

Success Chronicle

Norte de Santander

Displaced population “win” social recognition

Witness how tears fall down the face of thousands of people who have been victims of the armed conflict, or listen to them reply to the question ¿who forced you to leave your home? might be the most frequent expressions of a large group of men and women who make our heart shrink with their life testimonies.

Fortunately, these testimonies are gradually being replaced by smiles and tears of happiness, thanks to the hard work of many people and the political will of institutions that support several associations formed by internally displaced persons who now live in the El Tarra and Tibú municipalities, northeast of Colombia, where there is a strong presence of illegal armed groups.

These people express their confidence in the local health system with expressions such as “I can knock on my doctor’s door at any time and he will always answer... he has even given me some money to take my son to Cúcuta when needed”.

Others acknowledge that the main benefit they have received is the opportunity to identify their health right and duties, have a clear path to access health services, and permanently receive training on current legislation which enables them to provide assistance to others like them who one day arrived in a strange place, ignoring what to do or where to go for help.

Such achievements were made evident during the first forum on successful experiences of the “Health Services Delivery Plans for Internally Displaced Populations- IDP and Vulnerable Groups”. This event was sponsored by the Pan-American Health Organization PAHO/WHO and the United States Agency for International Development- USAID; and supported by departmental health institutions that work towards implementing strategies to improve IDP’s health conditions.

In this meeting the voice of satisfaction of IDP’s community leaders was heard, along with that of single mothers, representatives of different institutions, delegates of international organizations and governmental authorities, who for the first time, declared their complacency with the results accomplished in guaranteeing access to timely and quality health services.

