CREDITS

This document was produced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Colombia. OCHA Colombia wishes to acknowledge the work by the Humanitarian Financing Unit in the elaboration of this closing document.

Full project details, financial updates, real-time allocation data and indicator achievements against targets are available at gms.unocha.org/bi.
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Front Cover: OCHA/COLOMBIA
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The Colombia Humanitarian Fund (CHF) provided an inclusive source of humanitarian funding in Colombia, especially for national NGOs to assist chronic and sudden emergencies, in areas where there were gaps in the response and an initial limited presence of the State. The total of projects (20 under implementation in 2017 including those approved in the year) was coordinated with the local and national authorities, NGOs, UN Agencies and pertinent territorial ethnic authorities to guarantee a greater impact and the maximization of the resources. The CHF has been articulated with the objectives of the Humanitarian Country Team, in its Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and has contributed to my leadership of humanitarian coordination in Colombia as the Fund promoted linkages between humanitarian actors and state authorities to provide a coordinated and appropriate response to humanitarian needs in line with the Humanitarian Response Plan for the country.

The CHF has been managed in a way that guarantees efficient, strategic and appropriate allocation of resources, assisting geographic areas with the greatest percentage of gaps and vulnerable population affected by sudden and chronic emergencies due to natural disasters and/or armed conflict. The Fund has positioned itself as an essential source of humanitarian financing for national organizations, thus strengthening local capacities and guaranteeing a transition process through adequate knowledge.

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund has contributed significantly to improve the effectiveness of the humanitarian response in Colombia by directing funding towards priority needs, which are identified through an inclusive, participatory and transparent process. Its relevance and effectiveness was highly appreciated by donors, Implementing Partners, Government agencies and actors in general, Humanitarian Country Team and Clusters.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to Sweden, Spain and Switzerland, for their contributions and to the members of the Advisory Board and the Review Committee, national and international NGOs, State entities, as well as OCHA and the Agencies of the United Nations System, for their effort and collaboration to promote the Humanitarian Fund of Colombia as an efficient, accountable and more than ever relevant humanitarian financing mechanism in the country.

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund initiated its closing process in alignment with the Global Operational Handbook for Country-based Pooled Funds. The CHF closure plan has included a series of initiatives and steps as part of the transition phase to have an appropriate exit strategy.

MARTÍN SANTIAGO HERRERO
Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident United Nations Colombia
Introduction

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund Closes at the end of 2018 after providing humanitarian assistance since 2009 and saving lives of the most vulnerable people and communities in the country. The Fund operated under the leadership of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. The objective of the Fund was to respond quickly to chronic and sudden humanitarian needs, caused by the effects of armed conflict and natural disasters. The programmatic approach of the Fund was to support activities to save lives according to the Humanitarian Respond Plan. The Fund, was a pooled fund that received contributions from official cooperation sources, being Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland the main donors.

From 2009 to 2018 CHF allocated more than USD $ 14M in approximately 13 departments, thanks to the support of Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway. Through these funds it was possible to provide support to 243,439 beneficiaries (62,678 men, 54,931 children, 71,720 women and 54,110 girls) with the help of national NGOs (31% of the locations) international (64% of the locations) and UN Agencies (5 % of locations) during the last 9 years.

In 2017, the Fund received a total contribution of USD $ 1.3M thanks to the support of Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, which facilitated the implementation of projects in La Guajira, Arauca, Chocó, Nariño and Putumayo. National NGOs received 62% of the funds provided, while International NGOs received 38%.

The CHF had 46 organizations that were eligible to apply to the Fund after carrying out a Capacity Assessment. As part of the closing process, the Humanitarian Financing Unit in Colombia decided to carry out a series of workshops with

Some of the Implementing Partners of the Fund in recent years are:
- Fundación Acción contra el Hambre
- Consejo Noruego para Refugiados
- Federación Luterana Mundial
- Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
- Secretariado Diocesano de Pastoral Social
- Sociedad Nacional de la Cruz Roja Colombiana
- Fundación Halú
- Fundación Plan
- Corporación Infancia y Desarrolo
- Corpomanigua
- HelpAge International
- Bensposta
- World Vision International

Implementing Partners and members of the Advisory Board including Government Agencies of Colombia: Victim Unit (UARIV as its acronym in Spanish), National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD as its acronym in Spanish) and the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC as its acronym in Spanish) also, a series of interviews were conducted with the main donors of the Fund in order to document the added value of the Colombian Humanitarian Fund, identify good practices and lessons learned.
The Colombian Humanitarian Fund operates in the country since late 2009 under the leadership of the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. The objective of the Fund is to respond quickly to chronic and sudden humanitarian needs, caused by effects of armed conflict and natural disasters. The programmatic approach of the Fund is to support activities to save lives according to the Humanitarian Respond Plan, which includes the main gaps and humanitarian needs of the country. The Fund is a pooled fund that receives contributions from official sources of cooperation, individuals and private sector.

