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THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

CAROLINE DELGADO

STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Caroline Delgado

The SIPRI–WFP Knowledge Partnership and disclaimer

WFP and SIPRI established a knowledge partnership in 2018 to help strengthen WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace in the countries where it works. The research for phase I of this partnership visited four case study countries—El Salvador, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan and Mali—and produced initial findings in June 2019. The evidence from these case studies indicated that some WFP programming positively contributes to improving the prospects for peace; however, there were also issues that needed to be addressed. The preliminary report made a number of general and country-specific recommendations on how WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace could be improved.* However, further research was required to test the robustness and general applicability of the initial findings and recommendations, and to refine and add to them with more case studies. Accordingly, in phase II, the inquiry will broaden by incorporating new countries, and deepen through a focus on five thematic areas.

Nine countries have been identified for research in phase II: Chad, Central African Republic, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Lebanon, Nigeria and South Sudan. The five thematic areas are climate change, stabilization, gender, cash-based interventions and measurement. The research will inquire into and report on these areas in all nine countries; in addition, there will be a deep dive in each country on one or two of the thematic areas. Phase II research will result in nine country reports, five thematic reports, and a synthesis report that brings together all the evidence, findings and recommendations.

This Colombia case study is the first country case study of phase II. For each case study, a joint team of staff from SIPRI and WFP conducted in-country research for approximately two weeks to identify possible contributions to improving the prospects for peace resulting from WFP programmes. The methodology for this analysis involved: a literature review of the country context and of WFP's programmes and those of other organizations; key informant interviews with WFP country office staff, beneficiaries and local experts; focus group discussions with beneficiaries; and consultations with partners and experts in the country.

The publication of this report has been delayed due to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic that emerged in early 2020. The report therefore addresses specific WFP programmatic developments up to the end of 2019.

The findings and recommendations and any errors or omissions are those of the author and do not represent the position of SIPRI, WFP or the management, executive directors or boards of these institutions.

* Delgado, C. et al., *The World Food Programme's Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace* (SIPRI: Stockholm, 2019).

Executive summary

Objectives

The objectives of this case study report on Colombia are to understand the contribution of the World Food Programme (WFP) to improving the prospects for peace in Colombia, to identify how WFP could enhance its contribution and how these may be measured. The study forms part of a wider knowledge partnership between the WFP and SIPRI, in which Colombia is one of 13 case study countries. This case study centres on WFP's programming and interventions following the signing of the Colombian peace agreement in 2016 and the role WFP plays as the country transitions out of over 50 years of armed conflict. The research involved a desk review of programme documents, in-depth interviews and field visits to project sites.

Peacebuilding efforts and armed conflict are occurring concurrently in the Colombian context. The peace agreement ended violence between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército de Pueblo, FARC-EP) and the Government of Colombia. However, other armed actors were also responsible for the high levels of violence, many of which continue to operate in Colombia. Multiple factors, drivers and channels combine to shape the prospects for peace, as this report shows. Detangling the complex web of dynamics to draw conclusions about any one driver is analytically challenging.

WFP Colombia's contribution to peace is articulated in this report through theories of change (TOCs). The development of these TOCs provides a light systematization of WFP's approach, spelling out the pathways through which its programming and interventions can contribute to peace.

Overview of findings

This report covers four main areas where WFP Colombia is—or could potentially be—contributing to peace. The research examined if timely and interlinked WFP assistance allows conflict-affected communities to remain on their land, thereby contributing to stabilization. The findings point towards WFP contributing to stabilization in two ways. First by providing conflict-affected populations with access to food and livelihood opportunities during deteriorating post-agreement violence, thereby reducing the risk of mass displacement due to food insecurity. Second through providing tangible peace dividends against the slow implementation of the peace agreement.

Another area explored is whether WFP's support to the productive projects part of the reincorporation programme of ex-combatants, with links to markets and commercialization opportunities and involving host communities, can enhance sustainability of the reincorporation of former FARC-EP combatants. The reincorporation process is facing substantial delays, which is affecting trust and commitment among the ex-combatants. Against this background the research identified three important contributions of WFP interventions. First by initiating and facilitating sustainable, productive projects with links to markets. Second through enhancing social reincorporation. Third by incorporating spontaneous reincorporation sites into the overall national reincorporation efforts.

The research also explored whether an accelerated and coherent emergency response to Venezuelan migrants can address their immediate needs and support their long-term socio-economic integration, thereby reducing the potentially destabilizing impact of the migration crisis on the peace process. The research found

WFP interventions could have a potentially stabilizing impact through reducing the vulnerability of Venezuelan migrants to being recruited into illegal armed groups and their subsequent involvement in illegal economies. WFP is also in a position to dampen the rising social tensions caused by the stresses the migration crisis places on access to limited resources.

Finally, the research looked at ways in which WFP can enhance state–community trust and vertical integration in remote rural areas with heightened levels of violence. The findings demonstrate that WFP is in a position to significantly contribute towards restoring of state–society trust, which has been ruptured by decades of armed conflict. WFP is also well placed to facilitate interaction and complementarity among different approaches to peacebuilding. WFP's strong presence and acceptance at international, state and local community levels provide it with an opportunity to connect national-level formal peace processes and informal peace processes on the ground.

The evidence compiled during this research indicates that WFP programming can—and does—positively contribute towards improving the prospects for peace in Colombia. However, the conflict and peacebuilding environment is particularly challenging, given the increasing violence and the escalating Venezuelan migration crisis. In this context, implementing the peace accords and finding a sustainable basis for peace and security throughout the country is extremely difficult, and WFP programming may not be decisive. Building on WFP Colombia's important contribution to peace, this study recognizes there is room for improvement and also that important conflict sensitivity concerns need to be taken into account. This report therefore makes 15 recommendations:

1. Systematize knowledge, experiences and lessons learned from working with conflict-affected communities to articulate a clear understanding of stabilization that emphasizes a people-centred approach to security.

2. Position WFP's work as enhancing the ability of ethnic communities to remain on their ancestral land and promote their peace aspirations.

3. Ensure WFP interventions are tied into territorial development programmes, especially the pillars around the right to food and economic reactivation, and the implementation plan.

4. Make ex-combatants a specific target group for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

5. Enhance the sustainability of reincorporation efforts by supporting the process to formalize agreements between the cooperatives formed by the ex-combatants with local vendors, and anchor WFP programmatic interventions in communities to the government's reincorporation programmes and territorially focused development programmes (programas de desarrollo con enfoque terriotorial, PDETs).

6. Carefully tailor interventions with ex-combatants in a way that initially capitalizes on existing hierarchical structures.

7. As productive projects progress, facilitate transformation of the old hierarchical structures in a way that favours adaptation to civilian life.

8. Broker stronger connections among the Special Territories for Education and Reincorporation (Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación) to enable the sharing of lessons learned.

9. Use WFP's leverage with state entities to accelerate institutionalization of spontaneous reincorporation sites.

10. Gather data and share research findings to better understand the causal links between the school feeding programme, school enrolment and retention, and child recruitment into illegal armed gangs.

11. Capitalize on the pull factor of the community kitchens to serve as an entry point to refer to other social protection services, assess employability and support economic integration.

12. Ensure WFP's response to migrants is connected with macro-level strategies around social protection and economic integration of Venezuelan migrants.

13. Contribute to enhancing feedback loops through sharing assessments and analysis around WFP interventions with local actors, including local government.

14. Through WFP partnerships with different actors and across national and local levels, inform the development of road maps for the implementation of PDETs.

15. Capitalize on WFP's access in remote and hard-to-reach areas to build the required processes to close the centre–periphery gap.

Abbreviations

ARN	Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización)
AUC	United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia)
CONPES de	National Council for Economic and Social Policy (Consejo Nacional Política Económica y Social)
CSP	Country strategic plan
DDR	Demobilization, disarmament and reintegration
ELN	National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional)
EPL	Popular Liberation Army (Ejército Popular de Liberación)
ETCR	Special Territories for Education and Reincorporation (Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación)
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombia-Ejército de Pueblo)
GIFMM	Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (Grupo Interagencial sobre Flujos Migratorios Mixtos)
GOC	Government of Colombia
IAG	Illegal armed group
PDET	Territorially focused development programme (programa de desarrollo con enfoque terriotorial)
PEP	Special stay permit (permiso especial de permanencia)
PMI	Implementation plan (plan marco de implementación)
PPP	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFP	School feeding programme
TOC	Theory of change
UARIV	Victims' Unit (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas)
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNVM	United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia
WFP	World Food Programme
ZVTN	Transitional Local Zone for Normalization (Zona Veredales Transitorias de Normalización)

1. Introduction

This case study report sets out the contribution of the World Food Programme (WFP) to the prospects for peace in Colombia and the strategic role of WFP in peacebuilding in the country. The overarching purpose is to build an evidence base to assess whether—and if so how—WFP programming contributes to improving the prospects for peace, and to identify where—if anywhere—it has unintended adverse effects. The findings are expected to inform future operational refinement based on the conclusions.

WFP Colombia was selected to participate in the research as one of 13 country case studies of the SIPRI–WFP Knowledge Partnership. The objectives of the case studies are to understand in each context: (*a*) WFP's contribution to improving the prospects for peace, (*b*) how WFP might enhance its contribution to improving the prospects for peace and (*c*) how WFP can measure its contribution to improving the prospects for peace. The knowledge partnership explores five specific thematic areas: stabilization, climate change, gender, cash-based transfers and measurement.

This report begins with a contextual analysis of the conflict and the current security situation following ratification of the peace agreement in 2016, including root causes and drivers of armed violence. After a brief discussion of the research design and its limitations, the report presents the main analysis of WFP's interventions and its contribution to the prospects for peace. The analysis is centred around four theories of change (TOCs). Following the analysis supporting the TOCs, the report highlights particular conflict sensitivity concerns and provides recommendations on how WFP can address these concerns and strengthen its contribution to peace. The first three focus on specific geographical regions and WFP programming, and the report sets out the specific contextual background and an overview of the projects covered. The fourth TOC is cross-cutting to WFP's interventions and serves as an entry point to reflect on WFP's role as an external actor in peacebuilding in general. The final section of the report presents additional findings around the remaining thematic deep-dive areas.

2. Colombia context

Armed conflict has ravaged Colombia for over five decades, causing a devastating humanitarian crisis. More than 260 000 people died as a direct consequence of the conflict, over 60 000 disappeared, and at least 7 million people were internally displaced by the time of the signing of a peace agreement in 2016.[1] The peace agreement ended violence between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército de Pueblo, FARC-EP) and the Government of Colombia (GOC) (see box 2.1).[2] However, other armed actors were also responsible for the high levels of violence, many of which continue to operate in Colombia.

Against this background, the International Committee of the Red Cross distinguishes five different ongoing conflicts in Colombia involving various constellations of illegal armed groups (IAGs) and the state forces.[3] These are the conflicts between the GOC and: (*a*) the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN), (*b*) the Popular Liberation Army (Ejército Popular de Liberación, EPL), (*c*) the Gaitanist Self-Defence of Colombia, (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia) and (*d*) elements of the FARC-EP that have not accepted the peace process; and (*e*) between the ELN and the EPL guerrillas in the Catatumbo region. For this reason, this report refers to the period following the signing of the peace agreement as the post-agreement phase rather than the post-conflict phase. The protracted nature of the conflict and the number of actors with conflicting agendas defy any simple overview and characterization of the conflict. Unequal access to land and historical political exclusion are among the root causes of the conflict, whereas drug trafficking and illegal economies have extended the duration of the conflict. The violence has had a detrimental impact on food security in Colombia.

Unequal access to land and political exclusion

An important legacy of the colonial period in Colombia was the high concentration of land, creating landowning elites who were able to press for policies favourable to them.[4] The pervasive practices of dispossession through violence and corruption have continued since Colombia's independence from Spain.[5] Land distribution in Colombia was among the most unequal in the world by the time of the peace agreement. Over two thirds of agricultural land was concentrated in just 0.4 per cent of farmland holdings, whereas 84 per cent of the smallest farms controlled less than 4 per cent of productive land.[6] Most small-scale and subsistence farmers are without formal titles to the land, which they have lived and worked on for generations.[7] Although past governments have occasionally tried to reverse the unequal land distribution, opposition from large

[1] Unidad para la Atención y la Reparación Integral a las Víctimas (UARIV) (Victims' Unit), 'Registro Unico de Victimas', accessed 10 Feb. 2020.

[2] Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera [Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace].

[3] ICRC, 'Colombia: Five armed conflicts – What's happening?', ICRC, 30 Jan. 2019.

[4] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *OECD Review of Agricultural Policies: Colombia 2015* (OECD: 2015); and Thomson, F., 'The agrarian question and violence in Colombia: Conflict and development', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2011), pp. 321–56.

[5] For a comprehensive account of the history of dispossession through violence and corruption, see Thomson (note 4); and Grajales, J., 'State involvement, land grabbing and counter-insurgency in Colombia', *Development and Change*, vol. 44, no. 2 (2013), pp. 211–32.

[6] Oxfam, *Unearthed: Land, Power and Inequality in Latin America* (Oxfam: 2016).

[7] Department for National Planning, GOC, *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2014-2018 – Todos por un nuevo país (National Development Plan 2014-2018 – Everyone Towards a New Country);* and Oxfam, *Divide and Purchase: How Land Ownership is Being Concentrated in Colombia* (Oxfam: 2013).

Box 2.1. Final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace in Colombia, 2016

The peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC-EP) consists of six separate accords or subagreements that together constitute an indissoluble whole agreement:

1. *Comprehensive rural reform*, which focuses on: the well-being of rural communities, including different ethnic groups; strengthening state presence across the country and closing the gap between rural and urban areas; protecting the environment; and ensuring the right to food is realized.
2. *Political participation*, which seeks to strengthen pluralism to promote and strengthen citizen participation in matters of public interest and to outlaw violence as a method of political action.
3. *The end of the conflict through the bilateral and definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities and laying down of arms*, which addresses reincorporation of former members of the FARC-EP into civilian life and the fight against criminal organizations responsible for homicides and massacres.
4. *The solution to the problem of illicit drugs*, promoting a comprehensive approach to solve the illicit drugs problem, combining voluntary programmes with coca crop substitution, rural development, and a human rights and public health equity-based and gender-based approach to the prevention of drug use.
5. *The victims of the armed conflict and a transitional justice scheme*, which seeks to contribute to the fight against impunity and clarify the truth, search for missing people and provide reparations for harm and injury caused.
6. *Implementation and verification mechanisms,* which create a Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Verifying the Implementation of the Final Agreement, consisting of representatives from the national government and the FARC-EP.

Source: Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera [Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace].

landowners has stalled these efforts.[8] Moreover, national development plans and policies have often been biased against small-scale producers and subsistence farmers while favouring large landowners.[9] These practices are linked to historical political exclusion.

