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# Party Cooperation in a Results Perspective

Country Study: Colombia

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Party Cooperation in a Results Perspective  
Country Study: Colombia  
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# Acronyms

AD	Alternativa Democrática
CEUDES	Corporación Unidades Democráticas para el Desarrollo
CNE	Consejo Nacional Electoral
COP	Colombian Pesos (approx. SEK 0.0038 in October 2009)
CR	Partido Cambio Radical Colombiano
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FTC	Fundación Tercera Colombia
GF	Green Forum
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IRI	International Republican Institute
JHS	Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation/Jarl Hjalmarson Stiftelsen
JUCO	Juventud Comunista
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
MIRA	Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta
NDI	National Democratic Institute
Palme Center	Olof Palme International Center
PAO	Party Affiliated Organisation
PC	Colombian Communist party/Partido Comunista Colombiano
PCC	Colombian Conservative Party/Partido Conservador de Colombia
PDA	Alternative Democratic Pole/Polo Alternativo Democrático
PDI	Polo Democrático Independiente
PLC	Partido Liberal Colombiano
PPD	Partido Por la Democracia
PVO	Partido Verde Oxígeno
PVOC	Partido Verde Opción Centro

SAK	Social Democratic Party Branch of Stockholm/ Stockholms Arbetarekommun
VIF	Left International Forum/Vänsterns Internationella Forum
Unibagué	University of Ibagué
UPLA	Unión de Partidos Latinoamericanos

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# 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of the country study on Colombia carried out as an input to the evaluation of democracy support through Swedish party affiliated organisations (PAOs). The report is one of three country studies linked to the evaluation. The overall findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation are presented in the main report.

The cooperation in Colombia has engaged the following organisations:

- Olof Palme International Center (Palme Center) and Alternative Democratic Pole (PDA).
- Palme Center, PDA/University of Ibagué (Unibagué) and *Partido Por la Democracia* (PPD), Chile.
- Green Forum (GF) and Fundación Tercera Colombia and Corporación Unidades Democráticas para el Desarrollo (CEUDES).<sup>1</sup>
- Left International Forum (VIF) and Colombian Communist Party (PC).<sup>2</sup>
- Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation (JHS) and Colombian Conservative Party (PCC), as part of a regional project through *Unión de Partidos Latinoamericanos* (UPLA).

The visit to Colombia was undertaken October 4-16, 2009. The evaluation team (the Team) met with partner organisations, persons responsible for project implementation and some of the participants. It also met with NGO representatives, international party foundations, independent researchers and the Swedish Embassy. Before the visit to Colombia, the Team met the concerned Swedish PAOs and Sida. A debriefing with each PAO was made after the field visit. A list of persons met is attached in Appendix 1.

Each project is assessed with respect to effectiveness and relevance.<sup>3</sup> The assessment of effectiveness is made against the specific objectives of each project, as described in project documents and interviews. The assessment of relevance draws on an analysis of the party system attached in Appendix 2. The report also presents observations made regarding side effects and sustainability, as well as lessons and other observations of interest.

A summary of the main findings is presented in Chapter two. Findings in respect to the specific projects are presented in Chapters three to seven.

<sup>1</sup> The green party led by Ingrid Betancourt was called Partido Verde Oxígeno (PVO). It lost its legal status as a party in 2003. GF's partner organisation was therefore first Fundación Tercera Colombia, a foundation established by Ingrid Betancourt. After Fundación Tercera Colombia was closed in 2008, GF has worked through the NGO CEUDES.

<sup>2</sup> PC, with roots from the 1930s maintains its structure as a party but is part of PDA and not formally registered as a party.

<sup>3</sup> **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

**Relevance:** The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.

Source: Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2007.

The Team has consisted of Lennart Peck, M.Sc (team leader), María Julieta Ramos, M.Sc. and Anders Rudqvist, PhD. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the evaluation in different ways!



## 2 Main Findings

### 2.1 Political Context

Since the wars of independence from Spain (1810–1830), politics and violence have been almost constantly intertwined in Colombia. In the first half of the 20th century, a large wave of nonconformity and social protest emerged. Viewed in a historical perspective, these conflicts appear as typical reactions in situations where the possibilities for civil political opposition are restricted or eliminated.

The period of widespread urban and rural violence between conservatives and liberals during the late 1940s and early 1950s was thus not an exception in Colombian political history. Rojas Pinilla, with tacit support from moderates of both parties, took power through a coup d'état in June 1953. In the face of deteriorating economic conditions and recession towards the end of the 1950s, liberals and conservatives joined forces in the National Front to overthrow Rojas.

The National Front period, which lasted from 1958 to 1974, stipulated that the two parties would alternate in the presidency every four years and share equal membership in the legislative bodies. Essentially, it was a constitutional mechanism to monopolise all political and administrative power and divide it equally between the two traditional parties. The National Front governments were able to maintain relative social and political stability as well as enhance the domination of the two-party elite. However, this was achieved at the expense of closing the roads to genuine democratisation and inclusion, and allowing the poverty, social, gender, ethnic and regional gaps to continue to increase. The National Front governments met considerable popular opposition, discontent and mobilisation over the years, but the opportunities to pursue political opposition within the framework and rules of the prevailing system were restricted. As a consequence, some groups of the opposing popular forces resorted to armed struggle. Various guerrilla organisations were established during this period.

The new Constitution of 1991 opened up some avenues for broader political participation. The traditional dominance of the conservative and liberal parties in Colombia was reduced and there was a sharp increase in the number of parties. After a new political reform in 2003, the number of parties represented in Congress was again reduced, and is currently 16.<sup>4</sup> This reform successfully dealt with the problem of fragmentation but at the same time created difficulties obtaining political representation for some groups.

Since the election of Alvaro Uribe in 2002, there has been a strong concentration of power to the presidency. This development has been parallel to increasing militarisation as well as polarisation of political debate and opinion. In this process, the

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<sup>4</sup> Five of these are major parties and five are smaller parties representing ethnic minorities that have maintained their status as parties due to the norms of the Constitution of 1991, which protects the rights of the minorities in Colombia.

Colombian political parties in general have been considerably weakened as institutions and the president has been able to use his office to strengthen his position.

Many of the Colombian parties, including those of the president, lack ideology and often tend to serve as platforms for the campaigns of individual politicians. There is a strong interconnection between politics and the armed conflict and an important feature in recent years has been the ‘paramilitarisation’ of parties and politics, a phenomenon that has particularly affected the parties that constitute the political base of the president and the government. As a corollary of increasing presidential power, and related to the debate on paramilitary influence in politics, a profound conflict has developed between the executive and the judicial powers (mainly the Supreme Court of Justice and the Constitutional Court). This is due to the executive power attempting to impede the judicial investigations of politicians involved with paramilitary groups, investigations referring to bribery related to the re-election (past and upcoming) of the president as well as investigations referring to a mounting number of administrative corruption scandals, some of which directly involve the president and his family.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2 Strategies and Approaches of Swedish PAOs

In terms of strategies and approaches, the five Swedish projects in Colombia are quite diverse.

The Palme Center-PDA cooperation has aimed at strengthening the position of women within the party. The Palme Center project with Unibagué has aimed at strengthening democracy and peaceful co-existence through training of youth at the local and provincial levels. VIF’s support to PC has fundamentally been to ensure the existence of this party by supporting some core functions (congresses, training etc.) financially. GF’s engagement in Colombia originated in the struggle to liberate the former green presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, was then aimed at revitalising the Green Party and has lately consisted of promoting human rights within a ‘green’ framework. The regional project of JHS, implemented through UPLA, aims at strengthening the centre-right parties in Latin America, including developing the capacities of women and youth so that they can take an active role in political life.

While the Palme Center-PDA, VIF-PC and JHS-PCC projects have comprised typical fraternal party cooperation, the Palme Center-Unibagué project has targeted youth from a number of different parties. GF has worked to promote a green agenda, through former members of Partido Verde Oxígeno (PVO) and a local NGO.

VIF and GF have exclusively provided financial support for the implementation of local activities while the JHS, through UPLA, exclusively has offered seminars, conferences and training. The Palme Center-PDA and Palme Center-Unibagué-PPD have had elements of both.

While the Palme Center-PDA, VIF-PC and GF-CEUDES cooperations have been bilateral between Sweden and Colombia, the Palme Center-Unibagué-PPD has comprised a triangular cooperation with Chile, and the JHS project has covered all of Latin America, Colombia being one country among many.

<sup>5</sup> Salomón Kalmanovitz, *El triunfo de la injusticia y de la corrupción*, *El Espectador*, November 22, 2009.

Overall, there has been quite a strong focus on women and youth.

The greater part of the cooperation has been directed to the opposition parties.

### 2.3 Activities and Output

The activities in 2007/08 primarily consisted of competence building in Colombia, with and without Swedish participation, through seminars, workshops etc. The Palme Center-Unibagué project included a study visit to Chile and the JHS-UPLA project training and conferences in the region.

The output during 2007-2008 can be summarized as follows:

Organisations	Output and Activities
GF-CEUDES	15 one-day seminars with community groups (local leaders and citizens including children and youth) reaching approximately 250 women and 320 men. Focus was on environment, 'green thinking' and human rights. 6 issues (500-1000 copies) of the <i>Carta Verde</i> newsletter.
JHS-UPLA	Participation of 8 persons in training events and conferences, usually of a 2-3 day duration, as part of a regional project implemented through UPLA.
Palme Center-PDA	A two-day national workshop, Women's School of Politics of PDA, for 85 persons. Three two-day regional workshops with approximately 40 persons in each. A two-day National Workshop, Women's School of Politics of PDA, for approximately 100 persons. National Women's Encounter 'pre-congress', half-day, 204 persons.
Palme Center-Unibagué-PPD (2008) <sup>6</sup>	Virtual introduction course for approximately 40 persons. Three-day course for 20 participants of different parties, Ibagué. An open seminar for approximately 100 persons at the University of Ibagué. A workshop for approximately 15 persons in Bogotá, in cooperation with UNDP/IDEA. A one-week visit to Chile for eight persons from Colombia.
VIF-PC	Training of party members and leaders (youth association national school, 45 persons, seminar for political updating, 41 persons, basic party school, 50 persons, and preparation of study materials). Logistics for 60 delegates and purchase of materials for party conference. Publicity for election campaign in four councils of Bogotá, Pereira, Tolima and Arauca. Two publications (1000 copies each) for promotion of human rights and peace. Humanitarian support (soap, shampoo, underwear) to 70 prisoners.

### 2.4 Effectiveness

All of the projects are difficult to assess with respect to fulfilment of objectives, due to the way objectives have been formulated and problems of attribution.

The Palme Center-PDA project has contributed to strengthening the position of women in PDA by making it possible for them to come together, become more

<sup>6</sup> Only activities for the Colombian participants listed here.

visible and gain more knowledge about gender equality work. However, the project is best seen as a small, first step towards greater inclusion of women into the party.

Although the Palme Center-Unibagué project has produced a series of outputs and seminars that most likely have been interesting and valuable for the participants, any impact on political parties cannot yet be seen, and is highly uncertain in the future.

