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Acronyms

ACIN	Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca
ACONC	Asociación de Consejo Comunitarios del Norte del Cauca
AGO	Attorney General's Office
ASOM	Asociación Municipal de Mujeres
CONPES	<i>Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social</i>
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ESAP	<i>Escuela Superior de Administración Pública</i>
EWS	Early Warning System (<i>Sistema de Alertas Tempranas</i>)
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i>)
FENALPER	National Federation of <i>Personeros</i> (<i>Federación Nacional de Personeros</i>)
FLIP	<i>Fundación para la Libertad de la Prensa</i>
GOC	Government of Colombia
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HRA	Human Rights Activity
JAC	Juntas de Acción Comunal (Community Action Boards)
IGO	Inspector General's Office (<i>Procuraduría General de la Nación</i>)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Instituto Popular de Capacitación
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Intersex
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MIT	Massachusetts Institute for Technology
MOE	Ministry of Education (<i>Ministerio de Educación</i>)
MOI	Ministry of Interior (<i>Ministerio del Interior</i>)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPU	National Protection Unit
PPGNR	Prevention, protection and guarantees of non-repetition
RFA	Request for Application
UNOHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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I. Executive Summary

Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) presented USAID's Human Rights Activity (HRA) ample opportunities for the Activity to advance meaningful and sustainable human rights and peacebuilding initiatives throughout 40 municipalities and seven departments in Colombia. As FY19 kicked off, Colombia's newly elected President Ivan Duque had only been in office for two months and was focused on assembling his new national teams, agendas, and priorities. Among these priorities, Colombia's human rights defender and social leader crisis became a key issue demanding urgent action. Following a high-level government roundtable meeting with civil society held in Apartadó in August 2018, national government commitments were defined through the signing of the *Pacto por La Vida*. This broad framework set the blueprint for the Colombian government's approach towards improving protection conditions for human right defenders and social leaders while aiming to gain control of the spiraling rates of homicides and threats targeting this group.

Building on the previous two years of positive work carried out to support government institutions and civil society on advancing human rights agendas, HRA was well positioned to continue providing technical support in the areas of promotion of human rights; prevention of human rights violations and response to human rights violations. **The human rights defender and social leader crisis impacting Colombia deeply defined HRA's efforts throughout the year.** From the several commitments made through the *Pacto por la Vida*, HRA joined the inter-institutional coordination effort comprised of leading institutions such as the Attorney General's Office (AGO), the Ombudsman's Office, the Inspector General's Office (IGO), the Comptroller's Office, and public security offices to address the crisis. A key initiative which HRA has taken a lead on during this past year has been **supporting the National Protection Unit (NPU) in re-engineering its protection program.** As the primary government entity responsible for the issuance of protection measures to at-risk persons in Colombia, the NPU has been at the forefront of this national plight but has largely fallen short in providing adequate and timely measures for the diverse needs and risks that have emerged in Colombia's postaccord phase.

To this end, HRA worked closely alongside the NPU to develop a strategy that will be implemented in the coming year and will review, adjust and adopt new and improved protection measures which appropriately respond to varying security and cultural contexts and needs of differentiated at-risk populations. In addition, HRA placed emphasis on ensuring the reduction of evaluation and processing times to provide rapid protection measures. Pushing boundaries using innovation, HRA worked with the NPU to bring about the **2019 Campus Party hackathon, invigorating new tech-based solutions to mitigate the wave of threats and violence targeting human rights defenders and social leaders** by improving communications and collaboration between affected communities and responsible institutions. This unique and inspiring opportunity bridged young technically skilled individuals with threatened human rights defenders, thus building new avenues of hope and problem-solving. From this challenge, two winning teams emerged and are currently developing their technical proposals based on strengthening self-protection capacities.

Beyond this, HRA was perseverant in delivering the tools and know-how to at-risk groups in departments with some of the highest levels of violence faced by human right defenders and social leaders in Colombia. For this reason, HRA prioritized the departments of Antioquia, Cauca, Córdoba, Caquetá and Tolima to lead trainings using its consolidated **self-protection and protection methodologies to empower 7 at-risk civil society organizations (CSOs).** These trainings raise awareness and develop risk analysis capacity, development of self-protection tools, communications strategies, State protection mechanisms and much more. These efforts were further fortified by HRA's grant support to 4 at-risk CSOs. HRA's rapid response and expertise on these issues proved critical particularly when northern Cauca's security situation escalated in the latter half of FY19 resulting in a series of threats and attacks against human rights defenders and

social leaders, some of whom directly work with HRA. HRA reinforced its efforts to provide individual and collective self-protection and prevention-oriented support through grants and direct assistance.

Throughout these developments, HRA remained steadfast in maintaining its clear vision of establishing longer-term foundations for peace and human rights protection by its continuing support to the **Human Rights and Peacebuilding schools** established and initiated in 2018 with HRA support in Meta and Tolima. In line with this initiative, the **HRA-led human rights diploma courses** continued to train public officials and social leaders during the year while also including new groups/sectors such as youth, *consejo comunitario* leaders from the Pacific region, women leaders, and indigenous leaders. In total, these efforts resulted in 391 trained individuals prepared to effectively advocate and carry out duties advancing human rights and peacebuilding throughout eleven municipalities.

With a keen focus on sustainability, HRA's support contributed to the finalization and formalization of **three new departmental human rights and peacebuilding public policies in Antioquia, Tolima and Meta**. In addition, due to HRA technical assistance, **the development of two new public policies in Cauca and Córdoba made considerable advances towards their approvals** to be determined in the coming fiscal year. These invaluable instruments enshrine departmental government responsibilities, actions, and commitments from 2019-2034 in deepening the institutionalization and culture of human rights and peacebuilding in close partnership with civil society. HRA played a central role in developing and preparing all the strategic, technical and procedural steps to formalize these decrees and public policies to ensure robust human rights and peacebuilding content. With these in effect, these departments, which have been deeply affected by Colombia's conflict, also secure the implementation of key HRA-supported initiatives such as the Human Rights and Peacebuilding Schools and other key partnerships such as the Human Rights Observatory in Tolima and Antioquia.

By producing crucial supportive messaging to champion human rights and peacebuilding in the regions, **HRA's communications strategy drove forward dynamic and mobilizing communications campaigns** using radio programming, social media, and public dialogue platforms. HRA strengthened the capacities of at-risk CSOs and communities through critical communications skills and strategies to promote human rights and peacebuilding issues while also breaking down barriers of stigmatization plaguing human rights defenders and social leaders working in Colombia's most conflict-affected regions. At the same time, HRA's commitment to journalists and investigatory coverage of human rights violations proved invaluable through grant support it provided to report on and publish cutting-edge articles and video production highlighting some of Colombia's most pressing human rights and peacebuilding issues.

Empowering youth to become human rights promoters played a central role in HRA's promotion of human rights strategy throughout the year. Due to HRA-supported human rights trainings, 2,386 youth obtained comprehensive knowledge and tools to advance human rights and peacebuilding within their communities. In addition, HRA consolidated key public mechanisms such as youth platforms that serve newly trained youth as a safe place where they can voice their opinions, set agendas, organize themselves, and exercise advocacy and leadership. A key highlight of these efforts were the 11 mayoral candidate forums organized by youth platforms in which they presented youth agendas advocating for youth needs, rights, and proposals to secure candidate and future administration commitments.

HRA's comprehensive gender-based violence (GBV) strategy also made significant inroads during the year by raising awareness and strengthening GBV victims' access to quality support services and assistance through institutions such as family commissaries and the Ombudsman's Office *duplas*. HRA's ongoing **technical assistance to these entities as well as gender-focused sub-committees and roundtables maintained a local focus of governments and civil society on reducing GBV rates and advancing justice for victims**. HRA's technical assistance to the Attorney General's Office (AGO) also played a pivotal role in **bringing GBV cases to light and pushing them through the justice system which**

historically has faced high rates of impunity. By working to foster stronger ties between national-level AGO offices and local-level prosecutors, HRA is bridging the needed support and communication to draw attention and action to GBV cases which are often overlooked and forgotten. HRA's grants disbursements to local CSOs throughout the year are **empowering women with GBV knowledge and tools** and have created a dynamic momentum of GBV prevention and response throughout HRA priority municipalities where these violations often remain in anonymity.

HRA's close working relationship with the AGO also resulted in advancing a robust **case processing and prioritization strategy with a honed focus on threats targeting human rights defenders, social leaders, and land claimants.** With HRA support from previous years, the prosecution of homicide cases against this targeted group has made substantial progress. However, threats have significantly escalated in the past year requiring urgent attention. In coordination with USAID's Justice for a Sustainable Peace (JSP) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), HRA's consultants began guiding the process to transfer knowledge and capacities to regional prosecutors on improved methods to analyze and process threat cases while establishing crime patterns as they relate to illegal armed group activity. With a strong commitment to identify and prosecute intellectual authors, rather than simply tracking material authors of crime, HRA's support to the AGO is making meaningful inroads in its fight against impunity.

Over the course of the year, new emergent human rights issues have arisen. As a result, HRA began to more closely examine the continual wave of Venezuelan migrants and the increase in killings and threats against community action board leaders (JAC by its Spanish acronym). By HRA's annual strategic review session held in June 2019, HRA began to contemplate re-entering Norte de Santander given the overwhelming and concerning rates of human rights violations reported. Given their relevance with regard to HRA's objectives and scope of work, these pressing issues have since been incorporated into HRA's next annual work plan.

In conclusion, the transition in power at the national level over the past year has etched a new narrative regarding Colombia's peacebuilding and human rights agenda. This has been deeply shaped by the ongoing public security phenomena in concentrated regional areas where HRA operates. The rapid growth of illegal armed groups in historically conflict-affected regions placed urgent demands upon the national government to reduce and mitigate risks targeting vulnerable populations, most notably human rights defenders and social leaders. On an encouraging note though, according to figures from the Office of the Presidential Advisor for Human Rights and International Affairs along with national human rights organizations, **homicides of human rights defenders and social leaders have shown a considerable improvement since late 2018. 2019 figures indicate that 52 human rights defenders and social leaders were killed as opposed to the 114 that were reported in 2018.**

While gaining a firm grasp on security in affected areas of the country has largely eluded national efforts, **the importance of including civil society actors in developing sustainable stability strategies was underscored.** Nonetheless, at the same time, a growing sense of skepticism by civil society regarding the government's commitments in advancing peace accord agreements and guaranteeing their human rights became increasingly pronounced throughout the year evidenced by several social mobilizations reaching violent levels. Northern Cauca, for example, became a central stage during the year where these dynamics played out.

Recognizing these complex and sensitive dynamics, HRA concentrated efforts to amplify opportunities of collaboration, learning, and dialogue between civil society and the government. In this context, youth, women, ethnic communities, journalists, public officials, and institutional leaders remained at the center of HRA's strategy as protagonists and advocates in forging inroads towards the guarantee of human rights and peacebuilding in some of Colombia's most critical regions. As the country prepares to set new sights in the

upcoming local elections in October 2019, HRA's efforts in FY19 can account for strengthened systems, mechanisms, and public policies dedicated to advancing human rights and peacebuilding in Colombia.

II. Fiscal Year 2019 Results

A. Activity Components

Component 1: Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights

During FY19, HRA drove forward a dynamic and robust strategy to promote a culture of human rights and peacebuilding throughout its 40 priority municipalities during a year in which these related principles and norms remained largely misunderstood, un-represented, and some in cases under attack. In this context, **HRA's promotion component remained deeply committed to fostering opportunities to create and strengthen mechanisms to advance and complement human rights and peacebuilding agendas as they related to each region's social, economic, political and security contexts.** As such, HRA concentrated efforts to train public officials, empower human rights defenders and social leaders, mobilize youth, and fortify the necessary public policies and supporting mechanisms to guide communities towards individual and collective cultural transformations by which violence and human rights violations are substituted by reconciliation, non-violent co-existence, and greater acceptance of political, social, and cultural diversity.

A leading HRA achievement during FY19 was the **signing of human rights and peacebuilding public policies in three priority departments: Antioquia, Tolima, and Meta.** After more than a year's worth of advocacy and planning efforts, HRA, in partnership with departmental government leaders, led the design, development and ultimately the approval processes of these comprehensive policies. Through these invaluable instruments, these historically conflict-affected departments today operate with defined strategic action lines established to be in effect over the next 15 years. These policies are **critical tools in holding departments accountable for prioritizing, developing and implementing human rights and peacebuilding agendas inclusive of its diverse populations and mindful of the ways in which human rights violations have a differentiated impact on them.** HRA's methodologies ensured that departmental civil society sectors had opportunities to participate, review and add their inputs during the draft phases towards contributing diverse perspectives and experiences. HRA was also responsible for raising awareness of the policies once they were passed throughout HRA priority municipalities and advocating for their incorporation and implementation through local plans and mechanisms. By the end of FY19, HRA was similarly advancing draft policies to approval phases in the departments of Cauca and Córdoba.

During FY19, HRA **prioritized training 229 public officials and 9,828 civil society leaders** through informal education strategies such as the human rights and peacebuilding schools, diploma courses and technical support to municipal and regional human rights mechanisms. HRA was instrumental in **supporting the implementation of the human rights and peacebuilding schools in Meta and Tolima,** which were established in the previous FY. During this past year, first and second cohorts of these consolidated training modules were implemented in both departments. These schools represent the joint collaborations made by HRA, departmental government leadership, social leaders, and academia. The comprehensive curricula offered to students included in-depth and technical knowledge on issues such as citizen participation processes; gender and differential foci; peacebuilding with a regional focus; Colombia's peace accord; historical memory, and many other related salient issues. These curricula were carefully crafted with HRA technical support to reflect and respond to key human rights and peacebuilding issues and challenges identified by regional government and social leadership. In Meta, 18 enrolled students initiated the school's second edition in two new municipalities of Vista Hermosa and Uribe. In Tolima, the School's second edition initiated by the end of FY19 in Ortega and Rioblanco with 47 enrolled students, respectively.