The political system following independence in the early 19th century evolved in a way that concentrated and monopolized political power by the two main political parties: the conservatives and the liberals. Regional elites, consisting mainly of large-scale landowners and divided along the liberal and conservative line, fought to control municipal appointments and established a profitable patronage system.[10] A constitutionally sanctioned power-sharing agreement called the National Front, in place between 1958 and 1974, further monopolized political power between the two parties by closing off competition from any other party.[11] In this system, other social groups had no way of expressing their concerns through political channels.

On the back of this exclusionary political and economic system, the FARC-EP and the ELN guerrillas emerged in the 1960s. The FARC-EP in particular found their support base among the farmers persecuted and displaced into the isolated rural hinterlands, the so-called peripheries. In response to guerrilla violence, paramilitary self-defence groups formed to aid the national armed forces in defeating the guerrillas. However, they were extensively used as private protection units for the rural elite—to protect landowners from guerrilla attacks and to further expropriate farmers from their land and resist the growth of state power into these regions.[12] In more recent years,

[8] OECD (note 4); and Thomson (note 4).

[9] LeGrand, C. C., van Isschot, L. and Riaño-Alcalá, P., 'Land, justice, and memory: Challenges for peace in Colombia', *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, vol. 42, no. 3 (2017), pp. 259–76; and Berry, R. A., 'Reflections on injustice, inequality and land conflict in Colombia', *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, vol. 42, no. 3 (2017), pp. 277–97.

[10] Gill, L., 'State formation and class politics in Colombia', eds. Krupa, C. and Nugent, D., *State Theory and Andean Politics: New Approaches to the Study of Rule* (University of Pennsylvania Press: 2015), pp. 78–98.

[11] Le Grand, van Isshot and Riaño-Alcalá (note 9).

[12] Felbab-Brown, V., *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Brookings Institution: Press, 2009).

violent land dispossessions through paramilitary forces have been linked to mining corporations and agribusiness.[13]

Illegal economies

Nevertheless, armed violence was of relatively low intensity until the 1980s, when the drug trade took a stronghold in the country. Powerful and violent drug cartels were formed, which established paramilitary forces for protection and expansion purposes.[14] The drug trade transformed the conflict, creating new incentives for territorial and political control centred around dominating the drug trade and the vast profits pertaining thereto. The growth and evolution of the IAGs in Colombia were directly related to their ability to loot exportable resource commodities, principally coca/cocaine, but also oil and minerals.[15] The profits generated by illegal economies are enormous. While figures around illegal economies are always fraught with uncertainty, rigorous research shows that the FARC-EP earned an estimated $580 million per year from its involvement in the illegal economies by the time of the peace agreement.[16] The soaring income of the guerrillas in the 1980s and 1990s enabled them to challenge the state more aggressively and expand territorial control. It also resulted in the state becoming engaged in two parallel wars: the counter-insurgency war and the war against the drug cartels. Violence rapidly escalated in this context, and various peace negotiations attempted with the FARC-EP ultimately failed.

State-led stabilization efforts

Through various stabilization programmes implemented since the turn of this century, the Government of Colombia has sought to eliminate the IAGs and strengthen state institutional presence in the peripheries. The government has largely taken an area-specific phased approach to stabilization, where violent regions with weak state territorial control are first militarily secured, after which other state institutions gradually consolidate their presence.[17] Stabilization efforts have had tangible successes: the guerrilla forces were substantially weakened in numbers; the main paramilitary structure—the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, AUC)—was dismantled; over 30 000 paramilitaries were demobilized and disarmed; and kidnappings and homicides decreased. However, in response the guerrillas resorted to more traditional guerrilla warfare tactics, leading to an increase in the use of improvised explosive devices, ambushes and sniper attacks. There has been much criticism of the mass violation of human rights and international humanitarian law infringements committed by all armed actors during this time, including the state armed forces.[18]

[13] Oxfam (note 7).

[14] Gootenberg, P., 'Cocaine's long march north, 1900–2010', *Latin American Politics and Society*, vol. 54, no. 1 (2012), pp. 159–80.

[15] Escobedo, R. et al., *Colombia: Inseguridad, Violencia Y Desempeño Económico En Las Áreas Rurales* (Fondo Financiero de Proyectos de Desarrollo: 1997); Gutiérrez Sanín, F., 'Criminal rebels? A discussion of civil war and criminality from the Colombian experience', *Politics & Society*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2004), pp. 257–85; Nasi, C. and Rettberg, A., 'Los estudios sobre conflicto armado y paz: Un campo en evolución permanente', *Colombia Internacional*, no. 62 (2005), pp. 64–85; and Rettberg, A. and Ortiz-Riomalo, J. F., 'Golden opportunity, or a new twist on the resource–conflict relationship: Links between the drug trade and illegal gold mining in Colombia', *World Development*, vol. 84 (2016), pp. 82–96.

[16] McDermott, J., 'FARC's riches: Up to $580 million in annual income', InSight Crime, 6 Sep. 2017.

[17] Colombia Ministry of Defence, *Política Integral de Seguridad Y Defensa Para La Prosperidad (Integral Security and Defence Policy for Prosperity)* (GOC: 2011); Colombia Ministry of Defence, *Política de Defensa y Seguridad: Todos por un Nuevo País (Defence and Security Policy: Everyone Towards a New Country)* (GOC: 2015); and Isacson, A., *Consolidating 'Consolidation'* (Washington Office on Latin America: 2012).

[18] Among the gravest violations was the incentive scheme, in which soldiers were rewarded for every guerrilla member killed, now known as the 'false-positive' scandal. Farmers and marginalized youth were killed by the armed

The stabilization programmes have come under particular scrutiny for their emphasis on military offensives while largely failing to implement the humanitarian and development components.[19] The AUC demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process has been condemned for institutionalizing impunity while disregarding the state's responsibility for creating, consolidating and expanding the paramilitaries.[20] Moreover, several paramilitary structures remained intact, and a significant number of paramilitaries that went through the DDR process returned to these or formed new structures.[21] These so-called neo-paramilitary groups continue to drive armed violence in Colombia. With FARC-EP's share of the illegal economies now available, the vested interest in continued violence and war in Colombia is huge. The growing number, fragmentation and reach of IAGs, coupled with the resilience of the illegal economies they control, are among the greatest threats to the Colombian peace process. The peace process in Colombia is therefore highly dependent on the success of the Colombian state in preventing other IAGs from appropriating the territories and illegal economies left by the FARC-EP while ensuring a consolidated institutional presence and the provision of public goods and services, including justice, security, economic infrastructure, rural education and health.

The Colombian peace process

The GOC and the FARC-EP guerrilla signed a peace agreement in August 2016, ratified by Congress in late November 2016, thereby officially ending the armed conflict in Colombia. Four years after the peace agreement came into force, commendable progress had been made against the short-term 2017–19 implementation plan (plan marco de implementación, PMI) commitments, including dismantling of the FARC-EP. The peace process has now moved into the 2020–22 midterm stage. This stage focuses on the most conflict-affected territories and on closing the gap between rural and urban areas, supporting long-term socio-economic reincorporation of ex-combatants and securing victims' rights.[22]

However, the reincorporation process is not advancing according to the agreed timeline. There are signs that some ex-combatants are losing confidence in, and commitment to, the peace process (see TOC 2, section 4). A main challenge is the provision of livelihoods and security for ex-combatants. By September 2020, 224 ex-combatants had been killed.[23] The armed forces have faced significant challenges in ensuring state territorial control in the regions vacated by the FARC-EP, where numerous IAGs are engaged in fierce battles for territory.[24] The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVM) has repeatedly expressed concern over

forces and thereafter dressed up and presented as FARC-EP members. In October 2019 the Attorney General's office handed over more than 2200 open false-positive cases, involving 3876 victims, to the International Criminal Court.

[19] Delgado, J. E., 'Counterinsurgency and the limits of state-building: An analysis of Colombia's policy of territorial consolidation, 2006–2012', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 26, no. 3 (2015), pp. 408–28; Isacson (note 17); and Nilsson, M., 'Building peace amidst violence: An analysis of Colombia's policies to address security and development challenges', *Iberoamericana Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1 (2018), pp. 34–44.

[20] Krupa, C. and Nugent, D., *State Theory and Andean Politics: New Approaches to the Study of Rule* (University of Pennsylvania Press: 2015); and Cairo, H. et al., '"Territorial peace": The emergence of a concept in Colombia's peace negotiations', *Geopolitics*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2018), pp. 464–88.

[21] Nussio, E., 'Learning from shortcomings: The demobilisation of paramilitaries in Colombia', *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2011), pp. 88–92.

[22] Reincorporation is part of the DDR of ex-combatants. Traditionally, the 'R' in DDR stands for 'reintegration'. However, the FARC-EP has insisted on using the term 'reincorporation', rather than 'reintegration', to differentiate from previous exercises—in particular the reintegration of AUC combatants. Therefore, the report uses reincorporation and not reintegration when referring to the DDR process.

[23] United Nations, Security Council, 'United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/943, 25 Sep. 2020.

[24] Staguhn, J., Yayboke, E. and Dalton, M., 'Colombia at stabilization crossroads', Center for Strategic & International Studies, 5 Mar. 2020.

the continued violence against communities and killings of social and political leaders, human rights defenders and former FARC-EP combatants. The situation is particularly dire in areas where there is a convergence of weak state presence, illegal economies and poverty.[25] This new critical phase is more complex; it demands a higher level of investment at the local level and more intense inter-institutional coordination, and hence more time. The above developments partially explain why, by the time the research took place at the end of 2019, there had been no or only bare minimum implementation of 60 per cent of the agreements making up the peace accords (see box 2.1).[26]

The centre–periphery divide, territorially focused development programmes and food insecurity

The political and socio-economic development of Colombia since independence, together with the armed conflict, has resulted in a so-called centre–periphery divide. This refers to a distinction between the highly developed central regions and major cities of the country, and the underdeveloped rural hinterlands.

The centre is largely perceived as being areas of economic prosperity, with well-functioning state institutions and being relatively spared from the armed conflict. The peripheries are often characterized as zones of absence—referring to the absence of the state, its institutions, and the range of goods and services available in the more developed areas. The populations of the peripheries are geographically and institutionally disconnected from the centre; instead, informal and criminal businesses are the principal means of subsistence. The state does not act as the main social regulator and IAGs dispute, sometimes successfully, state authority.[27] These are the regions where the guerrillas and other IAGs have established their rural bases, where drug trafficking and other illegal economies have become entrenched and where human rights violations and breaches in international humanitarian law have been most intense.[28] As a result, the peripheries are among the poorest—with the multidimensional poverty rate being 2.3 times higher than in urban areas—and most violent regions of Colombia.[29]

While there is no formal recognition of which geographical areas are considered to be in the peripheries, the 170 municipalities that are the specific focus for peacebuilding and stabilization efforts under the peace agreement could arguably be considered as being in the peripheral regions (see TOC 1, section 4). The FARC-EP had a strong presence in these municipalities, which are now affected by violence among the remaining IAGs seeking to take over. They are characterized by high poverty rates, weak state institutional and administrative capacity, and the elevated presence of illicit crops and other illegal economies. The government aims to stabilize and develop these regions through territorially focused development programmes (programas de desarrollo con enfoque terriotorial, PDETs).

The PDETs promote rural reform, including securing land rights, reactivating the economy, providing adequate public services, improving housing and public infrastructures, promoting reconciliation and social cohesion, and supporting

[25] Progress reports are available at United Nations Verification Mission (UNVM) in Colombia, 'Reports of the Secretary General', Oct. 2020.

[26] KROC Institute For International Peace Studies, 'Actualización Informe 3 del Instituto Kroc Hacia una paz de calidad en Colombia', 2019.

[27] Llorente, M. V., 'From war to peace: Security and the stabilization of Colombia', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015).

[28] LeGrand, C., 'Colonization and violence in Colombia: Perspectives and debates', *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, vol. 14, no. 28 (1989), pp. 5–29.

[29] OECD, *OECD Territorial Reviews: Colombia 2014* (OECD Publishing: 2014).

the right to food. They are implemented through action plans created at village, municipal and subregional levels, including the participation of social organizations, producers' associations, victims of the armed conflict and ethnic communities, to name but a few. The government is also taking forward the Zona Futuro initiative in some of the most violence-affected regions of the country. This initiative combines army and police efforts, and social services provision, to increase security presence to allow for, among others, a faster implementation of PDETs. Nevertheless, some local communities perceive this to be a military security strategy at its core—in many areas where the initiative is implemented, the armed forces are the only state actor present.[30] Therefore, it is a challenge to build and maintain trust in the state against such perceptions, particularly following the impact of previous efforts to control and stabilize conflict-affected regions of the country.

There are pockets of marginalization in urban centres that bear similarities to the rural peripheries. They are the theatre of the armed conflict in the urban areas, where many IAGs are engaged in contesting territory and control over the population. These urban pockets provide a pathway in and out of major cities for IAGs to traffic drugs and arms to the broader conflict.[31] As is the case with the rural peripheral regions, these urban pockets are characterized by similar structural deficiencies, resulting in a high level of poverty, low job opportunities, and lack of access to services and inclusive social safety nets.

The history of inequalities and armed violence has generated poverty and unsustainable livelihood systems, and has had a significant impact on food security outcomes in the peripheries.[32] Most of the 43 per cent of Colombians who are food insecure reside in marginalized rural areas. The agricultural sector remains stagnant in these areas due to the informality of property rights and inadequate land use.[33] Only 3.9 per cent of rural households own the minimum assets (land, technical assistance, quality inputs and credit) required to ensure subsistence agricultural productivity.[34] The displaced population is particularly vulnerable, having to face social marginalization, political barriers and economic hardships that hinder their access to food.[35] The indigenous population is also among the population groups that have suffered most from the armed conflict; it is also highly vulnerable to food insecurity. For example in Chocó department, 90 per cent of indigenous children under five years of age suffer from stunting (impaired growth and development due to malnutrition).[36]

Food prices are increasing: by over 8.2 per cent in April 2020 compared with the same month in the previous year.[37] In May 2020 the unemployment rate reached a record high, at 21.4 per cent.[38] With unemployment and food prices increasing, availability and access to food have reduced. An increase in undernourishment, which has been dropping for years, seems unavoidable. All this is taking place in a context of increasing violence and slow progress in addressing critical structural drivers of armed conflict and food insecurity.

[30] Staguh, Yayboke and Dalton (note 24); and Human Rights Watch, '"The guerrillas are the police": Social control and abuses by armed groups in Colombia's Arauca province and Venezuela's Apure state', 2020.

[31] Berents, H. and McEvoy-Levy, S., 'Theorising youth and everyday peace(building)', *Peacebuilding*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2015), pp. 115–25.

[32] Brück, T. and d'Errico, M., 'Food security and violent conflict: Introduction to the special issue', *World Development*, vol. 117 (2019), pp. 167–71.

[33] WFP, 'Colombia country strategic plan (2017–2021)', 10 Feb. 2017.