The VIF-PC cooperation has contributed to a strengthening of the party by, inter alia, enabling more persons to participate in training and congresses and by contributing to the election of its candidates to public offices. A smaller part of the financing has also been used for the party's human rights and peace activities, which are impossible to assess the impact of.

In the case of GF-CEUDES, workshops with grassroots organisations were implemented, most likely having led to some increased awareness of human rights and green thinking. However, the green party, PVO, was not revived and the green agenda has today been taken over by another party.

Persons from PCC who participated in the regional UPLA seminars found these seminars highly useful. However, the number of participants from Colombia has been limited and, as always when persons attend seminars and training, the resulting impact depends on how the gained knowledge and contacts etc. will be utilized.

In sum, some of the projects have had a positive result at the outcome level. However, it is not possible to trace any impact at the party system level.

## 2.5 Relevance

The main components of the Swedish cooperation strategy for Colombia are peace and security, human rights and democratic governance. Strengthening of the party systems connects to all of this. In this perspective, Colombia is a relevant country choice for party cooperation. There has been no connection between the projects and the more precise objectives of the cooperation strategy, however.

Project content has generally corresponded well with the demand of the partner organisations. The clearest example of this is the VIF-PC project where PC itself decided how to use the money received. In one case (Palme Center-Unibagué-PPD), there were different perceptions about the project objectives.

Whether the demand expressed by the partner organisations also corresponds to the most urgent *needs* of these organisations is an open question. For example, promoting the position of women within PDA is no doubt relevant, yet there are other pressing needs as well. The financing given to PC has clearly been important for the party, but it is quite possible that an exchange of experiences with the Swedish Left Party would have been just as valuable for this unreformed Marxist-Leninist party. Both VIF and the Palme Center have been working with PDA (VIF indirectly through PC) but neither one has addressed what currently constitutes the main challenge of PDA, namely party unity.

Looking at the cooperation from the perspective of the concentration of power to the president, and seeing this as a problem, supporting mainly opposition parties has been a relevant response. However, the party that may have the best chances of

actually challenging the president may be the Liberal Party, with which there has not been any cooperation.<sup>7</sup>

PCC is a resource-strong party. However, the seminars aiming at greater participation of women and youth are relevant from a national perspective. Furthermore, the support goes well with the party's own ambitions to renew itself to become a modern centre-right party.

The human rights activities financed by GF are relevant, in view of the serious human rights violations in Colombia. Yet, it is less obvious that the objective to revive PVO, which was weak even before the kidnapping of Ingrid Betancourt, was strategic considering the problems of the Colombian party system. The Palme Center-Unibagué-PPD project has, despite the benefits it may have brought to the individual participants, lacked strategic focus.

## 2.6 Side Effects

A positive side effect of the Palme Center-PDA women's project may have been that the divides between different 'sectors' of PDA were somewhat bridged, by bringing women from different sectors together around an issue of joint interest.

Otherwise, that two Swedish PAOs (VIF and the Palme Center) support different groups of the same party (PDA) without any coordination or exchange of information hardly contributes to greater unity. The VIF support to PC helps strengthen this 'party's' position within PDA.

As mentioned earlier, the GF-CEUDES project may have had an impact on the lives of people and the respect for human rights, beyond the actual objective of the PAO cooperation.

Some women of the Palme Center-PDA project mentioned that they had been able to apply what they had learned about gender in other areas (professionally and in labour unions).

## 2.7 Sustainability

The issue of sustainability must be seen in relation to the varying nature of projects. The Palme Center-PDA project may have contributed to certain long-term effects in that it has been instrumental in pushing the women's network forward etc. But strengthening women's participation requires perseverance and long-term commitment, and the women interviewed said that in order to continue to meet, continued finance was important. The VIF-PC cooperation has been limited to financing of activities (training, congresses, campaigning), which may well have contributed to sustainability. It has not been a 'project' separated from everyday party activities, and if the Swedish support is phased out, there will be a reduced volume of activities yet the same activities will continue. While representatives of PCC found that their participation in seminars had been useful for the future development of the party, they also found the lack of continuity a problem. Generally speaking, efforts to strengthen networks of conservative parties in Latin America should be positive for sustainability. The history of PVO illustrates the importance of political parties having

<sup>7</sup> Apart from indirectly in the Palme Center-lbagué-PPD project.

a solid base. GF has been aware of this but the project has still lacked an organisational approach. The Team also considers the sustainability of the Palme Center-Unibagué-PPD very uncertain due to the weak institutional relationship with the Colombian political parties.

## 2.8 Observations and Lessons

The case of Colombia illustrates the many different ways in which PAOs may work. The Team is not in a position to say that one model is generally better than another since success or failure of projects has rather depended on a combination of factors.

It is observed that projects have been extremely small in relation to the challenges facing the Colombian party system. Although such small contributions may be valuable, they cannot be expected to lead to any significant impact at the systems level.

The projects show considerable weaknesses in terms of design and formulation. They display vague objectives and poorly formulated indicators (if any), and in many cases no clear logic between activities, outcome and how the project ultimately should contribute to strengthening the Colombian party system. This is likely to have reduced relevance and effectiveness.

In some projects, there have been weaknesses in the selection of participants in projects.

The projects are also quite dispersed, a natural result of the absence of steering or any kind of national strategy. There has been limited or no communication, even between projects involving the same Colombian party (VF-PC, Palme Center-PDA, Palme Center-Unibagué-PPD). Although it cannot be expected that all PAOs work together, the lack of a national perspective, and of coordination, is likely to have reduced relevance and effectiveness.

Cooperation with PDA illustrates the importance of considering the internal dynamics of a supported party. Depending on how contacts are established in such a party and how the project is designed, there is a risk of fuelling internal conflicts, as well as an opportunity to contribute to unity. There are historical and ideological reasons behind VIF's support of PC and the Palme Center's support of *Polo Democrático Independiente* (PDI), both currently part of PDA. As VIF and the Palme Center have different channels into the same party, both should have much to gain from talking to each other.<sup>8</sup> There also seems to be an excellent opportunity for a joint Palme Center/VIF project, for example on women's participation. Gender equality is a high profile issue for both the Swedish Left Party and the Social Democrats, and a joint effort would increase the possibility that all wings of the party become included.

In many projects, there has been a strong personal element. The Palme Center-Unibagué project came into being as a direct result of the earlier personal contacts. The Palme Center-PDA cooperation would not have come about had it not been for a Colombian person living in Sweden, being a member of both PDA and the Swedish Social Democrats. The GF-CEUDES project has been heavily dependent on the

<sup>8</sup> Unless the Swedish PAOs actually have taken sides in the internal power struggle of Polo. If this is the case, it can be seriously questioned if the cooperation strengthens or weakens the Colombian party system.

Swedish and the Colombian project managers. The personal dimension seen in several projects can be seen as an asset – without it, there may not have been any cooperation at all. At the same time, the dependency on individuals makes the cooperation vulnerable and there is a risk of ‘cosy relationships’ that are not always healthy.

Party institutionalisation has been stronger in some projects (for example JHS-PCC and Palme Center-PDA) than in others (Palme Center-Unibagué and GF-CEUDES). The problems in the two latter projects could probably largely be traced back to the lack of institutionalisation.

The Swedish support has primarily consisted of finance. The Palme Center/PDA and Palme Center/Unibagué projects included input from Swedish resource persons, but this was not highlighted (by the persons met by the Team) as the most central in the project. As PAOs are generally considered to have a unique capacity to support parties, this gives reason to reflect on what this capacity actually is and how it is being used.

Only during the two weeks the Team visited Colombia, there were political events taking place with significant importance for the projects (in connection with a ‘new’ green party and in connection with PDA’s leadership). This shows the importance for PAOs to be regularly updated and have multiple sources of information. In some cases, this has been lacking.

Apart from participants’ evaluations in connection with events, none of the projects have been evaluated. No results information beyond the output level has been produced.

The reports from the partner organisations to Sweden as well as from the PAOs to Sida have in several cases been inadequate. The lack of country presence of the PAOs is likely to be part of the problem. The small size of the projects also inevitably complicates follow-up and evaluation. There is also a lack of systems for follow-up.

The Swedish Embassy is noted to have played a positive role in the Palme Center-Unibagué projects, having facilitated contacts and even having attended some events. However, the Embassy was only quite recently informed about the GF cooperation and has not had any information at all about the VIF cooperation. The Team believes that the Embassy could serve as an important source of information for the PAOs with respect to the political development in the country, just as PAOs, with their close contacts with parties, could be an important information channel for the Embassy. It should be noted though that as the PAO cooperation is a partisan interference with Colombian politics, the Swedish Embassy must be careful with its involvement. However, as Swedish cooperation in Colombia aims at promoting democracy and human rights, it appears obvious that the Swedish Embassy, as a minimum, should be informed about all Swedish cooperation taking place.

PAOs are only some of the actors engaged in party development in Colombia. The American and German party foundations have also had activities, as well as IDEA/UNDP. In addition, there is other support to democracy, human rights, conflict resolution, etc. including the Swedish. No attempts by PAOs to link up with the efforts of others, in order to increase impact, were noted.

## 3 GF-Fundación Tercera/CEUDES

### 3.1 Background

This project started through a contact by the Green Federation of the Americas (*Federación de Partidos Verdes de Las Américas*) with Green Forum in 2004, that asked GF to engage itself in the work for the liberation of Ingrid Betancourt and other kidnapped Colombians, in connection with the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2005. Betancourt was kidnapped by FARC in 2002 and was at that time president of the Partido Verde Oxígeno (PVO) founded by her in the beginning of the 1990s. Betancourt was also the presidential candidate of PVO in Colombia.

PVO had, at the time of the presidential campaign and the kidnapping, attracted considerable public interest and media attention and was a member of the Federation of the Green Parties of the Americas. Yet, one of the major weaknesses of the party was its dependency on its main political public figure Ingrid Betancourt. Two months before the kidnapping of Betancourt, most members of the party's board of directors left PVO and joined the current President Álvaro Uribe's electoral movement *Primero Colombia*, and after the kidnapping, popular support and party cohesion began to dwindle. The party held its last congress in 2003, and as a result of the political reform of the Colombian party system the same year, aimed at reducing the number of registered parties (63 parties and movements participated in the 2002 senate elections) by raising the threshold requirement on the number of votes, PVO lost its status as a political party.

*Fundación Tercera Colombia* (FTC), established by Ingrid Betancourt, became the platform for continued green activism and efforts to liberate Betancourt and other hostages and the counterpart organisation for GF support. After her release in July 2008, Betancourt decided to leave party politics and closed down the FTC, causing great disappointment among party and foundation activists. As a consequence, a new partner organisation was identified for implementation of the project, namely *Corporación Unidades Democráticas para el Desarrollo* (CEUDES), an NGO mainly working in the area of human rights. CEUDES was founded in 1989 and also receives project funds from *Fundación Panamericana de Desarrollo* (FUPAD), the UK Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and the Irish charity organisation Trócaire. CEUDES' strength and experience are mainly in the field of human rights and its role has merely been that of hosting the project and the Colombian project coordinator.

