

Initiative for Media & Peacebuilding in Colombia

Final Report on a Delegation of Colombian Journalists to Washington, DC
November 8th – 16th, 2008

**PEACEBUILDING & DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
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Executive Summary

From November 9th – 15th, 2008 a dozen Colombian journalists were invited to Washington, DC by the Peacebuilding & Development Institute to participate in a week-long training program funded by the United States Institute for Peace. During their stay, the delegation participated in a conflict analysis and application workshop, skill-building trainings, simulation exercises in humanitarian crises and negotiations, and discussed ways to improve the media's coverage of the conflict in Colombia.

The week-long program was designed to provide the journalists with the tools to better report on the conflict and peace efforts, and more importantly, to better understand the role that the media plays in peacebuilding efforts.

Towards this end, the participants first attended a day-long skills training on conflict analysis and application. The topic for the following day examined in depth the role that the media plays in conflict situations and as facilitators in peace efforts. The following two trainings looked at conflict-sensitive journalism and the role of women and marginalized groups in peace efforts.

The participants were encouraged to utilize the neutral space in Washington to leave behind their role as journalists in order to experience firsthand the perspectives of conflicting actors through two separate simulations. These simulations allowed the delegation to put into practice many of the skills discussed earlier in the week without the restricting internalized bias that shaped their perceptions of the Colombian conflict.

The local Washington, DC and American University community had the opportunity to meet with the Colombian journalists to exchange their experiences and to discuss the challenges all face in their daily work on several occasions throughout the week both formally and informally. They met with documentary makers and human rights advocates, in addition to speaking to a public audience about their profession on the last morning of the training week.

All in all, the program was viewed as extremely effective as it provided the delegates critical information that was directly beneficial to their profession. The list of outcomes may be found on page 5 of this report.

There was a strong desire during and after the program to continue similar capacity building programs for those working in the field of journalism in Colombia. Some of the key follow-up projects identified by the delegation included: the creation of a network of journalists in Colombia with the expressed intent to strengthen the media's role in peacebuilding efforts; exploration of the impact of peace journalism in the country; a training in Colombia for journalists on media's role in peacebuilding; and, opening the space through their communication mediums to expand the public dialogue about the possibility of effective peace processes in Colombia.

Overview

The Colombian conflict is currently the longest lasting conflict in the world that has cost more than 50,000 lives as well as political, economic and social losses. As a result of the sensitivities that surround reporting in conflict ridden areas journalists in Colombia have paid very high price for their dedication. In the last 15 years more than 100 journalists have been assassinated and every day journalists experience censorship from the actors of the conflict. Yet in spite of their obstacles neither the media nor journalists themselves in Colombia and globally seem to perceive the gravity and importance of their mission. Journalists in Colombia need to realize the importance of their position in keeping the world informed of what is going on in the conflict and their role in helping to bring peace. The Colombian conflict has persisted for almost 60 years and things need to be changed. By highlighting the plight of Colombian journalists and helping them see their potential, it will allow more light to be shed on the conflict and more room for change.

In this spirit, the United States Institute for Peace supported the Peacebuilding & Development Institute to work with Medios Para La Paz to arrange this project. Of the 12 participants, there were 6 newspaper journalists, 4 editors, and 2 field correspondents. The focus of the program was to analyze responsible reporting methods, conflict and gender sensitive journalism, the media's perspective of the conflict vs. the community's perspective of the conflict, and the use of media in the empowerment of the affected community. Towards this end, the participants attended 4 trainings, 2 hands-on simulated activities, and various meetings and discussions on the role of media in armed conflict.

Since 2000, PDI has offered week-long courses looking at the intersection of media and peacebuilding for NGO practitioners and journalists, as well as holding other exchange programs with journalists from other conflict zones such as from Georgian and Abkhazia. Likewise, during the last decade, Medios para la Paz has conducted many capacity building programs for highly-skilled journalists to reflect on their role in the middle of armed conflicts. This program is another step towards understanding how these two professional fields—that of the media and that of peacebuilding practitioners—intersect. By observing the results of this training, and how it touched the participants equally on the personal as well as the professional levels, it is clear that further examination of this nexus should be pursued.

Selection Criteria & Participants

The selection of the delegation for the program was a joint exercise between the Peacebuilding & Development Institute (PDI) and Medios para la Paz (MPP). PDI and MPP worked together to approve the application procedures, after which MPP sent out and processed the received applications. Of the 30 completed applications received by MPP, a short list of participants was presented to PDI based on the following criteria:

- Extensive and documented experience in the coverage of the armed conflict from the field, rather than from the newsroom alone
- Demonstrated exercise of responsible journalism
- Experience in the areas where the conflict has a predominant presence
- Specific consideration of the journalist's role—editors, journalists, correspondents—inside their media organization
- Variety of journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet, and press agencies
- Gender balance of men and women

In the end, the selected delegation met the depth of experience and diversity that we had initially hoped. The average amount of professional experience of the delegates was around 10 years. There were seven journalists based out of the capital Bogota, and five that were from other provinces around Colombia. There were six journalists, four editors, and two correspondents. Of these, there were seven women, and five men.