[34] Departamento Nacional de Planeación (National Planning Department), *Informe Final: Misión para la transformación del campo* (*Final Report: Mission for the Transformation of the Countryside*) (Departamento Nacional de Planeación: Bogotá DC, 2015).

[35] Roy, S., 'Social disadvantage and food security in a forcibly displaced population in Bogotá, Colombia', *Global Health: Annual Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2018), pp. 3–4.

[36] WFP, *Colombia Annual Country Report 2017* (WFP: n.d.).

[37] Trading Economics, 'Colombia food inflation', 2020.

[38] Trading Economics, 'Colombia unemployment rate', 2020.

The peace agreement recognizes the close link between conflict and food insecurity, and places the right to food as a core component of the first point on integral rural reform. The right to food will be implemented through a system that aims at progressively increasing food production in rural areas, promoting income-generation opportunities and establishing conditions for well-being. The right to food is also reinforced in the PDETs.

Venezuelan migrants

Colombia has been affected by an unprecedented and rapidly increasing number of Venezuelan migrants and refugees since 2015. Venezuela is experiencing a political, economic and humanitarian crisis that has driven 4.8 million people to flee the country since 2014.[39] Many have crossed the border into Colombia, entering some of the most vulnerable and violent areas in the country. Colombia has predominantly been the producer of refugees and migrants and has little experience of or structures in place to receive large-scale migration flows. Migrants are preyed upon by the many IAGs, seeking to expand their ranks and thus fighting power (see TOC 3, section 4). Despite concerted political efforts to isolate the Colombian peace process from Venezuela's increasing migratory flows, the two are becoming increasingly interconnected and creating new violence dynamics.[40]

[39] Hidalgo, S. and O'Connor, A., *Independent Review of the Added Value of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to the Venezuelan Regional Refugee and Migration Crisis* (Development and Humanitarian Learning in Action: Aug. 2019); and Plataforma de Coordinacion para refugiados y migrantes de Venezuela (Regional Coordination Platform), accessed 18 May 2020.

[40] Maihold, G., 'Colombia's peace and Venezuela's turmoil: An emerging regional crisis landscape in South America' German Institute for International and Security Affairs, 2018; and Human Rights Watch (note 30).

3. Colombian case study approach

Objectives and background

This report assesses WFP's potential contribution to the prospects for peace in Colombia. As mentioned above, peacebuilding efforts and armed conflict are occurring concurrently, and there are increasing levels of armed violence in some parts of the country. Armed conflict and peace are not two opposites on a linear equation; instead, they are complex phenomena occurring in complex social systems. Contributions to the prospects for peace are therefore not always immediate, obvious or predictable, and need to take place in a system that is highly dynamic, non-linear and emergent.[41] Multiple factors, drivers and channels combine to shape the prospects for peace in the Colombian context. Detangling this intricate web of dynamics to draw conclusions about any one driver is analytically challenging. Working towards more inclusive political, economic and social systems will not necessarily show signs of steady progress or achieve the predicted peacebuilding outcome.[42] Therefore, peacebuilding is fundamentally an experiment.[43]

Against these complexities, the development of TOCs can help articulate and test difficult peacebuilding interventions. A TOC spells out an understanding of how a specific activity will result in the achievement of desired changes in a particular context. The development of TOCs that precisely articulate WFP's contribution to the prospects for peace and make clear the underlying assumptions can position WFP as an important actor in the Colombian peace process.

However, it is essential that the TOCs are not unrealistic or that they do not make massive leaps in logic. Moreover, the TOCs should be dynamic. It is not possible to identify TOCs that will help predict with certainty how these systems will behave in the future, owing to the characteristics of the complex systems. Instead, what is required is a process that uses a continuous participatory and locally anchored process of experimentation and feedback to generate knowledge about the conflict and peacebuilding environment. If the expected results are achieved, a TOC offers a causal pathway that can be explored, assessed for validity and adapted for other contexts.[44]

Methodology

The research involved a review of programme documents and the literature on Colombia, discussions with WFP country office staff and in-depth interviews with a wide range of stakeholders. There were also field visits to project sites in the departments of Chocó, La Guajira and Norte de Santander, where those activities were implemented. This case study focused mainly on activities related to crisis response and resilience building (strategic results 1 and 3 of the country strategic plan (CSP) 2017–21).[45]

Four main TOCs around how programming could contribute to the prospects for peace in Colombia were identified. These TOCs were discussed and refined

[41] de Coning, C., 'Adaptive peacebuilding', *International Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 2 (2018), pp. 301–17.

[42] de Coning, C., 'Complexity thinking and adaptive peacebuilding', *Accord: Navigating Inclusion in Peace Processes*, no. 28 (2019).

[43] Campbell, S. P., *Global Governance and Local Peace: Accountability and Performance in International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge University Press: 2018).

[44] de Coning (note 41).

[45] WFP (note 33).

in collaboration with country office staff, and existing data collection tools were reviewed to determine the availability of relevant data to the proposed TOCs.
The findings are expected to inform future operational refinement based on the conclusions. This is an important step in a longer process of reflective organizational learning and operating space for the country office.

Limitations

The complexities of the armed conflict, coupled with the scope of the research, resulted in some limitations. The research team could not meet with marginalized coca farmers (*cocaleros*) or internally displaced persons, who are among the population groups most affected by armed violence, as well as being primary beneficiaries of WFP interventions. Nor was it possible to visit some of the areas where the conflict has been particularly intense and where dynamics combine to make them crucial peacebuilding areas. As such, there may be important contributions to the prospects for peace made by WFP that this report does not capture.

4. Findings: WFP's engagement in Colombia

This section sets out WFP's engagement in Colombia and presents the four TOCs derived from the research, stipulating the pathways linking WFP's interventions to improving the prospects for peace.

WFP has been present in Colombia since 1969, and has targeted interventions in 12 of the 32 departments. WFP Colombia is contributing to the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, as defined by the GOC and the UN country team, by addressing root causes of food insecurity and supporting longer-term sustainable solutions, while at the same time addressing immediate humanitarian needs. WFP Colombia will contribute to achieving an inclusive peace by supporting the GOC to reach UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 17. WFP's strategy aligns with the GOC national development plan 2018–22 and the related UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2021–23, through its new CSP for 2021–24.[46]

WFP will be supporting all three programmatic areas in the UNSDCF: peace with legality, migration as a development factor and support to the SDGs. The peace agreement opened up new possibilities for WFP—in partnership with the government, international cooperation agencies and other actors—to build the resilience of communities cut off by armed violence and facilitate the reincorporation of ex-combatants. The aim is to support their social and economic reincorporation, by rebuilding and strengthening their livelihoods, ensuring adequate access at all times to nutritious and diversified diets, and increasing their capacity to recover from shocks and adapt to climate change. This is done increasingly through developing the capacity of local authorities to implement accountable programmes that contribute to reducing food insecurity and malnutrition.

WFP's contribution to the prospects for peace are set out through four TOCs. The TOCs help develop a light systematization of WFP's approach in Colombia, against which its continued interventions can be evaluated, to strengthen WFP Colombia's position as a contributor to the peace process.

Theory of Change 1: Territorial peace and stabilization

If *timely and interlinked humanitarian and development assistance allows conflict-affected rural and ethnic communities to voluntarily remain and exercise their right to live in their land/ancestors' territories,* ***then*** *this contributes to stabilization in areas that remain affected by high levels of violence.*

Contextual background

In recognition of the uneven impact of the armed conflict across the country, the government's approach to peacebuilding centres on the notion of territorial peace. Territorial peace constitutes a differential and contextual approach to peacebuilding, reflecting the economic, social and cultural characteristics of the different territories. It demands that peacebuilding efforts focus on the regions where the armed conflict has been the most intense, reflecting the needs of the regions as expressed by their communities. Community participation seeks to ensure different interpretations of what territory means to different actors are included. This is essential against the

[46] Department for National Planning, GOC, *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022 (National Development Plan 2018-2022)* (Department for National Planning: n.d.); and UN Sustainable Development Group, *The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance* (UN Sustainable Group: 2019).

strong correlation between armed violence and land, and thereby for improving security and for the construction of stable and lasting peace. Territorial peace is operationalized through the state stabilization policy (peace with legality), which focuses on the 170 priority PDET municipalities.[47] In the most conflict-affected areas, which the government has designated as 'Zonas Futuro', stabilization efforts are strengthened through an enhanced military presence to combat the IAGs. The stabilization policy continues the approach to stabilize conflict-affected regions by fomenting governance structures in a sequenced fashion.

The government's stabilization approach is partly echoed in the UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP), which aims to strengthen social cohesion, prompt economic recovery and reduce the risk of a resurgence of violence, particularly protecting vulnerable populations including ethnic communities.[48] Through the PPP, WFP is implementing the Programme for Trust and Territorial Peace in PDET communities in the Chocó, Guaviare and Meta departments, together with other UN agencies, the state territorial renewal agency (Agencia de Renovación del Territorio) and the clergy. The main objective of the programme is to improve the quality of life, generate coexistence and reconciliation strategies, and increase the level of trust within communities and in state institutions.

Projects covered

The research team visited WFP project sites in the Chocó department that were part of the UN Programme for Trust and Territorial Peace and where WFP was the lead agency.[49] Through this programme, WFP interventions aim to enhance household incomes, by supporting local low-value agricultural production and a more effective use of local natural resources, diversifying livelihoods, improving access to local markets and stimulating community associativity. These practices generate greater economic dividends and social and environmental benefits.

The research team visited two demonstration and training centres equipped with processing plants for the transformation of perishable agricultural products in the village of Vegaez. These activities related to CSP strategic outcome 1 (capacity strengthening), activity 2: 'develop and evaluate innovative food and nutrition models'. The research team also met with confined indigenous communities in the region, who were receiving emergency food aid through WFP's support to crisis-affected populations strategy that attends to the needs of over 150 000 beneficiaries. These activities related to strategic outcome 2 (access to food), activity 1: 'support victims of violence'.

Analysis

The armed conflict has profoundly affected the Chocó department. It is the poorest and least-developed department while being one of the most resource-rich regions of Colombia. Most people in Chocó are either indigenous or Afro-Colombian. These two ethnic populations are among the people recognized to have suffered the most from conflict violence.[50] As Chocó is underdeveloped and inaccessible yet rich in natural

[47] Presidencia de la Republica (The President's Office), *Paz con Legalidad (Peace with Legality)* (Presidencia de la Republica: 2018).

[48] UN, 'The PBF in Colombia', n.d.. This is a non-public document, held by the residence coordinators office.

[49] Technically, some of the municipalities visited belong to the Antioquia department, but since access is only possible via Chocó, they are treated by WFP programming structures as being part of Chocó.

[50] As acknowledged in the subagreement of the peace agreement, on victims.

resources, it is of geostrategic important to the IAGs.[51] Over the past decades armed actors have violently displaced indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities from their lands or prevented their traditional lifestyles within their territories.[52]

The post-agreement period presents an important opportunity to rebuild lives, despite the complex security challenges, in particular in the areas previously controlled by the FARC-EP and where other IAGs have subsequently consolidated their presence. However, increasing violence and the lack of tangible peace dividends for communities in these regions are eroding hope and optimism towards the peace process. Research findings point towards WFP making a contributing to the prospects for peace through the following.

Facilitating conflict-affected populations to stay on their (ancestral) land, despite escalating violence, thereby reducing the risk of mass displacement

The internal displacement of the civilian population has been one of the most devastating humanitarian consequences of the armed conflict. By October 2019 over 7.5 million people were registered with the government's Victims' Unit (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, UARIV) as being internally displaced, representing more than 15 per cent of the Colombian population. In Chocó over 94 per cent of victims registered by the UARIV had suffered forced displacement.[53] Displacement has a huge destabilizing impact, exacerbating the social, economic and political challenges that the country is already facing.

Of equal concern, although receiving much less attention, is the increasing practice of forced confinement of communities. Confinement is understood as a situation of violation of fundamental rights, in which communities lose freedom of movement due to the military, economic, political, cultural and social control exercised by IAGs within the framework of the armed conflict.[54] Nevertheless, victims of confinement do not have the same access to institutional support as victims of displacement. While displaced and confined populations require attention and support, confined populations require a different response since they remain trapped in a situation of extreme insecurity and are unable to access assets imperative for their survival.

Moreover, there is a direct causal link in the context of the armed conflict in Colombia between confinement situations and forced displacements as recognized by the Colombian Constitutional Court.[55] The court has ordered national authorities to act promptly to ensure the right to not be displaced. Responding to the confinement of indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations is complicated, as confinement is also used by these populations as a form of resistance (discussed below). A locally tailored response that reflects the specific complexities is of critical importance for stabilization efforts and the construction of stable and lasting peace.

Representatives of the indigenous populations interviewed reported that the IAGs are taking cover among communities during armed confrontations, effectively using them as human shields. They prohibit people from leaving their immediate housing areas. To enforce their control the IAGs place mines within the reserves, including in the rivers that communities use for transport. Confinement means communities are

[51] Colombian intelligence officials estimate 45% of the country's cocaine exports depart from the Pacific coast, whereas 60% of Chocó's gold leaves Colombia illegally. Sudarsky Restrepo, J., 'Civil society faces deadly threats in Colombia's Chocó region', Washington Office on Latin America, 8 Aug. 2019; and International Crisis Group, 'Calming the restless Pacific: Violence and crime on Colombia's coast', 8. Aug. 2019.

[52] Cairo et al. (note 20).

[53] UARIV (note 1).

[54] UARIV, 'The victims and land restitution law', 1448/2011, 2011.

[55] UARIV, 'Observatorio al día, No. 4, Confinamiento', Mar. 2019.

unable to practise many of their traditional livelihood activities, including cultivating, hunting, fishing and trading.[56]

Food security has become severely threatened as a result, and food intake has been reduced to one meal a day. Children are particularly affected as they are more vulnerable to the impact of food insecurity because their physical and cognitive development is determined by the quality and quantity of their diet. Confinement also means they are unable to attend school. As representatives of confined communities and the UARIV argued, food insecurity and their inability to attend school place children at higher risk of forced recruitment.[57]

Despite the hardship of confinement, community members argued they preferred living in forced confinement than to be displaced. Displacement has a particularly devastating effect on indigenous communities due to the strong cultural and ancestral ties they have to their land. They fear that once they leave their lands, they will be unable to return, and their communities will become extinct.[58] Leaving their land puts them at higher risk of forced recruitment and prostitution, and other hardships, including street begging, which goes against their customs and culture. The promotion of a dignified life in the territories and refusing to displace has become their form of unarmed resistance and an essential condition for peace.