In 2007, the *Opción Centro* party changed its name to *Partido Verde Opción Centro*, PVOC. This manoeuvre caused great impact on PVO since, according to the PVO leadership, it constituted a 'hijacking' of the green symbols and the political image hitherto associated with PVO. PVOC is a considerably larger party than PVO (which is actually *not* a party any longer) and is represented by two departmental governors and approximately 300 elected members of local and departmental councils. PVOC, however, has been tainted by paramilitary infiltration through a merger with the



*Convergencia Ciudadana* party and leadership. In the beginning of October 2009, PVOC called a party assembly where five councillors of the Bogotá town council joined the party together with the three high profile former mayors of Bogotá, Luis Garzón, Enrique Peñalosa and Antanas Mockus. At this moment, PVOC changed its name to, simply, the Green Party. The coordinator of the GF project has followed this process as observer and asserts that the new party will incorporate the Green Charter and principles in its statutes, and does not exclude a future alliance or merger with the new Green Party.

### 3.2 Project Design

GF first supported PVO in 2004 through an advocacy project aimed at the liberation of Ingrid Betancourt. After an intermission, the cooperation was resumed in 2006.

The global objective has changed considerably over time from the 2006 project objective of 'reviving the PVO', implying that 'the party has recovered its role as a legitimate political party in Colombia and to expand the spaces created in Colombia for an ecologically oriented policy for sustainable development', to that of 'strengthening the leadership for promoting and defending the human rights in Colombia' (2007/08) and finally, 'supporting networks which promote human rights as well as the green agenda and thinking in Colombia' (2008/10).

While the *project objective* of 2006 was basically to rebuild PVO, the project objectives for 2007/08 were to 'train political leaders, children and youth in how to handle tools for promotion and strengthening of citizens' duties and rights, in particular in the basis for political participation in the Green Party; to create rooms for action, creativity and cooperation; and to introduce citizens participation and influence by leaders indicating positive change in its local environment, so that citizens' working for peace, participation and tolerance increases'. The project objective for 2009/10 is to 'establish a green structure, in accordance with the legal requirements in Colombia in each municipality, and that this organisation shall strengthen and promote leaders having worked with human rights, thinks green and respects the living conditions of man for a sustainable ecological and social society'.

*Planned activities* for 2006 were: capacity development of PVO members through six seminars and workshops on ideology and politics and three workshops on organisational development in the project regions, as well as improving internal and external communication through development of the PVO website and the publishing of an internal newsletter, *Carta Verde*. In the 2007/08 period, planned activities comprised workshops, seminars, academic and political activities on human rights, political participation and conflict resolution, preparation of a local development plan for conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence, creation of a network of human rights promoters, publishing of *Carta Verde* and documents on the themes just mentioned. Planned activities for the 2009/10 period were: planning and 'linking' of the 16 municipalities, planning and implementation of seminars for network leaders, introduction of 'citizens agreements' (through integration, participation and organisation of local citizens and leaders), consolidation of *Carta Verde*, monthly meetings of the Green Network, monthly education seminars for leaders to achieve 'diploma', acquisition support of human rights and environmental literature for local libraries, maintenance and updating of the website.

The GF documents state that the *target group* of the 2006 project was Fundación Tercera Colombia, while the 2007/08 project was focused on selected social and political leaders along with children and youth in public school districts of Bogotá (three districts), Villavicencio, Bucaramanga and San Vicente del Caguán. The 2009/10 project document, however, indicates less precisely that the project is situated in the central regions of Colombia, i.e. Bogotá and parts of the provinces of Santander, Boyacá, Meta, Huila, Tolima and Caldas. According to GF, green ‘centres’ are being established in 16 municipalities of these areas. The participants in the project consist of a variety of local and grassroots institutions and groups related to education, environment and culture in these municipalities.

The links or potential causal relationships connecting project inputs and outputs with outcomes and impacts are not explicitly discussed or defined in the project proposals and documents. There is no explicit discussion or analysis in the GF documents of how the objectives of the projects would lead to a strengthening of PVO or the green movement in Colombia, nor any discussion of potential alternatives to strengthening PVO. Further, the GF documents lack any consideration of how to revive and strategically strengthen the party as a political organisation, or of the relationship between project activities, strengthening of PVO and, in the last instance, strengthening representative democracy. The logic of the project therefore remains largely unclear.

The objectives of the project are also generally very vague and have been modified in response to events occurring in Colombia, the discontinuation of the Fundación Tercera Colombia and the defection of the party leader. Project planners and implementers have thus had to respond pragmatically and in a rather improvised manner to a flow of unexpected events that they have not been able to steer and manage within the framework and objectives of the project as originally conceived.

Some indicators have been presented, but they were far too imprecise to be useful for determining the outputs and outcomes of the project. The most important deficiency is the lack of targets in terms of quantity, quality and time. In the absence of such targets, the indicators become virtually useless.

The project budget for 2006 was SEK 100 000, for 2007/08 SEK 353 000 and for 2009/10 SEK 384 000.

### 3.3 Activities and Output

The principal activities in 2007/08 were 15 one-day seminars as outlined below:

Preparation	Theme	Date	Place
Preparation of support materials and editing of project proposal	Booklets, support documents, agendas	Oct-Nov 2007	Bogotá
Visits to friends and leaders in Bucaramanga, Soacha and Bogotá	Preparation and organisation of the Project workshops	Oct-Nov 2007	Various localities

Workshops	Theme	Date	Place
1. Education and training of leaders	Environment and green thinking in the world	Nov 22/2007	Soacha: leaders, municipal/town councilors and social leaders
2. Education and training of leaders	Environment and green thinking in the world	Nov 24/2007	Bucaramanga: Leaders and members of PVO
3. Introduction and association of the indigenous Bochica community of Soacha	Environment and green thinking among indigenous communities	Nov 25/2007	Soacha: Families and leaders of the indigenous Bochica community
4. Education and training indigenous community Bochica	Environment and human rights	Jan 12 /2008	Soacha: Families and leaders of the indigenous Bochica community
5. Education and training of leaders	Environment, citizens rights and obligations	Jan 27/2008	Sativasur: Leaders and peasant leaders
6. Education and training of children and youth	Environment and human rights	Mar 14/2008	Sativasur: Children and youth of the school
7. Education and training indigenous community Bochica	Environment, citizens rights and obligations	Mar 31/2008	Soacha: Families and leaders of the indigenous Bochica community
8. Education and training indigenous community Bochica	Environment and human rights	Apr 26/2008	Soacha: Leaders of the indigenous Bochica community
9. Training as support to municipal representatives, personeros, as local leaders	Environment and human rights	Jun 11/2008	Bogotá: Municipal representatives (personeros) as local leaders
10. Education and training of children and youth	Environment and human rights	Aug 12/2008	Bogotá: Children and youth of the secondary school
11. Training as support to municipal personeros as local leaders	Environment, planning and human rights	Aug 22/2008	Bogotá: Municipal representatives (personeros) as local leaders
12. Education and training of former PVO leaders	Promotion of green thinking and defence of human rights	Nov 5/2009	Soacha: Leaders of the indigenous Bochica community
13. Education and training of secondary school students	Historical framework (human rights in the world and human rights in Colombia)	Nov 18/2009	Bogotá: Children and youth of the Carlos Pizarro secondary school
14. Leaders of the indigenous community of Cauca – ‘Minga por la vida’	Human rights in the world and human rights in Colombia, in the context of green thinking	Dec 15/2009	Bogotá: Leaders of the indigenous Bochica community. Minga por la vida
15. Municipal personeros as local leaders, and peasant leaders	Human rights and green thinking in institutional relations and relations with the community	Jan 23/2009	Tunja: Municipal representatives (personeros) and peasant leaders

The above seminars reached approximately 106 women and 129 men. In addition, the project financed the editing and dissemination of the *Carta Verde* newsletter (6 issues, 500-1000 copies). At least one of the proposed activities, namely to ‘maintain and update the website’, was not realised.

That Ingrid Betancourt after her liberation left PVO and closed down the *Fundación Tercera* and that PVO lost its status as a political party were serious unforeseen blows

to the original objectives of the project. Yet, these did not affect implementation of the seminars but rather the overall project rationale.

### 3.4 Effectiveness

According to the CEUDES report on project execution<sup>9</sup>, the project achieved the following results in 2007/08:

- Trained 90 civil society leaders of indigenous communities and 35 children in participation and green thinking, as references for the defence of life and respect for human rights.
- Provided support to the formation of a network of leaders for environmental issues and defence of human rights as the basis for the network 'green thinkers of Colombia', as well as assistance in discussions, analyses and citizen training in areas such as conflict resolution and the environment, and in addition provided the fundamentals of participation in the defence of the Constitution and citizen rights and obligations.
- Opened new scenarios of participation for the project participants in their local communities concerning aspects such as solidarity and cooperation affecting the transformation of the local environment.
- Cooperated in the work of the 'citizen peace promoters' (*ciudadanos gestores de paz*), promoting solidarity, tolerance and participation (for example, the collaboration in the implementation of the water referendum).
- Provided the leaders with theoretical and practical elements for the management, analysis and transformation of the conflicts in their communities.

It should be stressed that it is uncertain to what extent these results may have contributed to 'strengthening the leadership for promoting and defending the human rights in Colombia' (2007/08) or 'supporting networks which promote human rights as well as the green agenda and thinking in Colombia' (2009/10). The uncertainty depends on the limited number of individuals and groups reached but also the piecemeal and vague character of the activities. An example of the scattered character of the activities is that only five out of fifteen organisations involved in the overall project activities were included in the 09/10 project.

The original key objective was never accomplished. The PVO was not revived and the campaign for collection of signatures to re-establish the party was unsuccessful. Although the defection of Betancourt was of course an important factor in this process, the project did not strategically contribute to reviving the party. The project allowed the project coordinator to represent and promote the party, and to the name of the party surviving internationally. As a consequence of the project, he is now in a stronger position to talk and negotiate with the new and upcoming 'green' party, PVOC, but he will still be in a weak spot when confronted with the new party leadership. It is therefore doubtful what influence he may be able to exert in potential negotiations.

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<sup>9</sup> Fabio A Mariño V, Proyecto Gestión, Liderazgo Y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, Informe de Ejecución, Fundación Tercera Colombia, Green Forum, Suecia, Bogotá, Febrero de 2009.

In terms of promoting human rights and green thinking, anecdotal evidence from CEUDES and its coordinator maintains that people, as a consequence of the project, have become better informed about green philosophy and human rights. The Team has not been able to gather any first-hand information about the outcome of the workshops and there has been no systematic monitoring or follow-up of the project activities in Colombia. However, the low age of many of the persons participating in seminars, the fact that only two seminars were directed to political leaders, the limited number of events and short duration of these give reason to question the contribution to a well-functioning party system.

### **3.5 Relevance**

Looking first at the relevance of reviving PVO, it may be seen in the context of increased polarisation of Colombian politics. At the same time, the very purpose of the 2003 electoral reform in Colombia was to reduce the number of parties in order to counteract parliamentary fragmentation. When GF came into the picture, PVO was a very small and weak party that did not fulfil the requirements for party status in Colombia. In this perspective, the relevance of cooperating with PVO can be questioned. Moreover, neither can it be argued that PVO should be supported as a force that could challenge Uribe and strengthen democracy as an opposition party, nor did PVO represent a particular minority. What could possibly justify support to PVO is that it was a party representing a particular (green) political agenda of importance for the pluralism of the Colombian party system. This depends on the political analysis made.