Short biographies of the selected participants may be found later in the report.



Project Aims & Objectives

Following discussions between PDI and MPP in designing important aspects of the project, the following issues and needs were identified:

- The complexity of the Colombian conflict, coupled with the pressures inherent to reporting in a war situation, poses great challenges for journalists.
- While common perception is that media often contributes to the escalation of conflicts, it is also possible for media to play a positive role. It is this concept that Colombian journalists need to realize to counterbalance the negative consequences of their actions.
- By enabling journalists with tools to practice better reporting, they will in turn enable their own civil society, which currently is very inhibited.

The main objectives of this program were thus the following.

- Enhance the professional skills of the journalists on reporting on conflicts and peacebuilding issues
- Create greater understanding between, and minimize the gaps between media and the peacebuilding and conflict resolution communities
- Enhance understanding of some of the theories of conflict resolution in the hope that the analysis will help journalists in being more conflict sensitive
- Provide Colombian war correspondents and editors with the tools to be able to report about the Colombian conflict in a positive, responsible fashion
- Discuss the dichotomy of being a neutral participant and practicing responsible journalism in a conflict ridden area
- Discuss the idea of the 'CNN effect' and how journalists can also use their power to create peace within the Colombian conflict
- Open the path to other trainings focused on war correspondents and media within conflict

With these objectives and needs in mind, PDI designed the training schedule to accommodate many of these topics in the short time the delegation would be in Washington, DC. The training sessions included a day-long session on the broader field of conflict resolution and conflict analysis, and another day-long session looking further into media and peacebuilding efforts. In addition, there were half-day trainings examining conflict-sensitive journalism and the inclusion of women and underrepresented groups in peace efforts. In addition to these trainings, the group participated in simulated negotiations and in other meetings and talks. The complete list of events and descriptions of the issues discussed during the trainings may be found later in this report.

Project Outcomes

From the Re-entry Workshop

After a long week of trainings and simulations, the delegation gathered together to discuss their ideas for the future for the last time while in Washington, DC.

The group shared their thoughts with PDI on the most and least effective aspects of the program.

General outcomes:

- Participants gained a stronger understanding of the theoretical underpinnings around conflict resolution, learning to apply these concepts not only in recognizing the efforts of other peace journalists around the world but also in formulating concrete strategies for addressing specific conflict issues in their communities. Some of the frameworks provided a new language for the delegates to use.
- Realization of the potential role of the media as healthy facilitators to peace efforts. They learned to minimize their own biases and report neutrally in regards to either side of the conflict, but positively in regards to promoting conflict resolution.
- The understanding of the difficulties and challenges of complex negotiations, observing that not all information regarding ongoing peace efforts should be publicized as not to hinder potential breakthroughs. Their responsibility to report the truth and to report news must be weighed with their responsibility to the communities they serve.
- Recognition of the positive and urgent role civil society provides in resolving conflicts. Civil society has been underrepresented, because it does not provide the same shock factor as guerilla or paramilitary groups, but civil society represents the people working to create peace.
- Ability to share and exchange their experiences from their areas in the regions and the larger metropolitan cities, discovering both great similarities across regions and previously unknown differences in experiences that allowed them to put their experiences into a greater context of the conflict.
- The recuperation of hope was another outcome the journalists raised on repeated occasions. This was important for the group because as they constantly cover the events of the armed conflict, they lose hope for peace, and invariably begin to report on pure inertia alone. Raising the energy and hope of journalists positively affects their work, and this is a theme that is of deep interest to MPP and PDI in follow up work.

Some of the aspects that the participants felt should have been more directly addressed or other general issues regarding the program are the following:

- Particular focus on the Colombian conflict: Some participants desired more attention on their conflict itself, while others thought it was best to focus even more on conflicts other than their own.
- Delegates thought that even more concrete cases on how the media has played the role of peacebuilders in other conflict situations should have been discussed.
- Although issues around transitional justice were discussed briefly, the delegates thought it would be useful to learn more in-depth about the various models of truth and justice processes worldwide.
- Delegates felt that they should have received reading material prior to their arrival, which would have helped in the various workshops during the week.
- Nearly all participants felt that one week for the program provided too little time to deeply examine the issues at hand.
- There was also the difficulty at times with the language. While there was simultaneous translation during all the trainings the speaker was not fluent in Spanish, there remained the problem of some of the written material handed out by the trainers were in English. This made some of the information inaccessible to certain participants.

Participants' Follow-Up

From the Re-entry Workshop and Evaluation Meeting

The group then shared ideas for implementing the concepts learned during the week upon their return to Colombia, as well as the necessary and other potential follow-up steps to the training. The following are some of the ideas presented by the delegates.