**Approved Projects**

**Contributions (in US$)**

**Implementing Organizations (in US$)**

**Total Beneficiaries Reached**

![Map of Colombia](image)

- **WASH**: $5.8M
- **SAN**: $2.5M
- **Health**: $1.8M
- **Shelter**: $1.7M
- **Protection**: $1.5M
- **Education in Emergency**: $861K
- **Early Recovery**: $270K

- **Total Beneficiaries Reached**: 243,439
  - Men: 117,609
  - Boys: 62,678
  - Women: 125,830
  - Girls: 54,110
DASHBOARD 2017

CONTRIBUTIONS BY DONOR (in US$)

- National NGO
  - Total Projects: 4
  - Amount allocated: $597,973

- International NGO
  - Total Projects: 3
  - Amount allocated: $447,971

$1,3M Total received funds

TOTAL ALLOCATED (in US$)

- National NGO
  - Total Projects: 4
  - Amount allocated: $597,973

- International NGO
  - Total Projects: 3
  - Amount allocated: $447,971

The Fund contributed 1% of HRP funding in 2017

$1 M Partner organizations funded in 2017

PROJECTS APPROVED

- ACH $150,000
- PLAN $150,000
- HALU $150,000
- NRC $150,000
- HALU $149,998
- FLM $147,973
- SNRC $150,000

During 2017, the Fund provided humanitarian assistance in the departments of La Guajira, Guaviare, Chocó, Nariño, Putumayo y Arauca

TOTAL BENEFICIARIES REACHED 709

- Men: 184
- Boys: 184
- Women: 197
- Girls: 144

Beneficiaries reached in calendar year (1 January to 31 December 2017)

Source: BI Beneficiary figures. Consulted in 02/01/18

TIMELINE OF ALLOCATIONS (in US$)

- May: 300K Reserve allocation 2 Projects
- Jun: 150K Reserve allocation 1 Project
- Jul: 598K Standard allocation 1 Project
- Aug: 120K Reserve allocation 1 Project
- Sep: 598K Reserve allocation 1 Project
- Oct: 120K Reserve allocation 1 Project
- Nov: 598K Reserve allocation 1 Project
- Dec: 120K Reserve allocation 1 Project

* Source: BI Beneficiary figures. It may include double-counting
Alignment of the Colombia Humanitarian Fund with the Humanitarian Response Plan

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund was aligned with the objectives of the Humanitarian Country Team and Humanitarian Response Plan.

The Humanitarian Response Plan envisaged intersectoral interventions related to saving lives and protecting lives and early recovery in the areas with the greatest humanitarian needs in the country, ensuring a population approach, promoting gender equality, and favoring the link with the processes of solutions lasting, building peace and development.

1. Save and protect Lives: Improve the response capacity to provide effective and timely assistance in saving and protecting lives, complementing and supporting the state response in the gaps identified, through multisectoral actions with a focus on human rights and differential, and promoting gender equality

2. Prevent and mitigate protection risks: Ensure multisectoral actions of preparation, prevention and mitigation of risks that reaffirm the centrality of protection through the incidence and strengthening of institutional and community capacities, making visible the humanitarian impact and taking into account the risks and opportunities of the different population groups in the current situation of the country.

3. Ensure early recovery and durable solutions Increase early recovery capacities and ensure lasting solutions for affected communities, identifying and addressing the underlying causes of their vulnerability, strengthening their resilience and recovering self-sufficiency and self-protection. In addition, promote multisectoral actions to ensure the stabilization and effective guarantee of rights in the conjuncture of peace building.

The Humanitarian Country Team has focused its attention on the population affected by armed conflict and generalized violence (displacement, restrictions of mobility and limitations on access to goods and services, gender-based violence, attacks on the civilian population, forced recruitment and presence mines) Host communities are a fundamental part of the prioritization, as well as other population groups in vulnerable condition (indigenous, afro-Colombian, children, adolescents and women), people affected by events of natural origin.

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund provided humanitarian assistance in the following sectors:

- Protection
- Food security and nutrition
- Education in emergencies
- Health
- Water Sanitation and Hygiene
- Shelter/CCM
- Early Recovery

To ensure a gender equality approach, all projects approved by the Colombia Humanitarian Fund complied with a gender marker of 2a or 2b and demonstrate the differential impact of the intervention.
Colombia Humanitarian Fund Principles

Colombia Humanitarian Fund performance is guided by fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, aligning with international standards.

In addition, for 2017 CHF also aligned to the Common Performance Framework (CPF), which is a new tool developed jointly by OCHA and CBPF donors to assess and improve individual fund performance and understand how the CBPF mechanism performs as a whole.

CPF is built on five fundamental principles: Inclusiveness, Flexibility, Timeliness, Efficiency, Accountability & Risk Management, that guide the management of the Fund and the manner by which it achieves the strategic objectives of improving the response, strengthening leadership and ensuring better coordination and resourcing of humanitarian plans.

