Project No. 1-4d

Region: Americas
Country: Colombia

Project:
Demobilized youth

Project Description:
Colombia has been immersed in an internal armed conflict for over 50 years, in a process that has become aggravated in the last decade, with the conflict becoming a new source of poverty.

A labour market dominated by the informal economy, unemployment, discrimination and fragmentation of society reflect the extent of exclusion and inequity in economic, social and cultural terms that is being experienced.

One of principle commitments on the part of Colombia today is to work towards achieving true social inclusion, including through promotion of a peace process and the demobilization of individuals who form part of the factions engaged in armed confrontations.

In this sense, the proposed National Development Plan for 2002-2006, towards a State based on the community, is being pursued by the Government of Colombia, which sees reestablishing the peace as a central objective. On this basis, it has developed a strategy to take action to grapple with the multiple facets of the situation.

The idea involves dealing with armed groups operating on the margins of the law, providing protection for people who leave them, and prevention to keep people from joining them. An Advisory Body on Reintegration has been set up to coordinate; it is comprised of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the Ministries of Defence, Interior and Justice, and the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare.

The goal of the programme is to focus attention on demobilized individuals, by offering them full and actual reintegration into society. To attain this, the programme has designed a complex set of actions that facilitate transition from illegality to one in which rights can be fully enjoyed.

The Government is offering a set of economic benefits and opportunities for education and training for employment – conditions which are determinative when it is time to think of reincorporating these young people into society.

These training courses, which have been offered since February 2002, are run by the National Training Service (SENA), which brings the experience and ability of an institution specialized in training fully to bear. SENA has been one of the most active participants in the ILO-CINTERFOR network since its founding.

SENA, together with the Programme for Demobilized Persons, provides support through the programmes on Youth in Action, Rural Youth, and the National System of Business Incubators. The action focuses on training and employment, both wage employment and productive initiatives.

Thanks to these initiatives, around 5,000 Colombians have been able to change their way of life between August 2002 and October 2004.

Currently all capacity-building and training activity has been reoriented to fall under the coordination of SENA, with technical support from ILO-CINTERFOR, resulting in an improvement in the quality of training services offered to beneficiaries.
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