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GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT WITH COLOMBIA'S OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE

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Partnering with the Ombudsman's Office to protect human rights.

OVERVIEW

USAID's government-to-government agreement with Colombia's Ombudsman's Office (or the *Defensoría del Pueblo* in Spanish) strengthens the institution's internal processes, including the public defenders case management system. The agreement also improves services for victims, especially those impacted by gender-based violence (GBV), and assists the Ombudsman's Office to implement its strategy to protect the rights of social leaders and human rights defenders. The agreement with the Ombudsman's Office runs from July 2017 to December 2022.

COMPONENTS

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

The agreement assists the Ombudsman's Office to implement several reforms passed in 2018, including reforms to increase the Office's rural coverage and its process to hire public defenders more transparently. The agreement strengthens the Public Defenders Unit's capacity to manage and prioritize its caseload, including converting its filing system from paper-based to electronic to manage cases more effectively. The agreement also expands the reach and effectiveness of the Early Warning System to prevent human rights violations.

IMPROVING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) VICTIMS' ACCESS TO SERVICES

The agreement assists in the design and implementation of the Ombudsman's Gender Program for public defenders to strengthen legal support for GBV victims and reduce impunity. The agreement expands public defenders' presence at the local level to provide specialized services to GBV victims, and establishes a group of high-level public defenders to technically advise public defenders responding to GBV cases. The agreement also uses a virtual mentoring platform for staff to expand legal and psycho-social services to GBV victims.

PROTECTING SOCIAL LEADERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The agreement partners with the Ombudsman's Office to expand services to threatened social leaders and their families. The agreement supports the implementation of the Ombudsman Office's first-ever comprehensive social leaders strategy focused on countering stigmas against leaders. The agreement also strengthens the Early Warning System to monitor and prevent human rights violations; increases social leaders' access to legal representation; and strengthens social leaders' self-protection measures.

RESULTS

- Improved the public defense case management system;
- Increased access to services for victims, especially those impacted by gender-based violence;
- Expanded the reach and effectiveness of the Ombudsman's Early Warning System to prevent human rights violations; and
- Launched the Ombudsman's first-ever comprehensive social leaders strategy focused on protecting threatened social leaders and their families.