamos in establishing the area's specific financial needs and promoting micro-savings products.

Promotion of Rural Financing Models

Another way in which CR-MdM promoted access to financial services was by linking the small-scale producers to the financial sectors' institutions through training and assistance and support with loan applications. Because CR-MdM focused its efforts on supporting access to financial resources for promising production activities, the program primarily supported value chains with the greatest potential in the region. The two strategies are explained below:

Directed Individual Loan

The directed individual loan is a support methodology for the rural population to learn how to access loans from financial entities, especially Banco Agrario de Colombia. With this methodology, CR-MdM supported small-scale producers in: identification of investment needs, technical and financial project feasibility, compliance with loan access requirements, investment in loan resources, technical assistance and management of the Rural Capitalization Incentive (when applicable). Simultaneously, CR-MdM trained the producers' associations on requirements for accessing loans and completing application forms. In this way, the program not only built capacity among individual producers, but also among members of the producers' associations so that once trained, they can advise their associates. Implementation of this methodology involved coordinated work between Banco Agrario, municipalities through the Municipal Office for Agricultural Technical Assistance (UMATA), producers' associations and CR-MdM. The activities included communicating the methodology, raising small-scale producers' awareness of agricultural loans with the Rural Capitalization Incentive and its benefits, the requirements to access loans, and communicating other Banco Agrario financial products. This not only allowed greater knowledge of the range of financial services, but also, proximity between the bank, the municipal government and the communities to rebuild trust.

Important achievements were made through this work system which will allow a rural loan management process to be continued in the future through some associations that will be responsible for the processes. The following achievements are highlighted:

a. Dissemination of information of the bank's services to 1,548 agricultural producers and the registration of 333 loans;
b. Capacity building in producers' associations to provide consultancy for their associates in managing access to loans; support with making and registering the application with the financial entity; and control of the investment of loan funds;
c. Trust generation between organizations and producers and Banco Agrario de Colombia after years of mutual distrust;
d. Increased participation and interest of local Banco Agrario managers in community activities to access agricultural loans, supporting organization training for the updated use of loan tools;
e. Increase of loan applications for long-term investments, which were previously viewed with certain concern by the local Banco Agrario managers.

Revolving Rural Micro-Credit Loan Funds

The revolving rural micro-credit loan fund model has been an essential tool in promoting organizational and financial dynamics around producers' associations, which have seen the benefits of supporting their associates through micro-credit loans to finance short-term activities. Additionally, the financial entities

view the promotion of savings, loans and trust among farmers as a good practice, as this will definitely result in future clients for the bank with greater capacity in loan access and management.

The promotion of revolving funds in producers' associations, as well as improving small-scale producers' access to resources for specific production activities, aims to break the vicious circle that affects small-scale farmers that involves intermediary purchasers of their products. These intermediaries loaned money to the farmers at very high rates and then charged them when purchasing the harvest. This business was always harmful for the farmers as the intermediaries controlled the whole process.

This strategy was comprised of two important lines of action:

- Raise awareness and train farmers' associations on the micro-credit loan fund model.
- Formation and assistance in administration of the micro-credit loan funds in each association in which each member invested a small amount of savings into a joint fund.

With the creation of these rural micro-credit loan funds, members of the producers' associations have been able to access funds at more affordable rates with the requirements established by the same associations. In addition to this, the following was achieved:

308 Rural Producers Formed Micro-Credit Loans

1. Asociación de Cultivadores de Paz y Esperanza of Chengue, Ovejas
2. ASPROCAMM of Carmen de Bolívar;
3. ASOMUDEPAS of San Jacinto
4. ASOAFROLIB of San Onofre
5. ASODESAN of San Onofre
6. MUGESCO of San Onofre
7. ASOJUVENTUD of Ovejas
8. Fondo de Microcrédito of Montes de María – cocoa producers of San Jacinto, Carmen de Bolívar, Oveja, San Onofre

- Organizational strengthening of producers' associations on administrative, accounting, tax and financial topics.
- Formation of the eight funds using $ 50,948
- Granting of 222 loans to date for $ 39,520
- Rotation funds for short-term production initiatives formed by family or sole-trader companies
- Capacity building in four producers' associations (MUJESCO, ASOFROLIB, Asociación de Cultivadores de Paz y Esperanza and ASOJUVENTUD) to manage resources for the capitalization of their funds with programs such as the Micro-enterprise Capitalization Program of the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS in Spanish).
- Promotion of savings practice inside associations to capitalize on rural micro-credit loan funds.
- Elimination of the use of informal (and illegal) sources for financing short-term activities and the consequent increase in the profit on their production activities.