The 2007/08 objective of 'strengthening the leadership for promoting and defending the human rights in Colombia' is very general. Considering the Colombian context, there is no doubt that there is a need for promotion and defence of human rights. However, PAO funds are not intended to support human rights in general (which thousands of organisations are already doing) and the relevance for strengthening the party system must be considered to be rather low.

Furthermore, as indicated under the section on project design, the activities performed have not been very relevant to reach overarching goals. With respect to the 2006 project objective of 'reviving the PVO', it is not clear if and in what way the three workshops on organisational development conducted in three regions together with six issues of the *Carta Verde* newsletter and the preparation of the website may have contributed to the revival of PVO. In practical terms, the party would have had to participate in the election of 2006, meeting the requirements imposed by law, but this did not happen. The later objective of strengthening green leadership is, according to the Team, not effectively promoted by training school children, even though training of this group may be commendable as such. Also, recent activities appear to have been far too scattered to have contributed to the envisaged 'networks' and 'structures'.

### **3.6 Side Effects**

As indicated above, the activities implemented may, even though they have not contributed to a strengthening of the party system, have contributed to a greater awareness of human rights and green thinking among seminar participants.

It is possible that some activities indirectly have had positive environmental effects by spreading green thinking, but considering the activities and number of persons affected, such effects are likely to have been very small.

### **3.7 Sustainability**

The sustainability of this project is very doubtful. Sustainability of political parties and projects generally requires a collective and organisational approach, which is the opposite of what has been applied in this project. During the first stage of the cooperation with Green Forum, PVO was excessively dependent on the image and personality of Ingrid Betancourt. In the course of the reconstruction and revival stage, the project was also highly dependent on one individual, namely the CEUDES project coordinator. There was no political organisation to support the realisation of project objectives. In addition, the project has been unable to build a political institution or an organisation, and its capacity of extension and expansion has been very limited (also due to a limited budget).

### **3.8 Observations and Lessons**

Project problems and failure were mainly caused by design shortcomings, which are easily noticeable in the project applications. The objectives are vague, the project logic inconsistent, and the documents do not provide any strategic thinking or advice on *how* to revive the party or scrutiny of the realism of the general project objective. 'Strengthening the leadership for promoting and defending the human rights in Colombia'; is of course relevant and commendable per se, but the proposed activities seem to be very loosely connected to strategic party-building.

The external factor that affected the project negatively was primarily Ingrid Betancourt's decision to leave Colombian politics. However, it is highly uncertain whether the impact of the project as such would have been greater had she returned.

Problems were probably also caused by limited country knowledge and capacity for analysis and technical project preparation on the Swedish side. Although GF visited Colombia in 2007 and 2009, the Team concludes that a considerably closer follow-up and internal supervision of the project would have been motivated. The project illustrates the importance of having good knowledge about the partner country and of being updated about political events that may affect the project.

The project has been too dependent on single individuals, both in Sweden and in Colombia. The Colombian project coordinator is a strong social activist but has limited experience of party politics.

## 4 JHS-UPLA-Colombian Conservative Party

### 4.1 Background

JHS is financing a regional project in Latin America, implemented in collaboration with *Unión de Partidos Latinoamericanos* (UPLA), an organisation which unites centre-right parties in Latin America. Colombian Conservative Party (PCC) is one of the parties participating in this programme, together with 14 other like-minded parties.

As the Team has visited only Colombia, it has not been in a position to assess the programme as a whole. However, as the project is part of Swedish cooperation with Colombia, some observations will still be made. These are based on information obtained from the receiving Colombian end of the cooperation only and refer mainly to activities supported by JHS where PCC members have been involved.

### 4.2 Project Design

The overall objective of JHS is to strengthen its sister parties in a general sense. There are three sub-projects: 1) Policy, cooperation and network, for which the objective is to strengthen the parties in policy development and organisational development as well as to build up their networks; 2) Women decision makers, for which the objective is to strengthen the capacity and self-confidence of women so that they can take a more active role in political life; and 3) Youth and younger politicians, for which the objective is to strengthen the position of young people in political life, with the intention to contribute to a generation shift and renewal of politics.

Activities are planned in collaboration with UPLA. Some are co-financed with other international party foundations, such as Hanns Seidel Stiftung.

UPLA has the principal responsibility for implementation, but there is usually also Swedish input in the various activities.

The project budget for 2007/08 was SEK 3 600 000 million, of which SEK 1 600 000 was earmarked for sub-project one and SEK 1 000 000 for each of sub-projects two and three.

### 4.3 Activities and Output

The project consisted of a number of regional events in different Latin American countries, including conferences/training for women decision makers, youth conferences on 'Principles for a Free Society, candidate and campaign training, and policy conferences (some in connection with International Democrat Union meetings) on various topics, including the political development in the region. There were a total of 18 events, most of them lasting 2-3 days.

The participation from Colombia was limited to three persons participating in the youth conferences, two persons participating in the women's conferences and three

persons participating in policy conferences. PCC also attended UPLA events that were not JHS-financed.

#### 4.4 Effectiveness

PCC representatives interviewed in Bogotá asserted that the party has a permanently on-going cooperation with UPLA. For example, before the 2008 popular (internal) consultation of the party, it received training by the UPLA, which has also supported its parliamentarians as well as grassroots and youth groups. Women's meetings have been organised as well as courses in political planning for women and youth.

The party representatives consider that the role of UPLA has been oriented towards the strengthening of the organisation of women's and the new generation's networks. One of the participants in the women's seminar felt that the seminar gave her more knowledge about the barriers and possibilities for women to participate in politics and also contributed to the establishment of new contacts with other women politicians and networks.

The party representatives are satisfied with the UPLA activities and say that participants in seminars and courses generally have come back to Colombia more motivated. Other achievements referred to as results of the cooperation were strengthened systems of communication and internal party networks as well as improved capacity to use such networks. A critical point brought up was that the follow-up of the activities could have been better.

The UPLA model of political party aid is representative of what has sometimes been called the 'standard method' of party aid,<sup>10</sup> which consists of training, conferences and exchange visits or study tours. The general weaknesses of this method, as maintained by critics, are that it tends to use too standardised and predetermined designs, which are often not sufficiently adapted to varying contexts, and that the methods of implementation tend to be mechanistic. Another critical observation is that this type of aid often lacks a sufficiently strategic focus, i.e. that activities are not sufficiently interlinked and connected sequentially over time to produce tangible effects. Study and exchange visits are regarded as a poor method for supporting party reform, although they may foster goodwill and personal ties among participants.

It has not been possible, within the scope of the present evaluation, to determine whether these critical observations bear out in the case of PCC and UPLA. Nevertheless, they will still be worth considering in future evaluations of or follow-up exercises in all projects applying the 'standard method' of party aid.

Otherwise, the linkage to UPLA is likely to enhance effectiveness, since it entails that JHS contributions constitute an integral part of a greater critical mass, which should also imply economies of scale with respect to administration and implementation of the support, provided that UPLA project implementation and management are really effective. However, to assess whether or not this is the case is beyond the scope of the present evaluation.

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Carothers, *Confronting the Weakest Link, Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., 2006, p. 123 ff.



## 4.5 Relevance

PCC is financially strong compared to most other Colombian parties. Besides the traditional support from economically powerful companies and private persons, the party has been well economically rewarded for its alliance with the governing parties. So, from an economic needs point of view, the relevance of the project is not very high. Nonetheless, in the perspective of the Colombian party system, PCC constitutes the only solid centre-right party with prospects of subsistence, and it is undergoing a process of modernisation. In this context, the project is relevant as the international cooperation stimulates and exerts pressure in this process, promoting renewal and emergence of new leadership particularly among the party women and youth.

At the same time, though, it is important to remember that the Conservative Party has been seriously tainted by the involvement of conservative politicians with paramilitary groups in relation to the so-called '*parapolitica*' scandal that is still ongoing. How PCC will deal with the paramilitary influences within its ranks is of decisive importance for the relevance of the party and the project. Still, the outcome of this process remains to be seen.

The interviewed PCC members consider the regional and bilateral approaches to PAO cooperation as complementary. Arguments in favour of the regional cooperation made by PCC representatives were that it can be advantageous to channel funds through UPLA because in this way it is possible to avoid concentration of power to 'gatekeepers' or 'key persons'. According to PCC representatives met, the regional approach also implies a more Latin American vision of party relations than what might be the case in many instances of bilateral cooperation. To be really relevant and effective, however, a careful selection of participants is crucial. Training in particular, as indicated by the PCC representatives, requires continuity with the same group and possibly more coordination among likeminded donors than what has generally been the case.

## 5 Palme Center-Alternative Democratic Pole

### 5.1 Background

The Alternative Democratic Pole was established in 2005 as a merger between the two leftist coalitions Alternativa Democrática (AD) and Polo Democrático Independiente (PDI). The Palme Center, having previously supported a popular education project (*folkbildning*) through Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF) decided to start cooperation with PDA the same year. A member of both PDI and the Swedish Social Democratic Party District of Malmö had a central role in this process.

The implementing partners in Sweden have been the Social Democratic Party Districts of Skåne and Uppsala. The project manager in Malmö has had a key role, being of Colombian origin and a representative of PDA. In Colombia the project has been managed by the Women's Collective (*Colectivo de Mujeres*) of the party.

In 2005, the cooperation consisted of support to training of Colombian political campaign leaders or party members with other central responsibilities, conducted in Sweden and with follow-up training in Colombia for different groups within the party.

In the 2006 application to Sida, Polo Democrático was described as a new and emerging party in need of leadership and organisational development, particularly at the regional and local levels. According to the project application, the overarching objective of the project was to promote the democratic development in Colombia by strengthening a political alternative. The immediate objective was to strengthen PDA's local structures through training and organisational development. Planned activities included a seminar on democracy and political development in Bogotá with the participation of PDA and the Liberal Party, and leadership training in three steps. However, these activities were not realised and 2006 instead became a year of planning for future activities.

The Palme Center's report to Sida indicated that the principal objective of the activities in 2006 was to conduct a pre-study and to transfer the responsibility for the project from the Palme Center, having handled it centrally, to two social democratic party districts. The result was said to have created a solid basis for the future cooperation between the social democratic party districts, the Palme Center and PDA. It was also said that, based on contacts with PDA, it was decided that future projects were to focus on the women's association *Colectivo de Mujeres* of PDA, which was in great need of strengthening its organisation. Only SEK 57 000 out of the available SEK 150 000 was used, reflecting that no organisational development activities were carried out.

The project budget for 2006 was SEK 150 000, for 2007 SEK 300 000 and for 2008 SEK 300 000.

## 5.2 Project Design

According to the 2007/08 application, the problem to be addressed by the project was the political apathy among the younger generation in Colombia, and young people's lack of access to the knowledge required to participate in the political process. The objectives were 1) to strengthen PDA at the regional level, in terms of organisation, internal democracy and capacity, and 2) to strengthen the position of women and youth within PDA. The indicators included 'a higher degree of organisational structure and internal democracy, greater number of women and youth having reached higher posts within the party and/or more women and youth engaged politically.'

