



Volunteers in Colombia lead the inclusion of youth and women in peace processes.
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Supporting dialogue, resilience and reconciliation, the pillars of peace in Colombia

The inclusion of young people and women in the processes of peace, justice and strong institutions is essential in Colombia. Likewise, the institutionalization of dialogue and consolidation of the 2030 Agenda have been identified as country purposes. UN Volunteers contribute to the construction of inter-sectoral bridges, guaranteeing that no one is left behind in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, peace, justice and strong institutions.

The [National Voluntary Report of Colombia 2018](#), identifies as the main milestones of the country the creation of an intersectorial institution aimed at leading the implementation of the SDGs, and the alignment between the peace negotiations and the 2030 Agenda.

With the signing of the Peace Agreement, Colombia began a new era where the construction of a stable and lasting peace will allow Colombian society to concentrate on achieving true sustainable development.

This process is achieved under the principle of participation, involving different populations and sectors through different means, including volunteerism. For that reason, Colombia is the country that mobilizes the most UN Volunteers in the region.

María Fernanda Durán, a political scientist with an emphasis in government management and specialization in political marketing, is a national UN Volunteer assigned to the Governance Area at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Colombia.

Due Maria's previous volunteering experiences both in Colombia and abroad, she found in the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme an opportunity to continue strengthening those capacities that she had previously developed in other volunteering spaces. Additionally, it allowed her to be an agent of change contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda from UNDP.

As part of the process of building peace, justice and strong institutions in Colombia, projects are implemented along the public sector, specifically with the Congress and Colombian political parties, for the debate on the political and legislative exercise of various issues, including the 2030 Agenda.

María Fernanda works to strengthen democratic capacities in territorially-focused development plans (PDET), with territorial peace providing new perspectives on rural development, with different population groups, particularly young people and women.

During 2017 and 2018, she accompanied social organizations of young people and women, in the main PDET territories of Colombia, which are the municipalities prioritized for the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

Maria Fernanda participated in the training of around 816 women and 369 social organizations of women from 16 municipalities, strengthened on issues of political participation with a gender focus. She also supported the multiparty gender and youth tables in Colombia, training on the new Youth Citizenship Statute that facilitates Colombian youth political participation.

“ *My work implies a facilitator role between the Colombian legislative and executive powers, through the construction of communication and operational bridges that the UNDP promotes. These allow the inclusion of key points on the agenda, such as the Political Reform, and assure a comprehensive vision from different actors and scenarios. --María Fernanda Durán, UN Volunteer at UNDP Colombia*

The training workshops and initiatives implemented allow the empowerment of

communities for political issues, and open up spaces for territories that historically were affected by the war in Colombia, and now can be participants in new scenarios that transform the realities of their respective communities.

“ *I have experienced the willingness of the communities most affected by the armed conflict, to leave their condition as victims and bring peace to their territories; it is amazing to witness the capacity for reconciliation and resilience that these communities have. Those who have been more affected by war are those who long more for peace.*
--María Fernanda Durán,

Sebastien Coquoz, an expert on human rights and peacebuilding, is also a UN Volunteer in Colombia and contributes to peacebuilding from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). As part of his assignment, he participates in missions and meetings in the field, monitoring, training, reporting on human rights, transitional justice and peace in the Magdalena Medio region.

“ *The main challenge in my assignment is to cover an area as large as Magdalena Medio with a small team, but we are working hard, building bridges between different actors and favoring change and concrete solutions to the needs of the people.* --Sebastien Coquoz,
UN Volunteer with OHCHR, Colombia

María Fernanda and Sebastien are two of the 247 UN Volunteers who contributed to peace and the 2030 Agenda in Colombia during 2018.

 <https://youtu.be/6WnuenkDU4E>

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 5: Gender equality](#) [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#) [SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)