By the end of FY19, HRA had also trained 185 human rights defenders in the peacebuilding diploma courses throughout 9 priority municipalities across six departments. This dynamic initiative spearheaded with the *Escuela Superior de Administración Pública* (ESAP by its Spanish acronym) consists of a **120-hour course including 80 hours of in-class sessions and 40 via virtual sessions which provide comprehensive knowledge and skills to increase leadership and advocacy capacities of human rights defenders and peacebuilders**. Throughout the year, HRA and ESAP continued to work on improving its curriculum to ensure updated and relevant course content, always mindful of tailoring trainings to respond to local contexts. Participant classes were broadened to include youth, ethnic leaders, members from more rural areas, and *campesinos*. In fact, **specifically three diploma courses were tailored and implemented just for youth**. With this training, graduate participants have gone on to effectively serve in public service to advance human rights agendas including in local government offices, local human rights councils, youth platforms, and CSOs among others. Similarly, HRA's **ongoing technical support was a mainstay for municipal human rights councils, or similar local mechanisms**, which are responsible for developing and implementing local human rights plans, strategies and initiatives to raise awareness and defend human rights and peacebuilding. As will be further discussed, outcomes from these mechanisms included communications campaigns, recognitions of commemorative days, and other informational and interactive events fostering a culture human rights and peacebuilding.

To support the Ombudsman's Office mission of promoting and defending human rights, HRA led a creative initiative to increase knowledge of human rights and peacebuilding through the **design, production, and implementation of six human rights-focused educational/recreational games targeting youth and the broader community**. The six themes addressed by these games include: ethnic rights, *campesino* economic rights, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, historical memory, victims' reparations, and citizen participation rights. With HRA support, **1,800 board games** were produced. Ultimately, these board games were introduced to three schools in 19 municipalities (**a total of 55 schools**) covering HRA's seven priority departments. The schools concentrate in areas with high levels of conflict victims, underscoring the importance of this type of support from the Ombudsman's Office. HRA support also ensured that selected groups received **train-the-trainer courses including public officials, teachers, and CSO representatives** to properly and effectively use the games.

HRA's youth strategy during FY19 mobilized and trained 1.126 youth human rights promoters in 16 municipalities across 5 departments. Through eighteen grants, 14 tailored human rights diploma courses, and 22 HRA-supported annual student human rights Olympics competitions (in Córdoba, Antioquia and Cauca), Colombian youth were provided with new opportunities to engage, learn, participate and advocate for youth rights. Through music, arts, dance, and culture, these projects were all designed to educate and train youth on a wide range of human rights and peacebuilding concepts; advocacy and communications skills; and leadership in order to prepare them as human rights promoters in their communities. Notable, the HRA-supported student human rights and peacebuilding Olympics competitions expanded to include one new department (Puerto Libertador, Córdoba) and four new municipalities in departments that held them previously (Caldono, Cauca; Puerto Libertador, Córdoba; and Segovia, Cacerés, Ituango, and Tarazá).

Empowered by human rights and advocacy trainings, **youth went on to establish, activate, and participate on 16 municipal youth platforms**. These youth platforms, established by national law, provide safe spaces for youth to participate in developing and implementing youth development projects that contribute to their communities. In addition, in some of these municipalities, 27 youth participated as appointed members to their municipal human rights peace councils, gender roundtables, victims' roundtables or serving as youth liaisons in 12 municipalities across Caquetá, Meta, Tolima, Córdoba, and Nariño. In addition, HRA's youth strategy resulted in the **establishment of 17 youth networks in Caquetá, Antioquia, and Meta**. A key highlight that took place this year building on newly gained advocacy and mobilization skills via youth platforms were the 13 **mayoral candidate forums that they organized in**

five departments (Córdoba, Antioquia, Tolima, Meta and Caquetá). At these community-wide events, youth presented their proposals and agendas to candidates while fostering dialogue on human rights and community needs. The events finalized with signed social pacts with the majority of the candidates who committed to including youth voices, proposals, and ideas in future local development plans should they be elected. Also notable and resulting from the participation of HRA-supported youth platforms was the development and drafting of Caquetá's first departmental youth public policy. Building on the momentum generated by youth networks and re-activation of youth platforms, an HRA consultant provided integral technical support and guidance in engaging key stakeholders towards the finalization of this policy. By the end of FY19, the policy document was awaiting formal approval signing by the governor anticipated in early October 2019.

Following on HRA's commitment to go beyond providing essential knowledge and skills to promote a cultural change towards peacebuilding and human rights, HRA supported trainings and opportunities that delved deeper to transform individual and collective attitudes and behaviors based on conflict resolution learnings and practices. With these crucial tools, HRA empowers human rights defenders and other community leaders **to integrate, adopt and practice non-violent approaches as an alternative to violence in their communities.**

Through support to the *Universidad de Javeriana de Cali*, HRA launched an **innovative project fostering social dialogue and promotion of human rights and peacebuilding engaging diverse sectors from northern Cauca.** These prioritized sectors include indigenous communities, Afro-Colombian communities, and *campesinos* who, in addition to being one of the most disproportionately affected groups of the post-accord's phase violence, have experience inter-cultural conflicts. To mitigate these conflicts, this project will also include the participation of public and private sector actors. Through **human rights trainings using gender, ethnic, and regional focuses, conflict resolution capacities will be fostered, complemented by opportunities of facilitated social dialogues premised on analyzing ethics, values, and multiculturalism.** This project allows for the self-examination of differences and commonalities of these diverse sectors towards building bridges of greater understanding and collaboration to advance shared visions and goals related to more effectively advancing human rights and peacebuilding agendas. By the end of FY19, **the first diploma course module was carried out for 23 participants, of which 74% were women and 48% were youth. Participants represented 19 indigenous and Afro-Colombian CSOs as well as campesinos from northern Cauca.** These communities also contributed to developing the diploma course's curriculum to more accurately reflect the needs and challenges faced by leaders and communities based on their territorial contexts.

Similarly, to strengthen the important work carried out by *personeros*, HRA grantee *National Federation of Personeros* (FENALPER) provided a transformational values training led by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) contributing to **the strengthening of ethical leadership and entrepreneurial capacities** rooted in driving forward human rights and peacebuilding in Colombia. Participation included 19 social entrepreneur winners from the annual RECON competition, also supported by HRA grantee FENALPER.

Component 2: Prevention of Human Rights Violations

Colombia's human rights defender and social leader situation predominated the human rights and peacebuilding agendas, forums, and strategies throughout FY19. As prioritized in President Duque's initial months, national protection and prevention efforts towards reducing human rights violations throughout affected regions gained some positive traction particularly with regards to a respite in the rising trend of homicide rates of human rights defenders and social leaders transpiring from 2016-2018. Homicides rose from 61 in 2016, to 84 in 2017, and peaking to 114 in 2018. By the end of FY19, according to the latest Office of the Presidential Advisor for Human Rights and International Affairs, homicide rates dropped to

52 in 48 municipalities as opposed to 75 municipalities where homicides occurred in 2018. Nonetheless, Colombia has lost a total of 311 human rights defenders in the past 3.5 years (since January 2016). Perhaps more concerningly are the rapidly mounting threats made to this targeted group in the past year.

Accordingly, and having followed these trends and patterns through close HRA monitoring, HRA bolstered its prevention component strategies appealing to the urgent needs, concerns, and dynamics faced in every HRA priority department. At the national level, **HRA teamed with the NPU to build strategies to re-engineer their individual protection program.** The overwhelming nature of the phenomenon targeting human rights defenders and social leaders deeply challenged NPU capacities to process, review, and issue appropriate protection measures for the differentiated contexts, scenarios, targeted individuals, and levels of threats in an efficient manner. To this end, HRA worked with the NPU throughout the year to devise a project which, following USAID approval in June 2019, initiated promptly in forming two teams of six experts each to improve and expedite the NPU's protection request processing structure.

By the end of FY19, with HRA support, terms of references were finalized to begin recruitment in October 2019. These teams will lead a technical study to review strengths, weaknesses, challenges, bottlenecks, and resources of the protection program's intake and evaluation processes. This would mark the first steps towards modernizing and streamlining the protection program. Ultimately, the **NPU's protection program will not only improve its time efficiency, it will also improve the quality of protection measures to more adequately suit at-risk individuals facing new postaccord security dynamics.** Stepping away from one-size-fits all model, differential foci considering gender, community, cultural, regional, and other aspects will be integrated in approaches to ensure tailored and more effective delivery of protection measures. Improved measures aim to satisfactorily meet multiple and multi-dimensional needs and risks that human rights defenders and social leaders face to provide more realistic and useful protection beyond cell phones, bullet-proof vests or armored cars.

To reinvigorate more traditional problem-solving approaches addressing the human rights defender and social leaders' situation, HRA introduced technological innovation into the formula of project design. In June 2019, **HRA partnered with the NPU and IBM to support Campus Party 2019 also known as the largest technological fair in Colombia,** inviting over 5,000 techies, programmers, web designers and others. By organizing two technological-based hackathon challenges, HRA raised the stakes for interested "*campuseros*" to put their expertise to work towards saving the lives of human rights defenders throughout the country. At this 4-day 24/7 event, HRA brought in threatened human rights defenders from northern Cauca to mentor and field questions about the realities and challenges brought on by the crisis. In addition, IBM experts, the National Police representatives, NPU officials, and other prevention experts offered their insights and knowledge as mentors to enrich the 95 contestants (29 teams) who accepted the challenges.

At the end of the four days, two champions teams emerged. **The winning proposals included a prototype of an early warnings system using encrypted messaging emitted through FM frequencies to nearby early warning system network teams.** This method contemplates security and privacy issues as well as accessing and providing coverage for rural remote areas where close to 80% of homicides against human rights defenders and social leaders have taken place from 2016-2018. In addition, this app provides a one-stop user-friendly web portal facilitating users to fill out NPU protection measure request forms online. **The second winning proposal uses virtual reality tools adapted to community contexts and which will include community participation to design its audiovisual contents.** By the end of FY19, HRA and the NPU continued to support the development phases of these proposals which are expected to finalize by February 2020. Ultimately, these tools will be shared with relevant institutions and at-risk communities towards facilitating communications and information sharing to reduce and address risks in a timely fashion.

By bringing together two key institutional partners such as the NPU and National Police to the table on advancing prevention efforts, **HRA initiated a project that builds prevention capacities while bolstering community and institutional relationships.** In years prior, HRA had worked with the National Police to develop a collective self-protection guide handbook for police officer training purposes as a means to reduce risks faced by at-risk communities. This guide was designed to train police officers, with a focus on regional police officers, to carry out dialogues and workshops using the guide to strengthen prevention capacities with at-risk communities. This past year, building on its close working relationship with NPU on prevention and protection issues, HRA linked these two partners to further bolster the handbook's content and use. The NPU contributed to the handbook with additional prevention and protection content and by the end of FY19 the handbook was in its final review phase. This tool has been designed **to train both police officers and NPU officials to then train and work with priority communities/groups on these issues.** In this manner, institutions also proactively engage with and build trust with communities from regions where institutional presence has historically been lacking.

During FY19, HRA continued to provide key technical assistance to the Ombudsman's Office through the engagement of **two expert consultants dedicated to supporting the Early Warning System (EWS) in priority regions.** The first expert consultant was based out of Cauca and played a prominent role in technical assistance and led the coordination efforts oriented at context and risk analysis. These efforts resulted in the **issuance of four pre-alert notifications to the EWS.** These alerts helped to raise awareness and mobilize prevention efforts and recommendations for at-risk organizations and HRA grantee partners such as ACONC, ASOM, and PCN from northern Cauca. The alerts indicated increased risk of homicides and forced recruitment. The expert contributed directly to Risk Evaluation and Measures Recommendation Commission (CERREM, by its Spanish acronym) sessions and the alerts served to activate an Inter-sectorial Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings (CIPRAT, by its Spanish acronym) session to review risk scenarios and actions.

A second expert consultant, carrying out similar duties, was assigned to Caquetá as of July 2019. Since then, **the consultant has conducted humanitarian missions to Cartagena del Chairá and San Vicente del Caguán assisting in documentation of threats cases and reported crimes related to the elections.** The consultant documented a forced recruitment and illegal use of children and adolescent case in Cartagena del Chairá and contributed to reporting on the homicide of a social leader in this municipality which took place despite the issuance of an early warning. The consultant also reported on an act of forced recruitment and illegal use of children and adolescents that took place in Doncella following the early warning on this threat. **These latter reports indicate a lack in action taken by responsible institutions to issued warnings.**

Fundamental to HRA's prevention component strategy remained the empowerment of CSOs which fearlessly drive forward human rights and peacebuilding projects at the local level, where state presence has often been highly limited or non-existent. Due to the latter factor, CSOs can play a critical and unique role in providing orientation, assistance, and information related to human rights and peacebuilding in their respective regions. As proponents of the peace accord's implementation, many of the HRA grantee CSOs have become prime targets of threats and other aggressions.