Principle 1. Inclusiveness.

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund governance is inclusive, by ensuring its governance structure as the Advisory Board and the Review Committee have adequate composition with appropriate size and balanced representation of CBPF stakeholders.

Particularly, AB includes government agencies in its structure, which has been highly appreciated and seen as an indicative best practice, due to each agency contributes with their institutional perspectives, such as disaster risk management from National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), internal conflict victim’s response from Unit of Attention and Integral Reparation of Victims (UARIV) and cooperation coordination from Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC). This government’s participation ensures inclusive, complementary and coordinated response between the Colombia Humanitarian Fund and government response to humanitarian needs for conflict related and natural disasters humanitarian emergencies.

Additionally, CHF funding in 2017 continued to be allocated to the best-positioned actors in the field. In many cases, local NGOs and community-based organizations are among the best positioned actor for implementing the projects. In this case the CHF, has put a lot of effort training local NGOs and developing their capacities by acquiring knowledge about the fund and funding modalities and requirements. This has resulted in an increase of 33.23% from 2015 of funding allocated to national NGOs.
Principle 2: Flexibility

Colombia Humanitarian Fund adapted rapidly to humanitarian changing scenarios and implementing appropriate strategies to address priority humanitarian needs in the most affected areas of the country.

HFU demonstrated its flexibility and creativity to respond to situations that required reprogramming enabling partners to deliver project outputs and to be able to address operational and contextual changes.

Also, Colombia Humanitarian Fund encouraged eligible organizations to implement projects involved with cash-based interventions, where and when these interventions are suitable tools to assist people in need, affected by natural disasters and/or conflict. For example, total of 38% of CHF funding was allocated in 2017 to in-kind and cash assistance.

Principle 3: Timeliness

The Fund was timely in the response and worked to improve times in order to provide quick and timely assistance to the most vulnerable and remote communities in the country. The Colombia Humanitarian Fund complied with the Global Guidelines 2015 and the country Operational Manual, in alignment with Governance structure, allocation and operational modalities, that ensures the fund is a transparent funding mechanism in the country.

Principle 3: Efficiency

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund, provided a timely and strategic response, by aligning 100% with the priorities of HRP and the Strategic Objectives of the Humanitarian Country Team, contributing to humanitarian assistance and to save lives, representing 1% in 2017 of HRP financing requirements. During 2017, the Colombian Humanitarian Fund allocated $1.16M to help displaced persons, affected by conflicts and/or natural disasters, host communities and other vulnerable groups such as the victims of mines, victims of sexual violence, confinement and attacks against civilians.

Principle 5: Accountability & Risk Management

The Colombia Humanitarian Fund promoted activities to encourage participation of affected people as a component of funded projects as well as part of project cycle and field monitoring. A session on accountability with beneficiaries was introduced since 2016 and consolidated in 2017 as best practice.

Additionally, The Colombia Humanitarian Fund was 100% compliant with Fund guidelines and operational modalities set at the country level. Monitoring and reporting were carried out according to risk level, project duration and amount. In cases where the context and security conditions allow it, interim and final monitoring are carried out. All the projects were audited as per compliance with global guidelines and operational manual.

A duly follow up on the Assurance Overview Model on GMS was carried out by HFU during 2017 and followed in 2018 to show 100% compliance in accountability and risk management. The Colombia Humanitarian Fund was compliant with accountability and risk management of funding. Appropriate oversight and assurance of funding channeled through the CHF. All projects were monitored in the field and audits accordingly carried out for all projects funded through the CHF.
Without a doubt, the added value of the Colombia Humanitarian Fund is its flexibility which is important to understand the context, understand each one of the needs and be able to adapt those funds to a response completely adapted to the context and the needs is the value that we highlight the most.

Maria Carolina Rubio - Professional Support Program, Quality and Report Action Against Hunger (ACH)
According to the testimonies of the Implementing Partners (IP), one of the most relevant performance of the Fund was the ability to deal with the forgotten, neglected and new crises that were emerging in the country, in a timely and efficient way, before they became relevant for other humanitarian actors. As an example of this, Martín Hoyos, from the NGO Action Against the Hunger (ACH), commented on his experience in La Guajira, where, thanks to the support of the CHF, the NGO was able to deal with the malnutrition crisis experienced in the area, which was not receiving attention once most humanitarian actions were starting to focus on migration issues.

Most IPs emphasized the added value of the Fund in terms of coordination with the local authorities, who actively participated during the implementation of the different projects, nurturing the process and guaranteeing a better implementation. Carolina Hernández from World Vision international mentioned: "The Fund enhanced coordination which guaranteed a much more optimal and integral result". Likewise, it was mentioned that, although the local authorities supported the executed projects, the Implementing Partners were equally able to strengthen their knowledge and capacities, as it happened in the municipality of Fonseca (La Guajira), where this organization had the opportunity to mentor the authorities regarding education rights in children, which allowed setting a precedent in this municipality, where no one was doing a similar work.