However, the objective of the project was later changed to focus exclusively on women's participation. In a proposal from the Swedish implementing partners of 2007, the idea was instead to train women with a view to strengthen their positions within PDA. Planned activities were:

- A start-up conference with 80 participants, with participation of female politicians from Sweden and two Swedish facilitators and a purpose of presenting how Swedish social democracy has handled the question of women's participation as well as of discussing how women within PDA could organise themselves.
- Three training sessions in each region with 30 participants in each (the same participants in each of the three sessions), with Swedish participation in the first and the last training sessions.

No indicators for follow-up and measuring of outcomes were presented.

In the *final* report of the project (30 March 2009), the overarching objective was said to have been to strengthen the women's association organisationally and advance women's positions within the party organisation and politics. The project objective was defined as: a) to advance the position of women within the party by making them feel more secure in their role as political representatives and b) for more women to be elected to positions within the party and for them to contribute actively to the development of the party organisation and the shaping of politics. The sub-objectives were said to have been to implement six seminars during two delegation visits from Sweden and thereby lay a foundation for continued development.

## 5.3 Activities and Output

According to the project files and information from the PDA representatives responsible for the implementation of the project, the following activities have been carried out in Colombia:

- 28-29 February 2008, National Workshop, Women's School of Politics of PDA, 85 persons.
- 26-27 July 2008, Regional workshop in Pereira, 41 persons from nine departments.
- 2-3 August 2008, Regional workshop in Bogotá, 41 persons from eight departments and Bogotá.

- 4-5 August 2008, Regional workshop in Barranquilla, 35 persons from various departments.
- 28-29 November 2008, National Workshop, Women's School of Politics of PDA, approximately 100 persons.
- 25 February 2009, National Women's Encounter 'Pre-congress', half-day, 204 persons.

According to the Palme Center's reports to Sida, the implemented activities consisted of a planning visit to Colombia in 2007 to prepare for the cooperation planned for the following spring and, in 2008, two national women conferences and six (!) regional training sessions/conferences.

Within the framework of the two national conferences, there were reported to have been a number of different workshops, seminars and meetings that in different ways dealt with gender equality and organisational development. The participants were from all of Colombia and consisted of women selected by the local party organisations in their respective districts. Swedish politicians participated during the conferences with lectures about, inter alia, the Swedish political system, the gender equality work within the Social Democratic Party, the importance of internal democracy and transparency etc. At the first conference, 85 women participated, while 100 women attended the second.

The three regional conferences were arranged by the women who had participated in the first national conference, with the purpose of disseminating the experience and knowledge acquired. The topics were the same as those mentioned above and approximately 30 women attended each conference.

The participating women have, on their own initiative, implemented a number of smaller local 'study circles' and other training activities. All in all 700-800 women were reported to have participated. The Team was not in a position to confirm this.

#### **5.4 Effectiveness**

The fact that the project objectives were first formulated in a very vague and general manner and then modified over the course of the project, as well as the absence of measurable outcome indicators, make it virtually impossible to ascertain accomplishment of project objectives.

Nonetheless, the project has produced a series of outputs and some positive results. One of the most important effects was that it contributed to the process of dialogue, and negotiated agreement with and commitment to certain political and party gender issues among women belonging to the different political sectors of PDA. This process resulted in the formulation of a joint declaration by the women that was presented at the party Congress.

The project also resulted in increased visibility and recognition of the Women's Collective. According to some of the female participants, 'They listen more to us now', and more gender issues have been included in the programmes of the party candidates. According to the female project participants, the women who have participated in the project are better informed and trained and have access to new

tools in relation to gender issues. For instance, a gender mailing list comprising 350 email addresses has been established.

A revision of the PDA statutes from a gender perspective is also underway and quotas (although modest) for the representation of women in the party organisation have been established (but are not yet applied in a strict and fair way). As maintained by the female project participants, these positive steps forward would have been impossible without Swedish support.

A possible sign of the empowerment and increased visibility of women was that five female candidates for the party leadership were proposed by the 'moderate' sector of the party in the recent leadership crisis.

With respect to the project objective presented in the final project report and particularly 'to advance the position of women within the party by making them feel more secure in their role as political representatives', it is impossible to say whether women 'feel more secure' and have run for more political posts. Yet, the activities could very well have contributed to this.

What can be established is that the women's network within PDA and the Women's Collective continue to interact and meet, largely as a result of the project and the Pre-Congress. For a party such as PDA, which involves various political tendencies within the left, one of the main risks is internal divisions and splits. As a consequence, there is always a dilemma for the women of the party whether they should choose 'gender loyalty' or loyalty with a particular political orientation when it comes to supporting organisational or political alternatives put forward by the party. In this context, the project's support to the Women's Collective and its work that has brought together women of different political tendencies for common efforts could possibly also contribute to greater unity within the party as such.

Nevertheless, it is still a problem that the Collective is quite divided according to the political wings of PDA. Some women have felt excluded at certain points due to their political preferences. The women of the Communist party, for example, were only invited to participate towards the end of the activities supported by the Palme Center funds. With respect to effectiveness as related to project objectives, it should also be noted that there have been no activities for 'youth in this project and that women have not yet really entered the core decision-making structures of the party organisation.

## **5.5 Relevance**

The Team finds it relevant to support PDA because the party constitutes an important counterweight to the increasing accumulation of presidential power and the general weakening and corruption of the political party system. It is the first party that has managed to offer a leftist alternative, which strengthens pluralism and thus democracy.

In relation to the specific project objective, the Team finds the project highly relevant. The limited political participation of women is a problem at the national level, and, in addition, a recent study carried out by NDI concludes that PDA has been lagging behind many other parties in this area. While the party leadership has officially

supported gender equality and the advancement of women within the party, the women representatives interviewed in the course of the fieldwork in Colombia indicated that, in practice, the support remains very limited. The Women's Collective has so far received only very limited resources from the party. There is still a long way to go until equality between men and women has been attained. The project is also relevant, as pointed out by some of the interviewed women, in that it has attempted to respond to the needs, and involved women, of the more peripheral regions where the needs are even greater than in Bogotá.

It should, however, also be noted that it is not self-evident that supporting the women's organisation and gender equality is the *most* relevant contribution to PDA at the moment. Other important areas would include party organisation and unity, and persecution against individual party members irrespective of sex. It may be recalled that the initial purpose of the project was to address the political apathy among young people, but that the ambition to reach the party youth turned out to be unrealistic as the party youth were poorly organised and lacked representatives with a mandate to take decisions and capacity to mobilise participation. While this may indeed be correct, the decision to exclude the youth can still be called in question, since such a 'poorly organised' group lacking 'mandate and representatives' stands out as in real need of assistance and cooperation. Paradoxically, the reasoning seems to lead to the conclusion that the youth ought to be assigned very high priority as a target group.

## 5.6 Side Effects

As an unforeseen effect, the project has to a certain extent contributed to bridging the divides between different tendencies of PDA. The most conspicuous example of the bridging effect is that the women of the party have found joint issues to work on and that women from different sectors of the party have been able to unite in a process of dialogue, agreement and commitment on key political and gender issues. This could be considered good practice for the party at large and could be used to promote unity and resolution of internal conflicts.

## 5.7 Sustainability

The activities may have contributed to certain long-term effects in that they have been instrumental in pushing the women's organisation forward, making gender relations and problems more visible within the party, and in facilitating interaction between female party members as well as between central and peripheral regions. Nonetheless, gender relations as well as female participation in politics are influenced by traditional gender roles and patterns<sup>11</sup>, which in the long run may counteract women's participation in politics. Perseverance and long-term commitment is therefore needed.

Concerning sustainability, it should also be noted that the Women's Collective and the activities carried out to support women and gender equality so far have been

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<sup>11</sup> Due to current gender roles, women's participation may be fairly intensive at a younger age but tend to diminish considerably later on when young women get involved in higher level studies, get married and also gain responsibility for children and their households (often in combination with studies or some kind of wage work). This phenomenon is most pronounced in parties such as PC and PDA, whose constituencies are less economically well-off than the constituencies of most of the other Colombian parties. This is not a reason to abandon the aim to advance the position of women, but a risk factor that has to be taken into account and properly addressed.

highly dependent on the Swedish funds, hence in this sense sustainability has not yet been achieved. It is also worth mentioning that the Swedish support has been decisive for the progress and achievements of the project.

## **5.8 Observations and Lessons**

There were considerable changes of objectives during the course of the project. The reasons for this are not sufficiently documented in project applications or reports.

Instead of implementing the activities planned for 2006, this year was used for fact finding and planning. In view of this, it is remarkable that the project proposal for 2007/08 presented to Sida still had to be completely revised.

The project also suffered from a significant delay, which meant that no activities were carried out in 2007. According to the Palme Center's reports the postponement was caused by a combination of 'coordination and administrative difficulties between the project groups of the two Swedish party districts (Skåne and Uppsala)' responsible for the management of the project in Sweden and the same sort of difficulties on the Colombian side as well.

Despite the vague project objectives, the activities finally carried out in Colombia constituted an essentially well-designed project. Still, the project and meetings would probably have been even more effective had there been a clearer focus.

In principle, it seems somewhat unusual that one of the key actors of the project is simultaneously an elected representative of both the donor organisation and the recipient one. Such a double role may or may not give rise to what in evaluation jargon is called a 'cosy relationship' between donor and recipient.

It seems that the Palme Center has intended to support mainly one of the political tendencies within PDA and this may, of course, be quite legitimate. However, one of the main challenges to PDA is to maintain unity and avoid internal division. It would therefore be useful to examine the dynamics of the different political tendencies within the party, with an aim of strengthening the overall party unity and internal cooperation. Otherwise the project may fuel conflicts.

With reference to party unity and cooperation among different tendencies, it stands out as a shortcoming on the Swedish side that there has been no communication or dialogue between the Social Democratic Party and the Left Party despite the fact that they have been working, in the last instance, with the same party, i.e. PDA.

## 6 Palme Center Tripartite Cooperation

This project consists of cooperation between Sweden, Colombia and Chile. The Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) has been involved in cooperation with Partido Por la Democracia (PPD) in Chile, and with Alternative Democratic Pole (PDA) in Colombia for several years. The present project started through contacts between representatives of the Stockholm Branch of SAP/Stockholms Arbetarekommun (SAK) and the present coordinator of the project in Latin America, who in turn had contacts in Colombia through a previous cooperation project involving Swedish municipalities and districts.

The project partners are, according to the Palme Center's application to Sida, SAK, PDA in Colombia and PPD in Chile. However, in Colombia, the contract was signed with University of Ibagué (Unibagué) a private conservative university in Ibagué, located in the department of *Tolima*.

In 2008, a cooperation agreement was also signed with the regional peace and development programme *Tolipaz*, in which the regional government, the town district and Unibagué are represented. Another cooperation agreement was signed with *Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris* concerning an education week in Bogotá in August 2009.

The project started in 2008 and is still ongoing. The activities in 2009 were similar to the ones in 2008. The following assessment primarily looks at the first year of the project.

Please, note that the following assessment only relates to the results in a Colombian perspective and that no representatives of Chile have been interviewed. The reason for this is the time frame of the evaluation and the need to focus on Colombia.