This form of resistance has been possible because, so far, in the communities of the indigenous representatives interviewed there have been few killings of community members; however, should this change, they will have little option other than to leave.[59] Moreover, as one member of the indigenous community expressed with despair: 'For how much longer can we resist before having to leave or die of hunger? There is nothing left.'[60] There is a real risk that if the situation is not addressed, there will be mass displacement. Indigenous communities in Chocó have presented the government with a proposal for a humanitarian accord in the region, which includes a demand for an immediate ceasefire between the state armed forces and the ELN guerrilla group. Central to their peacebuilding aspirations is for them to remain in their territory, and to maintain their alternative and traditional economic and cultural practices, their identity and their ways of collaborative association.[61]

There are no indications that confinement will end any time soon, and resistance to IAGs has come at the cost of food insecurity. Against this background, WFP unconditional food transfer supports the survival of these vulnerable indigenous communities and helps them to remain in their territories voluntarily. By doing so, WFP interventions indirectly support their peace aspirations and are in line with the central tenets of territorial peace. This also aligns with the GOC's efforts to prevent mass displacement. Food assistance is vital, as all reserves have become depleted, pushing communities to their limits. Accompaniment is equally essential as food assistance for confined communities: WFP's presence provides protection, generates a feeling that communities are not entirely on their own and helps to build trust in the process.

[56] Interviews: Representatives of indigenous communities, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019; Bellavista, 11 Oct. 2019; and UARIV, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019

[57] Interviews: Representatives of indigenous communities, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019; Bellavista, 11 Oct. 2019; and UARIV, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019.

[58] According to the Constitutional Court, 36 indigenous tribes are at risk of extinction—including several tribes in Chocó—due to events arising from the internal conflict, including forced displacement and the construction of megaprojects. The National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia (Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia)—the leading authority of government, justice, legislation and representation of the indigenous peoples of Colombia—holds that the number could be as high as 80. UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'Esta es la situación de las comunidades indígenas en Colombia' ('This is the situation of indigenous communities in Colombia'), Aug. 2015.

[59] Interview: Indigenous community member, Bellavista, 11 Oct. 2019.

[60] Interview: Mesa Indigena, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019.

[61] Interviews: Indigenous community members, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019; and Bellavista, 11 Oct. 2019.

The responsibility for responding to the humanitarian and protection needs of confined communities lies with the local authorities and the UARIV, which sends local ombudsmen to collect denouncements. However, this is a risky practice as IAGs often block the entry of state representatives; even when denouncements can be made, the process is highly bureaucratic, centralized and slow.[62] Insecurity and bureaucratic hurdles mean WFP is one of the few actors with a strong field presence attending to the needs of the confined communities in Chocó.[63] WFP is well placed to leverage opportunities, thus providing inroads for other organizations and government entities through demonstrating its achievement of results.

Providing tangible peace dividends at the backdrop of slow and ruptured implementation of the peace agreement

Not all communities along the Atrato River where the IAGs are contesting territory are confined. However, non-confined communities suffer many similar vulnerabilities as those confined. The area is severely underdeveloped, cut off from the wider economic, social and institutional life of the country. Like confined communities in the country, the people live under the ever-present threats of IAGs. The municipalities visited by the research team were all PDET municipalities, meaning they are destined for fast-track implementation of the peace agreement. One of the FARC-EP reincorporation sites (Special Territories for Education and Reincorporation—Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación, ETCR) was also situated in the area until recently, which should have further accelerated the peace dividends for the communities. However, there had been no improvement in public infrastructure such as roads, schools or hospitals by the time of the research—three years after the peace agreement.[64] The ETCR was closed down without any development projects implemented, and the limited service provision part of the ETCR was discontinued. As a result, initial optimism towards the peace process in the region is eroding.

Against the lack of progress on implementation of the PDETs, WFP food security interventions are generating tangible peace dividends that contribute to maintaining confidence in and commitment to the peace process. Most community members in rural Chocó are subsistence farmers. Farming in the Chocó region is challenging. On the one hand, few crops can be cultivated in the hot and humid tropical forest. The main agricultural product is a low-quality variety of banana (*popocho*) adapted to the specific soil and climate conditions. On the other hand, there are no roads in the region. All transport is by river, which is time-consuming and challenging. The lack of roads makes it expensive to bring food, supplies and equipment into the communities. Likewise, it is costly to transport agricultural products to the market, and they often perish on the way.[65]

In line with the ethos of territorial peace, WFP takes as the starting point what exists in the region, and drawing on knowledge and practices, seeks to strengthen and build resources. By taking advantage of the leading local products, WFP is building the capacity of local communities, generating local economies and adding value chains to production. WFP has established and equipped a processing plant for the transformation of perishable agricultural output—including waste products such as corn husks—into, for example, flour and animal feed pellets. The local production of animal feed further increases the viability of keeping small farm animals, such as

[62] Interviews: UARIV, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019; Mesa Indigena, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019; and WFP local staff, Chocó office 9–12 Oct. 2019.

[63] This was confirmed by indigenous communities, UARIV, the local mayor's office in Bellavista and WFP staff alike during the research in Chocó, 9–12 Oct. 2019.

[64] Interviews: Community members along the Atrato River and WFP local staff, Chocó, 9–12 Oct. 2019.

[65] Interviews: Community members along the Atrato River and WFP local staff, Chocó, 9–12 Oct. 2019.

poultry, pigs and fish, also supported by WFP. The processing equipment is housed in training centres in the communities, where farmers receive training on its usage, on climate-resistant farming practices and on marketing. Other communities may use the processing plants, but they must buy the finished product and cannot hire the plant for their own production.

Communities can also sell the raw materials needed to produce the pellets. Prices of the final products are set to be approximately the same as the product would cost in the departmental capital Quibdó, thus saving consumers the cost of travel. The money earned through the projects goes towards worker salaries, who are appointed by the community board. Any additional gains are reinvested in the communities through community works. In this way, the intervention: increases the value of local perishable products; generates local markets, which allows community members to diversify production and increase income, nutritional intake and food security; and makes communities more resilient to the impact of climate change.

Furthermore, the projects have an important impact on social cohesion, which has been ruptured by the armed conflict and by challenges in the implementation of the peace process. When the FARC-EP was in control of these communities, it did not allow broader community collaboration. Following the withdrawal of the FARC-EP from the region, WFP staff are noticing a change in how communities collaborate on the productive projects, which was previously not seen or is still not seen in other communities where IAGs are in control.[66]

In the communities visited, social cohesion was also ruptured by the DDR process—in particular, by the government placing the Vidrí DDR site in Afro-Colombian collective land without consulting the communities. Nevertheless, the Afro-Colombian leadership finally accepted the DDR site on several conditions, which the government never fulfilled.[67] The process damaged community relations, between the leadership of Afro-Colombian communities and its members, and between Afro-Colombian communities and the state. WFP capacity-strengthening interventions with these communities are helping to restore trust and cohesion, for example, by enabling the Afro-Colombian leadership organization to expand its work with communities who look to these structures to organize life in the absence of state institutions.

These peacebuilding outcomes align with the objectives of the Programme for Trust and Territorial Peace in the PDET Communities part of the PPP. However, the programme was coming to an end at the time of the research. Therefore, it is crucial that WFP continues its work with these communities through other interventions and strategies, and ensures they are anchored in the local PDETs and support the PMI. While the GOC must ensure the rural reform programme is fully implemented, WFP can support this process. By leveraging its relations with national-level authorities down to grassroots organizations, and its strong operational footprint, WFP can ignite processes that promote community bonding, connect isolated communities to markets and institutions, and eventually restore social cohesion.

Conflict sensitivity concerns

Engaging with state authorities in regions where stabilization measures are being implemented comes with important conflict sensitivity considerations. The GOC is taking forward a new approach to stabilization that promotes territorial peace through a mix of people-centred humanitarian and development activities and

[66] Interview: WFP Chocó Office field staff, 10 Oct. 2019.
[67] Interviews: Representatives of Afro-Colombian communities and WFP field staff, 9–12 Oct. 2019.

military interventions. This combination makes stabilization a controversial topic among much of the conflict-affected population.

Responding to situations of confinement can be equally contentious. There is evident tension between violently enforced confinement of communities, which is a violation of fundamental rights, and communities refusing to displace under critical insecurity as a means of resistance. WFP must carefully balance its interventions, so it does not condone or facilitate the forcible confinement of communities by IAGs. To do this, WFP must understand how communities' peace aspirations are defined in different ways by different people at different times in different cultures and political systems. It is therefore essential that WFP consistently engages with alternative ways of reading conflict and peace and localized everyday peacebuilding efforts, such as those taken forward by indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

Recommendations

1. Systematize knowledge, experiences and lessons learned from working with conflict-affected communities to articulate a clear understanding of stabilization that emphasizes a people-centred approach to security. Such an approach supports the underlying assumptions of the concept of territorial peace, the peace with legality policy and the PDETs, by working with the grassroots and everyday levels of society to build peaceful and inclusive societies. Contributing to stabilization efforts through a strong people-centred approach helps balance the military components that tend to be the focus of stabilization programmes.
2. Position WFP's work as enhancing the ability of ethnic communities to remain on their ancestral land and promote their peace aspirations.
3. Ensure WFP interventions are tied into PDETs, especially the pillars around the right to food and economic reactivation, and the PMI. This could be done by linking WFP interventions to the community-based development proposals promoted through the PDETs.

Theory of Change 2: Reincorporation of ex-combatants

If WFP supports productive projects with links to markets and commercialization opportunities involving ex-combatants and host communities across formal and spontaneous reincorporation sites, ***then*** this will enhance the sustainability of the reincorporation of former FARC-EP combatants.

Contextual background

The DDR of ex-combatants and those associated with armed groups is a prerequisite for post-conflict stability and recovery. TOC 2 is based on the assumption that a primary goal of any peace process and DDR programme is to contribute to the security and stability in post-conflict situations by enhancing the ability of ex-combatants to participate as citizens.[68] The reincorporation component of a DDR programme is of prime importance, and yet the most challenging one.[69] In the peace process with the FARC-EP, the first two components of DDR—demobilization and disarmament—have

[68] Kaplan, O. and Nussio, E., 'Explaining recidivism of ex-combatants in Colombia', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 62, no. 1 (2018), pp. 64–93.

[69] Rodríguez López, M., Andreouli, E. and Howarth, C., 'From ex-combatants to citizens: Connecting everyday citizenship and social reintegration in Colombia', *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2015), pp. 171–91.

been successfully completed; however, reincorporation efforts are facing considerable challenges.[70]

Reincorporation is a complex long-term process consisting of interlinked political, social and economic elements. The political element seeks to ensure ex-combatants become part of broad political decision-making processes. The social element aims to assist ex-combatants and their dependants to adapt and (re)settle into society. The economic element seeks to engage them in sustainable civilian employment and livelihood opportunities.[71] As these processes take place in the uncertain and messy post-conflict environment—or indeed, as is the case in Colombia, alongside parallel armed conflicts—there is a high risk of ex-combatants returning to illegal and belligerent activities. This risk has been observed in various DDR programmes worldwide and in previous reincorporation efforts in Colombia.[72]

The reasons for returning to arms in Colombia are linked to: (*a*) strong personal motives for initially joining armed groups, (*b*) the amount of time spent in such groups, (*c*) weak social ties and (*d*) the feeling of loss of status after demobilization. Adding to these factors is the number of IAGs keen to expand their ranks, coupled with the incentives of the entrenched illegal economies, which pose formidable threats to the successful reincorporation of former FARC-EP combatants and which are pressing security concerns.[73]

The reincorporation process of former FARC-EP combatants is not progressing according to the agreed timeline, which has caused much resentment and eroded confidence in the peace process among the ex-combatants.[74] There are many different explanations and dividing opinions on why the reincorporation process has been slow. Former FARC-EP members maintain that the state is deliberately neglecting the collective projects as a way to diminish FARC-EP politically, whereas the individual projects are modelled in a way that generates dependency on the state. The government is concerned that prioritizing speed over thoroughness in the planning of the projects could backfire. The eagerness to get these projects going is clouding the judgement of some ex-combatants regarding the difficulties of establishing systems that will survive the test of time.[75]

Financial constraints, and legal and accounting issues are also obstructing projects.[76] As a senior UN official argued, while bureaucratic regulations can explain many of the delays, both sides have underestimated the time it takes to establish successful collective cooperatives. The planning has also disregarded the adaptation process ex-combatants need to go through before engaging in productive projects.[77] Insufficient coordination between the headquarters and the local offices of the agency for reincorporation and normalization (Agencia para la reincorporación y la normalización, ARN) is another factor impeding progress on the collective projects.[78] Access to land is a further key challenge for the sustainability of economic reincorporation. Land on which the ETCRs are situated is rented by ARN, but options to buy the land or prolong the lease are hindered by numerous conditions, including lack of funds.[79]

[70] See UNVM (note 25) and KROC Institute for International Peace Studies (note 26).
[71] Kaplan and Nussio (note 68); and Rodríguez López et al. (note 69).
[72] Kaplan and Nussio (note 68).
[73] Interview: UNVM, Cúcuta, 17 Oct. 2019.
[74] See UNVM (note 25) and KROC Institute for International Peace Studies (note 26).
[75] Segura, S. and Stein, S., 'The Colombian peace process with the FARC-EP: A mapping of vulnerabilities', Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum, 2018; and Interviews: Former FARC-EP combatants, Pondores, 15 Oct. 2019.
[76] Interview: Agencia para la reincorporación y la normalización (ARN), Bogotá, 8 Oct. 2019.
[77] Interview: High-level UN official, Bogotá, 18 Oct. 2019.
[78] Interview: UNVM, Cúcuta, 17 Oct. 2019.
[79] Interview: UNVM, Pondores, 15 Oct. 2019.

Finally, the characteristics that made the so-called Transitional Local Zones for Normalization (Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización, ZVTNs) ideal for the disarmament process, namely being remote and hard to access, make them particularly inconvenient for the development of economic enterprises.[80] The lack of progress on productive projects is of particular concern given the uncertainty around how long the monthly stipend will be continued for, whereas the provision of food and other basic needs to ex-combatants is being reduced and set to be discontinued.

Projects covered

WFP is assisting the reincorporation process through interventions in 13 formal ETCRs and 1 spontaneous reincorporation site. These activities relate to strategic outcome 4 of the CSP (food security through improved productivity and income), activities 7 and 8. In 2019 approximately 3300 people living in these communities were engaged in productive activities and subsistence agriculture; 35 community assets—such as community gardens, warehouses, fish farming ponds and greenhouses—were created. These activities were part of an integral plan that also included the promotion of gender equality, training on food security and nutrition, and the creation or improvement of productive assets. The research team visited the Pondores ETCR in La Guajira and a spontaneous reincorporation space on the Rio Arquía near the former Vidrí ETCR in Antioquia. It is important to note WFP does not treat ex-combatants as a distinct target group but rather includes them as part of an overall target group of a project.