Manu implementing partners mentioned the way in which the Colombia Humanitarian Fund was able to reach remote communities, such as Puerto Leguízamo (Putumayo), Litoral San Juan (Chocó) and Rio Sucio (Chocó) where there was no state presence, allowing to cover gaps in the humanitarian response. Given the conditions of these communities, which had several access difficulties and high insecurity, the lack of humanitarian support was clear. This situation allowed several projects funded by the CHF to be the firsts to enter to the area and to provide humanitarian assistance to these communities, setting a precedent and serving as a bridge of entry for many other organizations that later also supported these populations.

These emergency funds contribute to the articulation between the local government and the territorial ethnic authorities, in order to manage and give sustainability to the actions developed in the territory.
The duration of the projects was also highlighted, emphasizing in the fact that they had an implementation time that varied between 6 months to one year, which to many Implementing Partners was a good. In addition, it was pointed out that during their implementation period there was constant support from the Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU). This fact was mentioned by Juanita Sánchez, from NGO PLAN, who expressed the importance of having HFU support throughout the implementation of the projects.

On the other hand, regarding the implementation of the projects, the IPs mentioned as an added value the obligation of leaving installed capacity in the communities and institutions, as well as the capacity to promote the transfer of processes to other organizations. These actions were very relevant, since many other funding mechanisms do not have this requirement, which usually reduces their efficiency and does not guarantee the sustainability of actions over time. Additionally, the work the Fund did in terms of encouraging coordination with other NGOs, was underlined, since it greatly nurtured the process and the results obtained.

Moreover, Implementing Partners mentioned, that getting funds from de CHF, helped them to access other additional resources in a simpler way, since, according to their testimonies, being able to reach the high standards of the Colombia Humanitarian Fund, gave their project implementation and quality of their assistance an important degree of relevance, not to mention that, it also promoted the visibility of the actions that were taking place, as said by Martin Hoyos from (ACH) and Paola Benjumea from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Another added value of the Fund that was mentioned, was the way in which the implemented projects supported the identification of community leaders and were able to enhance their capacity and promote their progress. According to this, Claudia Lily Rodríguez from NGO HALÚ, spoke about her personal experiences, highlighting the story of Magnolia, one of the community leaders from San Juan River (Chocó), who is studying to become a nurse, thanks to the approach she had to health issues in 2015, because of a project carried out by this NGO.

Furthermore, the way in which the Fund promoted good practices, within the implemented partners, was highlighted, because the standards established in the CHF manuals, helped them improve their strategies and implementation, as mentioned by Juana Sanchez from Fundación PLAN.

Finally, Beatriz García, said that the CHF keeps alive the humanitarian discussion in the country.
I believe that a specific example to better understand good practices... It is when the tragedy of Mocoa occurred where I believe that we managed to get there quickly, look for the main allies in the territory, enter and strengthen the capabilities... I think there we have achieved an added value by being with this Fund.

Fabrizio Poretti
Head of the Swiss Cooperation - Humanitarian Aid and Development of the Embassy of Switzerland (COSUDE)

The message of the National Government for the International Community, especially for Funds such as the one managed by the United Nations through the Humanitarian Coordinator, is that we remain active... The Humanitarian Fund of Colombia must act and must continue to act not for a short time, but long time... that’s where we need all humanitarian actors working together and coordinated now.

Germán Infante
International cooperation group adviser Victims Unit (UARIV)

The efforts of donors, the Fund’s Advisory Board, the Review Committee, national and international NGOs, United Nations agencies, OCHA and the State have been key to making the Colombian Humanitarian Fund an increasingly efficient humanitarian mechanism. The Colombian Humanitarian Fund has been an important support in fulfilling the humanitarian imperative: alleviating the suffering of the most affected people, while at the same time strengthening coordination, ensuring the maximization of resources and thus contributing to lay the foundations for development and peacebuilding in the country.

Martín Santiago
Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident United Nations Colombia
Review Committee:

From the perspective of the members of the Review Committee, the Colombia Humanitarian Fund (CHF) managed to provide humanitarian assistance to populations that had not been previously assisted, always focusing on guaranteeing an intersectoral response, which gave projects a high degree of relevance in the humanitarian field.

It was highlighted that, despite the limitation of resources, the standards and scopes of the projects remained the same, which is an important added value. Adriana Guerra from UNICEF/Education in Emergencies Cluster, mentioned her experience with the CHF in Rio Sucio (Chocó) where access was very limited, but thanks to CHF, it was possible to entry and to implement and intersectoral response. And that this funding allowed to make the humanitarian situation more visible and thus facilitated additional resources to the area.

Likewise, the strengthening that the CHF provided to the local organizations was praised, since it contributed a lot to the improvement of the humanitarian response, because it gives the system a different perspective on the situations that were experienced in the country and, on many occasions, facilitated the access to remote communities, form which little information was available. Furthermore, regarding National Organizations, Adriana Guerra highlighted several of the processes carried out by the CHF, such as the audit process, which in her opinion helped to strengthen the internal procedures of many organizations, building their capacity.