During FY19, **HRA awarded eight grants to at-risk CSOs carrying out self-protection projects in departments such as Cauca, Caquetá, and Antioquia (Bajo Cauca sub-region).** Following targeted attacks against Afro-Colombian leaders in March 2019 in northern Cauca, HRA reinforced grant support

to this region including direct technical assistance to ACONC. ACONC is a CSO from northern Cauca representing the 42 *consejo comunitarios* of this embattled sub-region and one of the targeted victims of the May 2019 attack. Other grantees included *Red Caquetá Paz*, *Cabildo Indígena Misak de Ovejas Siberia*, *Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca* (ACIN), *Corporación Agencia Afro-Colombiana Hileros* (PCN), E.A. Consultores, *Caribe Afirmativo*, *Instituto Popular de Capacitación*, and *Asociación de Municipal de Mujeres de Buenos Aires* (ASOM). These CSOs represent or work with communities/groups which have historically been marginalized and largely live in rural and more remote areas of Colombia where State presence is limited or non-existent propagating vulnerability levels of these at-risk groups.

These grants focused on strengthening self-protection capacities through trainings on risk analysis concepts, self-protection tools, and strategies. Through these grants, at-risk communities **raised their awareness, both at the individual and collective levels, to formulate self-protection plans and protocols modifying actions and behaviors towards reducing risks taking into account their regional security contexts.** CSOs also worked on **strengthening advocacy and communications skills** to enhance their capacities to effectively document, present, and engage responsible institutions to mobilize actions collaboratively. As a result, 1025 people from CSOs were trained on protection and self-protection including indigenous authorities, Afro-Colombian leaders, Afro-Colombian women, local CSOs leaders and LGBTI leaders.

Further fortifying targeted CSOs and groups, HRA developed and implemented its own self-protection training modules reaching 150 at-risk human rights defenders, social leaders and representatives from at-risk communities from Caquetá, Córdoba and Tolima during FY19. Participants gained invaluable safety and self-protection tools and strategies to mitigate risks faced in their daily line of work. CSOs representing at-risk groups such as *campesinos*, ethnic communities, environmentalists, JACs and others participated in these comprehensive trainings. In addition, HRA engaged a self-protection expert consultant to accompany and reinforce HRA grantees carrying out self-protection projects. By the end of FY19, this expert consultant had held 5 workshops for 122 members of CSOs such as *Cabildo Indígena Misak de Ovejas Siberia*, ACONC, and ASOM providing in-depth insight and feedback as they design tailored self-protection tools and plans.

HRA's technical support to regional prevention and protection mechanisms also played an integral role in holding departmental and local governments accountable to responding to the surge of risks affecting priority regions facing a disproportionate amount of violence related to postaccord security dynamics. During FY19, **HRA played a significant support role to regional guarantees roundtables in Antioquia, Córdoba, and Cauca.** As will be reported in greater detail in the Regional Section of this report, HRA's ongoing technical support to this critical mechanism resulted in concrete initiatives **advancing the ongoing analysis and response to risks and security of vulnerable communities in respective departments.** These inter-institutional roundtables serve as a primary departmental meeting platform convening human

ASOM FIGHTS FOR AND GAINS PROTECTION FOR AT-RISK AFRO-COLOMBIAN WOMEN LEADERS

With HRA support empowered Afro-Colombian women leaders in northern Cauca used newly gained technical and advocacy skills to work with the NPU to strengthen protection measures, with a gender focus, for highly at-risk Afro-Colombian women leaders such as Francia Marquéz and ASOM director, Clemencia Carabalí. Grant support also resulted in organizing trainings, with a gender focus, including security detail personnel to improve protection of women human rights defenders.

rights defender and social leader organizations to dialogue and strategize to address often urgent needs and developments. These roundtables also act as principal catalyst in coordinating institutional response efforts and departmental *rutas* to address identified risks and problem areas.

In all three roundtables, for example, HRA played an instrumental role in designing and advancing **departmental no stigmatization against human rights defenders and social leaders communications campaign** set to officially roll-out in early FY20. Additionally, and as will also be further discussed in the Regional Sections, HRA's ongoing technical assistance to prevention, protection, and guarantee of non-repetition (PPGNR) sub-committees in 24 municipalities ensures continual momentum and strategic planning to bolster prevention awareness, analysis and mitigation responses to ongoing risks.

HRA also addressed bolstering citizen security as an essential strategic framework to increase prevention capacities of local governments and institutions. To this end, HRA conducted studies in two of the country's most affected municipalities by the recent increased surge of violence: Briceño and Cauca, Antioquia. This one-year project finalized during FY19 resulting in **a comprehensive report which included six public policy recommendations oriented at the development of citizen security policies by local authorities**. In addition, HRA developed **a guide designed for community action board members entitled, "Mediation: A Tool to Resolve Community Conflicts."** This guide was specifically designed to address community action board issues and needs which have been affected by high levels of violence targeting social leaders. This guide gathers best practices derived from the 4 conflict resolution trainings led by HRA with the community action boards in Briceño and Cauca.

Component 3: Response to Human Rights Violations

In the fight against impunity during FY19, **HRA continued to work closely with Colombia's AGO targeting areas of human rights violations committed against human rights defenders and social leaders, women, LGBTI persons, and journalists**. Due to HRA's support to the AGO's Support for Citizen Security Investigation and Analysis Office (DAIASC by its Spanish acronym), a comprehensive analysis of homicide case reviews was carried out in the prioritized regions of Cauca, Putumayo, and Antioquia. Based on this rigorous study, HRA supported the development of the consolidated report of key findings entitled "Analysis on Homicides of Human Rights Defenders in Antioquia, Cauca, Putumayo and a National Quantitative Section- October 2012-August 2018." **The report findings provide the AGO with a crucial tool to bolster its case prioritization policy**. Moreover, the report **characterizes the phenomenon related to the homicide trends affecting human rights defenders based on cases advanced by the AGO**. It also identifies best practices and gaps regarding investigation processes for cases of homicides of human rights defenders. This work, in turn, aided in defining strategies for prosecutors to bolster their capacity efficiently advance these cases. The report also provides strategies to aid prosecutors in advancing cases at the regional level by considering social, economic, political, regional, and population-specific components to examine the nature of the victimization in each case. By the end of FY19, the AGO, with HRA support, reviewed 190 homicide cases from Antioquia, Cauca, and Putumayo resulting in defined strategies to move these cases forward.

This past year, the AGO reported some encouraging advances made in reducing impunity rates regarding homicide cases against human rights defenders and social leaders. The AGO stated that it **issued 33 conviction sentences, 55 charges, and 45 indictments out of the 302 cases** verified by the UN. These figures reflect positive outcomes resulting from implementation of its investigation and prosecution strategy which HRA continues to support with technical assistance.

Based on these experiences, the AGO identified a stronger need for assistance in the area of **investigating and prosecuting cases of threats against human rights defenders and social leaders**. Given the newer dynamics of illegal armed groups emerging in the post-accord phase, the AGO has struggled to take on the

mounting cases of threats, in part due to a lack of understanding of the phenomenon as it relates to the broad expansion of illegal armed groups which are not easily identifiable. **To date for 2019, the AGO has registered 4,702 reported threat cases against human rights defenders, social leaders, and former combatants. This figure represents a 30% increase as compared to the same reporting period in 2018. According to the AGO, the impunity rate for these cases has been 100%.**

To counter this, HRA, following consultations with JSP and UNOHCHR, initiated a response strategy with the AGO which is guided by five HRA expert consultants: a context and data analysis expert; gender focus expert; and victim and perpetrator characterization experts. Some of these consultants particularly focus on supporting the analysis of cases associated with the alleged perpetrators identified as the illegal armed group, *Águilas Negras*. With this support, the AGO is focusing on identifying bottlenecks and other barriers to improve their response capacities once these crimes are reported. As a result, the AGO is refining their urgent actions based on differentiated threat cases. In addition, **HRA's support focuses on improving analysis capacities, case prioritization, and case advancements by reviewing and identifying strengths and weaknesses of their current procedures.** With this support, prosecutors will be able to modify processes to improve case management from the initial reporting of a threat by a human rights defenders and social leader. HRA-supported experts will eventually work directly with regional prosecutors, as it did with the support provided in improving homicide cases in prioritized regions. By the end of FY19, the team had already initiated a field trip to Cauca.

Also due to HRA support, important inroads were achieved in bolstering technical capacities of AGO prosecutors both at the national and regional levels to **advance GBV investigation and prosecution of GBV cases with a focus on sexual violence and violence against LGBTI persons.** Through support to the AGO's DAIASC GBV team, HRA facilitated the deployment of national prosecutors and analysts dedicated to GBV cases to participate at local Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables or other local gender-focused mechanisms which convene key stakeholders to raise awareness and **push forward GBV case work seeking justice.** As a result, the AGO directly worked with these mechanisms gathering information and carrying out follow-up to advance cases in municipalities such as Florencia, Caquetá; Santander de Quilichao, Cauca; Caucasia, Antioquia and Tumaco, Nariño. Additionally, a **training was held for regional prosecutors and investigators from Florencia and Tumaco on GBV investigation guidelines and protocols.**

To further support the AGO's GBV working group, HRA engaged a consultant focused on **cases related to sexual exploitation of women, youth, and transgender persons.** This consultant, an attorney expert on gender issues, initiated ongoing strategic efforts to analyze related contexts and advance case prioritization. By the end of FY19, the consultant started drafting a report which will contribute to increasing prosecutor and investigator knowledge; the development of investigative initiatives; the issuance of early warnings on GBV crimes; and defining national procedural support strategies to address related cases.

Shifting to the AGO's request for assistance in further deepening their knowledge and expertise on LGBTI issues, **HRA engaged a consultant who developed an expert opinion document on prejudice-based crimes against LGBTI persons providing an analytical reference for judicial officers to better understand prejudice-based violent practices, signs, and patterns.** This tool was presented as part of legal files in cases of homicides committed against LGBTI persons to bolster clarifications of prejudice-based aggravated homicides. To date, prejudice or discrimination have not been considered in judicial decisions when it comes to victims with diverse sexual orientation or gender identity. In this sense, it is expected that future rulings in these types of cases will be emblematic. Additionally, HRA supported the AGO's DAIASC in carrying out **specialized trainings for 54 prosecutors and investigators dedicated to advancing GBV cases, including crimes against LGBTI persons.** Much of this work is premised on

the key consolidated findings and materials established in the HRA-supported Best Practices Guide for LGBTI Case Investigations developed in the previous year.

Also notable in FY19 was HRA’s significant contribution in **supporting strategic litigation through grants and direct assistance to CSOs advancing emblematic cases of violence against human rights defenders, GBV victims, and journalists.** During this past year, HRA’s support to key organizations such as the Colombian Commission of Jurists, Colombia Diversa, *Fundación para la Libertad de la Prensa*, *Red de Mujeres de Ibagué y del Tolima* (REMI), and *Casa de la Mujer*, resulted in strengthening capacities to prioritize, properly document, prepare evidence, navigate and ultimately advance cases through the necessary prosecutorial processes. In places like Tolima which has seen concerning spikes in GBV rates recently and where HRA grantee REMI operates, this support has resulted in the **provision of protection measures for 26 GBV victims.** Similarly, for other cases assisted by REMI, strategic litigation support has resulted in several convictions against GBV perpetrators. It’s worth noting that strategic litigation support can embody activities such as legal representation, case documentation, legal process accompaniment, and even psychosocial support. The following first table illustrates cases supported by HRA strategic litigation (Table 1) in the past year due to HRA grants, which have since closed, including a sample of highlighted impacts. The second table illustrates (Table 2) target number of cases to be supported by ongoing HRA grant and direct assistance.

Table 1. Cases Provided with Strategic Litigation due to HRA Grant Support

Grantee	Cases Assisted	Human Rights Violation/Issue	Highlight Impacts
Colombian Commission of Jurists	6 (ethnic organizations)	Forced disappearance Forced displacement Homicide	Declaration of crimes against humanity and an established link of violations to an identified responsible party.
REMI I	12	Femicide GBV Sexual violence Forced displacement	In one femicide case, an arrest warrant was issued. In other cases, protection measures were ordered for GBV victims. In two cases, dispossessed lands were returned to women.
Colombia Diversa	10 (LGBTI)	Femicide Forced displacement GBV	Ongoing legal representation of an emblematic femicide case (LGBTI)

Table 2. Target Number of Cases Supported by Strategic Litigation Initiated in FY19

Grantee	Target number of cases to be supported with strategic litigation	Department
REMI II	10- strategic litigation	Tolima
<i>Círculos de Estudios</i>	8- strategic litigation support 40- legal accompaniment 60- documented cases	Córdoba Antioquia Meta
FLIP	2- strategic litigation	Bogotá and Tumaco
Direct Assistance		

<i>Casa de la Mujer</i>	5- strategic litigation 15- legal accompaniment	Caquetá
<i>Colectiva Justicia Mujer</i>	5- strategic litigation 5- legal accompaniment	Antioquia

Beyond this, HRA grantees such as REMI have been a strong advocate for women in Tolima’s municipalities of Chaparral, Ortega and Rioblanco where it has championed GBV prevention trainings with Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables and raising awareness among municipal governor secretaries, personerías, family commissaries, and local prosecutors. Complementing these efforts in Tolima is HRA grantee *Red de Mujeres Chaparralunas* which **works with local grassroots CSOs to provide organizational capacity building focused on GBV prevention through trainings and psychosocial accompaniment.** In addition to empowering women to understand and implement critical tools such as GBV *rutas*, this grant will work with women to **identify GBV cases to be further referred to REMI to receive the abovementioned strategic litigation support.**

HRA also provided crucial technical assistance to one of Colombia’s most vulnerable populations, journalists, who are dedicated to reinforcing human rights, democracy and peacebuilding through the protection of freedom of press. **In 2019 alone, HRA grantee FLIP reports 410 journalists were victims of a wide array of violations committed against them namely, threats.** Other violations include lack of access to information, legal harassment, homicide, verbal harassment, stigmatization and many others. During FY19, HRA awarded FLIP a second grant to carry out important **human rights trainings to regional journalists to improve their capacities in covering human rights and peacebuilding issues.** In addition, FLIP is working closely with the NPU to improve their response and protection measures for at-risk journalists. FLIP also began providing strategic litigation to two emblematic cases involving attacks and homicides against journalists.