With this model, CR-MdM has strengthened the rural micro-finances line as a tool that unifies and complements productive and sustainable development in Montes de Maria.

Creation of Self-managed Savings and Loan Groups

In addition to directed individual loan and Revolving Rural Micro-Credit Loan Funds CR-MdM implemented another type of rural financing model – self-managed savings and loans groups – with support from the national government through Banca de Las Oportunidades. Self-managed savings and loan groups are one of the best instruments for improving access to financial resources through the

promotion of savings and loan practices and financial education among the vulnerable population, which does not have possibilities for financing its production activities. The methodology consists of individuals who voluntarily create a group to save and generate a fund to provide micro-credit loans and establish their own rules on savings contributions, loan conditions, etc. CR-MdM facilitated training for established groups on topics such as funds management and maintenance of records of the savings and loan transactions. Additionally, some of the beneficiaries received training on teaching the methodology to other community members and consequently, make the process sustainable.

However, there are latent risks of a relapse of what is achieved if structural changes in the rural financial policy are not generated; factors such as: Rigid and uniform banking policies for all sectors; land restitution processes; national centralization of banking processes; lack of technical assistance with crops as a result of institutional weakness in this process; limited technology applied in rural loan processes; lack of financial promotion methodologies for the rural population; and financial products that integrate a real solution for the producers' needs.

Self-Managed Savings and Loans Groups

- 1,803 people (1,175 women and 628 men) forming 80 savings and loan groups; 736 of them are under 18.
- $ 67,800 saved by these groups
- $ 42,530 loaned

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Best Practices

Environmental Compliance Leads to Education

All projects, programs, or activities funded by USAID incorporate the analysis of environmental factors in the decision making of the use of the resources so that all implemented activities are environmentally adequate. In accordance with initial environmental approval and USAID environmental guidelines[21], CR-MdM followed procedures for three categories of environmental assessment: **Categorical Exclusion** (activities that do not have an effect on the physical or natural environment), **Negative Determination with Condition** (small infrastructure activities, agricultural production or production processes activities with low impact in the physical or natural environment, and that require the approval of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for its implementation); and **Positive Determination** (infrastructure or agricultural production projects that occasion a significant impact on the environment, and that require the approval of an Environmental Impact Evaluation for its initiation). In addition to USAID environmental regulations, the program followed GoC guidelines, which required close coordination with government officials and community members as well as a high level of oversight.

To ensure compliance with regulations, CR-MdM incorporated environmental monitoring through entry of activities into the USAID Colombia Information and Monitoring System, (Monitor[22]), all of which

[21] LAC-IEE-09-69 and 22 CFR 216, respectively

[22] At the beginning of CR-MdM, the registry of the activities was carried out in the Environmental Information and Environmental Management System (Sistema de Información y Gestión Ambiental –SIGA), which required developing an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the projects with the Negative Determination with Condition; subsequently in the year 2012, USAID made the transition to a new information and Monitoring system named Monitor, where all the activities financed by the different USAID programs are registered, and it includes two modules: one is environmental (where the basic

required revision and approval by USAID. Over the course of the program, CR-MdM contributed to system improvements that would allow implementers to more easily enter modifications in Monitor in accordance with changes in projects' scope of work and contributed to the creation of updated EMP categories[23]. In addition activity tracking in Monitor, field visits allowed CR-MdM to continuously monitor compliance with environmental regulations throughout the implementation of a project. Overall, CR-MdM held an excellent performance record, as confirmed by multiple visits and evaluations from both USAID and GoC officials throughout the life of program, and has been used an example for environmental compliance for other entities in the region.