Pondores: Following the conversion of the ZVTN into the ETCR, ARN registered 250 adults and 10 children living in the Pondores ETCR, including several high-level commanders and former FARC-EP secretariat members. At the time of the visit approximately 450 ex-combatants lived in the ETCR. Most had arrived after the disarmament and demobilization (registration) window closed and were therefore not accredited and counted by ARN. More people are joining the ETCR as ex-combatants and are reuniting with or forming new families. Migrants from Venezuela are also arriving. The growing population is increasing housing, food and health needs at a time when government support is being reduced.

The ex-combatants in the ETCR formed the Cooperativa Multiactiva para la Paz de Colombia. This is a cooperative with over 200 affiliated members and which focuses on five main production lines: agriculture (the largest one), ecotourism, clothes making, carpentry and administration. Part of the agricultural line is the community farm Granja Integral de Nueva Colombia, which produces fruit and vegetables. It was established in late 2017 with the support of WFP. The farm mainly produces for self-consumption, although a small surplus is supplied to local shops affiliated to the unconditional vouchers distributed by WFP. The cooperative also produces tomatoes that supply the WFP school feeding programme (SFP). Until recently WFP purchased the tomatoes directly from the cooperative, but due to corporate regulations around perishable goods, it is no longer able to do so; purchasing is now done through third parties through informal agreements with local vendors. WFP, together with ARN, provides capacity strengthening, technical assistance, and production and administrative support. For the community farm, it provides support for improved post-harvest conditions, commercialization, logistics, infrastructure, supplies and visibility. WFP has also helped to establish vegetable gardens for each house in the ETCR as a way of generating minimum conditions for food security.

Rio Arquía: Until August 2019, 470 ex-FARC-EP combatants were housed in Vidrí ETCR. The ETCR was situated on Afro-Colombian collective land, which caused

[80] Segura and Stein (note 75).

tensions with and within the surrounding communities. Following its closure, the communities allowed 39 ex-combatants who were originally from the area to remain and continue their reincorporation process. As the ex-combatants were not part of any formal ETCR, the only state support they received was the monthly stipend. WFP is implementing a livelihood project with support from the PPP in the communities surrounding the ETCR, in which the ex-combatants are participating.

Analysis

Interviews with the ex-combatants and government officials showed the peace process is at a critical point. WFP interventions targeting the ETCRs have an important contribution in supporting the reincorporation process, including ensuring the continued confidence in and commitment to the peace process of the ex-combatants through the following.

Initiating and facilitating sustainable productive projects with links to markets

Individual and collective productive projects are part of FARC-EP's economic and social reincorporation (see box 4.1); nevertheless, no such projects had been funded in the two reincorporation sites visited by the research team. The productive projects implemented within the spontaneous reincorporation site in the Rio Arquía were financed by WFP through its interventions under the PPP. In Pondores the ex-combatants were using their initial normalization allowance and the individual stipend to fund their productive projects, with the support of WFP. Nevertheless, at the time of the research, the monthly stipend was set to end in December 2019, and the projects were not yet at sufficient scale to be sustainable.

The WFP-supported projects are essential to economic and social reincorporation efforts for several reasons. First, the projects generate a sense of engagement and occupation among ex-combatants, which is extremely important for maintaining motivation. Many ex-combatants stated WFP interventions help create a structure that allows them to readapt to civilian life after years of living under the strict FARC-EP hierarchy. Although this support could be seen as a short-term modality, continuing commitment to the peace process at this critical juncture is imperative for preventing ex-combatants returning to arms. These interventions will likely be necessary for a few more years. Beyond these interventions, WFP could support larger collective projects as funding becomes available and is disbursed by the government.

WFP's vast experience in connecting producers to markets, and the initial evidence and lessons learned from supporting the shorter-term interventions in the formal ETCRs and the spontaneous reincorporation site, will be of great benefit for government-led long-term integration efforts. Building the productive skills of ex-combatants facilitates their return to civilian life, supports their economic reincorporation and eventually reduces the incentives to return to arms or become involved in illegal economies. Finally, carefully developed productive projects that engage the surrounding civilian population and provide tangible benefits to ex-combatants and the victims of the armed conflict are important for reconciliation efforts.

A key strength of WFP projects is the way the interventions are locally anchored. As one demobilized combatant expressed: 'WFP was the first to come, promise AND deliver.'[81] This was juxtaposed against ARN, which was seen as being highly centralized. Ex-combatants in the Pondores ETCR saw WFP's support as a vote of confidence for cooperatives at a time when scepticism around the peace process was

[81] Interview: UNVM, Pondores, 15 Oct. 2019.

rising. Government support was interrupted completely at one point. WFP's continued support was deemed fundamental for keeping the process on track at a time when tensions could have seriously jeopardized the peace process.[82] The importance of WFP support continues as the population of the Pondores ETCR is increasing. Food needs are growing but government-provided food is decreasing, although the ex-combatants are not among the most food insecure.

Enhancing social integration

Social integration is one of the most critical but neglected aspects of the different components of reincorporation. Significant support is often needed to transition out of the hierarchical structures that make up the military and reintegrate into civilian economic life.[83] The research found that the hierarchical and leadership skills of the ex-combatants were an opportunity to capitalize on and a potential obstacle for, successful reincorporation, which WFP must be sensitive to.

The reincorporation process was designed to take place in the ETCRs under the expectation that FARC-EP could use its hierarchical structure and the obedience culture to ensure a smooth transition from a military organization to a civilian one.[84] Visits to the two ETCRs starkly illustrated the crucial role of FARC-EP leaders in the reincorporation process. Several former high-level commanders and FARC-EP secretariat members were housed in the Pondores ETCR. They played a continuous leadership role by maintaining cohesion and support against the inadequate state support and increasing frustration and desperation among ex-combatants. While historic leaders have played a crucial role in successful reincorporation, according to the UNVM, they have also had significant challenges in evolving their leadership style and adapting to civilian life.[85] WFP's substantial experience in supporting the formation of new or strengthening existing community structures could help in this critical transitioning.

This is in sharp contrast to the spontaneous reincorporation site on the Rio Arquía, where the lack of former FARC-EP leaders impeded the reincorporation process. After spending 8–10 years with the guerrillas, the ex-combatants felt 'orphaned' and found it extremely difficult to adapt to civilian life away from the hierarchal structures. They felt the WFP project created a new structure that facilitated their daily life and helped them find a more substantial role and purpose in the community. At the same time, their experience of working in a highly organized and hierarchal structure was seen as a benefit for engaging in the project and motivating engagement of the surrounding community. The ex-combatants argued they were the most motivated in participating in WFP interventions, primarily as one ex-combatant expressed: 'from our time in the mountains, through which we know what hard work is and we are not afraid of it'.[86] They were also strongly motivated by their desire not to return to war but to rebuild their lives with families.

WFP interventions also facilitate social reincorporation through promoting social cohesion and building bridges between ex-combatants and the surrounding communities. The Pondores ETCR farm produces tomatoes used in WFP's SFP. This linkage enables the community to see tangible benefits in accepting ex-combatants back and the contribution they can make to overall post-agreement transition

[82] Interviews: Demobilized former FARC-EP combatants, Pondores, 15 Oct. 2019.

[83] Bowd, R. and Özerdem, A., 'How to assess social reintegration of ex-combatants', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2013), pp. 453–75.

[84] Segura and Stein (note 75).

[85] Interview: UNVM, Pondores, 15 Oct. 2019.

[86] Interview: Former FARC-EP combatant, Rio Arquía, 9 Oct. 2019.

Box 4.1. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) demobilization, disarmament and reincorporation process in Colombia

Following the signing of the peace agreement, close to 7000 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC-EP) combatants gathered across 26 zones and points, the so-called Transitional Local Zones for Normalization (Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización, ZVTNs), to lay down arms. The locations of the ZVTNs were selected for being in remote areas away from urban centres as a way of protecting the civilian population, guaranteeing security to the FARC-EP members concentrated there, and allowing a verifying mechanism to monitor and ensure FARC-EP members remained in these areas. Furthermore, the ZVTNs were required to be far away from areas with illegal economies and not located in indigenous reserves or collective land. Most ZVTNs were located in regions where the FARC-EP had a historical presence.

The demobilization and disarmament process was completed in August 2017, after which the ZVTNs were transformed into Special Territories for Education and Reincorporation (Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación, ETCRs) where ex-combatants would initiate their reincorporation. Subsequently, ex-combatants were granted freedom of movement in and out of their camps. The purpose of the ETCRs was to serve as a space to train ex-combatants for their reincorporation into civilian life, prepare productive projects and attend to the technical training needs of the surrounding communities, within a community reincorporation model. As of October 2019, 13 057 former FARC-EP members had been accredited.[a] Accreditation is a prerequisite to their political, social and economic reincorporation, and only accredited former FARC-EP members can access reincorporation benefits. Benefits include a one-off normalization allowance of 2 million pesos (approx. $600), a monthly stipend equivalent to 90 per cent of the minimum basic income for up to 24 months and 8 million pesos (approx. $2400) to implement a productive project, which could be used either individually or as part of a collective.

The ETCRs were meant to be temporary, but following their programmed expiry in August 2019, the government announced there would be a two-year transition period for all remaining 24 ETCRs, and the monthly stipend extended until December 2019. The stipend has since been extended to January 2021. However, the government also announced 11 ETCRs would have to be relocated as they were in special zones where permanent villages were not possible. By October 2019 the government had approved 35 collective productive projects, benefiting 2204 ex-combatants, with funding disbursed to 22 of them, benefiting 1433 ex-combatants. Some 431 individual projects have been disbursed, with most receiving funding. A total of 1916 ex-combatants, or 15 per cent of those accredited, have received funding for productive projects through these mechanisms.

By November 2019, 9225 ex-combatants, or approximately 70 per cent of those accredited, resided outside the ETCRs in varied settings in rural and urban areas. These so-called spontaneous reincorporation sites did not have judicial status and the ex-combatants outside the formal ETCRs were not entitled to reincorporation benefits, although they did receive the monthly stipend. Urban reincorporation is gaining relevance as larger numbers of ex-combatants are residing in major cities, attracted by the opportunities cities provide and an increased level of anonymity.

[a] Accreditation is the issuance of a certificate by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace by means of which an individual is certified as part of the Organized Illegal Armed Group of the FARC-EP, within the framework of the final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace.

Sources: United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, S/2017/801, 26 Sep. 2017, <>; UN, Security Council, 'United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2019/780, 1 Oct. 2019, <>; and UN, Security Council, 'United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2019/988, 26 Dec. 2019, <>.

and development. Although the research team could not speak to the beneficiaries of the SFP or the surrounding host community, this contribution was confirmed in interviews with wider stakeholders. In Rio Arquía the ex-combatants argued community relations were good from when they first arrived following the peace agreement, primarily because they were from the area. Their active engagement in the projects, the leadership skills and the commitment they brought enhanced their acceptance and were an important catalyst for wider community engagement and a critical element in the reconciliation and reincorporation process. Nevertheless, only a few kilometres down river, relations were much more hostile, and the ex-combatants felt they could not venture into the communities.

Incorporating spontaneous reincorporation sites into the national reincorporation strategy

Approximately two thirds of ex-combatants reside outside formal ETCRs (see box 4.1). These informal ETCRs have varying characteristics; for example, some might consist of 5–10 ex-combatants, others several hundred.[87] The government does not formally recognize spontaneous reincorporation sites, although ARN engages to a limited extent with the ex-combatants living in these spaces. The lack of formal recognition is of concern to the UNVM, which is advocating for an increase in outreach efforts, service provision and productive opportunities for ex-combatants living outside the formal ETCRs.[88]

WFP's experience in working with the ETCRs and the spontaneous reincorporation site, and the trust and confidence it has built up with ex-combatants, state actors and host communities, could be leveraged to enhance support to spontaneous reincorporation sites. ARN is requesting WFP involvement in diversifying livelihoods and creating income-generating opportunities, although it has not taken an official position on whether and how to support spontaneous reincorporation sites.

It is thus vital that WFP actively capitalizes on its operational footprint to act as a broker between the local and national governments and agencies to facilitate information sharing, planning and joint project implementation for improved response and sustainability of ETCRs. WFP's experience in working with ex-combatants outside ETCRs, in close collaboration with host communities, such as it is doing in Rio Arquía, can serve as a model. Catalysing interventions and engagement in such a way could help restore trust in the state and a belief among the ex-combatants that the government remains committed to the peace agreement. However, it is important that WFP does not replace national institutions in their role and functions.

Conflict sensitivity concerns

Reincorporation seeks to support the adjustment of ex-combatants to the uncertain and often messy realities of post-conflict situations. If reincorporation programmes are not sufficiently inclusive of wider society, there is a risk of adversely feeding feelings of exclusion and exacerbating existing social tensions derived from armed conflict. WFP has developed innovative ways of linking its work with more extensive livelihood interventions that help connect former demobilized combatants and the surrounding civilian population. However, technical procedures and regulations risk reducing the bridging potential of these interventions. A notable example is the inability of WFP to directly purchase the tomatoes produced by the FARC-EP cooperative for use in the SFP.

Reincorporation efforts must connect to local dynamics to be successful, as sharply illustrated by the impact that the different structural settings have on reincorporation efforts at the two reincorporation sites. Relations between the ex-combatants and some of the surrounding communities were tenser in Rio Arquía than in Pondores. The complete dismantling of the FARC-EP hierarchal structure and the absence of former high-level FARC-EP commanders furthermore made reincorporation more difficult in Rio Arquía.

Finally, reincorporation entails societal transformation, which takes time and is prone to setbacks long after peace has been formally declared.[89] There is a risk

[87] Interview: UNVM, Chocó, 9 Oct. 2019.

[88] UN, Security Council, 'United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2019/780, 1 Oct. 2019; and Interview: UNVM, Pondores, 15 Oct. 2019.

[89] Berdal, M. and Ucko, D. H., 'Introduction to the DDR Forum: Rethinking the reintegration of ex-combatants', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2013), pp. 316–20.

that the project-based interventions through the PPP, if not adequately anchored to WFP wider programmatic interventions in the community and to the government's reincorporation programmes and PDETs, feed into the expressed perceptions of aid projects generating dependency.

Recommendations

4. Make ex-combatants a specific target group. Separating out ex-combatants for monitoring and evaluation purposes would assess and strengthen the evidence around the contribution of WFP programming towards the peace process in general, and reincorporation in particular, which is of increasing concern.
5. Enhance the sustainability of reincorporation efforts by supporting the process to formalize agreements between the cooperatives formed by the ex-combatants with local vendors, as well as anchoring WFP wider programmatic interventions in communities to the government's reincorporation programmes and PDETs.
6. Carefully tailor interventions with ex-combatants in a way that initially capitalizes on existing hierarchical structures. This will help ensure interventions are tied to clear structures that facilitate the participation of ex-combatants no longer under any clear FARC-EP command structure.
7. As productive projects progress, WFP should facilitate transformation of the old hierarchical structures in a way that favours adaptation to civilian life. This includes ensuring strong connections between the productive projects and the host communities.
8. Broker stronger connections among the ETCRs across the country to enable the sharing of lessons learned, for example, the productive projects and how these can be advanced despite the delays in funding.
9. Use WFP leverage with ARN and other state entities to accelerate institutionalization of spontaneous reincorporation sites. This includes sharing evidence and lessons learned on WFP interventions within the spontaneous reincorporation site and the linkages created between the ex-combatants and surrounding communities through the PPP.