- Create a network of journalists to allow interactive dialogue regarding the media's role as peacebuilders. This network will facilitate the exchange of ideas and the coordination of efforts aimed at establishing and furthering peace initiatives.
- Establish links between journalists in the United States and Colombia in order to support each other's investigative efforts and to improve the quality of information reaching readers in the United States regarding peace processes and the local impact of American policy in Colombia. Through increased communication, not only are journalists in Colombia protected by the support and oversight of their American colleagues, but the more information that journalists share, the more likely the information is to be accurate and offer a wide range of opinions and sources.
- Further explore the impact of peace journalism in Colombia. This includes conducting comprehensive studies of the ways in which peace journalism tangibly reduces an atmosphere of violence and furthers conflict resolution.
- Create a theoretically sound practice oriented training program in Media and Peacebuilding within Colombia targeting national and grassroots media professionals.
- Seek to expand citizen participation of youth, women, and underrepresented groups in ongoing public debates through media initiatives. Media should work to voice the successes and struggles of these groups through interviews, guest columns, and hiring individuals based on their ability to provide unique and underrepresented voices to the conflict dialogue.
- Integrating community, regional, and national radio, as well as expanding assistance to local radio in order to strengthen their theoretical understanding of the role of media with respect to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The partnership of the in-depth coverage of events in the



conflict, as well as the stories of local communities, combined with the power of national networks to share those stories throughout the country and that world will increase the visibility of peace efforts and aid in representing the conflict faithfully.

Lessons Learned & PDI Follow-Up

Beyond what the participants to the program suggested as changes to make in the future should similar programs be designed, PDI has also identified other points that should be considered in our future endeavors when working with media.

- In the selection of participants, there was a desire to have a representative range of media professionals from correspondents and journalists to editors. Each group, however, faces different challenges. It would be more beneficial in similar trainings for the delegates to be all journalists, all correspondents, or all editors. The training sessions then can become more specific and practical.
- Likewise with the variety between radio, print, and television journalists, it would be more impactful to focus on one particular sector.

Following the training program's completion, there are many opportunities that the Peacebuilding & Development Institute feels the need to pursue.

- It is necessary to continue to follow-up with the delegates to observe the lasting benefits and impact of the program. The group-feedback as to the effective and ineffective aspects of the program needs to be taken into account, as well as seeking concrete examples of how participation in this program has affected an individual's reporting and analysis. PDI has recently contacted all delegates with an initial questionnaire concerning these questions a month after the program's completion, but has yet to obtain enough responses to reflect any identifiable trends at the time of writing this report.
- PDI also feels the obligation to continue to remain in close contact with the program participants and MPP in particular in order to assure that the follow-up ideas expressed during the week are not abandoned. The momentum created during the week in Washington must be maintained. Whereas MPP has the ability to facilitate a stronger connection of journalists within Colombia itself, PDI is willing to assist in strengthening of networks between media outlets in Colombia with those in the US and elsewhere.
- PDI seeks to continue examining the nexus between media and peacebuilding, looking at how to continue enhancing the professional skills of those in the media to better report on conflict and peace efforts, as well as expanding the mechanisms for the peacebuilding community to reach the larger public and target audience by more effectively using the media.
- Another aspect that needs to be further examined is the influence and impact of peace journalism in Colombia and other conflict zones.

- The participants desired to pursue a deeper understanding of transitional justice and the challenges and lessons learned from other post-conflict situations worldwide in order to better reflect upon the issues faced in Colombia through their media outlets. PDI would like to explore opportunities for holding sessions for media personnel regarding the many aspects of transitional justice.

PDI hopes to work closely with both USIP and MPP to successfully realize these aforementioned points. There is no shortage of work to be done looking forward, and this program has shown us many paths that the Initiative for Media and Peacebuilding in Colombia may take.

The following sections of this report will provide more detail on this particular week training, however, looking at the many concepts and issues discussed and debated.

Delegation Schedule

Saturday, November 8: Arrival in Washington, DC and day of rest.

Sunday, November 9:

- Team Building Exercises through an Experiential Peacebuilding Process
- Goal Setting and Expectations

Monday, November 10:

- Conflict Analysis and Application with Mery Rodriguez

Tuesday, November 11:

- Media and Peacebuilding with Johannes Botes
- Simulation of Two-Party Negotiation in Humanitarian Crisis

Wednesday, November 12:

- Conflict-Sensitive Journalism with Dilshika Jayamaha
- Simulation of a Multi-Party Negotiation with Anthony Wanis-St. John

Thursday, November 13:

- Inclusion of Women and Underrepresented Groups in Peace Efforts with Miki Jacevic
- Discussion with Bill Gentile and Joe Eldridge on Evolving Role of the Media, Obama Administration and its Effects on Colombia

Friday, November 14:

- Public Presentation
- Tour of Washington Post
- Meeting with Senior Editor of Foreign Correspondents
- Re-entry Workshop & Evaluation of the Week

Saturday, November 15:

- Tour of the Newseum
- Shopping

Sunday, November 16: Return to Colombia

Sunday, November 9

Team Building Exercises, Goals & Expectations

The purpose of the first day was to orient the delegates to Washington, DC and the plans for the week ahead. Before providing them the opportunity to discuss each other's expectations and goals, a team-building workshop led by Todd Walters was held outdoors to allow the participants to more thoroughly introduce themselves to each other. During this workshop, the participants shared experiences and impactful moments during their lives that had led them to become involved in the field of journalism, particularly in covering the armed conflict in Colombia.