Within this context, CR-MdM identified an opportunity to further build capacity and negotiated the support of the regional environmental authorities in order to educate leaders on environmental processes so they would have the tools and general competencies to effectively manage activities in their CDPs and mitigate environmental risks. Initiatives included: an environmental education project led by Parques Nacionales Naturales de Colombia; an education process for youth of Ovejas and San Onofre with CARSUCRE, the SENA and an education process for leader of San Jacinto and El Carmen de Bolívar with CARDIQUE. Communities became more knowledgeable about the work and responsibilities of the environmental authorities, which allowed them to begin more open communication with officials regarding environmental issues as well as hold local enterprises accountable for their environmental actions. Additionally, through close collaboration in the environmental analysis required for the identification of projects communities became sensitized to the care and conservation of their natural resources. For example, several CDCs in San Jacinto and El Carmen de Bolívar held public meetings to specifically address environmental related topics, including water and soil. The Jesus del Monte (El Carmen de Bolívar) CDC, which has expressed interest in declaring an environmental reserve zone, has begun leading the establishment of the Inter-institutional Committee of Environmental Education (CIDEA) to facilitate continuous coordination on educational strategies in the region.

> *"I was in the dam El Playón and I found the transport boat, right away I called and they sent the environmental police, which confiscated the wood and the boat, and never again has wood trafficking been seen there"*
>
> – Geovaldis González, leader of Camarón, El Carmen de Bolivar remarking on how we was able to stop illegal trafficking of wood in his community

Despite successes, CR-MdM faced several challenges inherent in rural communities that have not been exposed to such regulations and a region frequently affected by weather phenomenon. Initially, the program struggled in convincing infrastructure project implementers to use personal protection elements, such as helmets, goggles, gloves during construction. After continual reinforcement, workers recognized the importance of wearing protective gear for their safety and began to utilize them while spreading the message of safe practices. Similarly, producers implementing economic development and value chain projects were not familiar with the

> CR has a registry of over **1,500** women and **2,700** men who participated in trainings in environmental topics (including the preparation of organic compost and fertilizer in the productive projects).

data of the activity are entered and the classification of the project is realized, and in case it requires it, shows in a predetermined manner the EMP for said activity), and another of Monitoring and Evaluation.

[23] Type: Small Infrastructure, Sub-type: productive, Sector: special construction work, Class: Water reservoirs, Scope: Improvement

utilization of precautionary measures, such as the safe application of pesticides and proper handling of pesticide containers, which had been traditionally re-utilized for the transport of water and milk. With support from *Campo Limpio*, an educational program implemented by various agricultural chemical supply producer laboratories, CR-MdM implemented an awareness campaign on the dangers of pesticide container re-use and proper methods for their collection and destruction. These cases highlight one of the most important challenges that CR-MdM has overcome – self-care and protection of the surrounding environment. Through continuous reinforcement and education of healthy daily practices, community members have learned to take better care of themselves and their natural resources.

Towards the end of 2013 and during most of 2014, the Montes de María region suffered the consequences of the *El Niño* phenomenon, which brought an intense summer with notable increases of temperatures and severe reduction of rain; and which experts and farmers registered as one of the driest and hottest seasons in years. The severe drought resulted in loss of crops and livestock deaths, greatly affecting the programs' agricultural projects, including Productive Alliances. To address the acute situation, CR-MdM supported the communities through facilitating access to potable water and the provision of rainwater collection tanks as well as the construction or adaptation of water reservoirs for crop irrigation. While El Niño presented many challenges, the communities used the drought as a learning experience so they would be better prepared to mitigate severe climatic changes such as the shortage of water,

Communications – Strengthening the Communities' Voice

Communications served as a cross-sectional thread throughout the life of the program linking larger-scale objectives with the implementation of daily activities among all of the communities and operators. The clarity of the message delivered to the communities, to local governments, and to all program partners was essential in achieving the objective of making the Colombian State visible in places where it had historically been absent. Crucial to this strategy was the ability to communicate the government's commitment to the region by demonstrating that local governments supported and collaborated in project implementation and that the process of consolidation and recovery of the territory was a collective task of government and community members. These messages served as key elements for the recovery of trust at several levels in the region. In fact, the UACT utilized CR-MdM's Communications Protocol as a basis for the development of its own, further demonstrating how the program served as a pioneer in many core activities carried out in all the consolidation regions.

A successful communications strategy depended on inter-institutional coordination was crucial, particularly along three lines:

With municipal governments and communities: CR-MdM approached a population distant from its local government through mutually reinforcing communications between the two. Establishing the message that municipal governments were involved in activities was particularly important because communities did not perceive them as legitimate despite their being the main representatives of institutionalism. Equally important was CR-MdM communicating information about the actions planned and implemented with officials. The program developed concrete mechanisms for the dissemination of messages such as periodic meetings and informative bulletins to communicate advances of project implementation and anticipated activities. This allowed CR-MdM to win the trust of the mayors and other local government officials and of the communities but, above all, to increase the trust among themselves.