On the other hand, Antonio López from de UNGRD and Luis Fernando Ortiz, from UARIV mentioned, as one of the most important legacies of the Colombia Humanitarian Fund, the possibility to learn about double effected population (by natural disasters and conflict) since, thanks to the coordination spaces promoted by the Fund such as the Advisory Board, it was possible to evidenced that these entities did not work jointly. This situation led them to see that it was necessary to work together to optimize the scope of the humanitarian response.

On the other hand, Antonio López, also mentioned, as an added value of the CHF, that it was always oriented to a continuous improvement, which was visible in the Advisory Board, which always provided accompaniment and advice, to improve the articulation among the different humanitarian decision-making actors (international organizations, government entities, donors, etc.) since these spaces has not existed in any other context. This work led to a more fluid coordination among all the actors that are part of the humanitarian field in Colombia, which indirectly achieved an improvement in the humanitarian action that was carried out in the country.

Advisory Board Members from the Government:

Luis Fernando Ortiz from the disaster risk management unit, (UNGRD) mentioned an added value of the Colombia Humanitarian Fund was the efficiency and complementarity that the Fund promoted, which helped to avoid duplication and waste of resources.

Government partners from Presidential Cooperation Agency (APC), UARIV and UNGRD highlighted, the respect the Humanitarian Financing Unit showed for the internal processes and times required by these agencies during the project evaluation process and the fluidity of the communication of its members with the Fund, helped among other things, to strengthen the governmental system.

Luis Fernando Ortiz, recognized the Fund’s work in facilitating the dialogue between different humanitarian decision-making actors (international organizations, government entities, donors, etc.) since these spaces has not existed in any other context. This work led to a more fluid coordination among all the actors that are part of the
international cooperation organizations and state organizations. From
his point of view, since 2015, when the Fund’s new guidelines were
established, many efficient changes were also observed, so, according
to him, this divided the history of the CHF in two. He also mentioned the
relevance of having the government entities as part of the Advisory
Board, since this not only nurtured the result obtained with the projects,
but also allowed these entities to have a different vision of the
processes and know in a more profound way, the activities that were
about to be carried out.

Likewise, the clarity of the Operations Manual was highlighted, which
according to Martha Contreras, from the Presidential Cooperation
Agency, represented a fundamental tool for the performance of the
Fund, as it guaranteed the correct guidance to direct the work that was
going to be done. Following this comment, Luis Fernando Ortiz, from
UARIV added that this document, has being used as a guide for the
internal manuals of entities such as the Victims Unit, alleging that in
many occasions the procedures established in the Fund’s manuals, were
adapted in its internal methodologies.

Within good practices, the mechanisms and approval requirements of the Fund,
were mentioned, since they guaranteed the relevance of the projects. Likewise, the
constant accompaniment of the Humanitarian Financing Unit during the
implementation process was highlighted, with special emphasis on the monitoring
tasks, which was exalted as an effective practice that promoted a much more
harmonious implementation, which not only sought to monitor the situation of the
projects, but also the situation of the communities, allowing to have a constant
understanding of the humanitarian context. Likewise, María Carolina Perdomo from
Corporación Infancia y Desarrolo, stressed that the comments received after the
visit, permitted to adjust the actions that were being carried out, directing them to a
more optimal result, towards strengthening the capabilities of the organization.
Likewise, the relevance of the Multi Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
(MIRA) was expressed as the main support tool for the description of the
humanitarian context, highlighting it as a good starting point for the delimitation of
the projects, since it represented an evaluation that involves the participation of all
sectors.

As a good practice, the IPs also emphasized on the workshops given by the
Humanitarian Financing Unit, which promoted a fluid development of the projects
and an internal growth within the organizations, because many of the information
provided is now used as part of their internal processes, as mentioned by Francia
Hernández on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation.

Claudia Lily Rodriguez, highlighted that quality of the projects approved by the
Colombia Humanitarian Fund indirectly helped to organize the humanitarian
situation in general. She mentioned that the efficiency of the resource
management and the relevance of the Advisory Board and its members, since it
included all different humanitarian actors that were able to guide the humanitarian
response in Colombia.
Likewise, the integration of local and ethnic territorial authorities to the projects, was stated as a good practice, as this optimized the effectiveness of the projects, as stated by Juanita Sanchez from Fundación PLAN.

Furthermore, the fact of being articulated to the humanitarian architecture both, at the national level, in the technical matters (Clusters) and at the local level (Local Coordination Teams), was mentioned, since this guaranteed the maintenance of the activities carried out in the field, because it involved an accompaniment of both instances within the delimitation of the humanitarian situation and the response actions carried out.