The opening workshop allowed the participants to visualize the various areas of Colombia from where they came, as well as to realize that the conflict in Colombia manifests itself in various manners and assumes many local conflicts that are all driven by unique factors. The participants also noted the symbolism of the fact that nearly half of the group hailed from the capital, Bogota, from where the country's most powerful and influential media outlets are based. For many reasons, journalists from Bogota are rarely able to deeply investigate the local nature of the conflict, and due to the competitive nature of journalism, severely lack coordination of efforts and networks between the center and periphery provinces.



In the afternoon, the delegates were able to elaborate on their expectations and objectives for the week of training ahead. In doing so, the media's coverage of the conflict was passionately discussed, and the delegates arrived with the following list of goals:

- To learn situations of resolved conflicts, focusing on processes of truth, justice, and reparations
- Learn about conflict and peace from other conflict areas
- To examine the role of the media in these processes
 - What role can the media have in conflict resolution and the construction of peace, and understanding the limitations of its ability, what are the pros and cons of their actions?
 - What are the practical ways to generate proposals to improve the media's actions in these processes?

- To learn various models of negotiation and which of those may be applied in the Colombian context, as well as the role of the media in those models
- To see how social groups construct collective memory, and how the media can interact with these groups
- To listen to each other as not to naturalize conflict in order to assure that it is more natural to have peace rather than to have an environment in perpetual violence
- To share with the university community and others their perspectives of the conflict and peace efforts in Colombia in order to help change the negative perceptions many hold about the country
- To discover what potential impact an incoming Obama administration may have on the situation in Colombia



Monday, November 10

Conflict Analysis & Application

The first day of training was dedicated to conceptualize the field of conflict resolution, focusing largely on building the participant's ability to analyze conflicts. This training workshop was conducted in Spanish.

Some of the topics discussed throughout the day:

- Sources, levels of conflict, and the multilevel dimensions of conflict
- How to differentiate between one's interests and positions
- Brief history of the field of conflict resolution and analysis
- Implicit principles in the conflict resolution process
- Principles to determine the resolution of a conflict
- Roles of third parties and the examples of intervention
- Examination of one's own bias in their conflict analysis or reporting
- Conflict mapping



Tuesday, November 11

Media & Peacebuilding

With the concepts of conflict resolution discussed in depth on the first day of the training, the second day provided the delegates the space to critically explore the specific roles the media has played in conflict situations. The trainer, Johannes Botes, shared many of his experiences as a radio and television journalist in apartheid South Africa. Beyond the South African example, the delegates delved into the cases of Israel/Palestine and Rwanda, amongst others.

Dr. Botes and the delegates discussed the role journalists may play, neither as armed actors nor partisans to the conflict, but rather as agents in peace initiatives and processes. The idea of journalists as visionaries looking towards a peaceful future was widely discussed both during and after the session.



Simulation of Two-Party Negotiation in Humanitarian Crisis

While all sessions of the training week were interactive in nature, the delegates had the opportunity on two occasions during the week to abandon their journalistic roles and to experience negotiations as active participants, something which none of the participants have ever done. The first of these situations was held on Tuesday evening with the cooperation of the AU Negotiation Project and Link, two graduate student organizations part of the International Peace and Conflict Resolution program at American University.

The delegates broke into small groups and simulated a humanitarian crisis in Uganda where the United Nations World Food Program needed the cooperation of the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army in order to deliver food to a population of displaced persons. The simulation was developed by USIP.

The delegates were shy of the roles they assumed at first. However, they soon realized the chance to apply many of the concepts discussed during the first trainings of the week. During the debriefing, the delegates shared their successful creative solutions—including one group that took the liberty to involve journalists as verifiers to the process in order to secure an agreement —as well as the analysis of failed attempts to find a timely solution to the situation. Delegates then drew from encounters with similar situations they covered as journalists in Colombia and sought to explore the appropriate role for the press in moments of humanitarian crisis.



Wednesday, November 12

Conflict-Sensitive Journalism

Mid-week, the delegates turned towards topics regarding journalism work in conflict settings with Dilshika Jayamaha. Ms. Jayamaha delivered a presentation touching on many of the delegates' desired topics. Some of her key topics were the following:

- Key principles of conflict-sensitive reporting
- Trends in media coverage of crisis and conflict
- The role of the media in relation to conflict and peacebuilding
- The way political and individual agendas frame issues and shape media coverage and the subsequent effect of these political and individual agendas on the media
- The primacy of certain types of news—national news over regional and local; conflict over peacebuilding— and whether and how to address such imbalances
- Differences in coverage between “new” and “traditional” media
- The issues the media faces in Colombia, from political pressure to threats and intimidation

After examining these questions, the delegates and Ms. Jayamaha then turned to some very important questions and concerns the journalists encounter while carrying out their work in Colombia.

- When does media coverage become activism?
- How do journalists balance the various concerns and agendas while remaining impartial?
- Is taking the side of peace a bias?
- How to cover civil disobedience? Should journalists participate in civil disobedience?
 - For example: the implications of journalists joining government-supported anti-FARC protests
- Concerns that Colombians fail to receive informative and insightful regional news, despite the transnational nature of conflict



- Concerns over the complexity and lack of time to cover issues like peacebuilding efforts due to constant crises and the focus on spot news

One delegate in particular noted that should journalists be forced to take sides in a conflict, they should take the side of the victims, and they should assume the role of activists against conflict.