With the communities: Ensuring an open communications channel with the communities was one of the most successful elements during program implementation. To this end, the program facilitated the democratic election in each community of a Community Liaison who was responsible for serving as a contact point between the community and the program, facilitating meetings, and informing the

community about the arrival of an operator for a determined project, etc. Additionally, CR-MdM developed communications mechanisms, including presentation events of anticipated projects, accountability events, and project delivery events, as an integral part of each one of the projects to guarantee that the information between the program and the communities, between the CDC and the rest of the community, and between the implementers and the communities flowed in an adequate manner. Having established a fluid communication, the communities began to reduce the mistrust they had at the beginning with CR-MdM. Likewise, the communication was key during the implementation of the actions and projects to provide legitimacy to the leaders with their communities, who following many years of violence and mistrust had given their vote of trust and had bet on the "adventure" of rebuilding the territory.

With the operators and implementer partners: Given that operators were technically actors external to the program's management, their understanding of how projects aligned with consolidation and strengthened the alliance between communities and local, regional and national governments. For this reason, CR-MdM facilitated capacity building sessions with all operators before they initiated any activity in the communities. Similarly, all the implementer teams had to wear distinctive CR-MdM vests so that communities were aware that their work was supporting the implementation of the Consolidation policy.

In addition to ensuring open program communications among relevant actors, CR-MdM recognized that one of the most violated rights during the conflict was free speech and implemented several special projects to rebuild public voices and freedom of expression among community members. As previously mentioned, the rural communities of Montes de María were silenced by the guerrillas, paramilitaries, and armed forces, instilling an environment of fear and mistrust. Illegal groups prohibited the use of any communications media – open discussion, public meetings, and even visits to the municipality – using fear as a principal tool of domination. Even in communities where there was no direct presence of illegal groups, the possible existence of informants produced high degrees of mistrust that led to the self-censure of the inhabitants. As a result of various analyses from consulting with different primary and secondary sources, CR-MdM arrived at the conclusion that the creation of communications media in each one of the communities was a viable initiative by strengthening the community radio stations, which served as a lifeline for rural communications.

Montes de María Voices and Sounds Projects

The Montes de María Voices and Sounds Project provided communication tools to communities by establishing a network of 19 radio production and information collectives in the districts and townships of the four municipalities. The establishment of the radio production centers included provision of radio equipment, as well as the training of 157 individuals in technical topics such as production and editing, as well as the social function radio serves for a community. In addition to the community radio production centers, CR-MdM

Locations of radio stations

also strengthened three existing community radio stations operating in the urban centers of the municipalities through the provision of equipment and advanced training in administrative and financial issues.

Based on the principle that well-informed communities have greater capacity to participate and determine their own development processes, the network facilitated citizen's ability to manage and disseminate relevant information to their communities and municipalities. Initially, the project focused on creating a communications strategy in the rural communities of each municipality to inform the public about the consolidation process and raise awareness of the increased presence of the State. As a result, the network strengthened community participation as citizens gained access to information and were able to make significant contributions towards the decisions of their municipality. Increased rural community participation led to a strengthened identity and contributed to an integration of the urban and rural sectors among municipalities. Since the initial broadcasts, the radio centers have expanded their purpose and become well established in their individual communities. They are an independent media run by volunteers and a mechanism to spread information among citizens in accordance with the dynamics of the individual districts or townships in which they are located. The majority of the centers have a daily programming that generally starts in the morning, functioning as a wake up service for the farm workers beginning their daily activities. The topics addressed in each center vary, spanning from the celebration of special occasions and spreading general community messages about activities like cleaning campaign, protections of the environment, and collecting funds for emergencies to the journalistic task of critical topics such as the Victims Law and interviews with visiting government officials. The centers have become the central theme around which all collective community actions revolve and have been fully embraced by communities. They have generated an enormous impact in a territory where mistrust among the inhabitants, lack of leaders, and silence and fear prevailed, allowing community members to freely talk about issues of interest disseminate information.