Review Committee:

Within the good practices exalted by the Review Committee, was the level of excellence achieved by the implemented projects, thanks to the Fund’s standards, which produced a positive change in the internal procedures of many organizations. The latter, was discussed in spaces such as the Local Coordination Team meetings, were the work carried out by several of the implementing partners was recognized.

Anne Cécile Robin from UNFPA, referred to the interviews that were carried out, prior to the selection of the projects, mentioning that they promoted a space of relationship between the members of the different clusters and the Implementing Partners, which helped them to advise the type of actions that were going to be implemented, allowing the projects to be even more pertinent and effective.

Finally, as one of the most relevant points manifested by the attendees, especially from the representatives of the Lutheran World Federation, HALÜ and Cooperación Infancia y Desarrollo, was related to the level of improvement reached by the National NGOs with the support of the Colombia Humanitarian Fund (CHF), highlighting that this NGOs had 17% of the Fund’s allocations for 2014, but for 2017 this number raised to 62%. Within this discussion it was also stressed that not all funding mechanisms allowed the participation of national organizations, which in many cases, diminish their capacities. In relation to this, the possibility these organizations were given to link and participate in spaces such as the Inter-Cluster Team was also praised, since it promoted the cooperation and the visibility of their activities and capacities.

It was mentioned as good practice the way the Humanitarian Financing Unit conducted the review process which was very efficient, transparent and that as a result a very professional and cohesive group was created.

Finally, it was discussed, the way in which the contributions and comments to the projects that were going to be selected was made, stating that it was a very proactive space, since, it helped to provide them with the tools and knowledge on how to make adjustments, toward achieving a better implementation. This situation encourages joint growth, not only of the IPs, but also of the members of the Review Committee.
Advisory Board Members from Government:

Among the good practices, the Government Partners established the use of MIRA assessments as an efficient tool in the response, which, nourished with information from organizations such as the APC, UARIV and UNGRD, optimized the quality of the existing information.

On the other hand, the government partners mentioned the communication flow that the Fund Promoted, as it facilitated the communication between the different members of the Advisory Board, which, given its wide composition, allowed them to socialize topics of different nature, that showed new perspectives and ways of facing the situation of the country, towards achieving a better humanitarian response. In addition, the fact of having linked the government agencies to the project selection processes, strengthened the connection between the IPs and the government agencies.

On the other hand, the existing methodology to select Implementing Partners, was discussed, since, according to Martha Contreras from the Presidential Cooperation Agency (APC), it had a high level of transparency.

Finally, within this section, it was also stated, the way in which, according to the government partners, the Fund served to strengthen capacity of national NGOs, making special mention to the case of Fundación HALÜ. Antonio López said that, from his perspective, this was one of the greatest achievements of the Fund, since particularly, it was evident, how national NGOs became visible and relevant as those of an international nature.

Lessons Learned and Challenges

Implementing Partners:

Regarding the lessons learned, the fact of having community members as staff for implementing some projects was mentioned, as this practice significantly streamlined the different processes and promoted community trust, as well as empowerment and satisfaction. Martin Hoyos from Acción Contra El Hambre, told a personal anecdote lived in La Guajira, where there was widespread distrust of several organizations such as the ICBF (Colombian Institute for Family Welfare) since the institute recently separated several children of their parents.

This situation represented a great challenge for the organization because it forced them to change the perspective of the community, which, given the circumstances, had no confidence in external organizations.

This work, was achieved by having indigenous Wayuu within the team, because this managed to promote the safety of the beneficiaries, their trust and therefore the efficiency of the project.

Traceability of gender issues was mentioned as a challenge, since this is not possible to achieve in the short term, as stated by the Fundación PLAN. The approach is highly relevant for the Fund, but in the perspective of the IP, it is not really possible to consolidate this topic, when the projects have such a short duration. Finally, Paola Benjumea from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), referred to the topic of budget lines, which in her concept, were very rigid, because, making the budget required a lot of specifications, so, doing small changes, required to go through a long process, which represented a difficulty in a context where actions had to be done as soon as possible.
Anne Cécile Robin from UNFPA mentioned the coordination work of the gender subgroup, which determined which organizations should support visits to the communities they wanted to monitor, making the cluster itself an added value, as it could help in the coordination of the work and to facilitate to achieve a more efficient implementation.

Regarding the MIRA assessments, Alejandra Mendoza / Health cluster, mentioned that, despite highlighting the relevance this document, according to her perspective, in terms of health, it does not always have the most relevant information, because in many times, the figures presented were incomplete, and they cannot be used as and augment to implement a project. On its part, the cluster of Education in Emergencies, affirmed that the MIRA by itself could not represent the only tool to justify the execution of activities.

To which Adriana Guerra (Education in emergencies cluster/ UNICEF), Anne Cécile (UNFPA) and Hugo Sanchez (Shelter Cluster /OM) expressed that MIRAs are a relevant tool to define the situation to be addressed, but that it is important to complement it with more available information or deeper sectorial analysis.