Simulation of Multi-Party Negotiation

In the late afternoon, the delegates joined Professor Anthony Wanis-St. John for the second and final simulated negotiation of the week. This multi-party negotiation, written by Prof. Wanis-St. John, circles around the construction of a new modern shipping port to be built in northern Sri Lanka where a fictional peace accord has recently been signed. The Colombian delegates again were tested to find their creativity in applying conflict resolution skills, as well as discovering the many challenges that arise as part of complex negotiations involving government officials, regional authorities, former rebels, minority groups, business interests, non-governmental actors.

Thursday, November 13

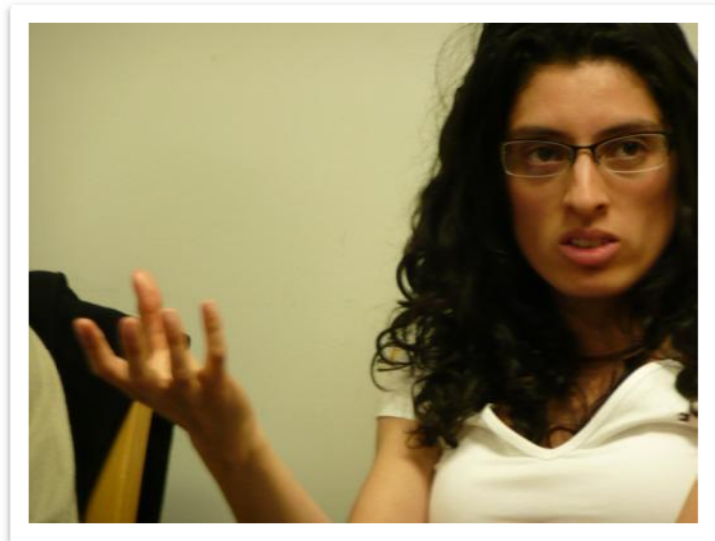
Inclusion of Women and Underrepresented Groups in Peace Efforts

On Thursday morning, the delegation met with Miki Jacevic from the Initiative for Inclusive Security to discuss the all-important role of women and underrepresented groups in peace efforts, as well as furthering the discussion of the appropriate role for the media in peace efforts. The delegates compared cases of these groups' participation in peace and reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan, the Balkans, Guatemala, as well as in Colombia.

Other topics during this session included similar questions discussed all week of what role was appropriate for journalists in conflict and post-conflict settings, and the cases discussed with Mr. Jacevic provided the delegation with both positive and negative contributions to draw lessons from. How media can escalate and perpetuate conflict was a topic of particular interest to the journalists, especially with respects to the prosecution of journalists for war crimes as part of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as well as the International Tribunal for Rwanda.

The workshop also focused on the National Commission for Reparations and Reconciliation.

Mr. Jacevic introduced the delegation to the Women's Waging Peace Network that IIS maintains, and urged the journalists to be in close contact with the network's members in Colombia.



Roundtable Discussion

On Thursday afternoon, Bill Gentile and Joe Eldridge met with the delegates to share experiences and exchange ideas with the delegation. Bill Gentile is an independent journalist and filmmaking professor at American University, and has reported from conflict zones worldwide since the start of his career in 1977. Joe Eldridge, the university's chaplain, has a long record of activity working towards the promotion of human rights, especially in Latin America.

Prior to the meeting, the Colombian delegates viewed the most recent of Gentile's documentary works, which followed a group of American marines in southern Afghanistan who, while continuing to fight for control of the territory, attempt to gain the confidence and cooperation of the local population.

The documentary provoked a strong debate over the government's use of journalists in promoting propaganda and controlling the public discourse. The delegation was particularly interested in

how much control and military censorship was exercised over Gentile's video. One participant noted that the Colombian military has begun to carry along its own journalists during operations and then later releases its reports, sidelining the outside media from freely accessing many areas in the country.

Other topics raised during the discussion were National Public Radio and Public Broadcasting Service in the United States, as well as the Pentagon's use of retired military personnel, who simultaneously were frequents on television newscasts and as sources on military affairs.



Friday, November 14

Public Presentation at American University

On Friday morning, the Peacebuilding & Development Institute organized an open public event to the Washington and American University community. The delegation, honored at the opportunity to be invited to the United States to participate in this training, in return wanted to discuss their collective desire for peace and on-going events in Colombia to the widest audience possible during their stay. Towards this end, the delegates selected three members of the group to represent their own diversity and discuss their work in the field as journalists.



Jaime Conrado Juajibioy

Jaime discussed his work, not as a traditional journalist, but rather in youth capacity building in the Putumayo department through the project Radios Ciudadanas. The objective of the Radios Ciudadanas project is to impel the fortification of the democracy, citizen participation, and coexistence of cultural diversity through the creation and consolidation of strips of opinion and analysis in the communitarian radios and of public interest of the country.