Similarly, HRA also invested in building CSO organizational response capacities such as CCJ which worked with five human rights defender CSOs from Tolima, Meta and Córdoba to identify risks and develop skills to effectively advocate their needs in engaging key institutions such as the Ombudsman’s Office, Ministry of Interior and the AGO to process their cases. CSOs supported included indigenous community, environmental and *campesino* CSOs. In Nariño, HRA grantee *Consultoría para los derechos humanos y el desplazamiento* (CODHES) also empowered and provided **advocacy capacities to indigenous and Afro-Colombian women from Barbacoas, Tumaco and Francisco Pizarro through tailored trainings.** With a focus on GBV issues, these trainings providing them with fundamental knowledge and tools to strengthen organizational capacities, 5 women CSOs were strengthened and increased their awareness on GBV response processes and mechanisms to access and carry out follow-up to advance cases. One key highlight took place in Barbacoas where women from 32 indigenous reservations collectively established the first Awá Women’s Permanent Committee. This committee is comprised of women leaders from their communities who serve as liaisons, carry out promotion of human rights initiatives, and assist on GBV cases which are brought forward in coordination with the *Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá* (UNIPA) UNIPA’s Women and Family Advisor.

B. Gender and Vulnerable Populations

During FY19, HRA’s support to two key institutional partners in the fight to reduce GBV rates, particularly at the regional level, proved instrumental in strengthening GBV prevention capacities. This past year, **HRA engaged seven psychosocial experts to support family commissaries in HRA priority municipalities** of San Vicente del Caguán (Caquetá), Tumaco (Nariño), Chaparral, Rioblanco (Tolima), Cauca, Cáceres (Antioquia), and Montelibano (Córdoba). With this added necessary support, family commissaries assisted 134 GBV cases while also attending to 363 requests for assistance. Additionally, with this support, family

commissaries carried out 37 house calls, 49 individual psychosocial evaluations and 22 GBV and human rights trainings.

Further bolstering institutional GBV capacities, **HRA engaged five legal and psychosocial experts as part of *duplas* in the departments of Caquetá, Tolima and one specifically to support Antioquia's Bajo Cauca sub-region.** *Duplas* provide crucial legal orientation and psychosocial support at the local level while also fostering inter-institutional response on GBV cases. **Due to *dupla* support in the past year, 122 GBV victims have been assisted in Caquetá and 116 in Tolima. Caucasia's *dupla*, via HRA support, initiated in 2019 and has since assisted on 56 GBV cases.** *Duplas* have also played a significant role in accompanying community GBV awareness raising initiatives as well as leading human rights trainings oriented at women and LGBTI persons from various communities and surrounding municipalities.

One key highlight this year has been the *dupla* support and advocacy efforts made to strengthen transgender CSO capacities to carry out advocacy with the Ombudsman's Office. HRA together with the Ombudsman's Office worked to improve working relationships and communication between this group to improve the protection of their rights, which too often are dismissed or overlooked due to lack of knowledge by both parties. To this end, **HRA provided technical and financial support to carry out a training with the Red Comunitaria Trans de Bogotá and the *duplas* from Tolima and Caquetá.** Transgender men and women in Colombia remain a particularly invisible population and are more likely to seek assistance from within their own formal and informal networks. For this reason, working with, and strengthening transgender advocacy networks such as this one, serves to raise the visibility of transgender issues, as well as improve access and information to services and assistance for victims of LGBTI rights violations.

It should be noted that HRA's complementary and strategically positioned *dupla* and family commissary supports in Caucasia, Antioquia; Tolima; and Caquetá has ensured maximized institutional coordination in these departments. At the regional level, they have worked together to activate GBV *rutas* and join forces to advance human rights promotion throughout communities. *Duplas* in both Tolima and Caquetá have played a more prominent role in Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables as well as trained its public officials on carrying out responsibilities with a gender and human rights focus.

HRA provided important support to the Ombudsman's Office Delegate for Women and Gender Affairs this year to draft and launch this institution's first GBV report. The launching of this national report was fittingly presented to the public on March 8, 2019 in commemoration of International Women's Day. This inaugural report presents the **country's current human rights situation impacting women and LGBTI persons and the Ombudsman's Office's response efforts led by the *duplas* throughout the country.** It also provides **recommendations to public entities with respect to the prevention of GBV and discrimination, response to victims and the promotion of human rights.** HRA not only provided technical support in developing and publishing the report, but it also supported its release event carried out in Bogotá which gathered diverse national authorities, social organizations, and media coverage.

HRA was also a leader in working with the Ombudsman's Office Delegate for Women and Gender Affairs to develop an **internal response to sexual harassment in the workplace *ruta* for the Ombudsman's Office.** With technical assistance and a methodology from Chemonics International, a participatory training session was held including regional ombudsman officials along with experts from the different Ombudsman Office delegate offices. The *ruta* was adopted by the end of FY19 and will be formally presented to commemorate the November 25th week of women's rights.

Due to HRA's commitment to fully integrate a gender focus in institutional practice, HRA aligned itself with the National Police to carry out a training in August 2019, to police cadets at the Gabriel González Police Academy in Tolima. This is the second of this type of training HRA has offered to police cadets, the first was provided at the end of FY18. Through the training of 196 police cadets, HRA, in partnership with

the Police Academy, transferred key knowledge and skills regarding pertinent national laws and police procedure guidelines when dealing with GBV victims. Prior to these trainings, the National Police and HRA worked together to develop and refine the police *ruta* and print pocket-size resource booklets to issue to new cadets and police officers working throughout the regions to best respond in the moment to reported GBV cases with the GBV *ruta* and tools on hand. In addition, due to HRA support, two 3-minute animated training videos on the GBV response *rutas* were produced to complement police trainings.

During the year, **HRA awarded 4 grants and direct assistance to regional and national women's and LGBTI CSOs to promote and defend gender and diversity rights, raise the visibility of GBV, women's rights, and LGBTI rights among civil society and institutions; strengthen organizational capacities; and develop GBV *rutas* and other key tools.** Grantees led projects in all seven priority departments and included indigenous and Afro-Colombian community women, as well as made concerted efforts to reach women and LGBTI persons from more rural areas. By galvanizing local capacities and resources throughout priority regions, HRA's support served as a catalyst in maintaining a spotlight on GBV prevention through community-wide awareness raising events commemorating hallmark dates such as **International Women's Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.** These commemorative dates served as kick-off points for collaborative efforts between CSOs and local administrations.

Also due to HRA grants, **658 individuals, public officials and women leaders, developed and were trained on implementing GBV prevention and *rutas*** while another **659 GBV victims received psychosocial assistance.** In addition, 6 women's CSOs increased organizational capacities in areas such as administration, accounting, program management, internal control mechanisms, and organizational planning and structuring to better ensure their sustainability. During FY19, **9 women's CSOs strengthened their advocacy and communications capacities** to maximize their agenda potential in effectively identifying, presenting, and requesting the appropriate assistance and resources needed to reduce and respond to GBV in their municipalities. HRA also provided direct assistance to two national CSOs: *Casa de la Mujer* and *Colectivo Justicia Mujer* during FY19 to complement efforts in documenting GBV cases, providing legal and psychosocial assistance, and providing strategic litigation in Caquetá and Antioquia.

Central to HRA's gender strategy, HRA provided ongoing technical support to local and departmental gender rights promotion and prevention mechanisms such as Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables and other gender sub-committees. Through these mechanisms, HRA accompanied sessions while providing technical assistance and trainings to not only ensure the effective operation of these vital platforms, but to also equip members with the necessary understanding, knowledge and skills to perform their duties. During FY19, HRA's support was instrumental in **re-activating 30 Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables and developing or updating 9 GBV *rutas*.** In addition, due to HRA support, *ruta* materials such as brochures, booklets, and posters were created and distributed throughout HRA municipalities in departments such as Meta. In total, HRA supported 4 Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables which will be further detailed in the Regional Section of this report.

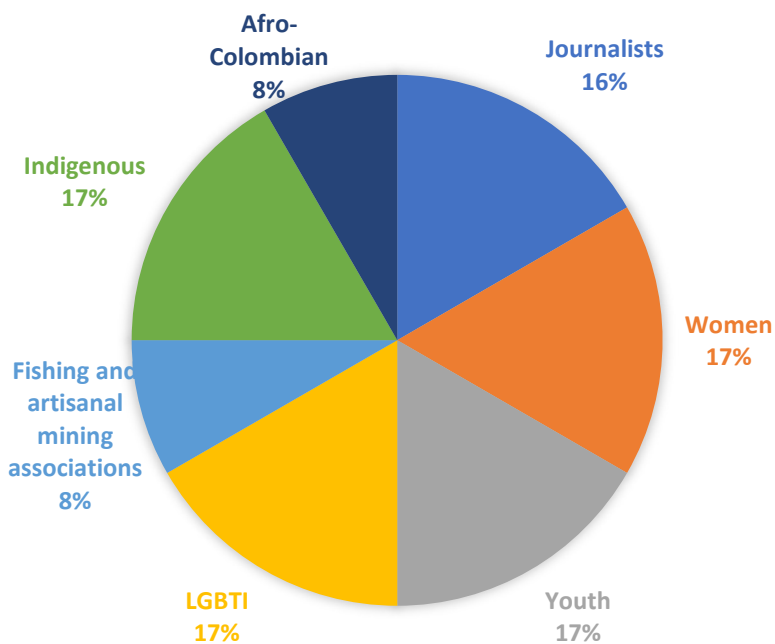
One key highlight and example of HRA's support to link regional and local institution efforts to bolster GBV response resulted in the collaboration with Antioquia's departmental judicial branch's gender committee and the departmental Elimination of Violence against Women roundtable. As a result, two GBV awareness trainings were carried out in Yolombó and Santa Rosa de Osos, Antioquia, remote municipalities with historically limited State presence. Through this training, **318 prosecutors, *personeros*, family commissaries, judges, and other related law enforcement responsible for GBV cases gained knowledge and increase capacities to ensure that the judicial processes and eventual court sentences incorporate a gender focus.** In northern Cauca, HRA collaborated with JSP, Regional Governance Activity (RGA), and Plan International to hold a human rights-focused forum for prospective mayoral candidates and invited CSOs from nine municipalities of northern Cauca, including HRA's priority

municipalities. During this event, HRA’s Gender and Vulnerable Populations Expert delivered a presentation on gender rights, norms and issues and how to effectively incorporate gender components and initiatives into government budgeting and planning.

III. Human Rights Grant Fund and Subcontracts

HRA’s grants support during FY19 to CSOs, with a strong regional focus, opened new paths of growth and empowerment for numerous human rights and social development processes emerging in Colombia’s post-accord phase. At the onset of FY19, HRA was already implementing 13 grants covering diverse human rights and peacebuilding projects throughout its seven departments in areas of youth human rights promotion, GBV prevention and response, risk prevention for ethnic communities and many more. **From December 2018 to February 2019, HRA issued four Requests for Application (RFAs) with a total budget of \$550,000 USD.** HRA identified priority issue areas guiding the RFA process which included gender advocacy; respect for ethnic rights; journalism and advocacy for the freedom of press and human rights; and promotion of peacebuilding, including youth participation mechanisms. The RFA resulted in awarding 10 grants to CSOs working on these human rights issue areas. Given the rapidly deteriorating security and human rights situation which unfolded in northern Cauca during the latter half of FY19, three grant awards were directed to affected CSOs to support self-protection and protection capacity building in this region.

Graph 1. Vulnerable Populations Supported in FY19 due to HRA Grant Support



By the end of FY19, HRA was implementing a total of 13 grants covering its seven departments. With these, HRA has awarded a total of 54 grants to CSOs since the program’s start in 2016. The following graph (Graph 1) illustrates an overview of vulnerable populations supported during FY19 with HRA grant support.

Strengthening of Civil Society Organizations

HRA's unique approach to cultivate sustainable and constructive organizational capacities among human rights and peacebuilding-focused CSOs steadily advanced during FY19. During this period, **HRA led capacity strengthening workshops for 16 CSOs**- 15 of these participating CSOs were regional-based (Tolima, Caquetá, Cauca and Nariño) and one was Bogotá-based. To date, HRA has led 35 of these workshops since 2017. Of the strengthened CSOs during FY19, eight were HRA grantees and the other eight were non-grantee CSOs. Non-grantee CSOs were identified and selected based on their shared missions and objectives with HRA's. The last CSO to participate in this workshop was the *Fundación Red Comunitaria Trans*, from Bogotá, which also received complimentary human rights and GBV trainings. All of the 16 CSOs who participated in the workshops were organizations that had never received this type of training prior. HRA is a leader among USAID programs in advancing this type of initiative.

These integral training opportunities go beyond simply transferring critical knowledge and skills in the HRA-designed modules such as: administration, finance, and accounting; communications; monitoring and evaluation; and proposal writing and fundraising. During FY19, HRA sought out opportunities to coordinate and consolidate trainings facilitating multiple CSO participation. These experiences allowed for enriched exchanges among human rights defender organizations on issues such as methodologies, strengths, challenges, contexts, and best practices. In this manner, CSO networking was maximized and each of their experiences served as essential learning tools and support while broadening their understanding of the larger human rights CSO landscape towards building support and greater solidarity.