Traceability of gender issues was mentioned as a challenge, since this is not possible to achieve in the short term, as stated by the Fundación PLAN. The approach is highly relevant for the Fund, but in the perspective of the IP, it is not really possible to consolidate this topic, when the projects have such a short duration. Finally, Paola Benjumea from the Norwegian Refugee council (NRC), referred to the topic of budget lines, which in her concept, were very rigid, because, making the budget required a lot of specifications, so, doing small changes, required to go through a long process, which represented a difficulty in a context were actions had to be done as soon as possible.

This situation represented a great challenge for the organization because it forced them to change the perspective of the community, which, given the circumstances, had no confidence in external organizations.

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Review Committee:

Anne Cécile Robin from UNFPA mentioned the coordination work of the gender subgroup, which determined which organizations should support visits to the communities that they wanted to monitor, making the cluster itself an added value, as it could help in the coordination of the work and to facilitate to achieve a more efficient implementation.

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Advisory Board Members from Government:

Within the good practices, the quality of the Capacity Assessments of capacities was mentioned, thanks to the effectiveness of the information and the standard that were carried out. During this conversation, it was reiterated once again, the commitment to share the Capacity Assessment with the Presidential Agency for Cooperation, in order to maintain its validity and allow this agency to have good quality information for their particular processes, seeking to ensure the validity and relevance of the actions performed by all the Fund’s Implementing Partners.

Likewise, the efficiency of the GMS platform was highlighted, since it allowed, in a simple way, the Government partners and the rest of the members of the Advisory Board, to know the status of the projects that were carried out and make comments if necessary.

As part of the good practices, the usefulness of the constant training sessions and workshops carried out by the Humanitarian Financing Unit was mentioned again, since it was clear that they optimize processes and encouraged a more efficient implementation, so the government partners agreed to use this as an activity they can implement, in order to improve the coordination problems.

“...the idea of these funds is to be able to transfer capacities and response through local organizations and the Humanitarian Fund of Colombia has been an example in this sense... during all the years the Fund gave about 30% of its resources to local NGOs and only in 2018 this amount came to over 60%.”

Maria José Daza - National Officer of Transitional Justice Programs and Humanitarian Assistance at the Embassy of Sweden
As part of the process of preparing this document, a series of interviews were also conducted, which were intended to show certain relevant processes that were carried out within the Colombia Humanitarian Fund, which are worth highlighting.

Cash Based transfers (CBT)
Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

Fundación HALÜ

I do not want to miss this opportunity to express our gratitude to OCHA, the Colombia Humanitarian Fund, the donors who made it possible for OCHA’s mission to be present in the country … and I speak not only in our name, but in the name of the communities that received humanitarian assistance … where we carried a voice of encouragement, accompaniment, and response.

Claudia Lili Rodríguez Neira - Director Fundación Halü
Cash Based transfers (CBT)
Lutheran World Federation (LWF):

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) implemented one of the most innovative activities financed by the Fund, that is, the delivery of bonuses and cash transfers. Its implementation required a series of trainings, carried directly from its headquarters in Geneva.

This strategy is based on a global humanitarian trend, where it was identified that cash transfers and bond deliveries have a positive impact on human dignity, since it allows people to obtain directly what they need, making this activity something more personal. Particularly LWF is being performing this type of activities with the funding of the CHF since 2015 and has already applied it in 3 of the 5 implemented projects.

Within the process of identifying when to use this strategy, it is initially necessary to review the conditions of the community and the local market, in order to examine if they have sufficient supplies, quality products and establishments capable of maintaining standards of transparency and adequate administrative report required, all the above without generating possible damages in security issues.

Likewise, the organizational capacities of the community and their willingness to participate in these activities are taken into consideration, but the main principle for the creation of this type of projects is based on trust, since according to the studies, it is a mistaken belief that communities affected by crisis will use resources incorrectly.

On the other hand, it is necessary to create well-defined strategies for the delivery of bonuses and cash transfers, since this is a delicate part of the process. LWF has carried out similar delivery techniques for all of the projects. The delivery process initially included, creating training sessions to explain the methodology, delivery and use of the bonuses. First, it was necessary to divide the community into groups, providing them with a token that represented the group they would be part of. Once this was done, each of the groups had to attend the corresponding workshop in which they should participate obligatorily in order to obtain the bonuses. Workshops were held in the morning and in the afternoon, approximately from 1 to 3 days, depending on the number of beneficiaries to attend, all the latter with the intention of maintaining order. At the end of the day, the bonuses were delivered and could be used immediately following the established recommendations.

The LWF incorporated this technique for the first time in the project implemented in Saravena (Arauca) funded by the CHF. This project aimed to provide a response to the floods presented in this area in 2015. During this process, the bonus delivery was made, after agreeing with the community about their most relevant needs.
The bonuses given in this project, were directed to support hygiene problems and sustainable livelihoods methods, they were delivered by family, prioritizing the distribution to women, since during their studies, it was determined that women have a greater knowledge of household needs.