These capacity building activities, which introduce and train youth in both old and new mediums of communication, seek to direct youth away from participating in armed groups and leave the cycle of violence. Through the project, youth have avenues of communication to enter into the public discourse and to contribute to their local community's improvement. Jaime noted that the activities are developed in such a way that the leadership is transferred in order for the project to become self-sustaining.

Towards the end of his presentation, he showed the audience videos which were entirely written, produced, and edited by the creative youth in their programs from a region in Colombia named Belén de los Andaquíes.

Gloria Castrillón

The following presenter spoke on the systemic challenges journalists face reporting on the conflict and peace efforts in Colombia. She also touched on the difficulties encountered when journalists reporting on the conflict are close to and living in the conflict zones when there are no security guarantees for the journalists, their families, and their sources. On the other hand, reporting from a base in Bogota holds its own challenges. Journalists from the capital and other metropolitan areas travel to the outer departments only for a few days, and soon thereafter leave the zone with their reports written without the ability to further examine the issues in order to avoid security problems and limited travel budgets. In response to these challenges, Gloria mentioned the need for the creation of journalism networks more firmly linking the capital to the outer regions.

She then referenced the political challenges in the inner-workings of the media industry in Colombia. The directors and editors draw a clear line with relation to the information that should be presented and which should not, she noted. She lamented that there are media outlets whose priorities do not even include the conflict, let alone peace efforts.



Marisol Manrique

The last presenter, Marisol Manrique, spoke of her experience working with journalists in Colombia through her organization Medios para la Paz (MPP). The main objective of MPP is to fortify socially responsible journalism as an instrument for the construction of culture of peace and democracy in the country. MPP holds trainings for local journalists, as well as developing tools for the journalists in order to report on the conflict in a more sensitive manner. One project towards these goals was the creation of online dictionaries to “disarm the words” often used in conflict reporting. This particular project has been fortified with the publication of books on the armed conflict and journalism in the country, as well as with multiple workshops for journalists organized by MPP.

Marisol later focused on a network of journalists called Reporters of Colombia, whose aim is to become a press agency introducing new themes regarding peace initiatives into the wider press agenda in the country and abroad. At the end of her presentation, she showed a video that included various examples of journalism done in this particular experience.

Meeting with Virginia Bouvier, USIP

Following the panel discussion, the delegation sat down for a working lunch with the moderator of the discussion, and supporter of the program at USIP, Ms. Virginia Bouvier. Together with the journalists, Ms. Bouvier discussed a wide range of topics, including an explanation on USIP programming, their grant competitions, and which of their institutional priorities can apply to Colombia.

The discussion began with the participants saying that the trainings in conflict resolution help them better understand the Colombian conflict in general, as well as the role that media plays in conflict prevention and resolution. The delegation stressed the desire to continue learning even more about the field of conflict resolution.

There was also a discussion about the Putumayo region in particular and the need to continue with reporting that better informs the American public about the on-the-ground effects of Plan Colombia and the dynamics US policy has created in the region.

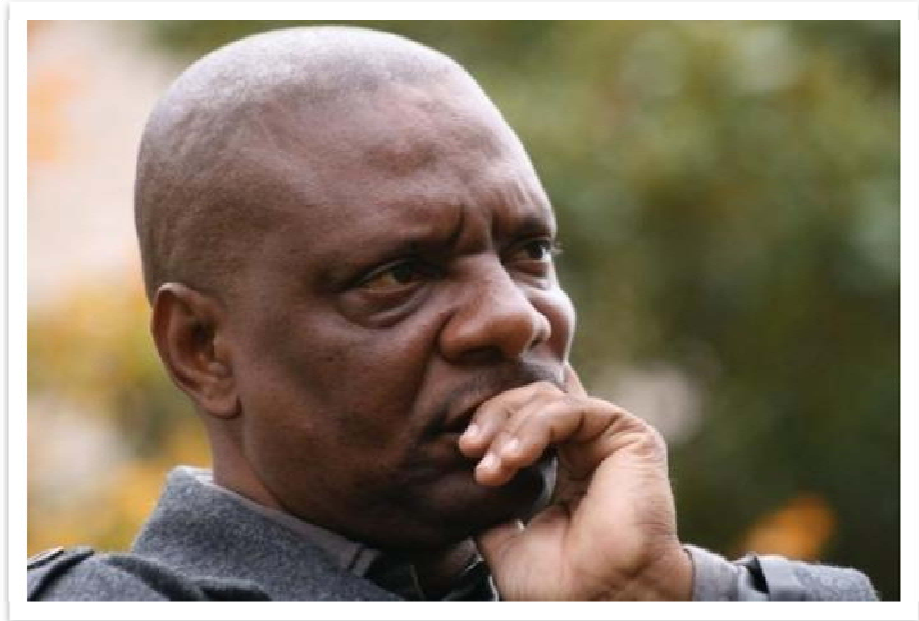
Once again, the topic regarding the creation of a strong network of journalists was raised. Not only are durable links between journalists in Colombia necessary, but connections between reporters in Colombia and those based in the United States are needed to support Colombian journalists get out critical stories. This is of particular importance if the stories relation to the United States somehow, including the extradition of paramilitary leaders to the US. An international alliance between journalists would facilitate the publication of important stories.