### 6.1 Project Design

This project builds on the idea that Sweden, having a strong and stable democracy, and Chile, being a young democracy, could serve as good examples for a country such as Colombia. In its problem analysis, SAK pointed to the need to consolidate democracy in Latin America. The overarching objective of the project was to strengthen democracy and the peaceful co-existence in Colombia through exchange and leadership training directed to young politicians at the local and provincial levels, not least women, in Chile and Colombia, and further to:

- Stimulate synergies between different political actors in Latin America.
- Transfer competence and successful experiences in terms of democratic leadership, among young people and, not least, women.
- Tighter social networks by integrating different actors.
- Train for a new democratic leadership.



- Exchange experiences in order to find common models – if possible – for citizens' influence, democratic rights and social justice.
- Stimulate to a renewal of political work, theoretically as well as practically.<sup>12</sup>

The project is said to be about a training for tolerance and understanding between persons through dialogue. By sharing practical experiences from Chile and Sweden, the participants are to value democratic principles and joint solutions to social and political conflicts.

The project targets young politicians (25-30 years) from Chile and Colombia. It is the ambition of the project that 50 percent of the participants are women. No indirect target groups are mentioned in the project documents.

Three separate and consecutive activities were foreseen: 1) course and seminars in Colombia; 2) study visit, course and seminar in Chile; and 3) a study visit to Sweden.

The indicators for follow-up and measurement of outcomes presented in the project documents are not formulated as operational performance indicators. Besides being remarkably vaguely formulated, no targets are given in terms of quantity, quality and time. Consequently, they are not fit for measuring outputs or outcomes.

Beyond the ambition to 'consolidate democracy in Latin America' and the appropriateness of Sweden and Chile as 'good examples' for Colombia in this respect, there is no further analysis in project proposals and documents of potential causal relationships that might link project inputs and outputs with outcomes or, finally, with strengthening of democracy and the party system.

The project was designed in collaboration between Sweden, Chile and Colombia, but the basic proposal came from Sweden and the Colombian input consisted of comments on drafts of the project proposal.

Apparently, the vague and wide formulation of project objectives led to different perceptions of the objectives among the project stakeholders. The project representatives interviewed at Unibagué thus perceived the objectives as roughly those of creating unity and cooperation among regional political parties in order to attract interest and investments to the department of Tolima. For others, the key issue has been to promote a generation shift in Colombian politics. The Swedish project coordinators emphasised the exchange of experiences between Colombia, Chile and Sweden and the spreading of social democratic values.

The project budget for 2008 was SEK 335 000. The visit to Sweden, although included in the application to Sida, was not included in this amount.

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<sup>12</sup> This is according to SAK's application to the Palme Center. Palme Center's application to Sida parts the objective is presented partly differently (shortened).

## 6.2 Activities and Output

The activities according to the Palme Center project report of October, 2009<sup>13</sup> have consisted of:

- Selection of 40 course participants in Colombia and Chile in January, February and May 2008.
- A virtual introduction course, design of homepage and establishment of email network in February-March 2008.
- A three-day course for 20 participants from Ibagué, Columbia in March 2008.
- A one-day seminar for approximately 100 participants from Ibagué, Columbia in March 2008.
- A workshop in Bogotá arranged by UNDP/IDEA with the participation of 15 youth leaders mainly from the liberal party PDA.
- A three-day study visit in Chile including a one-day course with participants from Chile and Colombia in Santiago in September-October 2008, including a one-day seminar with participants from Chile and Colombia, a one-day seminar for 100 participants, and selection of five participants from Colombia to participate in the study visit to Sweden.

Most of the 20 participants in Ibagué came from PDA and the Liberal Party but some also belonged to the Conservative Party, Cambio Radical, Partido de la U and MIRA.<sup>14</sup> Some did not have any clear party connection but were students or civil servants. Twenty participants took part in the three-daycourse as a whole and about 50percent of these were women. There was no real selection process as the number of interested persons did not exceed the number of seats.

Eight persons (ten foreseen) participated in the Chile visit. These were selected from the 20 participants having undergone training in Ibagué. They were all from PDA or the Liberal party.

There was a six-month delay of the implementation of project activities caused, according to the Palme Center reporting, by the turnaround time of the application. The start of the virtual course component was also delayed a few weeks, due to technical difficulties with the homepage. In addition, disagreements between the person responsible for the virtual course and the IT technician led to the Chilean participants not being able to participate in the course.

There is a discrepancy between the planned and reported 'one-day seminar for approximately 100 participants in Bogotá, in collaboration with UNDP/IDEA' and the workshop for 15 persons described by the representative of International IDEA as two hours of conversation.

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<sup>13</sup> Projekt. 65426, Chile Colombia, Oktober 2009.

<sup>14</sup> MIRA is an 'independent' political movement founded in the year 2000. It is represented in the Senate and Chamber of the Colombian Congress as well as in several local government assemblies and councils. Hence, participants did not only come from PDA, the Liberal Party and some smaller organisations ideologically close to these, as reported by SAK to the Palme Center .

The visit to Sweden has still not taken place as of late 2009, more than one year after the visit to Chile. The principle of selection of participants remains unclear, as well as the specific purpose of the visit.

### **6.3 Effectiveness**

Due to the formulation of the project objectives and the lack of operational outcome indicators, it is difficult to establish whether and to what degree the project objectives have been accomplished. If the objectives are interpreted in their most ambitious sense, it seems obvious that they have not been fulfilled, nor would it be feasible to realise such objectives given the budget of the project.

With a less ambitious interpretation of objectives, it is clear that the project has produced a series of outputs such as courses and seminars in Chile and Colombia and these activities have most likely been interesting and useful for the participants. Two interviewed course and seminar participants in Ibagué gave assurance that they 'got enriched through the international experiences' that they could take part in through the project and 'acquired experiences of political campaigns' that were useful in their own political campaigns. They also indicated that 'the political parties did not commit themselves [to the project]' and that 'many of the participants continue after the course with their own small political projects.'

It can be called into question, however, whether the approach and content of the programme have indeed been strategic.

According to the persons responsible for the project at the Unibagué, two false assumptions at the design stage affected the implementation and outcome of the project: 1) that the participants had sufficient knowledge about the conditions of Colombia and its political system, and 2) that they would be capable on their own to transmit the acquired experiences and knowledge to other people. The fact that these assumptions were unrealistic limited the impact of the project.

### **6.4 Relevance**

No institutional relationship with PDA was established from the beginning of the project. The lack of a political party as a partner organisation from the outset, as well as the particular way in which the project was prepared and designed, implied that it became very Swedish-driven.

Even though the project had the blessing of a PDA politician from Tolima, the main counterpart has been the Unibagué. A cooperation agreement was signed in 2008 with the regional peace and development programme Tolipaz, but there are still no institutional agreements with the political parties from which the participants come, including the two social democratic sister parties (PDA, Partido Liberal). The Team believes that establishing institutional relations with the political parties would have been more relevant, considering the project and programme objectives.

The general idea, i.e. to exchange experiences, train for a new democratic leadership etc., is relevant. Also, the Swedish and, even more so, the Chilean experiences are relevant if the objective is to bring alternatives to the fore, which may inspire changes

and reforms of the Colombian political practice and party system. From a gender and youth perspective, the objectives are also relevant.

However, there has been a disconnection between the different activities. There has for example been little or no connection between the training of 20 participants in Ibagué, the public seminar held at the university and the meetings held with PDA representatives in Bogotá. The training in Ibagué has been across party lines, while the activities in Bogotá have been with PDA. Spreading information about Swedish social democracy does not match the cross-party approach applied in Ibagué. Although interesting and inspiring for the participants, it is not clear how the visit to Chile and the studies of political party practice and elections in this country contribute to a better functioning democracy in Ibagué. It is the Team's opinion that these disconnections are a result of the wide and imprecise objectives.

Furthermore, the information about Sweden provided in the training and seminars was of rather general nature. Persons met in Ibagué stated that, even though it was interesting and inspiring in a general sense, it had limited applicability for them.

Although a strengthening of democracy in Chile is something positive, it is questionable whether sending Chilean party representatives to Sweden is an efficient use of PAO resources, considering that present-day Chile is a quite well-functioning democracy.

## **6.5 Side Effects**

According to the Unibagué participants, one of the most important unforeseen results of the project was the establishment of a governance observatory at the university's Faculty of Political Science of the university. However, due to reorganisation of the university, the School of Governance was subsequently eliminated, and now subsists as a part of the Faculty of Political Science. In addition, the Federation of the Women of Tolima was also founded unexpectedly as a result of the project (according to the project reports)

After the course in March 2008, a final declaration was presented by the participants, where the foundation of a multiparty entity was announced, which would coordinate political activities across party boundaries. Even though this is an interesting result, it is also problematic considering that a key problem of the Colombian party system is the lack of clear differences between the different parties.

There was also an invitation, costs paid, to PPD and SAP from the youth organisation of the Liberal Party, to participate in their Bogotá congress in November 2008.

## **6.6 Sustainability**

The sustainability of this project is very uncertain, since the institutional relationship with Colombian political parties has been weak. The project idea and proposal originated and were mainly developed from Sweden, while the Colombian participation was limited. This obviously restricts the prospects for Colombian 'ownership'. Institutionally-rooted sustainability would have required a more collective and directly party-related approach than what has been the case in this project. It should also be noted that the project activities have been dependent on the Swedish support, with-

out which the project most likely would not have been initiated and implemented. The restricted Colombian participation in project design and preparation also confines the likelihood of sustainability.

The project activities may have contributed to certain long-term effects and to enriching the participants through international exchange and acquiring experiences and knowledge about political alternatives. Nonetheless, such effects or outcomes are most likely to remain mainly at the individual level. To improve the likelihood of sustainability, a more strategic and focused project approach would have been required, with a more strategic selection of participants and/or influencing the political parties directly at the institutional level.

## **6.7 Observations and Lessons**

In principle, the three-party cooperation involving Chile, Colombia and Sweden is an interesting approach that contrasts with the typical party-to-party PAO project. Another interesting feature is the cross-party approach applied.

The principal weakness relates to project design and vague objectives, having resulted in disconnected activities and different perceptions about project purpose. The wide and open character of the objectives makes it possible to include just about anything in the project. The objectives also appear far too ambitious given the available project budget and additional project resources.

The weaknesses in the project design ought to have been evident for the Palme Center when receiving SAK's application. One would have expected the Palme Center to have remarked on this as part of its quality assurance.

Another fundamental weakness has been the lack of institutional link to a specific party, alternatively, a full-fledged cross-party approach.

Since 2009, the participants have been selected by Tolipaz in close contact with all political parties in Ibagué, having nominating persons. This is likely to lead to a better selection. On the other hand, this explicit multi-party approach does not fit with this project supposedly being a Palme Center-PDA collaboration.

The project should be given credit for its attempts to evaluate the courses and report the results of such assessments. Some Ibagué participants, however, felt that the follow-up of the project activities had been unsatisfactory. 'We do not know what happened to the essays [written during the course], but the last stage was missing, there was no follow-up.'

It is somewhat surprising that there has been no coordination or contacts between this project and the Palme Center or some other Palme Center-led PAO projects in Colombia, although contacts at the personal level do exist with Palme Center representatives. It would, of course, be useful to establish institutional contacts and project dialogue, not only with the Palme Center but also with VIF, since both organisations are cooperating with a party included in the present project, namely PDA.

