

## **Success Chronicle**

## Violence "unites" a group of Colombians

"Love towards their community in reestablishing their rights is the best reason these three violence's victims have to stay standing on their feet"



Although they do not know one another and live in different municipalities, Justo, Florentino and Yajaira have been sharing the same reality for more than five years: forced displacement, which, according to the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation- Acción Social, at present affects approximately 3 million Colombians.

Night's darkness and quietness acted as accomplices for these three Colombians to abandon the place where they and their children had once dreamed of growing old harvesting, milking and contemplating the splendor of countryside sunsets.

Now they share survival efforts, leadership, and the desire to learn and teach how to decrease access barriers, and thus guarantee health services access to around 400 members of three associations of violence's displaced persons, which they today lead.



They decided to start this process after feeling their multiple attempts to find opportunities were unfruitful and their health needs were not being met: they were often forced to queue for long hours since very early in the morning, buy medications and visit institution after institution just to be told "come back tomorrow, as the service you require is not being provided at this moment".

That old reality has slowly been transformed thanks to their hard work, and the political will of the different actors of the National Government involved in health service provision, as well as International Organizations as the Pan-American Health Organization- PAHO/WHO and the United States Agency for International Development-USAID; but mainly thanks to the wish and need of the community to achieve a better quality of life for this group of Colombians that have gotten together in order to reestablish their health rights.

This might be the reason why it is not uncommon to hear Yajaira say "I have learned about duties and rights, the idea is that every associate learns what is the Health Access Route to be followed in order to receive health care"; or to see Justo, a skinny man well over 60, providing directions and information to people who share his displacement condition at the Information Point of the Norte de Santander Municipality's hospital, located several hours away from the Capital City.

Florentino shares a similar role as he works towards guaranteeing health provision for his 200 associates, at the same time that he cares for his four children and works in the fields in order to secure some income; activities that are reflected in his hands, sight's depth and face's expressions.

There are hundreds of displaced persons like them, who now know how to put into practice their health rights, which is the best tool they count on to demand a worthy treatment.