Table 6: Radio Production and Information Centers in 16 communities of the consolidation zone

Department	Municipality	District or township	Name of the media
Sucre	San Onofre	Libertad	Ecos de Libertad
		Palito barrio	Palito Renace
		Cacique	Cacique Stereo
		Pelona	Pelona Stereo
	Ovejas	Almagra	Almagra Stereo
		Flor del Monte	Guayacán Stereo
		Canutalito	Vijagual Sterep
		Pijiguay	Santa Ana
Bolívar	El Carmen	Caracolí	La Voz de Caracolí

Department	Municipality	District or township	Name of the media
		Arena del Sur	Voces Campesinas
		Camarón	Camarón Stereo
		El Hobo	El Hobo Stereo
	San Jacinto	Las Charquitas	La Voz de Charquitas
		Arenas	La Voz de Arenas
		Paraíso	La Voz de Paraíso
		San Cristóbal	La Voz del Trozo

Montes de Maria Voices and Sounds Radio Magazine

In accordance with the Consolidation Policy, participatory and integrative communications served as an essential strategy for community participation and for education in municipal identity based on legitimacy, institutionalism and governance. Focused on reinforcing institutionalism and democratic values, the Consolidation Policy's strategy aimed to strengthen sustainable development by promoting regional integration and the appropriation, mobilization, participation, and co-responsibility of the communities. As analyses confirmed, expression of the interests and needs of the citizens in rural communities became one of the fundamental objectives of the community communications media, particularly through the tool of radio communications.

Once the Radio Production Centers were established and with support from local and regional governments, communities developed programs titled *Radio Magazines* in order to disseminate the objectives of the Consolidation Plan. In additional to the Radio Production Centers, the programs were transmitted through five regional communications media in Marina Estéreo Corozal, Marina Estéreo Carmen de Bolívar, Playa Mar Estéreo, and Emisora Comunitaria, Carmen Estéreo, and Unisucre FM Estéreo. These programs generated a space for participatory communication that empowered and strengthened rural communities, promoted regional integration and further established settings for dialogue between citizens and their local governments. Radio Magazines covered topics of interest, such as accountability of municipal government programs and information about the Victims Law. A total of 40 Radio Magazines were produced with an additional 150 individuals trained beyond the original Radio

Production Centers trainees.

Both of these strategies were a critical component to CR-MdM achieving integration of the communities; the democratization and dissemination of information that had been concentrated in a few leaders in the past; fostering the emergence of new leaderships, especially of women and youth; reduction of the fear of speaking; the strengthening of the freedom of speech; and the right to communication. Likewise, the radio programs strengthened the dialogue with the local governments; the community capacities of self-management; and the realization of educational, sports campaigns. Furthermore, radio strengthened solidarity in the communities; the identity and recovery of the culture through the diffusion and the recognition of musical talent; and publicized community problems allowing for discussion of solutions among public and private entities. Finally, an alliance was generated with the community radio stations so that the communities could transmit their programs in the urban center and make themselves known.

Local Professionals and Entrance to Communities

The impacts, achievements, and decisions of CR-MdM benefitted from the involvement of professionals of the region who were knowledgeable about its history during the conflict and of the current social, political, and economic dynamics. Enlisting the assistance of local professionals enabled the program to better focus its strategies and allowed for flexibility in implementation. Furthermore, local professionals were vital to recovering trust between the communities and the government.

Upon arrival in Montes de Maria, two elements became apparent: i) Often the national government, or even international agencies, arrived in the municipalities without previously consulting with the local governments, showing a lack of respect for municipal authority and lack of coordination with the Municipal Development Plans; ii) The communities had had negative experiences with being called to meetings as during the conflict it had been a mechanism utilized by the armed actors to subsequently assassinate members and after the conflict served as a means of deception for individuals making false promises.

Taking this into consideration, CR-MdM dedicated a good portion of its time to undertake outreach to the diverse actors beginning with the mayors' offices, as well as with the communities and local organizations that had been working in the region. This allowed CR-MdM to generate trust from the beginning even before initiating project implementation, and fostered a good environment of mutual collaboration among the different actors. From the beginning the program and its professionals were seen as respectful of local authorities, and of the situation of the communities.

The territorial approach: Despite what the National Consolidation Plan originally proposed regarding the program's focus on the victim population, CR-MdM considered its focus should be the entire territory's population as the beneficiary community. The territorial approach allowed inclusiveness while respecting the rights of specific population groups such as victims, Afro-Colombians, and children. This facilitated the participation of all the interest groups within a community and a municipality, avoiding the creation of "privileged" groups, which would have generated conflicts within the communities.