## 7 VIF – Colombian Communist Party

### 7.1 Background

The VIF cooperation with the Colombian Communist Party (PC) started in 1996 and has been ongoing since then. The project, one of the first of VIF, largely originated in contacts between *Ung Vänster* (youth association of the Swedish Left Party), PC and *Union Patriótica*, a broader leftist alliance in which the PC was a key part. It was to a certain extent by coincidence that VIF started cooperating with PC in Colombia. The project was initially divided between the Colombian Communist Party and its youth organisation *Juventud Comunista* (JUCO) and includes for example support to the *Casa de la Juventud* in Bogotá, visits to Sweden and support to the preparation of JUCO's National Congress.

The main project stakeholders in the PC include its youth organisation JUCO and its women organisation, *Las Polas*. Indirectly, the project activities may also benefit PDA, since the PC is an integral part of this 'party of parties'. PC was founded in 1930 and consolidated its presence in different parts of the country through rural and urban labour organisations. During the 1980s, the PC was a key part of the broader leftist political alliance *Union Patriótica*, which was systematically exterminated by military secret services in conjunction with paramilitary organisations in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This persecution has continued up till now, although the massacres of the 1980s have today been replaced with selective assassinations, displacements and threats.

The PC is a national party and its strength lies principally in its structure and organisation. It does not depend on any particular political leader (contrary to most Colombian parties). Its members are of all ages. However, the political persecution has affected the party severely and does threaten its very existence. Many leaders have been imprisoned, murdered or forced to leave the country. It is a small party (supported by approximately 1% of the population) with a long tradition. The party has played an important role as a consistent part of the political opposition and is also a noteworthy part of political pluralism in the context of the Colombian party system. It has a significant presence within the unions and peasant movements. Its weekly magazine, *Voz*, has a fairly wide circulation (20 000 copies). According to party statutes and documents, it is a classical Marxist-Leninist communist party. Yet, in practice the party has been rather pragmatic, as evidenced by its labour union work and entering into alliances such as PDA.

PC no longer has formal status as a party but exists within PDA, through which it is represented by two members in the Colombian parliament. PDA is currently the only left alternative in the Colombian party system.

According to VIF, the two traditional Colombian parties (conservative, liberal) had monopolised political power for decades, creating a de facto 'shared one-party state'. Moreover, systematic violence has been used against groups attempting to organise

political movements beyond the two-party consensus. Large groups of the electorate have thus not had access to any party that really represented their interests. The inability of the party system to allow articulation of alternative viewpoints has, according to this analysis, constituted a concrete hindrance to breaking the cycle of political violence in the country.

## 7.2 Project Design

The VIF project aims to contribute to the survival and consolidation of an alternative to the traditionally established parties, as well as to the newly established parties, which largely also support the president politically. The political assassinations, threats and persecution against leadership and members have affected the party both financially and as an organisation. VIF finds the continued existence of PC important for the subsistence of pluralism and democracy in Colombian politics. It is the threatened existence of PC that motivates the organisational support offered by VIF.

The global objective of the project, according to VIF's Sida application, was 'to strengthen popular participation in Colombian party politics in the presence of the extreme difficulties that restrict democratic participation.<sup>15</sup> The project objective is to 'strengthen PC with respect to organisation, education of cadres, and policy formulation.' The specific objectives are 1) to attain a higher level of education among participating party members, 2) to strength PC's youth work and 3) strengthening of PC's work for the defence of human and political rights.

The planned activities, according to the application, consisted of party conferences, training, human rights activities and peace campaigns.

The approach of the VIF-PC cooperation is largely that of core financial support, which has been going on for several years without major modifications. An advantage of the budget support approach, according to VIF, is that no parallel project structure needs to be established, which contributes to efficient use of available funds. VIF funding has been used to fund training events, congresses, human rights advocacy, humanitarian support and regular party operations including political campaigns.

There have rarely been any discussions between VIF and PC on the objectives of the support. No measurable outcome indicators are given in the project documents and, generally speaking, the project has not been designed in a way that permits follow-up of results. However, the causal reasoning on problems, objectives, outcomes and outputs is straightforward and flows in a logical fashion.

The direct target group is mainly active party members, although this may vary somewhat depending on the particular project activities at hand. Training and education activities are offered to party members and activists. The funds are also used to support victims of political persecution, for preparation and arranging of congresses or conferences as well as for activities aimed at a broader audience such as advocacy for human rights and democracy. However, the main objective of the project is to support the party as such and not individuals. The project activities have no specific geographical focus.

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<sup>15</sup> VIF, Application 2009/10, 9.2. Colombia., p. 66.

Sometimes the youth association affiliated with PC, JUCO, has been involved in project activities. JUCO, however, has never been a direct receiver of VIF funds.

VIF leaves needs assessment and project planning entirely to PC and does not propose any particular activities. The only restrictions are those imposed by the regulations for Swedish PAO support. Hence, the activities have essentially been identified by PC and discussed in dialogue with, and approved by, VIF. PC thus presents an application to VIF that is translated by VIF into Swedish and put into Sida format. It is this application to Sida that is the binding document. A problem is that the Colombians cannot read this document, something considered by VIF as not only an administrative problem but also a problem of transparency and democracy.

The PAO cooperation has been increasingly formalised and applications and reports now follow a stricter format than earlier. However, VIF essentially continues to do the same things as before with respect to project approach and content. There are no Logical Framework Approach (LFA) planning exercises, but projects expressed by PC are partly translated into LFA terms. A problem, according to VIF, is that the stricter the reporting and application format, the less it will reflect the original intentions of PC. Two persons from VIF have undergone LFA training, but, in general, VIF is still not very used to the LFA method.

Even if there is a clear improvement of the suggested indicators in the 2009/10 VIF application as compared to earlier ones, the proposed indicators are still not operational and therefore not applicable for measuring project outcomes.

The yearly project budget was SEK 260 000 for 2007 and 2008.

### **7.3 Activities and Output**

Implementation is carried out by PC. In 2006, a Swedish delegation visited Colombia but gave no regular Swedish input to project implementation. According to PC's own report presented to the Team, the activities and output produced during 2007 were the following:



Item	Actions	Expenditure COP	No of beneficiaries	Women	Men	Objectives
Support to activities for peace \$7,445,000	Publishing, education material	7.445.000	1000 Booklets	No record	No record	Education on human rights and a negotiated solution of the conflict
Human rights \$9.853.730	Booklets on impact of ALCA (FTAA)	1.935.010	1000 booklets			Training and diffusion of the social and economic effects of ALCA
	Publicity and participation	1.490.000	200 delegates	No record	No record	Achieve the participation of the delegates, victims of forced displacement due to paramilitary threats, in the ANDAS assembly
	Solidarity with political prisoners	3.500.00	70	30	40	Support through purchase of toiletries (soap, shampoo, underwear)
	Support to the National Days convened by ANDAS	2.928.720	Participation estimated to approximately 1500 persons	No record	No record	The Days had the purpose of rejecting the militarisation and massive arrests in rural areas of the country
Elections and Democracy \$41.899.200	Campaign for the councils of Bogotá Pereira, Tolima and Arauca	41.899.200	Support to publicity			Achieved: 1 councillor in Bogotá, 1 deputy in Arauca y 8 councillors en Arauca
Education \$7.800.000	JUCO National School	3.000.000	45	20	25	Political education of the new generation of JUCO members
	Seminar, Political updating	1.000.000	41	No record	No record	Updating the national party leadership on the main debates of the present political conjuncture
	Basic Party School	600.000	50	No record	No record	Education of new party members
	Preparation of study material	3.200.000	1500	No record	No record	Statutes and programme to study and understand the nature, character and scope of our proposals
National Conference \$9.499.880	Reproduction of booklets	3.505.000	2000			Disseminate the theses of discussion and provide an instrument for studies
	Logistics and purchase of materials for conference	5.994.880	60 National delegates	21	39	Discuss and define the principal dimensions of the unitary policy of the party

Activities and output in 2008 were the following:

Item	Actions	Expenditure COP	Total Beneficiary Quantity	Women	Men	Objectives
Peace activities \$3.031.250	Support to the Minga Indígena	1.771.250	Food and medicines	No record	No record	Solidarity with the march against Bogotá of the indigenous peoples, to condemn their difficult conditions of life and demand solutions
	Support by the solidarity team to the political prisoners	760.000	60	30	30	Purchase of toiletries and underwear
	Solidarity with the tragedy of Cauca	500.000	30 Families	No record	No record	Purchase of food to relieve the calamity caused by natural phenomena
Human rights and solidarity \$6.683.000	Support by the solidarity team to the political prisoners	4.290.000	75	35	40	Purchase of toiletries and underwear
	Solidarity with <i>compañeros</i>	1.600.000	5	2	3	Solidarity with <i>compañeros</i> victims of political violence and persecution
	Bouquet of flowers	53.000	1		1	Solidarity to and accompaniment of the family of the assassinated leader Guillermo Rivera
	Vindication and solidarity act for Carlos Lozano	640.000	3000 persons	No record	No record	Vindication and solidarity act for Carlos Lozano in view of the persecution and staging of the so-called 'farcpolítica' process
	Solidarity dinner for Cuba	100.000	2 persons		2	Payment of ticket for participation in the solidarity dinner
Elections and democracy \$12.119.932	Publicity elections CUT	2.700.000	20.000 fliers			This support contributed to the election of three party members to CUT leadership positions
	Publicity PDA	8.475.932	Fliers, Radio spots, advertisement in El Tiempo			Calling the people to accountability exercise
	Per diem Meta	300.000	5000 participants	No record	No record	Campaign CUT
	Political Declaration of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Congress	644.000	3000			Payment 50% publication of the political declaration of the congress

Item	Actions	Expenditure COP	Total Beneficiary Quantity	Women	Men	Objectives
Education \$14.191.898	PC School	2.000.000	22	8	14	Political training of regional party members
	Assisting regional schools	175.000	2		2	Tickets for participants
	Education booklets	650.000	2000 Booklets			Study documents for party militants
	Booklet woman	660.000	500 booklets			Study documents for party militants on women and gender issues
	Study documents	1.560.000	1000 booklets			Study documents for militants
	Booklet on Jorge Eliécer Gaitán	1.000.000	500			Reappropriation of historical memory and study of causes of political violence in the country
	Fliers education	890.000	1000			Study document on political analysis
	Book stand	1.901.898	1			Participation in the international Book Fair
	Congress report	1.230.000	500			Document on actions and definitions of the Central Committee
JUCO workshops	4.125.000	Bogotá: 32 Medellín: 20 Viotá: 40	12 5 23	20 15 17	Training of JUCO leaders in Bogotá, Medellín and Viotá	
National conference \$12.190.090	Theses of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Congress	2.200.000	3500			Central discussion document before the 20th Congress
	Tribuna 1 and 2	1.000.000	3000			Document gathering the contributions emerging from regions and members in relation to the 20 <sup>th</sup> Congress
	Purchase of materials	1.404.490	Photocopies, folders, sheets			Practical material for the Congress
	Logistics	174.600				Sending of mail correspondence
	Per diem interregional conference in Cali	250.000				Tickets and per diem for participants from other regions
	National women seminar	1.800.000	60	60		Preparatory event before the National Party Congress
	Per diem for participants from the regions	361.000	3 regions: Caquetá, Pasto, Paia			Assistance with tickets and per diem for travel to regions
	JUCO national seminar	5.000.000	60	22	38	National preparation seminar before the National Congress of the party

Item	Actions	Expen- diture COP	Total Beneficiary Quantity	Women	Men	Objectives
PC National Congress 25.000.000	Publicity Banners Placards	1.100.900	4 banners 2 placards			Publicity for the congress
	Logistics	23.899.100				Payment of hotels, auditorium, installation of the Congress

## 7.4 Effectiveness

The objectives of the project do not lend themselves to an analysis of their fulfilment. However, a number of positive results can be observed at the outcome level in line with the ambition to 'strengthen PC with respect to organisation, education of cadres and policy formulation.' The project has allowed an increased number of persons to participate in training and education activities. This, according to party leaders, has been important for membership renewal and for the quality of leadership. It should be seen in the context of the political assassinations of, threats directed to and persecution against PC leadership and members.