Subcontracts

During FY19, HRA implemented a fixed-priced subcontract with *Fundación Ideas para la Paz* to strengthen citizen security with a human rights perspective in the municipalities of Briceño and Caucasia, Antioquia. The activities under this subcontract, which are highlighted in Component Two of this report, were completed in May 2019, or the third quarter of FY19.

IV. Regional Coordination with USAID Programs

HRA's progress in the regions is on several occasions the result of a collaborative effort bringing together resources, ideas, and commitments by other USAID programs who also share common objectives. As a united front, USAID programs maximize visibility and shared agendas with their partners on the ground, broadening reach and inclusion of key stakeholders. Throughout FY19, HRA continued to rely on key USAID partners as all programs were impacted by the quickly developing changes particularly affecting the peace process and human rights defenders and social leaders where USAID operates. During FY19, USAID's JSP worked especially close with HRA to advance key projects to protect human rights defenders and social leaders with the NPU and the AGO. JSP played an instrumental role in providing legal and judicial insight and ideas as HRA and JSP developed strategies, such as enhancing strategic litigation approaches, to address the human rights defenders and social leaders' crisis. JSP also contributed to technical assistance to NPU's engagement selection process as it moves forward in the re-engineering of its individual protection program. Annex E illustrates the numerous activities carried out in partnership with other USAID programs throughout all of HRA's seven departments this past year.

V. Regions

In FY19, four post accord dynamics that have primarily played out in HRA's priority regions deeply defining human rights and peacebuilding were: **1) an increase in threats against human rights defenders and social leaders; 2) increased presence of illegal armed groups; 3) increased risks associated with regional elections which have included threats, kidnappings, and homicides against candidates to local political seats (common councils and mayor's offices) and; 4) the concerning increase of 3,000,000 Venezuela migrants passing through Colombia or taking up temporary residence.** Against this backdrop, HRA's efforts throughout FY19 concentrated on building regional promotion, prevention and response capacities of both civil society and institutional partners to meet the growing human rights and peacebuilding needs of Colombia's most vulnerable populations across 40 municipalities in its seven priority departments.

Regarding the promotion of human rights, a key highlight of HRA's regional efforts was the development and advancement of regional human rights and peacebuilding public policies, as mentioned in Component One, covering the period of 2019-2034. **Three HRA priority departments Antioquia, Tolima and Meta now operate with these comprehensive public policies enshrining departmental government commitments to human rights and peacebuilding moving forward.** The approval of these public policies enabled the establishment and strengthening of departmental human rights and peacebuilding coordination mechanisms. With these vital mechanisms in place, departments can now effectively develop, implement, and carry out follow-up and evaluation of human rights and peacebuilding initiatives. By the end of FY19, **departmental public policies in Córdoba and Cauca were finalizing their public policy drafts for approval phases by the departmental general assembly.**

To further bolster the implementation and effectiveness of human rights and peacebuilding policies, HRA made a concerted effort to train public officials and social leaders to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of human rights basic concepts and advocacy mechanisms. During FY19, HRA, in partnership with ESAP and regional government partners, carried out **a second round of its human rights and peacebuilding diploma courses in 15 municipalities across six departments.** In total, 431 individuals completed the courses, of which 79 were public officials. **The third edition of the diploma course was later carried out in another seven municipalities where 283 individuals successfully completed the course.** Of these, **three diploma courses** in the municipalities of Anorí, Antioquia and Puerto Libertador and Tierralta (Córdoba) **were youth oriented.** The remaining four were offered in Montería (Córdoba), Puerto Rico (Meta), Santander de Quilichao (Cauca); and Tumaco (Nariño).

A key highlight of FY19 was the local public forums that were organized to convene aspiring governor and mayor candidates to advocate for the incorporation and prioritization of a human rights focus into the political agendas and prospective local development plans for 2020-2023. HRA collaborated with CSOs, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNOHCHR, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Organization of American States Peace Process Support Mission (MAPP-OEA by its Spanish acronym), UN Women, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Electoral Observation Mission to organize these forums by contributing to the preparation of guidelines and technical tools. Between July and September 2019, **40 forums or political dialogues with gubernatorial candidates** were held across six departments (Antioquia, Caquetá, Cauca, Meta, Nariño and Tolima). In addition, **34 local forums were organized with mayoral candidates, of which 13 of these were led by youth platforms and the remaining 21 in partnership with community and CSO leaders.**

In FY19, HRA maintained its ongoing technical support to strengthen the implementation of 40 regional PPGNR sub-committees. Through this support, risk scenarios were updated and 37 prevention and protection plans were adjusted. This support resulted in the first session of CIPRATs carried out in

municipalities of northeastern and Bajo Cauca, Antioquia; southern Córdoba; and Caquetá. In addition, HRA support contributed to the adoption and modifications made to individual protection *rutas* in Antioquia, Córdoba, Meta and Tolima. These individual protection *rutas* play an important role in activating the municipal prevention *rutas* and have become prevention measures incorporated into the updated prevention and protection plans.

HRA's technical support also contributed to the **strengthening of prevention capacities of forced recruitment and illegal use of children and adolescent technical committees in Antioquia (Briceño, Remedios, Segovia and departmental level); Caquetá (San Vicente del Caguán); Meta (El Castillo, Mesetas, Uribe, Macarena, Vista Hermosa, and Puerto Rico); and Tolima (departmental level).** HRA's coordinated efforts on this issue resulted in the development of targeted partnerships with local forced recruitment and illegal use of children and adolescent roundtables and CSO partners such as FUNVIPAS in Caquetá and Benposta in Meta. Through these strategic partnerships, technical accompaniment was provided to municipal administrations and civil society in San Vicente del Caguán, Cartagena del Chairá, La Macarena, Uribe and Vista Hermosa which implemented projects to bolster protective factors and increase prevention capacities and awareness among youth, parents, teachers, and public officials who comprise rapid response teams. Per recommendations of Early Warning No. 001 of 2019, these activities successfully fulfill commitments included in local prevention and protection plans.

HRA also served as **prime catalyst in advancing efforts initiated by guarantees roundtables in the departments of Antioquia, Córdoba, and Cauca.** These roundtables contributed to the **development of 2019 work plans; risk evaluations of departmental human rights defenders and social leader situations, risk identification, and garnering feedback from public officials on departmental institutional response.** HRA's assistance in Antioquia contributed to the approval and integration of the departmental protection *ruta* via decree which provides urgent protection measures to human rights defenders and social leaders in the department. To date, the *ruta* has been activated for 32 cases. Furthermore, HRA supported the development of the Antioquia departmental protocol for urgent protection against risks. In early FY2020, guarantees roundtables in the three departments will begin to launch the HRA-supported no stigmatization of human rights defenders and social leaders' campaigns developed throughout FY19 to break down the barriers of misperceptions surrounding and jeopardizing their important work carried out during Colombia's postaccord phase.

As mentioned in this report's Component Two section, **HRA was responsible for leading 3 self-protection workshops to at-risk CSOs and targeted groups in Córdoba, Tolima, and Caquetá.** These at-risk groups included ethnic communities, JAC leaders, *campesinos*, environmentalists, and women leaders among others. Using the HRA's self-protection methodology, CSOs received crucial knowledge, tools, and practices to reduce their risks given the increasing presence of threats by illegal armed groups and the inadequate State response to these risks. CSOs gained hands-on experience in carrying out risk analysis, accessing institutional services, and developing tools customized to respond to their regional and cultural dynamics while building on existing protection systems.

ANTIOQUIA

During FY19, significant strides were made in HRA's twelve priority municipalities of Antioquia to advance human rights and peacebuilding while also addressing some of the country's gravest human rights risk challenges unfolding during its tenuous postaccord phase. To this end, HRA's strategy remained committed to working with the responsible institutions concentrated on building the necessary mechanisms, policies, and systems to promote and protect human rights and peacebuilding. In this vein, **HRA's technical assistance and accompaniment to the Antioquia governor's office throughout the year was instrumental in supporting the development and passing of Antioquia's 2019-2034 comprehensive human rights public policy.** To reach this point, HRA supported diverse sectors, regions, and stakeholders

to provide input and feedback as the policy development process moved forward. HRA supported nine sub-regional meetings and other sectoral meetings carried out through Antioquia's human rights and citizenship regional roundtables which bring together civil society and institutions to promote enhanced coordination on human rights issues. These efforts ensured the participation of representatives from indigenous communities, women's groups, LGBTI persons, human rights defenders, Afro-Colombians, and universities. In addition, HRA supported the governor's office in holding a departmental meeting to present advances, gather inputs, and present the newly enacted policy to the public.

After the officializing the public policy, **HRA's technical support focused on aiding the departmental human rights office to develop its action plan centered on the implementation of the public policy.** This support resulted in the official establishment of key components such as the departmental human rights committee, the human rights observatory, and an operational protocol for the regional human rights, citizenship, and peacebuilding roundtables. HRA also assisted in designing, printing, and devising a dissemination strategy to distribute 1,000 public policy informational handbooks at diverse events and implemented mechanisms which bring together institutions, public officials, and CSOs from across the department.

HRA's youth strategy gained a strong foothold throughout some of HRA's priority municipalities and established strong foundations for youth human rights empowerment. **In Ituango, HRA's support resulted in the establishment of a youth peacebuilding network which included the training of 70 youth from both rural and urban areas.** Other key partners involved in this process included MAPP-OEA, IOM, UNOHCHR, UNHCR, and the *Universidad Católica del Norte*. Youth received an additional certificate issued by the *Universidad Católica del Norte* in Citizenship, Human Rights, and Peacebuilding recognized as two course credits by the university. The newly established network now coordinates with the recently launched municipal youth platform. These newly trained and mobilized youth leaders contributed to the development of the municipal's youth advocacy agenda. With HRA technical assistance, this agenda served as the blueprint for the action plan of the newly approved municipal youth public policy. HRA was also a key player in developing this latest public policy which was passed in August 2019. As a direct outcome of HRA's ongoing support to the youth platform efforts, youth leaders organized a 2020-2023 mayoral candidate forum which resulted in the candidates' signing a youth manifesto entitled, "For Ituango's Youth". This document establishes commitments made to youth and human rights issues moving forward.

Similarly, HRA's support contributed towards the establishment of Anorí's youth platform. To date, HRA's support has aided in developing and approving its internal regulations and a work plan. Its official establishment is pending approval of the municipal *personería*. In the meantime, Anorí's participating youth organized a mayoral candidate forum supported under the banner of #JóvenesporAnorí. The endeavor included the participation of 148 youth, ages 14-28, from urban and rural areas. Three of the four candidates signed a social pact committing their administrations, if elected, to developing concrete activities to support youth in Anorí. Furthermore, HRA's support to youth human rights empowerment extended to Cauca where by the end of July 2019, HRA was accompanying its 40 youth platform participants who have expressed strong interest in affiliating with HRA's youth strategy moving forward.

HRA priority municipality of Anorí was also the site of **HRA's youth-focused human rights and peacebuilding diploma course** this past June 2019. With 52 youth between the ages of 14-28, participants gained knowledge and tools on youth rights and peacebuilding towards strengthening their advocacy and leadership skills. Other key supporting partners included Antioquia's governor's office, the mayor's office, the *personería*, ESAP, IOM, and ISA Inter Colombia. Fifty-two youth officially completed the seven in-classroom sessions and virtual modules including a presentation on a project they designed by applying their newly gained knowledge.

Another key highlight of **HRA's support and scaling up of human rights promotion initiatives were the human rights and peace student Olympics competition which initially began in Cauca annually since 2014**. While Cauca this year completed its sixth edition, this dynamic competition extended to 12 municipalities including Remedios, Valdivia, Briceño, El Bagre which are municipalities carrying out second annual editions. During FY19, this initiative resulted in training 99 teachers from 17 schools providing them with the fundamentals in human rights, protection mechanisms, gender issues, and teacher training techniques on these issues. This newly gained knowledge was quickly applied in the classrooms to prepare students for the competitions. From 684 students who participated in this phase, 180 were selected for the competitions based on highest scores. The Olympics were held in Briceño, Valdivia, El Bagre and Cáceres.

To advance the prevention of human rights violations in Antioquia, HRA's continuous support to the departmental guarantees roundtable was fundamental in ensuring its effective and ongoing response to critical levels of violence and violations targeting its human rights defenders and social leaders. Due to HRA's accompaniment to its permanent sub-committees, the roundtable carried out its bi-annual guarantees evaluation; the development of its 2019 work plan; and the development of its operational protocol. **A key highlight from the HRA-supported guarantees roundtable this year was the kick-off of its humanitarian caravan initiative which established dialogue platforms bringing together institutions, human rights defenders and social leaders and affected communities to build trust and discuss peacebuilding opportunities and challenges**. To date, these caravans took place in Bajo Cauca and northern Antioquia. The caravans finalized in Medellín drawing attention of priority issues and recommendations derived from these efforts in the sub-regions at a dedicated guarantees roundtable hearing to protect human rights defenders.

Another key tool developed during this year in response to the human rights defender and social leader crisis was **a departmental protection *ruta* for human rights defenders and social leaders**. Enacted through a decree, this *ruta* is now recognized and incorporated into municipal administrations guaranteeing the protections of this at-risk group. HRA also supported the development of the departmental protocol for urgent protection against risks impacting human rights defenders and social leaders. HRA played an important role in working with local responsible institutions and authorities to become informed, understand, incorporate, and implement the *ruta* and protocol. By the end of FY19, 27 cases were assisted via the activation of this *ruta*. Complementing these efforts, HRA grantee IPC also carried out critical work with 15 local CSOs in carrying out dialogues and risk analyses for the northeastern and Bajo Cauca regions of Antioquia. This work helped to identify risks, threats, and vulnerabilities contributing to the design of work plans to strengthen CSO self-protection and targeted groups' capacities in these regions. Self-protection protocols for organizations were also developed. By the end of FY19, IPC established a regional human rights defender and social leader network comprised of CSOs from the northeastern and Bajo Cauca sub-regions.