The "how" as purpose: CR-MdM placed much emphasis on the manner in which it implemented activities. The program recognized that, in many circumstances, the process of obtaining a goal was more valuable than the end goal itself. This was particularly relevant to communities using the methodology "PACE we all contribute" and responsible for implementing their own projects. Through the process, communities acquired or reinforced capacities essential to organizational strengthening and following the path toward consolidation and recovery of the territory.

Completion of the cycle of the recovery of the self in order to do: One of the great lessons gained by CR-MdM in its work with communities is that it is necessary to design and implement a strategy composed of stages or processes that are coordinated in a logical sequence within a community. Characterized as a "value chain", strategies focusing first on the individual-level and then moving toward the neighborhood and community-level and finally toward municipal-level and beyond were found effective. In this way, CR-MdM implemented strategies of psychosocial assistance; support to the creation of the Community Development Committees, and participative planning processes (under the PACE methodology); created Radio Production Centers; supported the creation of People's Housing Organizations; and the strengthening of producers' associations, among others. All of these were components that recovered the self as individual and as a collective while simultaneously improving the social fabric of the community. These were essential elements that have allowed the organizations to have greater capacities for "doing" that has been solidified in a greater capacity of negotiation and dialogue with the different levels of the government and in a greater participation in regional development planning and discussion settings.

Inclusion of all: usually when there is talk of including the State or government entities, this is limited to the municipal, departmental governments and some agencies of the national Government. For CR-MdM it was essential to include, during the totality of its intervention, all of the entities that had any relationship with the issues that were being addressed. In this manner work was carried out not only with the mayors' offices but with all the municipal secretary offices that had any relationship with the projects that were being implemented. This included environmental regulatory and oversight authorities and with private businesses that have a presence in the zone, among others. This approach also pertains to all the actors who intervene in a territory around a common development objective and makes the community organizations known at the same time as it builds communications bridges between these and the entities.

Participation of the local governments in the selection of operators: one of the initial tensions that CR-MdM experienced was in the selection of contractors and operators of the projects. In numerous opportunities various public officials intended to influence the selection of persons or companies that would implement program activities, proposing candidates that not always complied with the requirements to do the job. The dilemma was difficult because on the one hand CR-MdM sought to recover the trust and at the same time required the support and commitment of the mayors and their officials, above all in the projects of the Municipal Strengthening component.

CR-MdM opted to first share the terms of reference with the mayors each time it initiated a process of selection of operators, so that in this way they could present their candidates of choice provided they complied with all the requirements. In this manner a transparent selection process was guaranteed in the eyes of the local governments and of the communities.

Challenges – Lessons Learned

Land challenges

A large part of present challenges relate to the Montes de Maria region where the Colombian Government granted many plots of land to small-scale farmers through INCORA and later INCODER. It is very likely that this set of reflections does not apply to other regions where delivery of land by the State was not so significant or was not carried out.

Focusing Efforts on Restitution:

Since the Victim and Land Restitution Law was issued, state support has shifted focus from INCODER and towards restitution and strengthening the URT. However, as identified by CR-MdM, the main roadmap to access land ownership was not necessarily through restitution, but through legalization.

Additionally, because the government had granted a large number of plots of land to farmers in Montes de Maria, most of the information was held by INCODER. Diminished government support to strengthen INCODER's regional offices ultimately hindered resolution of many cases. Had the national government applied the different public policy instruments for land in a coordinated manner in the territory many of the restitution requests underway in the URT and the courts could have been resolved much quicker through INCODER.

Transfers from INCORA to INCODER: Many plots of land that INCORA granted to farmers were not ultimately registered in their names and therefore still appeared in INCORA's name. It is essential to start the processes to transfer these plots of land to INCODER and grant them again.

Information systems:
Institutions had disorganized systems, in which information was unreliable because it was poorly recorded or coded, making it difficult to track cases. INCODER's databases of land grants did not have land or real estate register references nor any information linking plots to their registered background. In the majority of the cases, only the name of the owner and plot of land is found, which is why it is very difficult to compare this information with that of institutions such as IGAC. As an example, in IGAC, there are still plots of land in INCODER's name that have already been passed on to private citizens.