Meeting with Senior Editor of Washington Post

On Friday afternoon, the delegation was able to tour the Washington Post newsroom and later sit down for a conversation with the senior editor in charge of foreign correspondents, Scott Wilson. The discussion with Mr. Wilson touched on a wide range of topics, particularly so due to Mr. Wilson's deep knowledge and experience in the Colombian context.

Journalists in the United States and Colombia, especially print journalists, face similar challenges with respects to new mediums of communication, and are facing staff reductions and ever-heavier workloads.

There was also a discussion expressing the need to create professional and durable links between news agencies in the US together with agencies in Colombia in order to increase the quality of reporting. Mr. Wilson was encouraged by the prospects of this idea, and stressed the need to stay in contact upon their return to Colombia.



The delegation engaged Mr. Wilson on the types of stories often coming out of Colombia, and stressed their desire that the American and international public become better informed on the effects of certain American government policies, such as the unintended consequences of crop fumigations aimed at destroying coca fields.

Final Remarks

The Peacebuilding & Development Institute is very excited about the results of this week-long training program focused on media and peacebuilding in Colombia, and is looking forward to building upon this initial experience. It is our hope that this partnership between PDI, the United States Institute for Peace, and Medios para la Paz, will continue to prosper in a manner that goes to the heart of learning, sharing and programming for and with journalists in the evolving nexus of media and peacebuilding in Colombia. The building blocks of that have already been identified by the journalists upon their visit to Washington, DC.

Note

Once again on behalf of the Peacebuilding & Development Institute at American University and Medios para la Paz, we would like to reiterate our profound thanks to the United States Institute of Peace and the determined individuals who converted this program from a mere idea into reality.

ANNEX 1 - Delegate Biographies

Carlos Eduardo Barragán is a journalist for *Caracol Televisión*. He has been practicing journalism for the past 14 years reporting largely on public order.

Catalina Oquendo is a writer for *El Tiempo*. She is a part of the team writing national news stories where she continues to cover the armed conflict.

Gloria Castrillón is the editor of the Investigations page for the magazine *Cromos*. She has written columns and reports from the conflict affected areas for *Cromos*. She left the news world to search for human stories between the victims and their victimizers in the conflict.

Jaime Conrado Juajibioy is the Regional Coordinator in Putumayo for Radios Ciudadanas. He has delivered reports for community radio stations, indigenous peoples, and nationally circulated radio series for the past 10 years.

Jairo Antonio Rivas is the Director of News for *Caracol Radio* in Quibdo, Chocó. He hopes to be able to better understand groups on the fringe of the law, and the language necessary to reach those victimized by the violence.

María Victoria Bustamante is the writer and editor of the judicial pages for *El Meridiano de Sucre* in the city of Córdoba. Her experience reporting for this paper is composed of field work in the region best known in the country for being afflicted by the armed conflict.

Marisol Gómez is the editor of Justice and Politics for *El Tiempo*. She has written about the failed peace process with the FARC in Caguán, the failed dialogues with the ELN, the Plan Patriota, and the judgment of the paramilitaries through the peace process with the government since 1994.

Marisol Manrique is a member of the Inter-institutional Committee of Reporteros de Colombia. As a member of the Inter-institutional Committee, Marisol is a councilor for the production of works that are proposed and developed by the journalists who subscribe to the network. She is also the director of Medios para la Paz.

Nathalia Salamanca Sarmiento has worked at *El Tiempo*, *Santore Editores*, *Planeta Paz* y *Medios para la Paz*. Currently, she is studying towards a specialization in Theory and Conflict Resolution at the University of the Andes and is the Project Coordinator of Medios para la Paz.

Néstor López has worked for *El Tiempo* and his main topics of reporting have been the actions of guerrillas, paramilitaries and, previously, the resurgence of paramilitaries in Norte de Santander, Antioquia y Chocó.

Óscar Fernando López is a journalist and correspondent in Cali for *Noticiero 90 Minutos y Noticias Uno*. In the past years he has been covering the subject of public order in Cali and the influence of the Colombian Pacific in the states of Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Putumayo and Nariño.

Pilar Andrea Peña is a writer for the magazine *Semana* and the web portal *semana.com*. She has covered subjects of public order, human rights and armed conflict for the past five years.

ANNEX 2 - Trainer Biographies

Mery Rodríguez was born and raised in Bogota, Colombia. She holds an A.S. in Women's Studies from Tompkins County Community College in Dryden, NY, and received her B.S. in Social Communications at the Javeriana University in Colombia. She has worked as a Human Rights activist and social issues researcher, and has taught as a professor at the Catholic University of Colombia. She has been living in the United States for eight years, six of which have been at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), earning her M.S. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. She is currently working on a PhD, also from ICAR. She specializes in local peace-building initiatives, particularly in Colombia/ Latin America. Currently her work focuses on Zones of Peace, and she is part of ICAR's Zones of Peace project. She is a board member and an active participant with REMEDE, a Spanish-speaking mediation network for the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, where she also works with at-risk youth. As a practitioner, she is a bilingual facilitator and mediator who has designed and implemented several trainings on intercultural mediation and facilitation processes.