Similarly, HRA's technical assistance was instrumental in strengthening civil society and institutions to prevent GBV in HRA priority municipalities. Due to the support provided the Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables, Remedios and Segovia now operate with GBV prevention and response *rutas* while in Ituango and Nechí, sectoral *rutas* involving justice, protection, and health were developed. In addition, HRA supported the departmental Elimination of Violence against Women roundtable in coordination with the departmental judicial branch's gender committee to carry out sub-regional GBV response work sessions in Antioquia's northern, northeastern and Bajo Cauca sub-regions. Through these sessions, 15 justice officials were trained on judicial decision rendering through a gender focus. Additionally, HRA strengthened family commissaries in Cauca and Cáceres in their capacities to respond to GBV cases. HRA's engaged psychologists provided critical support to these family commissaries to properly document, respond and carry out follow-up to received cases. Since their support initiated in September 2019, 17 cases have received follow-up.

HRA's assistance on GBV prevention has resulted in training over 785 individuals from HRA priority municipalities increasing knowledge on violence typologies, the importance of reporting GBV crimes, and how to activate GBV *rutas*. As a result of nine HRA-supported Justice House mobile sessions, psychosocial support and inter-institutional response was provided to GBV victims and their cases in rural areas of Cáceres and Caucasia. The HRA-supported *dupla*, which started in May 2019 in Caucasia, assisted 52 GBV cases with legal and psychosocial support. **The *dupla* has further strengthened GBV prevention and response capacities by providing trainings on Law 1257, violence typologies, GBV *rutas*, and related norms to over 127 individuals including public officials and civil society.** The *dupla* also provided technical assistance to Caucasia's gender liaison in carrying out her role as a member of the Elimination of Violence against Women roundtable as well as to other gender mechanisms in Zaragoza and Cáceres. Complementing these efforts at the end of July 2019, HRA's assistance to Medellín-based CSO *Colectivo Justicia Mujer (Colectivo)* has resulted in identifying GBV cases that require legal and psychosocial assistance. By the end of FY19, six cases were documented four of these will receive legal representation and the other two will receive legal orientation. In Briceño and Ituango, the *Colectivo* has also developed advocacy plans with local CSOs to be carried out before local responsible institutions to address GBV cases.

CAQUETÁ

During the year, encouraging inroads were made in supporting youth human rights promoters through HRA's youth strategy which focused on the municipalities of Valparaíso, La Montañita, and Cartagena del Chairá. Together with HRA technical assistance, local youth groups, and local institutions, HRA grantee Red Caquetá Paz led concentrated efforts in FY19 to **strengthen municipal youth platforms and youth mobilization raising their visibility in their communities as human rights leaders.** Through HRA technical guidance and trainings oriented at youth human rights leaders, the platforms became catalysts for organizing and carrying out municipal youth assemblies in the three mentioned HRA priority municipalities. Through these constructive sessions, youth citizenship norms (Law 1622 of 2013 and Law 1885 of 2018) were introduced and discussed to deepen understandings among youth leaders and municipal youth agendas were developed.

Another key outcome from HRA efforts to empower youth platforms were the youth-led mayoral candidate forums entitled, "Political dialogues: The Future is NOT a game- Let's Transform Our Realities." In convening local mayoral candidates, youth delivered prepared presentations on youth and community needs and offered alternative proposals as solutions. By the end of the forums, youth platforms and candidates signed the social pact, "Pacts for Youth", whereby candidates pledged commitments to guarantee youth platform participation in developing future municipal development plans as well as ensuring that decision-making mechanisms and processes abide by youth citizenship statute parameters.

Further pushing boundaries to ensure sustainability of youth rights and participation, **HRA worked together with the departmental governor's secretary, PRODES – GIZ, and HRA grantee Red Caquetá Paz to develop and support the passing of Caquetá's departmental public policy.** Measuring up to the importance of this feat, HRA engaged an expert consultant during FY19 to support, systematize and provide leadership throughout the processes resulting in the eventual passing of this public policy (October 3, 2019). This public policy embodies 115 strategic actions delegated to Caquetá's government to guarantee youth rights and needs over the period of 2019-2031. The policy's approach places emphasis on rural youth and human rights.

Additionally, during FY19 HRA emphasized efforts to address the human rights defenders and social leaders' situation which has affected HRA's priority municipalities in Caquetá. As a result, and in support of San Vicente del Caguán's prevention and protection plan, **HRA carried out its self-protection training**

in this municipality with local CSOs. In partnership with San Vicente del Caguán Diocesis Foundation (FUNVIPAS), a total of 351 human rights defenders and social leaders participated in fifteen sessions focused on self-protection and protection workshops. Strong representation from the municipal’s rural areas formed part of this training group including youth groups, teachers, and Peace, Reconciliation, Co-existence, and Human Rights council members. The training focused on identifying security concerns, social mapping, context analysis, risk identification, and protection and security vulnerabilities. From these sessions, participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the value of developing robust risk evaluations as a decisive factor in shaping self-protection strategies.

Moreover, participants learned to identify community values and capacities to form constructive relations among stakeholders and foster protective factors. Participants increased their self-awareness and identified behaviors to change to increase self-protection while also understanding the importance of developing communications and conciliation strategies between communities and institutions. The latter is significant given that due to weak institutional capacity and presence, community leaders or mechanisms, such as the JACs, are often left to handle institutional responsibilities with no prior or proper training or knowledge. For example, JACs in these areas have been relegated to handle recovering deceased corpses resulting from increased violence in their communities, without any prior proper training or authority to carry out this delicate task.

HRA’s focus on strengthening GBV prevention and response capacities in Caquetá during FY19 resulted in the training of 304 members of the Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables in Valparaíso, Cartagena del Chairá and La Montañita. This mix of 27 public officials and 277 social leaders gained a strong knowledge base on issues such as basic GBV concepts, Law 1257 of 2008, violence typology, women’s rights, women’s protection measures, among others. These HRA-supported trainings also contributed to complying with commitments made by their roundtable work plans. Throughout the year, HRA placed emphasis on advancing two primary components of the roundtable work plans: 1) dissemination of GBV *rutas* accompanied by trainings on violence typology, and women’s rights from rural areas and 2) GBV case reviews at every Elimination of Violence against Women roundtable session to better identify barriers and areas of improvement. These processes have aided participants in increasing their awareness and knowledge of the various dimensions and challenges regarding GBV in their communities while also initiating dialogue and steps to develop commitments to enhance the guarantee of GBV victim rights.

HRA’s assistance to *Casa de La Mujer* is complementing these efforts by documenting 60 GBV cases as of the end of FY19. **This critical process has shed light on a concerning rise in the level of femicides, attempted femicides along with other types of violence against women in Caquetá.** From this information, *Casa de la Mujer* has designed their strategic litigation approach in Caquetá. The impact of this strategic litigation plan aims to have regional and national reach by advancing emblematic cases. *Casa de la Mujer’s* has also provided critical legal and psychosocial assistance to approximately 79 GBV victims from communities around Florencia and San Vicente del Caguán since its start in June 2019.

JESÚS ANTONIO
POLANCO- LAW
STUDENT,
UNIVERSIDAD DE LA
AMAZONÍA

Regarding HRA-supported
Second Annual Amazonía
Sexual Diversity Forum:

“For us, law students, these types of events are necessary due to the situations which are occurring at our University targeting our peers who are discriminated against based on their sexual and gender orientation.”

Also due to HRA support on advancing GBV and gender equality rights during the year, the **second annual Amazônia Sexual Diversity Forum was held in Florencia to commemorate the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia**. With a participation of 154 attendees, including members from the university and civil society sectors, this event opened a safe space for dialogue and reflection on these largely invisible issues affecting their communities resulting in marginalization, discrimination, and violence against LGBTI persons due to lack of knowledge. LGBTI spokespersons shared experiences on the challenges in accessing their rights and services as well as leading prosperous and meaningful lives when faced with barriers and prejudices. The forum also presented and outlined the departmental LGBTI public policy to provide a comprehensive understanding of norms guaranteeing LGBTI rights as well as resources and services for LGBTI victims.

CAUCA

FY19 represented a particularly challenging period for HRA's priority municipalities in northern Cauca due to increased levels of violence resulting from the reconfiguration and emergence of new illegal armed groups vying for territorial control. Social mobilizations as expressions of resistance by ethnic and *campesino* communities marked the second half of FY19, including an organized *minga* held in March calling on the country's president to personally meet with ethnic and *campesino* leaders to address peace accord implementation concerns. The government's decision to send representatives in his stead quickly intensified tensions resulting in the closing of the Pan-American highway due to violent standoffs with local communities and public security forces. With eventual concessions made by disputing parties, tensions were quelled. However, this subregion of Colombia remained under significant duress due to violence from illegal armed groups targeting ethnic and *campesino* leaders. Some of the highest violence rates associated with the national human rights defenders and social leader crisis emerged from northern Cauca over the past year. Vulnerable populations, including ethnic communities, youth, women and JAC leaders, experienced exponential increased levels of risk during the past year. As a result, HRA doubled efforts to comprehensively bolster human rights and peacebuilding capacities to effectively address and advocate for increased protection of guarantees to life, liberty and physical, mental, and moral integrity.

During FY19, HRA focused on strengthening promotion of human rights in Cauca as a strategic approach to provide its municipalities with essential policy tools and mechanisms to foster a culture of respect for human rights, peace and a reduction in violence. In this context, HRA's technical assistance has been instrumental in **advancing the development of Cauca's departmental human rights public policy**. HRA's consultant aided in maintaining forward momentum on this initiative by convening and participating in bilateral meetings with Cauca's governor's office to ensure its prioritization on the public agenda. With HRA support, the draft policy was shared with public officials to elicit input and feedback regarding its implementation plan, monitoring and evaluation, and follow-up to incorporate into a final version. Through HRA's assistance, the need to familiarize the draft policy with CSO members of the guarantees' roundtable was identified. In this manner, buy-in and support to implement the policy will be enhanced.

To provide public officials and social leaders with effective knowledge and tools to advance human rights and peacebuilding at the local level, **HRA implemented a human rights and peacebuilding diploma course in partnership with ESAP this past year**. In Santander de Quilichao, together with the mayor's office, this diploma course consisted of a 120-hour, seven-session course comprised of in-class and virtual modules. Content includes issues focused on prevention and protection as well as peacebuilding with a gender and differential focus, participants included women leaders from the Women's Political Training School, youth, ethnic leaders, and public officials.

Another key highlight in promoting human rights in Cauca has been HRA's work with youth human rights promoters. **For the first time, due to HRA support, schools from Caldono were prepared for and participated in the Human Rights Student Olympics which engaged three schools and 79 adolescents**.

In preparation of the competition, youth took part in human rights trainings to gain a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities, institutional roles, and protection mechanisms. Students gained a firm understanding of these concepts and analyzed them through a contextual lens. These trainings also helped youth to develop tools to strengthen democratic, participatory and community processes. Instead of individual award recognitions, the youth participants voiced that they desired the recognition to be a collective one as well for their community. This achievement stems from previous student Olympics held in in Buenos Aires and Santander de Quilichao.

HUMAN RIGHTS
STUDENT OLYMPICS
PARTICIPANT FROM
SUSANA TROCHEZ
SCHOOL IN CALDONO

HRA’s ongoing technical assistance to local and departmental PPGNR mechanisms bolstering regional institutional response was critical in northern Cauca due to its intensified security situation, affecting human rights leaders and social leaders, and the general population. To this end, HRA has provided **continuous trainings to the departmental PPGNR committee members** on current prevention and protection norms and policies as well as the review and changes made to protection *rutas* for human rights leaders, social leaders, and targeted groups. **HRA’s prevention and protection-related trainings have also extended to *personeros*.** The most recent example of these trainings was held in Silvia to empower and support leaders and officials from more rural and remote areas in activating protection *rutas*. This particular training consisted of 39 individuals trained including 17 *personeros* from across Cauca. In addition, to date all HRA priority municipalities, with the exception of Corinto, operate with PPGNR subcommittees which receive regular technical support and accompaniment from HRA. These sub-committees, with the exception of Corinto, also operate with prevention and protection plans, supported by HRA. It should be noted that Corinto has faced particularly severe security challenges during the year which restricted HRA’s movement and activity there. The security situation has equally and adversely affected public officials’ activity and performance. While Corinto does not have an operating PPGNR sub-committee, there has nonetheless been some progress in the development of its prevention and protection plan.

“We are currently experiencing unfortunate situations facing our leaders, those who defend us and defend our natural resources. That is why, we as youth, need to continue to learn and train to ensure that our rights are respected and that we support the work that our leaders are bearing for us and our communities.”

As mentioned in Component Two, HRA’s expert consultant provided vital assistance to Cauca’s regional Ombudsman’s Office EWS to improve effectiveness and efficiency regarding the monitoring, issuance and follow-up of early warnings. Due to this support, early warnings were issued for the municipalities of Caloto, Corinto, Miranda, Suarez, Florida and Pradera, in northern Cauca. The consultant also contributed to the issuance of national early warnings regarding the violence surrounding the election season as well as updating the national early warning on human rights defenders and social leaders, originally issued in February 2018. As a credit to the consultant’s notable contributions in improving the EWS’s performance, the Ombudsman’s Office ultimately engaged her as official staff for the EWS in Cauca, ensuring sustainability of this critical support. HRA has since engaged a new expert consultant to further support the EWS in Cauca.