Institutional responsibilities:
There are no clear central guidelines regarding Agreement 266, which outlines the relationship between INCODER and URT. It is necessary to establish clear responsibilities in the framework of Law 1448. There must be clear inter-institutional cooperation between the Land Restitution Units and INCODER. It is not currently one of the Restitution Unit's priorities to attend to the documents sent from INCODER's territorial divisions.

Lack of a comprehensive land policy:
The land institutions' intervention in the region is uncoordinated. There needs to be an intervention protocol between the institutions that carry out land legalization and restitution processes, as this will allow and ensure more effective intervention and minimize repeated efforts. One solution for this is to generate areas for agreement with these institutions' central departments.

Updating IGAC Information Databases:
All of the land registers are poorly updated and in some cases, they have not been updated.

In addition to land issues, the biggest challenges are to sustaining achievements in the territory consolidation process, and are determined by two factors.

Sustaining achievements at the local level:

Sustainability in municipal governments: although many of the actions that CR-MdM implemented through institutional strengthening established capabilities and lessons learned in the local governments, there is the risk that the subsequent mayors may not continue best practices like consensus building, development of the Municipal Development Plans, accountability, and identification of investment projects that are focused on the needs of the communities.

Anticipating these risks, CR-MdM strengthened civil society organizations, especially the CDC Network who may use the project's lessons to place sufficient pressure on the next local government to maintain transparent practices in planning, and participation in government.

The community organization maintaining the course: a strong civil society presence has been developed in the region, among them, the CDC Network is a stand out leader, but it also includes producers' associations, the People's Housing Organizations (Organizaciones Populares de Vivienda,) the

Voices and Sounds Network, and the victims associations. However, the immediate needs of the vulnerable population in the region and the many years of irregular practices in the exercise of politics and local development means that challenges remain for maintaining strong community organizations.

Although this risk will remain in the background, CR-MdM has confidence that the organizations' new capacity, and the quality and strength of its leaders will lessen the risks. The process of organizational strengthening and renovation of leadership, the community's newly gained knowledge of the governmental entities, as well as the channels of dialogue established between them make CR-MdM hopeful that this risk can be mitigated.

These factors highlight the need for authorities that provide oversight to the electoral processes to pay special attention to the upcoming mayoral elections. A transparent election process focused on programmatic proposals as opposed to illegal practices to determine the election, will provide greater potential for the governance strengthening process to be sustained.

Factors related to the actions of the national Government:

Rural development programs: for many years, the national Government has wanted to undertake adjustments to the public policy instruments for the support of issues of rural and productive development. At present, despite there being an entity responsible for rural development (INCODER), the programs oriented towards the support of agricultural initiatives are within the Ministry of Agriculture. The programs of the Ministry can be difficult for small farmers who live in regions where the local and regional governments are weak (such as in Montes de Maria) to benefit from them.

The manner in which the government re-designs or re-structures these programs will have an impact on the capacity of communities in a process of consolidation to recover economically and retake the path of equitable development.

Implementation of post-conflict programs: If the peace negotiations lead to a successful completion, the next step, following the ratification of the agreements, will be the design of programs and other public policy instruments to implement actions that materialize said agreements. The challenge facing the country and the region is how this is realized including the programmatic and institutional design.

For programmatic design, CR-MdM considers that programs should be created that respond not only to the needs of the communities and that are linked to the market (in the case of productive initiatives), but to local realities. Likewise, the implementing institutions should have a great regional presence and autonomy, the latter to respect the programmatic framework that has been designed.

Regarding the institutional issue, the design of the entities that are responsible for the coordination and/or implementation of the actions should have the following diverse characteristics:

i) Be a new and temporary entity responsible for the post-conflict actions (coordination and in some cases, implementation); this entity would have a life cycle equivalent to the time it takes to make the adjustments in the current State entities to adapt to the new reality of the country. This recommendation is based on the fact that currently there is no State institution with said characteristics or capacities; ii) The regional teams should be high level and very qualified; the emphasis in the personnel staffing should be in the regions and not in Bogotá. It is not advisable, as occurs at present, that an entity responsible for rural development of the country has more than 70% of its personnel in Bogotá given its existence is to serve in the regions; iii) Regional directors should be individuals with great management skills to dialogue effectively with mayors and governors, and have great knowledge of the region; iv) The regional offices should have certain programmatic and financial autonomy, albeit respecting the design of the programs, they may adjust them to the local realities. They should have the capacity to administer investment and

financial resources as this will allow them to have negotiation capacity with the governorships, mayors' offices, and other entities of the national Government.