Theory of Change 3: The migration crisis

If an accelerated and coherent emergency response to Venezuelan migrants effectively addresses their immediate needs and supports their long-term socio-economic integration, ***then*** migrants' vulnerability to be caught up in violent post-agreement dynamics and have a destabilizing impact on the Colombian peace process will be reduced.

Contextual background

Approximately 4.8 million refugees and migrants have left Venezuela due to political unrest, socio-economic instability and the ensuing humanitarian crisis. Over 1.6 million have arrived in Colombia.[90] The CoG estimates over 900 000 migrants do not have the required permits to stay in the country. An estimated 25 000 Venezuelans were crossing the border to Colombia daily at the time of the research.[91] Colombian

[90] Grupo Interagencial sobre Flujos Migratorios Mixtos (GIFMM) (Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows), 'GIFMM reporte siuacional (GIFMM situational report)', Oct. 2019.

[91] Interviews: GIFMM, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019; and UN OCHA, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.

migration authorities classify migrants into four different groups, depending on specific migration patterns (see box 4.2). Since February 2019 the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has recognized all Venezuelan migrants as refugees in need of international protection.

The GOC has an open-door policy for Venezuelan migrants. It is actively seeking to ensure irregular migrants formalize their status by granting special stay permits (permiso especial de permanencia, PEPs). Over 600 000 Venezuelans had received PEPs at the time of the research. The PEPs protect migrants' human rights, and give access to services including subsidized public health and education for two years. The National Council for Economic and Social Policy (Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social, CONPES) Comprehensive Migration Policy and attached resources offer new opportunities to invest in the socio-economic integration of migrants.[92]

There have been many migration waves from Venezuela to Colombia. However, Venezuela's population has become more vulnerable because of the rapid economic and political deterioration of the country in the last few years. By 2017, 87 per cent of the households were under the poverty line, up from 48 per cent in 2014.[93] One third of Venezuelans were food insecure and in need of assistance.[94] Many of those leaving Venezuela are extremely impoverished and vulnerable. This includes the elderly, unaccompanied children, women with young children and people suffering from chronic illnesses. Many have travelled a long distance through Venezuela before reaching the border, arriving in Colombia physically exhausted and with few resources.

Most Venezuelan migrants crossing into Colombia arrive in the Norte de Santander or La Guajira departments. There are seven official border crossings between Colombia and Venezuela and an estimated 230 informal paths (*trochas*). Precise statistics on Venezuelan migrants in Colombia remain unknown due to the irregular migration flows. However, registered migrants make up 14 per cent of the population in Norte de Santander and 15 per cent in La Guajira.[95] The crisis is placing immense pressures on the municipalities, which are among the poorest and most conflict-affected municipalities of the country.

The two border departments have also been profoundly affected by the armed conflict, particularly Norte de Santander, where post-agreement security dynamics are threatening to destabilize the peace process. The border region is mainly peripheral, rural and underdeveloped. The lack of state presence in the region makes the border hard to officially control, which makes it a strategic illegal trafficking corridor and coca cultivation area. Various IAGs operate in the area, in rural and urban settings. These dynamics are causing a steep rise in the number of civilian victims of violence. From 2016 to 2017 registered victims in Norte de Santander increased from around 10 000 to over 45 000—an increase of over 350 per cent. Some 10 per cent of victims are Venezuelan migrants.[96]

Projects covered

WFP has been responding to the Venezuelan migration crisis in Colombia since April 2018. By December 2019 it had attended to approximately 1.6 million migrants and host communities. Interventions are designed to provide different types of assistance

[92] CONPES, *Documento CONPES 3950* (CONPES: Bogotá, 2018).
[93] Acaps, 'Venezuela humanitarian crisis', 23 May 2018.
[94] WFP, 'Venezuela food security assessment', 2019.
[95] Interview: GIFMM, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.
[96] Interview: UN OCHA, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019, quoting UARIV figures.

Box 4.2. Migration groups in Colombia

Colombian migration authorities distinguish between four kinds of migrant groups:

Destino (in-destination): Migrants who intend to remain in Colombia. Registered number as of October 2019: 1 488 373.

Pendular (pendular): Migrants who regularly cross back and forth between Colombia and Venezuela. Registered number as of October 2019: 4 356 370.

Transito (in-transit): Migrants who pass through Colombia on their way to other countries in the region, but who may stay for an extended period in Colombia. Registered number as of October 2019: 1 021 983.

Retornados (returnees): Colombian nationals who have been living in Venezuela but are now returning to Colombia. Registered number as of October 2019: over 500 000.

Source: Interview with Migración Colombia, October 2019.

depending on context and needs of target groups. This includes the provision of hot meals in community kitchens targeting migrants and the surrounding Colombian population. WFP also supplies migrants, returnees and the most vulnerable members of host communities with unconditional vouchers for a period of three to six months, which they can redeem in local shops. School meals are provided in areas with a high proportion of Venezuelan children and Colombian returnees, using the school meal platform.

The aim is to identify and assist extremely vulnerable children settling in host communities, reduce their protection risk, enable their integration into communities and mitigate tensions among families. WFP is also distributing food kits for migrants who are transiting on foot through Colombia to reach neighbouring countries. These activities relate to CSP strategic outcome 2 (access to food), activity 1. The research team visited interventions in Cúcuta (Norte de Santander), including a community kitchen run by the local church with the support of WFP, a school feeding project and a cash-based transfer project. In La Guajira the team visited a community kitchen at the Paraguachón border crossing and an inter-agency emergency shelter in Maicao.

Analysis

Migration dynamics are becoming increasingly intertwined with post-agreement dynamics. The migration crisis risks having a destabilizing impact on the peace process in Colombia if not adequately addressed. WFP interventions targeting Venezuelan migrants have mostly addressed their immediate humanitarian needs so far. However, the research identified the following two specific challenges on which WFP interventions could have a potentially stabilizing impact.

The risk of Venezuelan migrants being recruited by IAGs and becoming engaged in connected illegal economies

Venezuelan migrants are particularly vulnerable to Colombian post-agreement security challenges, including reconfiguration of the remaining IAGs and interconnected readjustments of illegal economies. Many migrants cross into Colombia unaware of the unfolding post-agreement security dynamics and may become exposed to the abuses committed in this context.[97] Most migrants enter Colombia through unofficial paths. They run considerable risks crossing these paths, which are violence ridden and uninhabited, although some are located only metres from the official border crossings and in full sight of the police.[98] IAGs often charge migrants trafficking and protection fees. Many migrants in Colombia live in precarious conditions, and are exposed to

[97] Human Rights Watch, *The War in Catatumbo* (Human Rights Watch: 2019); and Interviews: UN OCHA, UNVM, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.

[98] Interviews: Parents and staff, primary school, Cúcuta, 17 Oct. 2019.

violence (including homicides and gender-based violence), abuse, exploitation and recruitment by IAGs.[99] Women and particularly young girls are at risk of forced prostitution.

Migrant children are among the most vulnerable to IAG recruitment.[100] There are approximately 52 000 migrant children in Colombia, of which over half do not attend school.[101] Children outside of schools are extremely vulnerable to IAG recruitment, including for work in the coca cultivation fields, prostitution and urban micro-trafficking in drugs and arms.[102] Organizations attending to Venezuelan migrants also note an increase in adolescent pregnancies tied to IAG recruitment, although no supporting figures were provided.[103] Most of these crimes go unreported, as migrants fear IAG retaliation or being deported if they come forward and report violations.[104]

As the IAGs compete for filling the void left by the FARC-EP, they target Venezuelan migrants to expand their ranks.[105] While some recruitment is violent and forced, the IAGs also offer substantial incentives to migrants against the dire humanitarian conditions they face in Venezuela and Colombia. For example, the monthly minimum wage in Venezuela is $8, whereas IAGs offer an average of $300.[106] According to unconfirmed sources in the Colombian military, 30 per cent of guerrillas in Colombia's eastern borders are Venezuelan, and are forced or willing to take up arms in return for food and pay. The precarious situation of the Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, their fear of deportation and their survival needs, coupled with threats many face back in Venezuela, make migrants easier to recruit than Colombians, which the IAGs have been quick to exploit.[107]

Rising social tensions caused by the stresses the migration crisis places on already weak state service provision

The La Guajira and Norte de Santander departments host many PDET municipalities. The social and economic integration of migrants is an enormous challenge that will require a comprehensive strategy with actions ranging across several policy areas including education, taxes, pensions, business regulations and labour market policies.[108] By some estimates over 70 per cent of Venezuelan migrants do not have formal work or access to basic rights and services in Norte de Santander, which is one of the departments with the highest unemployment rate (37 per cent).[109]

The social, political and financial sustainability of the government's commendable and generous open-door policy towards Venezuelan migrants is being stretched to its limits. Many Venezuelans cross into Colombia in search of medical care. However, few have any means of self-subsistence, including food and shelter, and emergency

[99] Interviews: GIFMM, UN OCHA, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019; and R4V, *RMRP 2020 for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela Jan.–Dec. 2020*, May 2020 Revision.

[100] Alves Lima Zanatta, M. de L. and da Luz Scherf, E., 'The role of rights-based social work in contemporary Latin American diasporas: The case of Venezuelan migrant children', *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, vol. 4, no. 4 (2019), pp. 238–47.

[101] Interview: GIFMM, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.

[102] Human Rights Watch (note 97); Venezuela Investigative Unit, 'GameChangers 2018: Venezuelan migration a new gold mine for organized crime', InSight Crime, 8 Jan. 2019; Venezuela Investigative Unit, 'Colombia failing to protect Venezuela children from sexual exploitation', InSight Crime, 16 Oct. 2019; Ortega, M., 'Colombian armed groups exploit Venezuelan minors', *Diálogo*, 27 Jan. 2020; and Interviews: GIFMM and UN OCHA, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.

[103] Interview: Clergy, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.

[104] Interviews: Clergy and GIFMM, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.

[105] Interview: GIFMM, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019; Human Rights Watch (note 97); and Venezuela Investigative Unit (note 102).

[106] Interview: GIFMM, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.

[107] Murphy, H. and Acosta, L. J., 'Exclusive: Colombian armed groups recruiting desperate Venezuelans, army says', Reuters, 20 June 2019.

[108] OECD, 'OECD policy note on the Venezuelan migration shock in Colombia', 2019.

[109] Interview: GIFMM, Cúcuta, 16 Oct. 2019.

healthcare. Worryingly, diseases previously eradicated in Colombia are reappearing, including measles and diphtheria, which is attributed to migration from Venezuela.[110] Many migrants settle informally in the outskirts of larger towns, which is causing increases in the price of land, much of it speculative in anticipation that the government will need to acquire land to settle migrants formally.[111]

In La Guajira, which is particularly affected by drought, migratory pressures are also increasing strains on already scarce water supplies. Schools along the border region are under immense pressure. More than 10 000 Venezuelan children are registered in Cúcuta, yet the number of available school places has not increased since 2016.[112] One school visited by the research team reported the intake of Venezuelan children had gone up steeply and now accounts for more than half its pupils. The increase in enrolment has negatively affected the quality of schooling, partly due to the lower education level of migrants, access and the decreasing ability to provide quality school meals.[113]

The migration crisis is therefore exacerbating existing deep-running structural problems, including access to basic goods and services, weak governance and corruption. Local perceptions towards Venezuelans, which have traditionally been favourable, have been changing, with xenophobia and social tensions on the rise and also instigated by the inflammatory language used by local politicians in their race for votes.[114] Migrants interviewed for this research stated that whereas they were well received in Colombia, they felt isolated and unfairly blamed for the increase in violence caused by Venezuelan criminal groups operating in Colombia.

Potential impact of WFP interventions

WFP humanitarian relief could play an essential role in mitigating the destabilizing impact of the migration crisis on the Colombian peace process. WFP Colombia is providing school meals to 40 000 Venezuelan migrant children. A meal from the emergency SFP is often the only meal that migrant children receive and thus is important in terms of food security. This meal is also a strong incentive for parents to send their children to Colombian schools and enhance retention rates.[115] Attending school improves the rapidly declining education levels and offers a safe space while providing additional support such as food, reliable health services and lifesaving information.[116]

Evidence suggests the SFP could contribute to reducing children's vulnerability to recruitment into IAGs.[117] However, assessing the extent to which the SFP helps prevent recruitment is difficult, not least due to the clandestine nature of these groups and the control they exercise over the population, which significantly impedes the denouncement of recruitment. Moreover, any evidence of a decrease in child recruitment would be hard to attribute solely to the SFP. Proxy indicators around the impact of the SFP on child recruitment would have to be highly contextual, and developed in conjunction with the communities who are aware of the specific dynamics

[110] Paniz-Mondolfi, A. E. et al., 'Resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases in Venezuela as a regional public health threat in the Americas', *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, vol. 25, no. 4 (2019), p. 625.

[111] Interviews: International Organization for Migration and UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Riohacha, 16 Oct. 2019.

[112] Interviews: Parents and staff, primary school, Cúcuta, 17 Oct. 2019; and R4V (note 99).

[113] Interviews: Parents and staff, primary school, Cúcuta, 17 Oct. 2019; and R4V (note 99).

[114] Interviews: GIFMM, Riohacha, 16 Oct. 2019; and Migración Colombia, 7 Oct. 2019.

[115] Interviews: Parents and staff, primary school, Cúcuta, 17 Oct. 2019; and WFP (note 36).

[116] UNICEF, *Machel Study 10-Year Strategic Review: Children and Conflict in a Changing World* (UNICEF and UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict: 2009); and Hatløy, A. and Sommerfelt, T., *Rethinking Emergency School Feeding: A Child-Centred Approach* (Fafo: 2017). School children at risk of recruitment is also a specific target group in the WFP CSP.

[117] Hatløy and Sommerfelt (note 116).

tied to the IAGs. One example is how, during the coca harvest seasons, children would temporarily drop out of school to work in the coca fields managed by the IAGs.

WFP community kitchens offer unique opportunities beyond alleviating some of the immediate humanitarian needs. Approximately 132 000 people attend the 34 community kitchens daily. The kitchens are located in the Colombia–Venezuela border areas; they present an opportunity for carefully designed information strategies that help reduce the risk of IAG recruitment and connect migrants to basic social services and migration procedures. WFP is already collaborating with the Pan-American Health Organization to provide migrants with vaccination services. Such inter-agency collaboration could be increased, for example, by linking with UNICEF to enhance child protection and further reduce the risk of child recruitment to IAGs. WFP also has an excellent opportunity to collect personal data and an increased number of variables by expanding the use of community kitchens' registration processes. Not all kitchens collect the same data, and none collect data on past work experience, education levels and other vital information that could help the development of longer-term integration and self-reliance strategies. These records are crucial to a better understanding of the migration crisis given the lack of official data.

