MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS MARCH 2016

VICTIMS INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING PROGRAM (VISP)
Provides accompaniment and technical support for the Government of Colombia’s (GoC) policies, systems, and institutions at the national, departmental, and municipal levels, to strengthen capacities and build necessary competencies for the timely and effective execution and implementation of the Victims Law.

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS
This report provides monthly institutional and Victims Law achievements supported by VISP at the national and local levels.

To the left, the Mechatronic Therapy Area of the Rehabilitation Unit inaugurated at the Caribbean University Hospital in Cartagena, where victims and people with disabilities can relearn to walk and pursue rehabilitation through exercise-driven tissue repair. Photo IOM.

WHAT WAS DONE THIS MONTH?

RECOGNIZING BEST INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING EXPERIENCES
REPAIRING AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL
- Colombia Lider and VISP launched the acknowledgement “Repairing at the regional level: Recognition of the best experiences of the Victims Institutional Strengthening Program,” to highlight, document, and disseminate successful institutional strengthening experiences.
- Experts will evaluate applications from governors’ offices, capital cities, and municipalities, and winners, who will be announced at a ceremony on July 6, will be publically recognized and receive a technical assistance package to design projects.
- Regional workshops are being held with elected officials to include initiatives for victims and reconciliation in local development plans, as well as dialogues to share best practices.

FOSTERING PARTICIPATION
TECH TOOL TO DISSEMINATE PARTICIPATION PROTOCOL FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT VICTIMS
- To circulate the Participation Protocol for child and adolescent victims to be actively involved, design proposals, and monitor the Victims Law’s implementation, VISP supported a three-day long “hackathon” for the development of a tech tool.
- The “Participathon High Voices” brought together ten teams of programmers, designers, and social scientists to develop innovative IT proposals. The winning team, Medea Interactiva, developed “Paz a la voz,” a multimedia tool that gathers initiatives from child and adolescent victims and creates a virtual platform for them to learn about the protocol and their rights.
- The winning team received about USD 3,000 to develop the final version of the tool, which will be submitted by the end of April.

HIGH-END REHABILITATION SERVICES IN REGIONS AFFECTED BY CONFLICT
REHABILITATION UNIT INAUGURATED IN CARTAGENA
- With the Ministry of Health and Mayor’s Offices, VISP is strengthening the public health system through the creation of top-notch rehabilitation services in municipalities that have been most affected by the conflict, including Apartadó, Cartagena (in two hospitals) and Quibdó.
- This process includes adapting spaces for rehabilitation units, providing cutting-edge technological equipment for various therapies and areas to simulate daily life and workplace activities, training rehabilitation professionals, and developing market studies to ensure services’ sustainability.
- On March 10 the Functional Rehabilitation Unit at Cartagena’s Hospital Universitario del Caribe was inaugurated. It will provide about 19,000 physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy sessions each year.
- A service in Apartadó was inaugurated in December and is currently operational, and a children’s center will be inaugurated in the municipality on May 15. The rehabilitation service in Quibdó will be inaugurated on May 5 with the simultaneous launch of a children’s center.

HISTORICAL MEMORY
FEMALE RESISTANCE: STORIES OF WOMEN FROM THE UNION PATRIÓTICA
- With support from the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH) and VISP, the historical memory report “Female resistance” (“Mujeres en resistencia,” in Spanish) on the life stories, struggles and resistance of ten female members of the Unión Patriótica was produced.
- The report was launched on March 8 and can be found in Discover VISP Advances (page 2).

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS
ENCOUNTERS WITH RETIRED AND ACTIVE MILITARY AND POLICE MEMBERS DISCUSS HISTORICAL MEMORY

- VISP supported the CNMH to hold three dialogue encounters with 90 current and former members of the armed forces on historical memory, truth-telling, peacebuilding and democracy, to support the creation of conditions for peace and the consolidation of democracy at the regional level.
- An initial encounter with high-ranking retired officers in Bogotá, was followed by regional encounters with active and retired officers and noncommissioned officers in Tumaco and Apartadó. 87% of participants in Tumaco agreed that members of the public forces involved in crimes should recognize their responsibilities and participate in processes to rebuild historical memory, as a way to support peace.
- One finding was a general lack of knowledge about the peace process and CNMH historical memory exercises, representing an opportunity for future efforts to deepen dialogue with victims who are members of the military forces, to dignify their memories and promote public responsibility.

REPRESENTATION OF COLOMBIANS IN EXILE: NARRATIVES OF THOSE WHO RETURNED

- An event was held by VISP and the CNMH on March 9 to begin a social dialogues on the National Museum of Memory and the representation of exiled individuals and organizations of returned people.
- This event is one of multiple that will collect experiences and testimonies from exiled individuals that will be included in the social construction of the National Museum of Memory. A website was created with testimonies from exiled victims and can be found in Discover VISP Advances.

INCLUSIVE APPROACHES

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY COMMEMORATIONS

- Through diverse activities, VISP commemorated International Women’s Day around the country. In Florencia commemorations included the movie forum “Visible women for a land free of sexual violence” and the concert “We had to sing: A musical journey against forgetting” (Tocó Cantar: Travesía musical contra el olvido). In Bogotá, VISP supported a special presentation of the theater play “El hombre herpético y la muñeca” by the Casa E theater ensemble.
- VISP also supported cultural acts in El Salado, Carmen de Bolívar and San Jacinto, and under the national campaign against sexual violence “It is Not Time to be Silent” (“No es hora de callar”), the return of female victims to El Placer (Putumayo).

DISSEMINATING WOMEN’S AND LGBT POPULATIONS’ RIGHTS: “GENDER SUITCASE”

- With VISP support, the Presidential Council for Women’s Equality presented the “Gender suitcase,” a toolbox to disseminate women’s and LGBT rights.
- The toolbox includes digital and educational material to understand and disseminate concepts, definitions, national and international legal framework, attention routes and guidelines to promote women’s and LGBT populations’ human rights.

HIGHLIGHTED REGIONAL ADVANCES

- **Magdalena**
  - Support to incorporate victims policies in local development plans with 25 public servants.
  - Revision of Fundación’s development plan.
  - Transferred strategies and tools for attention and reparation of child and adolescent victims to public servants and victims representatives.

- **Bolívar**
  - Inauguration of the functional rehabilitation unit at the Hospital Universitario del Caribe.
  - Supported commemorations of international women’s day in El Salado (El Carmen de Bolívar) and San Jacinto.
  - “Victims, reconciliation and peace-building” workshop in El Carmen de Bolívar.

- **Córdoba**
  - Supported sessions by Córdoba’s Victims Participation Roundtable and Transitional Justice Committee.
  - Revision of Montería’s development plan to guarantee the inclusion of victims policies.

HIGHLIGHTED INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL ADVANCES

- **Institutional Capacities**
  - Knowledge exchange between the CNMH and the Smithsonian Institute for the design and construction of the National Museum of Memory.
  - Tech tool to disseminate the Participation Protocol for child and adolescent victims.
  - Support to incorporate the victims’ policy in 2016–2019 local development plans.

- **Individual Capacities**
  - Concluded the Victimology, Transitional Justice, and Peacebuilding diploma training program with 100 public servants in Córdoba and Sucre.
  - Presentation of the theater play “On the Route,” in Quibdó and San Juan del Cesar, to teach victims about their rights and the Attention and Reparation Comprehensive Route.

DISCOVER VISP ADVANCES ONLINE:


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