Lastly, independent of future interventions in the region, the main challenge for the Consolidation zone is achieving understanding from entities that implement actions in the territory and recognition that there is a consolidated organizational process, and that the CDC Network of Montes de Maria is a community organization that has developed the vision of the territory they want, and that it can become a coordinating point between the institutions and the communities to combine efforts and work in a coordinated manner.

Implementation Indicators and Outcome Indicators

Indicator	Colombia Responde / Montes de Maria - Performance Indicators	LOP Target	Y1 Progress	Y2 Progress	Y3 Progress	Y4 Progress	Y5 Progress	Progress%	LOP Progress
DO1-006	Public funds leveraged in CSDI zones attributable to USG Interventions	25,000,000	2,387,238	1,553,295	5,089,288	13,611,924	366,266	92	23,008,011
DO1-007	Number of rapid impact projects implemented by the GOC	24	0	4	17	0	0	88	21
DO1-008	Number of rapid impact projects implemented by USG implementers	96	36	24	36	72	27	203	195
DO1-010	Number of strategic national social programs implemented in CSDI zones	16	2	0	2	0	0	25	4
DO1-011	Number and percentage of people benefitted by national social programs implemented in CSDI municipalities	6,000	325	0	221	2,062	0	43	2,608
DO1-012	Number of beneficiaries receiving improved infrastructure services (F indicator 4.4-8)	19,500	6,214	1,183	22,468	18,756	248	251	48,869
DO1-015	Number and percentage of cases initiated in ZFM "zonas de formalizacion masiva"	700	0	154	1,058	622	0	262	1,834
DO1-016	Number and percentage of formalization titles issued	520	0	89	25	68	0	35	182
DO1-017	Number and percentage of registered formalization titles	520	0	87	26	17	0	25	130
DO1-018	Number of pending applications in INCODER's portfolio, presented for formalization	0	164	300	364	83	0	0	911
DO1-019	Number and percentage of resolutions issued by INCODER, delivered and registered	279	0	0	72	23	0	34	95
DO1-020	Number and percentage of restitution cases received for substantiation	300	0	142	370	0	0	171	512
DO1-021	Number and percentage of restitution cases presented to the judges	300	0	40	226	0	0	89	266
DO1-022	Number and percentage of restitution cases processed	300	0	0	46	0	0	15	46
DO1-025	Number of CSO members supported by USG assistance	3,300	503	1,750	2,803	347	4,532	301	9,935
DO1-030	Number of strategic rural and economic development programs with territorial approach implemented in CSDI municipalities	9	2	2	4	1	0	100	9
DO1-031	Number and percentage of people benefitted by strategic rural and economic development programs with territorial approach, implemented in CSDI municipalities	15,898	897	1,549	1,879	2,071	0	40	6,396
DO1-032	Private sector funds leveraged in CSDI zones attributable to USG Interventions	5,000,000	385,594	1,264,660	3,959,662	7,166,396	80,177	257	12,856,489
DO1-033	Number of private public alliances formed	20	3	7	10	0	0	50	10
DO1-034	Number of rural households benefiting directly from USG interventions (F 4.5.2-13)	8,175	2,175	1,653	5,285	4,204	3,652	208	16,969
DO1-035	Number of people with a financial product from a local financial institution	5,088	0	522	3,455	2,994	2,287	182	9,258
D01-036	Total value of CSDI projects approved (USD million)	50,000,000	0	0	0	17,318,196	104,209	35	17,422,405
D01-037	Total value of CSDIprojects completed (USD million)	42,400,000	2,772,832	2,817,955	9,048,950	35,418,057		86	36,347,203
D01-040	Number of formalized properties supported in CSDI municipalities	520	164	454	1,422	705	0	528	2,745
D01-041	Number of restitution cases supported in CSDI municipalities	300	0	142	370	0	0	171	512
D01-042	Community funds leveraged in CELI zones attributable to USG interventions	100,000	0	0	0	1,293,846	482,703	1777	1,776,549

Annexes

1. Final Indicator Report
2. CR-MdM Land Publication
3. CR-MdM Systematization