In partnership with UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and Migración Colombia (the Colombian migration governmental agency), and through its involvement in the implementation of the regional refugee and migrant response plan for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, WFP is in a strong position to facilitate sustainable long-term integration.[118] Additionally, WFP can help connect and refer vulnerable Venezuelan migrants to the national social protection programme through its participation in the Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (Grupo Interagencial sobre Flujos Migratorios Mixtos, GIFMM). WFP can also draw on the analytical capacity of the Vulnerability and Assessment and Mapping Unit to conduct profiling of the beneficiaries served and registered into the transfer management platform SCOPE. There is also ample experience within WFP of linking vulnerable and marginalized populations to human capital building interventions, including employment opportunities and vocational training, brokering agreements and collaboration between the private and public sectors.[119]

The government is also looking to introduce biometric identification for migrants, and has expressed an interest in collaborating with WFP and other UN agencies to harmonize systems and avoid duplication of processes. WFP is also in a strong position to enhance a regional response to the migration crisis through its participation in the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan.

Conflict sensitivity concerns

There are important conflict sensitivity concerns around responding to the Venezuelan migrant crisis due to the conflict transition dynamics in Colombia and the increasingly politicized nature of the migration crisis. Surveys have found negative perceptions of Venezuelan migrants among host communities, fuelled by competition in the job market and concerns over budgetary diversions to fulfil the health and education rights of the migrants. These perceptions link to the difficulties host communities often face in accessing essential services. Therefore, any interventions targeting Venezuelan migrants must take into consideration the needs and responses targeting the surrounding host communities. In some areas the WFP SFP targets

[118] R4V (note 99).

[119] See e.g. Delgado, C., 'The World Food Programme's contribution to improving the prospects for peace in El Salvador', SIPRI Working Paper, Nov. 2019.

Venezuelan students only since the national SFP run by municipalities and other institutions provides for Colombian children. While WFP's approach to targeting is based on fostering equality, inclusiveness, solidarity and stability, it is important to regularly assess that all children in need are covered by either the WFP or the national SFP. This is particularly important against increasing social tension and xenophobia should Colombian students be perceived to be disadvantaged.

Systems must be put in place to prevent the risk that community kitchens become potential IAG recruitment sites. While there were no indications that this had happened in any of the WFP-supported community kitchens, other protection risks had been identified (and remedied).

Any systematic collection, processing and sharing of personal data has significant legal, ethical and operational implications, placing beneficiaries—many of whom are fleeing persecution or have threats to their lives—at serious risk. Biometric data collection comes with additional protection concerns, including the ease with which such data can be shared, analysed and repurposed for law enforcement or national security screening, used by foreign countries for intelligence or sold for profit.[120] Personal data collection demands a high level of technical and organizational security, and needs to adhere to strict data-protection standards.

Recommendations

10. Gather data to better understand the causal links between the SFP, school enrolment and retention, and child recruitment into IAGs. Share findings and lessons learned through various collaboration platforms such as the GIFMM to improve evidence on the linkages and to accelerate efforts and hasten progress in reducing child recruitment (of Venezuelan migrants and Colombians) into IAGs, as these groups seek to fill the void left by the withdrawal of the FARC-EP.

11. Capitalize on the pull factor of the community kitchens and the gathering of people there to serve as an entry point to refer to other social protection services, assess employability (education level, experience etc.) and support their economic integration, which is a key government strategy. This would entail unifying the data collected by the different kitchens during registration and thinking beyond food security, by including additional questions relevant to their long-term socio-economic integration.

12. Ensure WFP's response to migrants is connected with macro-level strategies around social protection and economic integration of Venezuelan migrants, such as CONPES 3950, and is based on a thorough understanding of the local economy and labour market opportunities.

Theory of Change 4: state–community trust and vertical integration

If state–community trust and vertical integration can be built, restored and/or enhanced in the peripheries, ***then*** this will contribute to achieving the core objectives of territorial peace underlining the peace agreement.

Contextual background

TOC 4 goes to the heart of the centre–periphery divide, which is a key structural driver of violence and armed conflict in Colombia and thus fundamental for the prospects for

[120] The Engine Room and Oxfam, *Biometrics in the Humanitarian Sector* (The Engine Room and Oxfam: 2018).

peace (see Colombia context, section 2). It assumes that one of the critical challenges in the post-conflict transition period is how to transform the social and political capital the FARC-EP held in the peripheries in a way that strengthens the state and restores trust in the state.[121]

Throughout the armed conflict, the state was challenged in exercising its authority legitimately and effectively across key sectors of public life in large swaths of its territory.[122] As a consequence, there is considerable mistrust towards the state, and social cohesion is low.[123] The IAGs dominating many of these regions have been able to amount a degree of social capital, not least through the sponsoring of illicit economies in areas where there are few legal economic opportunities and where public goods are lacking. Under these conditions—notwithstanding the violence, coercion and threats these groups are responsible for—the IAGs effectively enhanced some elements of human security, including food security, of the marginal populations who depend on illicit economies for basic livelihoods.[124] A key challenge in the post-agreement transition period is therefore to eliminate the IAGs' social and political capital while restoring trust in the institutions and strengthening the social contract with the state, especially in the peripheries.

The peace agreement and the PDETs recognize the importance of instigating a resilient national social contract and closing the centre–periphery gap through decentralized processes. Nevertheless, many argue that the government continues to operate in a predominantly centralized manner. Engagement with local communities is still limited, despite the need identified in territorial peace for understanding the territories from a local perspective.[125] Lack of dialogue and coordination among national and local institutions, competition over resources and influence, lack of funding and the delays in developing a clear road map for each region are all hampering implementation of PDETs.[126] Others highlight a marked difference between the local and central offices of the same government agencies. While central policies and procedures are not fully knowledgeable of local realities and result in overly bureaucratic procedures, their field-based offices are well aware of contextual dynamics.[127]

Projects covered

TOC 4 is not derived from a particular geographic area or specific intervention, but is crosscutting across all projects visited and discussed in the previous TOCs.

[121] Garzón-Vergara, J. C., 'Avoiding the perfect storm: Criminal economies, spoilers, and the post-conflict phase in Colombia', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2015).

[122] Schultze-Kraft, M., Valencia, O. and Alzate, D., 'Decentralisation, security consolidation and territorial peacebuilding: Is Colombia about to close the loop?', *Third World Thematics*, vol. 1, no. 6 (2016), pp. 837–56; Elhawary, S., 'Security for whom? Stabilisation and civilian protection in Colombia', *Disasters*, vol. 34, no. s3 (2010), pp. S388–S405; and Shifter, M., 'Colombia on the brink: There goes the neighborhood', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78 (1999).

[123] Llorente (note 27); Rettberg, A., 'Peace-making amidst an unfinished social contract: The case of Colombia', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2020), pp. 84–100.

[124] Felbab-Brown, V., *Human Security and Crime in Latin America: The Political Capital and Political Impact of Criminal Groups and Belligerents Involved in Illicit Economies* (Western Hemisphere Security Analysis Center: 2011).

[125] Paladini Adell, B., 'From a divisive peace agreement to a legitimate peace in Colombia', eds Richmond O. P. and Mac Ginty, R., *Local Legitimacy and International Peacebuilding* (Edinburgh University Press: 2020); and Burnyeat, G., 'Peace pedagogy and interpretative frameworks of distrust: State–society relations in the Colombian peace process', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2020), pp. 37–52.

[126] Interviews: Presidential Office for Stabilization and Consolidation, Bogotá, 8 Oct. 2019; UNVM, Cúcuta, 17 Oct. 2019; and High-level UN officer, Bogotá, 18 Oct. 2019.

[127] Interviews: High-level UN officer, Bogotá, 18 Oct. 2019; Representatives of indigenous communities, Quibdó, 9 Oct. 2019, and Bellavista, 11 Oct. 2019.

Analysis

TOC 4 is not derived from a particular geographic area or specific intervention. Instead, it is cross-cutting to WFP's interventions and serves as an entry point to reflect on WFP's role as an external actor in peacebuilding in general. WFP is in a position to significantly contribute towards restoring of state–society trust, which has been ruptured by decades of armed conflict. WFP is also well placed to facilitate interaction and complementarity among different approaches to peacebuilding. WFP's strong presence and acceptance at international, state and local community levels provide it with an opportunity to connect national-level formal peace processes and informal peace processes on the ground

Restoring state–society trust

The research team visited several PDET communities in Chocó and La Guajira. The low level of trust among the local communities, including ex-combatants, towards the state was apparent (see TOCs 1 and 2 above).[128] However, it was also evident that there is a big window of opportunity to strengthen trust and social cohesion. Despite disappointment and dissatisfaction with the slow progress of implementing the peace agreement, overall, communities remain firmly committed to the peace process. But, commitment to the peace process is not matched by the same level of trust towards the state; this is of concern given the government's leading position in implementation of the peace agreement. Therefore, a significant challenge and opportunity in the post-agreement transition period is to enhance citizens' trust in the public institutions rather than in what remains of the conflict violence-prone networks.[129]

Trust in the state is linked to various factors. These include instrumental considerations around if and how government policies benefit individuals, and normative considerations around whether government policies are seen as right or wrong, regardless of whether they generate direct costs or benefits to an individual.[130] Trust also links to how citizens perceive state legitimacy, which is shaped by localized, embodied encounters with state officials and processes.[131] Trust in the state is problematic in the peripheral areas of Colombia, where state institutional presence has been minimal, and state policies have no direct benefits for inhabitants.

For many in the peripheries, encounters with the state have mainly been with the armed forces. While such encounters can take the form of relatively problem-free standard military checkpoints, the armed forces are also associated with violence and human rights abuses against the civilian population. When encounters with the state are limited, research has shown people often aggregate discrete events and entities into those of the totalized whole state.[132] In the minds of many in the peripheries, the state is the armed forces, and the armed forces are the state. In addition, the IAGs dominating these regions have a strong influence on how inhabitants understand what a state should provide, as a way of building their legitimacy and base of support.[133] As a result, tension begins to emerge in the state–society contract where people fiercely reject the state's actions, which they perceive as hostile; they long for it to redress historical wounds but believe it never will.[134]

[128] Other research has also found this; see e.g. Paladini Adell (note 125); and Burnyeat (note 125); and Kreutz, J. and Nussio, E., 'Destroying trust in government: Effects of a broken pact among Colombian ex-combatants', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 4 (2019), pp. 1175–88.

[129] Kreutz and Nussio (note 128).

[130] Kreutz and Nussio (note 128).

[131] Burnyeat (note 125).

[132] Burnyeat (note 125).

[133] Kreutz and Nussio (note 128).

[134] Burnyeat (note 125).

Post-conflict situations offer a critical window of opportunity to support government and communities and build back better in a way that restores state–society trust.[135] WFP can influence the perceptions of the state in the peripheries, by providing tangible peace dividends for isolated and vulnerable communities through food security interventions, and indirectly playing an essential role in maintaining a commitment to the peace process. A key strength of WFP, expressed in all local communities visited by the research team, is that its interventions are timely, locally anchored and reach communities not targeted by other actors.[136] WFP interventions are aligned with and in support of state policies and programmes.[137]

The provision of tangible peace dividends that link communities to the state can improve instrumental dimensions of trust if people begin to perceive that state policies and programmes have a direct benefit for them individually. For this to happen, WFP must communicate to the communities it serves how its interventions connect to state efforts. As a high-level UN representative expressed: 'One might need a UN flag to move in [to the highly isolated, IAG controlled peripheral areas], but we must communicate that this response is part of the state response. The WFP is here because the state failed to move into these areas or because the state asked us to be here.'[138] While WFP has a vital role in filling the gap in some of the most isolated areas, it must not replace the state. That would risk the adverse effect of reinforcing negative perceptions on state commitment to the peace process and the communities in the peripheries.

WFP can also help restore normative trust through its large field footprint and the feedback channels it has established with local communities. Through its presence in isolated and hard-to-reach areas, WFP can directly assess what is happening on the ground. Its field presence means it can produce rigorous and contextually fine-tuned analysis. Such analysis is fundamental for identifying actions that may reduce the gap between national-level peacebuilding aims and local peacebuilding outcomes in a constantly changing context.

WFP is in a strong position to create effective feedback loops given its extensive partnerships with other actors, including political and social actors, official and unofficial actors, and international and local actors. A partnership must be of necessity and integral to the TOCs. Different organizations, with diverse mandates and networks inside and outside a conflict zone, have different information at their disposal. Information sharing provides the opportunity for an organization to build up a different conflict assessment that can inform the development and continuous fine-tuning of its TOCs dynamically. The resulting information exchange can furthermore lead organizations to spot new opportunities for intervention while avoiding duplicating efforts.[139] Partnerships and information exchange can help mitigate the centralized state practices in the implementation of the peace agreement and help connect formal peace processes to informal local peace processes. In this way, WFP can also have a positive contribution to the normative aspects around trust and local perceptions of the state.

[135] Holleman, C. et al., *Sowing the Seeds of Peace for Food Security: Disentangling the Nexus Between Conflict, Food Security and Peace*, FAO Agricultural Development Economics Technical Study 2 (FAO: Rome, 2017).

[136] WFP's strong local connection can be demonstrated by looking at the percentage of its work implemented in the field, which is between 50% and 60% of its activities. Interview: WFP country office staff, Bogotá, 7 Oct. 2019.

[137] See TOCs 1–3 for how WFP interventions are linked to state policies and programmes.

[138] Interview: High-level UN official, Bogotá, 18 Oct. 2019.

[139] Ricigliano, R., 'Networks of effective action: Implementing an integrated approach to peacebuilding', *Security Dialogue*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2003), pp. 445–62.

Fostering vertical integration to improve contextual and contingent responses within a complex system

Generating public buy-in and popular support for a peace process is important for conflict termination and implementation of peace agreements. Peace processes and settlements that fail to incorporate bottom-up mobilization and key civil society actors are fragile and prone to conflict resurgence.[140] Peacebuilding must happen at all levels. Just as peace at the macro level does not necessarily constitute peace at the subnational level, successful micro-level peacebuilding initiatives do not necessarily lead to peace at the national level.[141] Only a combination of top-down and bottom-up efforts can build sustainable peace.