During this activity two outstanding things were identified, the first one was, that giving hygiene bonuses per family, may not be a fair way of distribution, because not every family is composed by the same number of members, so it did not guarantee an equity. On the other hand, it was observed that the opposite happened with the delivery of the sustainable livelihoods bonuses, since this delivery was also made by family, but in this case it helped to strengthening the family union, since this activities motivated them to sit together, make a join decision and arrange the activities that were to be carried out with the money they were going to receive.

At the end of the activity, the corresponding monitoring was done, particularly in the financial area, to ensure that the execution was properly carried out.

The second project executed with the funding of the CHF, delivered bonuses and also transfers of cash. The project was carried out in Arauquita (Arauca) and aimed to benefit internal displaced families and Venezuelan migrants. In this case, the bonuses were delivered to cover early recovery activities. In relation to the cash transfers, previous work was done with the banking sector, which efficiently supported the project. One of the major setbacks presented, was related to documentation, since most of Venezuelan migrants did not have any valid identity documents in Colombia, so it was necessary to make these deliveries without the intermediation of the back.

As an added value, this activity not only promoted the dignity of the community by letting them use their money autonomously, but also fostered spaces in which women were allowed to coordinate bonuses delivery activities and provide support in other general tasks, which potentially increased their empowerment.

This activity also fostered the alliance between the humanitarian system and the banking sector, as well as the efficiency and the functionality of the banking system in Arauca, which set a positive precedent within the framework of cash transfers in the region.

On the other hand, the last implemented project with funding from the CHF, also took place in Arauca and was directed to the migrant population. For this activity, bonuses were given per person, as a result of the experience in 2015. This activity had an important added value, since it was necessary to sensitize suppliers on xenophobia issues, which was very serious in the area.

Finally, all the lessons learned from this experience were shared with the CBT (Cash Based Transfers) group. This group was born as a part of the Early Recovery cluster, under the idea of sharing the acquired experiences, in order to define the good practices and the areas in which an improvement was required. In particular, the FLM highlighted as lessons learned, the need to choose a most effective intervention modality, explain in a clearer way its functions to the community, strengthen the knowledge of the local market, recognize access and implementation barriers, understand the differences between the rural and urban sector, identify and manage the informality conditions of some providers, implement training strategies for practical improvements, systematize information through platforms and incorporate gender criteria in the CBT language. In this way, the FLM allowed their experiences to serve as tools to build knowledge for the rest of the agencies.

“The Fund has helped a lot to support the work of Colombian humanitarian organizations; It is not that it has been exclusively aimed at this, but it has indeed opened the door to the financing of actions by Colombian organizations that are those that are many times in the territory and know very deeply what is happening.”

Carlos Cabanillas - General Coordinator of Spanish Cooperation in Colombia (AECID)
Fundación HALÜ was one of the first national organizations to work with the Colombian Humanitarian Fund, its first project implementation was performed in 2015 after a pilot test carried out by the Fund, to evaluate the possibility of working with National NGOs which was carried out as a Capacity Assessment.

The first project implemented by HALÜ was very effective and it complied with the new Fund Guidelines and procedures.

Initially, this fact allowed to change the general perspective of some other organizations, mostly international, that did not know the standards and the work carried out by many national organizations. It was because of the support of the Fund, that the quality of their work was seen, helping to increase their status in the humanitarian field. Thanks to this, organizations such as HALÜ were included in several coordination spaces, which optimized their work.

Likewise, HALÜ was able to assist as a spokesperson for other national NGOs, serving as a connection bridge that encouraged the visualization of other local organizations, allowing them to join coordination spaces and to work along with different organizations. The latter helped expanding the spectrum and adding much more information to the humanitarian framework.

As another noteworthy element, the NGO highlighted that the standard established in the Capacity Assessment allowed them to nourish their capacities, since the high level of requirements, helped them to improve their own structures, from the lowest levels, as it was to employ a bilingual person to support their capacities, to the adaptation of new methodologies to improve the proposal writing processes.

Thanks to their outstanding performance, HALÜ was asked to be part of the Advisory Board of the Colombia Humanitarian Fund, which among other things, allowed them to expand their knowledge in different subjects, to know how the selection process was and to nourish their general capacities. As commented by Claudia Lily Rodríguez (HALÜ director) one of the most relevant tools in this process was the possibility to interact with the Humanitarian Donors, since this experience let them know their main interests, which represented a valuable information for the NGO, especially when fundraising. Among other highlighted processes, there was the internal growth obtained through the workshops dictated by the Humanitarian Financing Unit, the recommendations made during the monitoring processes and above all, the recommendations obtained by the auditing firm, gave them a new perspective that optimized many internal processes.

After discussing these growth experiences, the NGO expressed its gratitude to the CHF for the support and trust granted, since, it represented an important lever to its growth process, that allowed them to save many lives, in an efficient and timely manner.
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