The implementation of HRA’s self-protection strategy for human rights defenders and social leaders during the year sought to provide critical knowledge and tools to targeted human rights defenders, social leaders, and communities caught in the crossfires of illegal armed groups as well as confrontations with public

security forces. To this end, **HRA initiated three projects either through grants and direct assistance to empower CSOS with increased self-protection capacities to mitigate risks.** CSOs such as ASOM, ACONC, the Misak indigenous community, and ACIN are among the lead CSOs beneficiaries of HRA technical support and trainings in self-protection.

By the end of FY19, HRA was working closely with ACONC, a CSO which has seen an alarming increase in threats and killings impacting its Afro-Colombian communities in northern Cauca in the past year. As a result of the support of HRA's self-protection expert consultant, ACONC is developing self-protection tools and strategies including the documentation, analysis and systematization of risk scenarios across its 43 *consejo comunitarios*. Through this approach, these communities are trained to effectively identify and articulate their needs, challenges, and risks to responsible authorities and institutions to initiate appropriate and adequate protection and response measures. Participants included community leaders from the 43 *consejo comunitarios* as well as 54 community security officers, the *Guardia Cimarrona*, who received training on security strategies, concepts, and practices through a train-the-trainer module to further replicate these trainings. HRA's self-protection training modules were all modified to respond to the varying cultural and community contextual realities as a means to ensure effective and easily incorporated lessons learned and best practices moving forward. These efforts have been further complemented with HRA's ongoing design and planning support to develop a **departmental anti-stigmatization communications campaign** carried out in partnership with Cauca's governor's office and the guarantees roundtable. By the end of FY19, the campaign development was in its final phases and was being prepared to launch by the end of October 2019.

CÓRDOBA

HRA's commitment to advance the promotion of human rights in Córdoba, a department with some of the most concerning high rates of violence in the past year due to expanding illegal armed groups, resulted in significant strides in developing its departmental human rights public policy. Over the past year, **HRA's ongoing technical assistance to Córdoba's governor's office has proven instrumental in preparing its public policy, including a diagnostic exercise to hone in on priority human rights issues impacting the department.** To this end, HRA supported four sub-regional diagnostic and policy development workshops including the participation of 240 individuals from the southern Córdoba region where HRA operates (60 from each HRA priority municipality). The diagnostic gathered and documented priority human rights issues and proposed possible solutions. In addition, HRA supported three workshops oriented at public officials from the governor's office to provide them with the knowledge and tools to plan immediate promotion of human rights activities as well as prevention of human rights violation activities. By the end of FY19, a public policy document was formulated and under review by the departmental assembly.

Additionally, **to bolster human rights knowledge and capacities of key stakeholders during the year, HRA led two dynamic human rights and peacebuilding diploma courses.** The first diploma course carried out in partnership with ESAP, the governor's office IOM, MAPP-OEA and UNDP, was oriented at the members of the departmental human rights and peace council to deepen their knowledge in these subject areas. In total, 55 individuals were trained including council members, social leaders, students and other key civil society actors. It provided an enriching learning and dialogue platform to identify, discuss and raise the visibility of leading human rights and peacebuilding challenges faced throughout the department. Following this, HRA in partnership with CSO Benposta also led a youth-focused human rights diploma course. This was carried out in the municipalities of Puerto Libertador and Tierralta in which 51 youth increased their knowledge and capacity to develop and advance human rights and peacebuilding agendas. Building on these skills, they were tasked with applying their knowledge by replicating trainings in their communities as well as identifying human rights and social justice issues to be addressed. Empowered youth leaders went on to carry out projects such as raising awareness of institutional health and nutrition

services to the Embera indigenous communities in the Alto Sinú in order to strengthen access to health rights. CSO partner Benposta will continue supporting these youth and their projects moving forward.

To bolster prevention capacities particularly in the wake of a wave of violence targeting human rights defenders and social leaders, HRA provided continuous technical assistance to the departmental guarantees roundtable throughout FY19. This accompaniment significantly contributed to the implementation of its work plan throughout the year with a focus on developing individual and collective protection *rutas*. In addition, this assistance aided in carrying out human rights trainings on key protection issues and strengthening capacities of at-risk human rights defenders and social leaders. **HRA's support during the past year has positioned Córdoba's guarantees roundtable to be able to take on the development of a human rights defender and social leader public policy in FY20.**

In addition, **HRA played an instrumental role in strengthening self-protection capacities of southern Córdoba's largest and most important campesino CSO, Asociación de Campesinos del Sur de Córdoba (ASCSUCOR).** This well-recognized CSO has come under numerous threats and attacks by illegal armed groups as they have committed to advancing peacebuilding through implementing the crop substitution program in southern Córdoba. Through HRA's **self-protection training of 43 ASCSUCOR leaders, knowledge and tools were provided on personal and collective self-protection.** In addition, HRA supported the printing of a self-protection handbook created by the training workshop participants including the protection and self-protection *rutas* developed throughout the workshops. In addition to presenting the handbook to the CSO members, these handbooks will be submitted to responsible local and national institutions to raise their awareness of risks faced by *campesinos*, their current risk situations, and to ensure their compliance and commitment to eliminating the risks faced.

During the year, **HRA has also continued to provide key technical assistance to local GBV prevention and response mechanisms in Montelíbano and Puerto Libertador to increase knowledge and capacities to reduce GBV rates.** In Montelíbano, HRA's assistance has been oriented to the family commissary and the Elimination of Violence against Women roundtable towards developing a work plan to strengthen women's organizations. This assistance has also contributed to raising visibility of immediate protection mechanisms available to GBV victims. Complementing these efforts, HRA engaged a consultant to carry out follow-up of GBV cases as well as increase access to GBV women victims to justice mechanisms. By the end of the FY19, HRA's technical support had resulted in the finalization of GBV prevention and protection *rutas* which will be readily launched in early FY20 in Montelíbano. Similarly, in Puerto Libertador, HRA's technical assistance resulted in the creation of the decree establishing its Elimination of Violence against Women roundtable as well as in developing the roundtable's work plan.

JORGE ELÍAS RICARDO,
ASCSUCOR PRESIDENT

This handbook reflects a joint effort which will contribute to strengthening the organization to carry out its activities in the region, while implementing personal and collective security mechanisms, towards carrying out human rights defense work in southern Córdoba”

NARIÑO

Due to HRA's commitment to empowering key stakeholders with knowledge and tools to advance human rights and peacebuilding at the local level, HRA's priority region of Nariño greatly benefitted from opportunities such as the **human rights and peacebuilding diploma course during this year.** Two

diploma courses were offered- the first was carried out with a focus on training public officials. The second concentrated on training social leaders. As a result of the first course, 185 individuals achieved completion, not only from the urban center of Tumaco but also from the more rural and remote municipalities of Francisco Pizarro and Barbacoas. A second edition of this diploma course was ongoing by the end of FY19 working with social leaders including *consejo comunitario* representatives, JAC leaders and peace advisors as well as public officials.

Further strengthening human rights leadership development, **HRA targeted support during this past year towards training youth human rights promoters.** With HRA grant support to CSO *Agencia de Comunicaciones del Pacífico* (ACOP), **the youth platform in Francisco Pizarro was re-activated.** To reach this achievement, HRA led trainings which motivated and provided 115 youth with basic international and national human rights legal frameworks, norms, policies as well as a firm understanding of local human rights and peacebuilding mechanisms and State responsibilities. Furthermore, youth gained self-confidence and a stronger sense of community identity as activities centered on or relied on music, arts and culture rooted in local customs and traditions. With this, youth replicated trainings among their peers and other community sectors mobilizing community momentum centered on advancing human rights and peacebuilding in the conflict-affected communities. Beyond this, HRA grantee ACOP led a characterization study of Tumaco and Francisco Pizarro's youth which now serves as an input to design municipal youth agendas, which consolidate a commitment to youth needs and concerns by the incoming administration to begin in January 2020. This study was reviewed by the respective municipal youth platforms.

HRA also made significant headway **strengthening municipal prevention capacities involving participation of institutions and civil society throughout the year.** One of the most impactful HRA-supported initiatives included **five inter-institutional mobile sessions reaching some of Nariño's more remote, rural areas with historically low to no state presence.** These communities served included Veredas Playa and Salahondita of Francisco Pizarro; central Barbacoas; and the *comuna* 5 of the Ciudadela neighborhood in Tumaco. Through this effort key relevant institutions traveled to and responded directly to community member inquiries and needs. Supporting participating institutions included the mayor's office, *personería*, community development office, the police IGO, *Más Familias en Acción*, and the victims' liaison office. As a result, community members gained a greater understanding of the roles and services provided by each institution. These opportunities allowed for victims' statements to be registered; information was received on accessing technical training through SENA oriented at single-mother households; and other key services for vulnerable populations.

Beyond this, HRA played a central role in providing ongoing technical assistance to strengthen key local prevention mechanisms. In this sense, HRA's support advised and accompanied PPGNR sub-committees in Francisco Pizarro, Tumaco and Barbacoas. With this type of support, **Tumaco's sub-committee supported the updating of Tumaco's prevention and protection plan.** Also resulting from HRA technical support, 261 local students and 15 teachers from five schools in Tumaco, Francisco Pizarro and Barbacoas participated in prevention workshop regarding forced recruitment and illegal use of children and adolescents. In addition, youth participated in a workshop informing and advocating for the incorporation of human rights and international humanitarian law in school curriculums of HRA priority municipalities.

HRA's assistance also resulted in **significant inroads for GBV prevention in HRA priority municipalities where this violation is insufficiently addressed due to lack of knowledge as well as weak institutional presence and ineffective operation.** Given this landscape, HRA held GBV prevention workshops to raise awareness and generate trust and momentum to activate Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables in Barbacoas, Francisco Pizarro and Tumaco. **Consequently, GBV prevention and response sectoral *rutas* were developed for these municipalities.** HRA provided technical assistance to Francisco Pizarro's roundtable through GBV and gender trainings as well as support to develop its 2019

workplan while also receiving assistance to disseminate its GBV *rutas* via CSOs. Barbacoas' roundtable also received GBV and gender training led by HRA.

Beyond this, HRA supported work sessions of Tumaco's LGBTI persons Inter-sectoral Roundtable sessions, a critical groundbreaking mechanism to address this highly taboo and invisible human rights issue among this heavily ethnic-populated region. Also, noteworthy, as of July 2019 **due to support from an HRA psychologist consultant in Tumaco, its family commissary received needed assistance and orientation in improving service delivery to GBV victims.** Family commissaries are highly under-supported but are valuable institutional resources responsible for assisting GBV victims and families. This action complements ongoing HRA technical assistance to family commissaries in Tumaco, Barbacoas and Francisco Pizarro.

META

During FY19, HRA's interventions to promote a culture of respect for human rights and peacebuilding in Meta contributed to reaching positive milestones through empowered key stakeholders and sectors. A leading achievement, **made possible through HRA's technical assistance and persistence, was the signing of the 2019-2034 departmental human rights public policy**, which was passed in April 2019. After more than a year's worth of HRA-supported dialogues, trainings, coalition building, and reviews of draft versions, the enacted policy included 11 thematic pillars reinforced by 194 strategic actions which specifically outline responsibilities, priority areas, and actions to be put into effect towards the guarantee of human rights and the prevention of human rights violations in Meta. This public policy was also designed to guarantee the implementation of the HRA-supported Human Rights and Peacebuilding School launched in the previous FY. Since the signing of this public policy, HRA is committed to raise awareness on this critical human rights instrument throughout its priority municipalities as well as advocating and providing technical support to incorporate the policy into departmental and municipal development plans, and finally to create the policy's action plan.

Also, during FY19, **HRA placed an emphasis on supporting and training youth human rights promoters in Mesetas and Vista Hermosa.** As part of HRA's youth strategy, HRA regional advisors concentrated efforts to consolidate and formalize municipal youth platforms. Through HRA technical support and accompaniment, these platforms carried out municipal youth assemblies in Mesetas and Vista Hermosa with youth leaders. **Through these assemblies, youth gained a clear understanding of relevant youth-focused norms and policies, developed youth agendas including establishing the objective of creating municipal youth public policies for each municipality respectively, and developed work plans in a participatory manner.** By June 2019, these youth platforms mobilized and organized mayoral candidate forums setting up a democratic dialogue platform with candidates and presenting them with their youth agendas to be considered as part of future local development plans.

BRAYAN ALGECIRA, MESETAS YOUTH PLATFORM

HRA's youth strategy has developed new youth leadership and participation via the youth platforms as well as raised awareness of...social youth priorities. Personally, it has helped me to learn from experiences of other participants and to deepen my belief that you can continue work for human rights, as youth and as a community, in the municipality.

Another strategy used to solidify ongoing human rights and peacebuilding knowledge and capacity building was HRA's support of the Human Rights and Peacebuilding School's second edition of trainings and informal educational curriculums. With support to the departmental implementing partner *Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez Bello*, the school worked with and trained 60 students in Uribe and Vista Hermosa. Subjects covered by the School's students included: Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution, Participatory Methodologies and Processes; Cultural and Regional Identity; Differentiated Women's and Gender Focus. In addition, two editions of the specifically tailored training course for School trainers entitled, *Espacios para La Vida* was held during the year working with 15 people including facilitators, support trainers, and the School's administrative and coordination teams. By the end of the year, with HRA support, a systematization process initiated to document the School's experience thus far.