Vertical integration is an emerging concept in the peacebuilding literature. In peacebuilding contexts, it refers specifically to the need for greater coherence and coordination up and down the chain of relationships that link international, national and local actors.[142] The lack of vertical integration in Colombia means that the policies addressing many of the key drivers of violence are often only partially implemented or not implemented at all at the local level. For example, the Presidential Office for Stabilization and Consolidation in Bogotá identifies the greatest risk to the PDETs as being the inability of local authorities to comply.[143]

WFP is well placed to bridge such gaps, by capacity building and by accompanying local state institutions in responding to the needs of local populations. Many state institutions at local and national levels are already looking to WFP to fill this policy-implementation gap, through service provision and technical support. WFP is part of or leads the local coordination team in many areas where it operates. It has extensive partnerships with local communities, state authorities and international actors, and strong field presence. These make WFP well placed to bridge the different levels and enhance coherence and complementarity among actors and help strengthen state capacity in the peripheries. By using the feedback loops described above, it is possible to reach the most isolated conflict-affected communities, whose inclusion is fundamental for building sustainable peace in Colombia. This can contribute to much-needed vertical integration and can help accelerate one of the principal peacebuilding objectives to close the centre–periphery gap.

In this way WFP gives visibility to and can act as a catalyst for other interventions. At the local level the access WFP has to isolated, conflict-affected communities means it can convey their request for humanitarian aid directly to state institutions, as happens in the isolated communities of Chocó, for example. Such kind of accompaniment is crucial to generate a sense that communities are not abandoned, and, by linking interventions with local state institutions, helps build trust in state institutions. These measures are recognized and valued by communities and the state alike. They even generate a form of respect from IAGs, as the research team found. WFP's strong presence and acceptance at international, state and local community levels provide it with the opportunity to connect national-level formal peace processes and informal peace processes on the ground.

[140] Tellez, J. F., 'Peace agreement design and public support for peace: Evidence from Colombia', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 56, no. 6 (2019), pp. 827–44.

[141] Autesserre, S., 'International peacebuilding and local success: Assumptions and effectiveness', *International Studies Review*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2017), pp. 114–32.

[142] Donais, T., 'Towards vertically integrated peace building: Bridging top-down and bottom-up approaches', Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2013.

[143] Interview: Presidential Office for Stabilization and Consolidation, Bogotá, 8 Oct. 2019.

Conflict sensitivity concerns

Peace is complex, contextual and multifaceted; building sustainable peace entails influencing the behaviour of complex social systems affected by armed conflict, thus achieving change in a constantly changing context. For a peace process to become sustainable, resilient social institutions need to emerge from within (i.e. from the local culture, history and socio-economic context). International actors can assist and facilitate this process, but if they interfere too much, they will undermine the self-organizing processes necessary to sustain resilient social institutions. In this context, self-organization refers to the ability of organizations and individuals within a complex system (see section 3 on the approach) to organize, maintain and adapt themselves without the direction of a controlling agent.[144] Therefore, the capacity of WFP to successfully contribute to the prospects for peace also relies on the ability of its field staff to ensure WFP is responsive to parties in the local context while connecting bottom-up processes to top-down ones.

Another main conflict sensitivity concern is that of inadvertently fuelling perceptions of the state being unable or unwilling to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities towards its population, thus undermining trust and the emerging social contract. To build bridges between the state and the civilian population in areas where trust in the state is low, it is crucial to fully understand how the dynamics at play affect distrust.

Recommendations

13. Contribute to enhancing feedback loops through sharing assessments and analysis (e.g. conflict analysis and relevant monitoring data) around WFP interventions with local actors, including local government, but in a manner that is conflict sensitive and does not further expose communities, by, for example, applying data-protection standards.

14. Through WFP partnerships with different actors and across national and local levels, inform the development of road maps for implementation of PDETs.

15. Capitalize on WFP's access in remote and hard-to-reach areas to build the required processes to close the centre–periphery gap. This includes: (*a*) facilitating communication channels between confined and in other ways isolated communities and state authorities through, for example, the sharing of assessments, best practices with local governments, capacity building of communities to facilitate direct engagement with local authorities and accompaniment; (*b*) bringing in other UN agencies and actors by leveraging WFP's long-term engagement with some of the most isolated communities to demonstrate to other actors that reaching these communities is possible; and (*c*) linking interventions to government strategies and gradually handing over to the government alongside conducting trust-building activities. WFP should also use its leverage with local mayors to ensure PDETs are implemented in line with the principles of territorial peace.

[144] de Coning (note 41).

5. Cross-cutting components to improving the prospects for peace

Research under the SIPRI–WFP Knowledge Partnership also explores five cross-cutting themes: climate change, stabilization, gender, cash-based interventions and measurement. While this report has mainly presented findings on stabilization, significant findings have emerged from other cross-cutting components, as detailed below.

Action on climate change and food security to improve the prospects for peace

Climate change exacerbates risks to peace and stability, especially in contexts that are already prone to social tensions and conflicts.[145] However, it is not possible to identify the impact of climate change as the sole or primary cause of rising insecurity and armed conflicts. Yet, the evidence of climate change as an essential part of the background to insecurity and conflict is steadily increasing. Colombia is at high risk from the impacts of climate change. It has been predicted that that the average temperature will increase between 2°C and 4°C by 2070, along with changed hydrological conditions, including reduced rainfall by up to 30 per cent in some regions.[146] The departments of Chocó and La Guajira are among the most affected within the country. The impacts will primarily affect the livelihood of the rural populations, and may accelerate internal displacement and migration.[147] WFP interventions with rural communities in Chocó, discussed under TOC 1, include agricultural practices tailored towards mitigating the impacts of climate change.

However, a particularly innovative approach is being implemented with indigenous communities in La Guajira. In this area, climate change manifests in more severe droughts and floods, and changes in biological early warning signs. WFP is taking forward an initiative that seeks to recover traditional indigenous knowledge of such warning signs that are at risk of being lost.

Drawing on this knowledge, WFP is implementing a differentiated approach for the improved management of various sections of the main river basin in the area, which is key to the survival of many communities in the arid desert department. The intervention is being well received by communities, and changes are being noted, including new forms of social organization. Different groups and communities that use the river are beginning to work together in implementing integration activities, enhancing knowledge and experiences. This has resulted in improved relations between communities and institutions, fractured by decades of armed conflict.

The role of action on gender inclusivity in preventing conflict and improving the prospects of peace

Gender identities and norms—as well as the systems, institutions, traditions of practice and patterns of attitudes that support them—play an important role in shaping the effects, causes and drivers of conflict, as recognized in Security Council Resolution 1325.[148] Societies' perceptions of how men and women should be, and the

[145] Krampe, F., 'Climate change, peacebuilding and sustaining peace', SIPRI Policy Brief, June 2019.

[146] UN Development Programme, 'Mainstreaming climate change in Colombia: Screening for risks and opportunity', 2010.

[147] UN Development Programme (note 146).

[148] UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), S/RES/1325 (2000), 31 Oct. 2000.

accompanying assumed responsibilities and aspirations, often shape and sometimes even drive the way in which conflicts over land, power and resources emerge and are fought across the world. Moreover, gendered power relations affect the institutional responses of the international community, including WFP's food assistance.

The research team found several important gender aspects tied to WFP interventions. This included facilitating the adaptation to civilian life of former female combatants. It was argued in the visit to the Pondores ETCR that interventions by organizations (not specifically referring to WFP) tended to treat women as victims of the highly patriarchal FARC-EP structure, failing to realize that women often held similar power to their male counterparts and engaged in the same activities. Reincorporation activities were found at times to reinforce divisions between women and men along traditional conservative lines, demoting women to a subordinate role. Another finding illustrates the well-known dilemma of human rights becoming subordinate to cultural practices. Gender-based violence is a pressing issue in many indigenous communities in Colombia; however, their traditional laws and customs do not allow women to denounce or seek care for gender-based violence. Communication around such harmful practices is also hampered by language. This was starkly illustrated in the research visits; among interviews with indigenous communities, women were either absent or did not speak. While WFP does hire interpreters when needed, these are often male, leading to the perception that gender messages are not fully translated.[149]

Assessing and measuring WFP's contribution to the prospects for peace

The research team looked at current data production and analysis, to identify capacity and systems in the country office for measuring and monitoring the prospects for peace. Contemporary conflict and peace are complex phenomena, not least because all social systems are non-linear and therefore can be unpredictable complex systems. While evidence clearly shows there are significant adverse impacts of conflict on food security, the drivers and channels vary across contexts. They are often difficult to disentangle because of the complex dynamics among conflict and pre-existing conditions that determine food security.[150] Therefore, there is a need for a continuous process of exploration and adaptation based on an understanding of the system as it evolves, fully involving the communities intended to benefit from the peacebuilding interventions. Such an approach is partly recognized in the concept of territorial peace, which seeks to ensure local understanding of conflict dynamics and peacebuilding needs are incorporated into the overall peace process.

A key starting point in establishing a monitoring, evaluation and measurement system for assessing contributions to the prospects for peace is to generate a contextual understanding of core concepts that underline the TOCs and other peacebuilding activities. The WFP Colombia country office is already doing this. Efforts include assessments of the various concepts and methodologies used by different actors working on similar issues, such as confinement and displacement. The need for such assessments arose against the disparities in numbers being used by different actors, thus generating confusion and misunderstanding. Much of this disparity could be explained by the use of different methodologies, or by simply not indicating whether numbers refer to incidents or individuals. Another concept unpacked in this way is that of food security, which illustrates how organizations and state entities conceptualize food security differently in their plans and policies.

[149] Interviews: WFP field staff, Chocó, 9–12 Oct. 2019.
[150] Holleman et al. (note 135).

Such basic exercises are of fundamental importance for any assessment, evaluation or measurement. However, it becomes even more important when assessing the contribution to the prospects for peace due to the complex and multifaceted nature. Moreover, definitions of peace are culturally shaped and contested. They include elements such as feelings and relationships that are not easily quantifiable. As a result, peace is largely defined subjectively. There is therefore a need to combine organizational and other top-down indicators with community-developed indicators that capture local and subjective dimensions of peace. All indicators provide a narrative, and the narrative of community-identified indicators is one that community members feel is important.[151] This process should furthermore be regularly repeated over time and space to capture evolving dynamics.

The focus group discussions with different communities conducted by the research team provided preliminary pointers of the issues important to local community members and how they defined certain phenomena. For example, in discussions with members of confined indigenous populations, it was clearly expressed how confinement was used as a form of resistance, and, accordingly, was preferential to displacement despite the detrimental impact on food security caused by confinement. Such perceptions need to be further unpacked to understand how WFP interventions can strengthen communities' capacities to resist (post-) conflict-related stresses and achieve their peacebuilding aspirations while avoiding reinforcing IAG control over communities. Rather than developing a standardized definition of confinement, a significantly more flexible definition is needed that is malleable to contextual nuances and contingencies. Only then can WFP assess how its interventions help prevent mass displacement, which could be measured as simply as by communities expressing whether—or to what degree—those interventions played a decisive role in their decision to remain in their communities against increasing levels of insecurity.

A similar exercise was conducted with former FARC-EP combatants, who were asked to reflect upon what peace meant to them and how contributions to peace could be measured. Concepts of land, space and place were of similar importance to this group as to indigenous communities, but they were expressed differently. For the ex-combatants interviewed, the possibility to remain in ETCRs under dignified conditions and being able to work and sustain themselves were important components of 'peace'. They saw their continued involvement in productive projects despite the many difficulties as a measurement of their determination and commitment to the peace process. This points to the need to move away from an output-oriented approach that assesses the productive projects as 'successes' or 'failures' with the subsequent focus on 'problems' and 'solutions', to an emphasis on the quality and sustainability of engagement with the communities and stakeholders necessary to sustain the peace.[152]

The importance of ex-combatants staying together as a group, while simultaneously establishing or rebuilding relations with the surrounding communities, was strongly expressed by the ex-combatants within the spontaneous reincorporation site. Potential indicators could thus be developed around: (*a*) the extent to which WFP interventions facilitate the process of forming new social structures through which peacebuilding activities (including productive projects) can be conducted following the dismantling of the FARC-EP hierarchical structures that governed all aspects of the lives of its members and (*b*) the minimum requirements or conditions that need to be met for the ex-combatants to remain in a specific ETCR.

[151] Firchow, P. and Mac Ginty, R., 'Measuring peace: Comparability, commensurability, and complementarity using bottom-up indicators', *International Studies Review*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2017), pp. 6–27.

[152] Ricigliano (note 139).

WFP has robust participatory processes in place that it can easily use to develop these kinds of local community-based indicators. In this process it is essential to ask people to reflect on the conditions of peace in their communities and to identify indicators that would help them track changes, rather than to impose predetermined indicators.[153] It was clear from the research that many such narratives are already being picked up by local project staff; however, existing monitoring structures do not capture these narratives. This is partly because WFP's corporate results framework does not allow for this—a finding that the phase I country case studies also identified, and which will be further unpacked in the forthcoming measurement deep dive.

[153] Firchow and Mac Ginty (note 151); and UN, *Women, Peace and Security: Study Submitted by the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)* (UN: 2002).

6. Conclusions

The evidence indicates WFP programming positively contributes towards improving the prospects for peace in Colombia. There is room for improvement by further strengthening and systematizing existing engagement. This report therefore makes the 15 recommendations summarized below. The contribution to the prospects of peace is not always immediate, obvious, linear or predictable. A process of engagement is required, using a continuous participatory and locally anchored process of iterative feedback to continuously adapt to the changing environment. Building on its humanitarian footprint, WFP should further strengthen its long-term support to conflict-affected communities, articulate and refine its contribution to peace, and measure it in the long term.

Summary of recommendations

1. Systematize knowledge, experiences and lessons learned from working with conflict-affected communities to articulate a clear understanding of stabilization that emphasizes a people-centred approach to security.
2. Position WFP's work as enhancing the ability of ethnic communities to remain on their ancestral land and promote their peace aspirations.
3. Ensure WFP interventions are tied into territorial development programmes, especially the pillars around the right to food and economic reactivation, and the implementation plan.
4. Make ex-combatants a specific target group for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
5. Enhance the sustainability of reincorporation efforts by supporting the process to formalize agreements between the cooperatives formed by the ex-combatants with local vendors, and anchor WFP programmatic interventions in communities to the government's reincorporation programmes and PDETs.
6. Carefully tailor interventions with ex-combatants in a way that initially capitalizes on existing hierarchical structures.
7. As productive projects progress, facilitate transformation of the old hierarchical structures in a way that favours adaptation to civilian life.
8. Broker stronger connections among the ETCRs to enable the sharing of lessons learned.
9. Use WFP leverage with state entities to accelerate institutionalization of spontaneous reincorporation sites.
10. Gather data and share findings to better understand the causal links between the SFP, school enrolment and retention, and child recruitment into IAGs.
11. Capitalize on the pull factor of the community kitchens to serve as an entry point to refer to other social protection services, assess employability and support economic integration.
12. Ensure WFP's response to migrants is connected with macro-level strategies around social protection and economic integration of Venezuelan migrants.

13. Contribute to enhancing feedback loops through sharing assessments and analysis around WFP interventions with local actors, including local government.

14. Through WFP partnerships with different actors and across national and local levels, inform the development of road maps for implementation of PDETs.

15. Capitalize on WFP's access in remote and hard-to-reach areas to build the required processes to close the centre–periphery gap.

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