Johannes Botes is an Associate Professor and currently on a sabbatical from his position as the Director of the Master's Program on Negotiation and Conflict Management at the University of Baltimore (UB). His main areas of academic research and writing are the news media's reporting on social conflict, media roles in conflict and conflict resolution, conflict transformation, and informal third party roles. Before joining UB he was a visiting professor at Bryn Mawr College (1997-1998) and at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution--ICAR (1998-1999). He holds a Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University. His Master's degree in Communication (Journalism and Public Affairs) was obtained from American University in Washington, D.C. Before moving to the U.S. in 1987 he was a radio and television journalist in South Africa where he received various award for his work.

Todd Walters is the Program Manager for the unique Experiential Peacebuilding programs with the Center for Peace Building International. Todd completed his Masters Degree in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from the School of International Service at American University in August 2006. Based off his masters research paper, "Outdoor Experiential Education: A New Tool for Peacebuilding", Todd was asked to write an entry entitled "Experiential Peacebuilding" for the International Encyclopedia of Peace, to be published by Oxford University Press in 2008. Through his efforts with CPBI, Todd was selected as the International Volunteer Coordinator for the Balkans Peace Park Summer Program from June 14 to August 10, 2008. He will supervise 30+ international volunteers from the EU, UK and 2008. USA; where he created Experiential Peacebuilding treks through the park, for the youth from the villages of Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro - making symbolic border crossings and spending time in each other's villages.

Dilshika Jayamaha is the Director of Programs for Women's Campaign International, which focuses on conflict transformation and women's political and social participation in several countries, including Sri Lanka, Liberia and Colombia. Ms. Jayamaha, a native of Sri Lanka, has covered the country's civil war for many years for radio, television and as a correspondent with the Associated Press. More recently, she

has worked with the United Nations Development Program in Sri Lanka building public-private partnerships and with NARAL Pro-choice America in Washington, DC.

Mirsad “Miki” Jacevic is deputy director for partnerships and consultations at the Initiative for Inclusive Security. He oversees Inclusive Security’s partnerships with various policy institutions, as well as strategic consultations with leaders from conflict areas around the globe to help them remain focused on promoting women’s inclusion in all stages of the peace process. He has led efforts to include mechanisms in international policy to ensure that women are able to participate in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and have a role in post-conflict reconstruction. Inclusive Security encourages the implementation of these international commitments by brokering relationships between policy shapers and an extensive network of women peace builders, thus broadening the base of support for the vital role women play in promoting security. Mr. Jacevic is a human rights activist and peace program specialist from Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. During the war, he was involved in numerous projects to ease the suffering of youth and the elderly. Prior to joining The Initiative for Inclusive Security, he directed the Emerging Leaders Project at the State of the World Forum and managed child-soldiers reintegration efforts at Search for Common Ground.

ANNEX 3 - Sponsoring Organizations

United States Institute for Peace

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent international conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and development, and increase conflict management capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide.



The Institute accomplishes this by empowering others with knowledge, skills, and resources, as well as by directly engaging in peacebuilding efforts around the globe.

This program would have been impossible without the financial and technical support of USIP. Once again on behalf of the Peacebuilding & Development Institute at American University and Medios para la Paz, we would like to reiterate our profound thanks to the United States Institute of Peace and the determined individuals who converted this program from a mere idea into reality.

Peacebuilding & Development Institute

The Peacebuilding & Development Institute (PDI) at American University provides cutting-edge training, research, assessment, and capacity-building opportunities for practitioners and scholars in the areas of conflict-sensitive development, humanitarian assistance, diplomacy, and good governance. In addition, the Institute serves as the practical, operating arm of the International Peace and Conflict Resolution Division within the School of International Service at the University.



Peacebuilding & Development
Institute

PDI was founded in 2001 and utilizes five components to integrate policy, practice, and theory in creating new approaches to conflict-sensitive and transformative peace practice. These practical initiatives are the Summer Professional Training Program, customized Trainings and Symposia, the Youth & Gender Initiative, the Peacebuilding Forums, and International Programs.

Medios para la Paz

Medios para la Paz (MPP) is a Colombian non-profit organization specializing in training, education and the dissemination of information for journalists in times of war and negotiations of peace. MPP believes these areas are fundamental tools for democracy as well as for the defense and protection of human rights, specifically: the freedom of the press. MPP has conducted more than 200 workshops, a national seminar with the attendance of 1,830 journalists, students, and professors of journalism, and an International Seminar in Caracas, Venezuela with journalists from El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela that have found their work affected by the Colombian conflict. Having been founded in 1998, MPP is headquartered in Bogota, Colombia. Two of the primary stated objectives of MPP are to work towards the 'disarming' of language - exploring and undertaking actions to assure that the language used in reporting events does not in itself contribute to the perpetuation of violence - and to break through the passivity and indifference of the mass media with respect to the armed conflict.



Medios para la Paz

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