The School has significantly and positively shaped Meta's human rights leaders and social leaders who have completed the School's courses by equipping them with practical and participatory tools, methodologies and capacities to effectively advocate and build sound strategies. Many of these participants have gone on to take up jobs or carry out public leadership jobs aimed at promoting and defending human rights through institutional decision-making mechanisms. **Alumni from the courses (including those held in the first edition in El Castillo and Mesetas) identify as "School" members and are working as members of decision-making bodies such as the PPGNR sub-committees, human rights councils, and other social-based entities advancing human rights in their communities.**

During FY19, the forced recruitment and illegal use of children and adolescents has risen as a concerning post-accord emergent risk in Meta. As a result, **HRA shifted efforts to prioritize this issue by consolidating a prevention and protection strategy for children and adolescents in the municipalities of Vista Hermosa, Mesetas, and Uribe.** HRA has teamed up with the ongoing project entitled, *Escuela de Vida*, implemented by Benposta. This project works to strengthen capacities of municipal administration public officials and institutions who serve as members as PPGNR sub-committees and rapid response teams. These are institutional mechanisms tasked with implementing actions to respond to and prevent forced recruitment and illegal use of children and adolescents at the local level. Further supporting these efforts, HRA has implemented communications and educational strategies resulting in the establishment of three local community networks, comprised of 69 social leaders who have been trained, dedicated to supporting youth. Also through this strategy, HRA supported a training with the participation of 66 children and adolescents from rural areas, where a participatory exercise was carried out to collectively identify risk scenarios related to forced recruitment and illegal use of children and adolescents resulting in increase awareness of municipal prevention mechanisms.

TOLIMA

During FY19, **HRA's technical support was instrumental in developing, raising awareness and advancing the approval of Tolima's human rights and peace public policy by its departmental government.** As a direct result from this achievement, Tolima's government also established its departmental human rights, peace, reconciliation, and co-existence council which acts as the primary operational mechanism for this public policy. This milestone was reached following approximately two years of concentrated HRA efforts and technical assistance to develop a policy which included input resulting from a participatory process of Tolima's diverse social sectors and populations. HRA's assistance also ensured that council members reflected this diversity. By the end of FY19, HRA's support contributed to the establishment of the council's primary operational driver, its technical committee.

In coordination with IOM, **HRA has provided continuous technical assistance to the council through trainings and raising awareness among its members regarding the vital importance of the council's purpose and their roles to set the foundation of peace and human rights in their region.** To this end, the council's action plan was drafted by the end of FY19, which serves as the blueprint for the public policy's implementation, as well as its internal regulations ensuring a smooth organizational operation. Both documents were under review for approval by the end of the year. HRA has also played a critical role in supporting the governor's secretary for the interior in developing, reviewing and making changes to the public policy's administrative act which officially establishes key components such as the departmental peace council and the human rights and peace observatory.

In addition, HRA supported carrying out the second edition of Tolima's Human Rights and Peacebuilding School which launched two classes in two new municipalities: Ortega and Rioblanco in August 2019 with 40 enrolled students. Leading up to this initiation, HRA supported key implementing stakeholders to prepare for the incoming classes. To this end, HRA supported a training held in Ibagué for the two School's trainers providing them with key tools and materials to effectively teach the curriculum's courses.

To further support the fostering of human rights promotion in Tolima, **HRA has been a key catalyst in empowering youth human rights leaders in HRA priority municipalities of Planadas and Cajamarca.** Significant strides were made to update and re-establish its two youth platforms. Combined with human rights and peacebuilding trainings, this support has facilitated youth to actively participate in addressing human rights issues facing their communities. **Youth have come forward in their communities as vocal advocates drawing attention to challenges and proposing new ideas.** HRA's assistance has also empowered youth to effectively participate, through a human rights and peacebuilding lens, in municipal democratic and decision-making processes given the upcoming local elections. In both municipalities, youth organized and led mayoral candidate forums inviting candidates to carry out a dialogue with them and community members to discuss their prepared proposals focused on youth rights, concerns, and needs. These opportunities also aided in leveraging youth platforms before the community and these candidates as active, strategic and political mechanisms advancing agendas led by informed youth. By the end of the forums, a social pact was signed by candidates guaranteeing youth rights; commitments to include youth in the development of municipal development plans; and resource allocation to implement youth agendas in the coming four years.

To bolster prevention capacities in Tolima, **HRA focused its self-protection methodology workshops to support seven at-risk CSOs from Chaparral** including CSOs representing Afro-Colombians, indigenous communities, women's organizations, environmentalists, *campesinos*, and the victims' participation roundtable. These trainings were carried out in partnership with the mayor's office and USAID's *Fortaleciendo* also as a means to comply with commitments made under its prevention and protection plan. As an outcome, participants directly

LEONARDO AVILEZ,
SECRETARY GENERAL
OF CHAPARRAL

"HRA has greatly supported us to comply with early warnings regarding social organizations and leaders in Chaparral...regarding the measures that they need to adopt to guarantee their safety and self-protection and prevent human rights violations for those who greatly contribute to their communities, particularly in rural areas. With HRA support, we have reached objectives from our development plan and Chaparral is in a better place today regarding the guarantee of human rights, regarding the Victims' Law and peacebuilding."

contributed to the design of a differentiated pamphlet tailored for each of the seven participating CSOs. Each pamphlet speaks to the selected and priority issues, information and messages that the organizations felt was important for their community and context.

Furthermore, HRA's technical assistance made **positive inroads throughout the year in strengthening GBV prevention and response capacities of both civil society and government institutions**. A target population this year under local GBV prevention strategies was outreach to the education community. To this end, HRA in coordination with the HRA-supported *dupla*, trained 160 children and youth from Rioblanco schools on GBV prevention concepts, including new masculinities. Meanwhile, in Ortega and Cajamarca, HRA together with the departmental education secretary and the HRA-supported *dupla*, carried out GBV prevention workshop for 80 teachers from both urban and rural schools of these municipalities. In Chaparral and Rioblanco, HRA continued to provide **ongoing technical assistance to its Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables as well as engaged a psychosocial expert for each municipality to support the family commissaries in carrying out their duties and related informational workshops**. Furthermore, during the year, HRA grantees such as *Red de Mujeres Chaparralunas por la Paz* and *Red de Mujeres de Ibagué* have served to bolster efforts in supporting and orienting GBV victims regarding resources, services, understanding the activation of sectorial GBV *rutas*, and accompaniment to legal cases. Due to HRA's overall and continuous assistance to all Elimination of Violence against Women roundtables throughout its six priority municipalities, action plans and GBV sectorial *rutas* were implemented throughout the year. In Ortega and Cajamarca, HRA's support was instrumental in developing their sectorial *rutas* which were in operation by the end of the year.

VI. Monitoring and Evaluation

During FY19, HRA updated its AMELP in April 2019 to include new indicators. The two context indicators that were added to the plan were 1) an indicator measuring homicide levels (24.3 per 100,000 inhabitants) and 2) an indicator that registers intrafamilial violence levels (120.57 per 100,000 inhabitants). Data collection for these data took place during the fourth quarter of FY19 and have been systematized and disaggregated in HRA's monitoring and evaluation system (SIME, by its Spanish acronym) per priority municipality. Relatedly, information collection tools were also updated in SIME to complement the AMELP modifications.

HRA's MEL team focused on strengthening its team through precise data analysis and feedback to build on strengths while recognizing areas for improvement. To this end, HRA carried out a team presentation to gauge the Activity's levels of progress, or lack thereof, to make strategic decisions in directing resources and energies. In addition, the MEL team carried out information collection necessary to update its progress on indicators 1,6,7, and 12 across its 40 municipalities. The MEL team carried out additional technical assistance in this process in six municipalities- 3 in Cauca and 3 in Córdoba by the end of FY19.

VII. Communications

HRA's communications strategy played a critical role during FY19 raising awareness and disseminating truths to break down misperceptions and stigmatizations on key human rights issues, while also proving fundamental in providing powerful tools to key stakeholders to advance human rights agendas in often difficult contexts. One such effective communications approach implemented during the past year was HRA's technical assistance to budding radio programs dedicated to highlighting human rights and peacebuilding issues, challenges, concerns, related programs etc. as they affected HRA priority municipalities. Most of the communities within these radio programming reaches are located in Colombia's

remote rural areas and areas that have been deeply affected by years, if not decades, of human rights violations and violence. In this sense, radio programming serves as a safe and effective source of information sharing, dialogue, and education greatly missing to shed light on sensitive issues that are also even sometimes considered taboo. **In the past year, HRA has worked directly with municipal human rights committees or councils responsible for radio broadcasts and provided technical assistance on script development or reviews and providing guidance on identification and presentation of human rights and peacebuilding issues** to be addressed. Through this initiative, **15 radio programs** were broadcast including: 6 in Caucasia; 1 in Zaragoza; 7 in Cáceres; and 1 program focused on GBV issues impacting women which was shared throughout all HRA regions. Human rights issues covered included forced displacement; Antioquia's human rights public policy; a concerning increase of youth drug abuse in Bajo Cauca; violence against children and adolescents; LGBTI rights; and the student Human Rights Olympics.

As mentioned in the Grants section, workshops to strengthen organizational capacities included an HRA-designed communications module. The module was **delivered at the 16 sessions held throughout the year and provided key tools and skills to CSOs to incorporate communications as an essential strategy within their missions and agendas**. CSOs gained a clear understanding of their potentials to be reached through effective messaging and information dissemination techniques and plans. Due to this support, communications tools were created and are being implemented by: Meta's sub-regional human rights mechanism, Meta's family commissary, the *Fundación Sergio Urrego* which works on anti-discrimination issues, and ACONC and its member associations which increasingly face risks due to growing illegal armed groups in northern Cauca.

HRA's technical support in **designing various human rights and peacebuilding communications campaigns during the year also played a significant role in mobilizing communities centered on promoting and defending human rights throughout HRA priority municipalities**. During the year, HRA was a catalyst or main support to nine communications campaigns on issues ranging from Afro-Colombian heritage and pride (#MesHerenciaAfricana) to GBV prevention. A key achievement during the year has involved HRA's support to develop the Anti-Stigmatization against Human Rights Defenders and Social Leaders in Colombia campaign which was born out of collaborative efforts led by departmental guarantees roundtables in Córdoba, Antioquia, and Cauca. Other supporting partners including the UNDP, governor's offices, and UNOHCHR. Modeling this initiative, HRA also worked key governmental institutions in Nariño to design their own communications campaign on this issue. This endeavor was further complemented by HRA-led #ProtegeaLosLideresSociales campaign which was at the heart of HRA-supported Campus Party 2019. Flanked by supporting hashtag handles such as #CPCo2019, #Hackathon, and via Instagram @campuspartyco, informational updates on these technological and cutting-edge challenges to save human rights defenders generated substantial social media buzz. For the first time in HRA's implementation, the @USAID/Colombia twitter account posted updates in real time over the course of the 4-day event. At least 15 media stories (tv and print) were published covering this exciting venture converging tech thinkers with human rights defenders and government institutions to introduce innovative approaches to this crisis.

Under the banner of #MeLaJuegoPorLosDDHH, 70 video or photographic submissions were submitted to HRA's facebook fanpage in commemoration of National Human Rights Day (Sept. 9) galvanizing awareness and momentum of human rights and peacebuilding activities throughout HRA's priority regions. Similarly, #16days and #DiadelaMujer served as media channels to turn the spotlight on HRA-supported projects, activities, and events promoting gender equality, GBV resources, and information to raise awareness to empower and mobilize communities on these issues. Via #MesHerenciaAfricana, similar supporting initiatives were showcased through Twitter and Facebook work being carried out with 11 Afro-Colombian CSOs across 25 municipalities of several departments advancing cultural and community rights, self-protection, GBV prevention and organizational strengthening.

Due to HRA's leadership in communications, several media products (print, video, and audio) were created which promoted reflection and dialogue on some of Colombia's leading human rights and peacebuilding challenges throughout the year. Moreover, many of these products were the result of HRA's technical assistance or grant support to key regional CSOs advancing human rights initiatives in difficult contexts. Through HRA grantee *Consejo de Redacción*, which worked in close partnership with *Verdad Abierta*, **five human rights investigatory articles were published by regional journalists (Meta and Cauca) who were provided with technical training to research, write, and edit thought-provoking and insightful pieces covering pressing human rights issues impacting their regions in the post-accord phase.** These articles published across regional media outlets, verdadabierta.com and colombiacheck.com include: [“La mala hora de Ituango”](#); [“Caquetá, la sustitución que no fragua”](#); [“Indígenas de Nariño, a la espera de la JEP”](#); [“El crimen que rompió la armonía en el Norte del Cauca”](#); and [“Los rescates de las Mujeres Nasa.”](#) Moreover, regional journalist networks were strengthened and provided with the encouragement and renewed sense of value of this critical work.

HRA's efforts, with support from the US Embassy's videography team, yielded **eight short-film videos highlighting HRA-supported human rights and peacebuilding initiatives.** Topics covered included ethnic women participating in the women's school and developing GBV response *rutras*, Campus Party 2019 to protect human rights defenders and social leaders, and the important work carried out by human rights defenders and social leaders in southern Córdoba. Complementing these efforts, the 2018 **HRA-supported short-film documentary contest #NuevaMirada resulted in the development, production, and screening of “El Joven de la Cámara.”** This film captured the joys, pride and challenges of an Afro-Colombian community in Chocó braving Colombia's precarious post-accord phase through the lens of a promising young film co-director team. It premiered at the International Film Festival in Cartagena, a literary festival in Quibdó, Chocó, and Bogotá. This achievement was covered by at least 12 media publications.

HRA's Facebook fan page continued to expand and gain social media traction during FY19. HRA saw increased social media traffic throughout the days the Facebook fan page promoted the aforementioned communications campaigns. On these days, there was an average posting of 2-3 comments or interactions as opposed to the average one when campaigns were not underway. During FY19, the fan page follower tally increased to 7,444, with 2,389 new followers representing a 32% increase from the previous year. This growth also represented a 29% increase in interactions during FY19.