The support to election campaigns has contributed to the election of key PC leaders to important political positions, which also constitutes a necessary platform for party politics and advocacy.

The support to the national Conference and Congress enabled more party members and leaders to participate and a better discussion as a result of the material produced in advance.

The support to political prisoners and persecuted, threatened or displaced party members is very important from a humanitarian point of view, but it also demonstrates that the party is willing to assist members in times of crisis and urgency, also making it instrumental for the survival of the party.

The advocacy and manifestations for human rights, democracy and a negotiated solution of the armed conflict are outcomes that are impossible to measure in the short term. According to many observers, however, such activities are essential in the current authoritarian and polarized political climate in Colombia. In a more restricted perspective, such activities may also have given visibility to the party, which is also important from a security point of view.

The importance of the Swedish financing can be seen by relating it to the total yearly budget of PC, which amounts to approximately 300 million Colombian pesos (COP). The project contributed with 76 and 73 million COP, i.e. approximately 20 percent and consequently a significant contribution for PC, which otherwise has virtually no institutional donors.

## 7.5 Relevance

For reasons given above, the Team finds it relevant to support PC in order to safeguard political pluralism and democracy. It is a party that has had a long trajectory in Colombian party politics and that can be considered as an institutional party with a defined (although orthodox) ideology and unaffected by *caudillismo* or *clientelismo*. The

fact that the party leadership and members for many years have suffered persecution is an additional motive for support.

Project objectives and activities have been of high priority for the PC partner organisation since they have been selected by the party itself and include the principal activities undertaken by the party as an organisation. The project has also been relevant for women given that it has supported female candidates among whom some have been elected to important political positions. It has also funded a special school for women as well as a pre-congress for women. Also young people have benefited from the educational and training activities offered by the project.

The financial support provided by Sweden has been useful for the party, which has very limited financial resources and very few sources of financing. PC has difficulties raising funds and does not have the same support as other Colombian parties. Yet, it could have been relevant to engage in a dialogue with PC, which traditionally has been a very orthodox and closed communist party. The policy of VIF is to avoid influencing its partner organisations. At the same time, the 'added value' that VIF has brought in as a Swedish PAO has been limited.

## **7.6 Side Effects**

Indirectly, the project has also supported PDA, but this also involves risks of the project contributing to conflicts among the parties incorporated into PDA. It is thus important to follow-up and attempt to manage such risks in order to strengthen the unity of the PDA.

## **7.7 Sustainability**

Although not as a consequence of development projects, the party as such has a long history in Colombia and has, despite severe persecution, showed strong resilience in itself. The financed activities (training, congresses, campaigning) are likely to have contributed further to the sustainability of the party and the support may even have been crucial for its survival as an organisation.

At the same time, the project is limited to financing of regular party activities. In this sense, it is not a 'project' separated from everyday activities. If the Swedish support is phased out, there will be a reduced amount or volume of activities, although the same activities will continue.

## **7.8 Observations and Lessons**

The project has been highly 'demand driven' and reflected the priorities of the party, which therefore appears to have used it well.

Part of the project funds have been used to finance political campaigns, which is not in accordance with the PAO guidelines and Colombian law. Neither was it included in the budget presented to Sida. The financing of the campaigns, however, had a high strategic priority for the party. It should furthermore be noted that PC was

completely open to the Team about the use of funds, indicating that there was an information problem between Sweden and Colombia.<sup>16</sup>

The design of the project also makes it difficult to follow up. It would, for example have been very easy for PC to have let all of the Swedish funding go to, say, training and used money from other sources to finance campaigning. This is a prime example of the so-called problem of fungibility.

The management and monitoring from the Swedish side has been poor. The Team has been unable to obtain some vital project documentation from VIF. VIF representatives have rarely visited Colombia. Yet, other people in VIF's network have and, due to their reporting, VIF considers that it has a pretty good picture of the project progress made. There is a higher level of confidence between the counterparts in this project than in many other VIF projects. However, this is not sufficient to assure that the project is on track. Until now no evaluation has been made of the project.

There have also been more fundamental problems in the application and reporting procedures. The demand from PC, often expressed in rather general terms, is reformulated by VIF to fit the Sida format. However, this does not make any difference to PC, who never gets to see the application to Sida. Similarly, information from PC to VIF is used to produce reports to Sida, but PC does not get to see the final reports. (Similar observations have been made in other PAO projects).

With reference to party unity and cooperation among different tendencies, it stands out as a shortcoming on the Swedish side that there has been no communication or dialogue between the Social Democratic Party and the Left Party despite their working, in the last instance, with the same party, i.e. PDA.

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<sup>16</sup> VIF stresses that they in connection with the plan of activities for 2009/10 explicitly emphasised that financing of campaigns not was permitted according to the Guidelines.

## Appendix 1: List of Persons Met

### Colombia

#### CEUDES/Fundación Tercera/Green Movement

Marelby Agatón	Personal Assistant of Ingrid Betancourt
Linsay Benitez Barajas	Social worker, teacher of the project, Bogotá
Olga Luz Cifuentes Toro	Chairman CEUDES
Juan Carlos Lecompte	Formerly in PVO
Fabio Mariño	Project coordinator
Diana Pardo	<i>Personera municipal</i> , Municipio de Paz del Río, Boyacá
Nelson Andrés Pérez	<i>Personera municipal</i> , Municipio de Soracá, President Association of Personeros, Boyacá
Nestor Ramírez	Former mayor, PVO
Nubia Ronderos	Accountant, Fundación Tercera

#### Colombian Communist Party

Magnolia Agudelo	Women's wing, Las Polas
Milady Barrera	Board Member of Juco in Barranquilla, Atlántico
Jaime Caycedo	Secretary General
Claudia Flores	Finance director
Carlos Arturo García	Coordinator of PC Human Rights commission
Jorge Gómez	PC Secretary and Board member PDA
Nely Andrea Niño	Party youth wing (JUCO), Barranquilla
Juan David Ortega	Trainer of the party, Barranquilla, Atlántico
Gloria Inéz Ramírez	Senator
Juan Carlos Sandoval	Party coordinator for Barranquilla, Atlántico

#### Colombian Conservative Party

Mariela Ayala	National Women's Organisation
Luis Andrés Bernaza	Legal expert
Soraya Galvis Cobo	<i>Secretaria Alterna</i>
Angélica Gutiérrez,	Assistant to the <i>Veeduría</i> (oversight) of the party
Beatriz Elena Jaramillo	Member of national Board
Mauricio Prieto	Legal expert
Alfonso Ramírez	Assistant to party president
Juan Pablo Tovar	Youth secretary
José Jaime Uscátegui Pastrana	Director of international relations department

**Alternative Democratic Pole**

Carlos Bula	Secretary General
Bertina Calderon	Women's Collective, Project coordinator
Astrid Coronado	Women's Collective, Barranquilla, Atlántico
Rosalba Gómez	Women's Collective, Project coordinator
Eva Herrera	Women's Collective, Barranquilla, Atlántico
Lina Mora	Women's Collective, Barranquilla, Atlántico
Gloria Oramas	Women's Collective, local councillor
Nancy Ramos	Women's Collective, Barranquilla, Atlántico
Maria Fernanda Rojas	Women's Collective, local councillor
Lina Mora Tirado	Women's Collective, Barranquilla, Atlántico
Marta Valderama	Women's Collective, Project coord.
Yohana Yepes	Women's Collective, Barranquilla, Atlántico

**University of Ibagué/Tolipaz**

Adriana Aviles Alvarado	Course participant
Rodrigo Castañeda	University teacher
Cecilia Correa Valdes	Project co-ordinator
Diego Wilmar Gómez	Executive director, Tolipaz
Alejandro Suárez	Course participant
Carlos Trejo	Director of Governance, Tolipaz

**Swedish Embassy/Sida**

Catalina Hoyos	National Programme Officer
Susanna Jansson-Landin	Programme Officer
Lena Nordström	Ambassador
Torgny Svennungsson	Programme Director

**Other**

Martha Balaguera	Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris
Hernando Gómez Buendía	Academic
Francisco Leal Buitraigo	Academic
Marta Cárdenas	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
Luis Eduardo Celis	Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris
Francisco Herrero	Country Director, National Democratic Institute
Javier Loaiza	Director General, Fundación Tomás Moro
Juan Fernando Londoño	International IDEA/UNDP
Lucy Malo	Program Manager, USAID
Hans Mathieu	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
Pedro Moura	Local Deputy, Partido de la U, Ibagué
Henry Pava	Cambio Democrático Radical, Ibagué



Mauricio Romero	Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris
Willian Rosas	Local Deputy, PDA, Ibagué
Cara Thanassi	Sub-director, USAID

## **Sweden**

### **GF**

Eva Goës	Chairman of the Board
Inger Schörling	Board Member

### **JHS**

Eva Gustavsson	Managing Director
Evelina Lorenzon	Senior Project Manager

### **Palme Center**

Juan Espitia (by phone)	Project Coordinator, Social Democratic Party District of Malmö
Anna-Karin Gauding	Regional Project Manager
Johan Moström	Deputy Head of Operations
Kaj Nordquist	Project Coordinator, Social Democratic Party, Stockholm Branch
Mikael Näve Ljunggren	Programme Officer, Latin America

### **VIF**

Jens Holm	Fomer MP and Board Member
Anita Persson	Chairman of the Board
Johan Sommansson	Programme Officer

## Appendix 2: The Colombian Party System

### General Overview

Since the wars of independence from Spain (1810–1830), politics and violence have been almost constantly intertwined in Colombia. In the first half of the 20th century, a large wave of nonconformity and social protest emerged. Viewed in a historical perspective, these conflicts appear as typical reactions in situations where the possibilities for civil political opposition are restricted or eliminated.

The period of widespread urban and rural violence between conservatives and liberals during the late 1940s and early 1950s was thus not an exception in Colombian political history. Rojas Pinilla, with tacit support from moderates of both parties, took power through a coup d'état in June 1953. In the face of deteriorating economic conditions and recession towards the end of the 1950s, liberals and conservatives joined forces in the National Front to overthrow Rojas.

The National Front period, which lasted from 1958 to 1974, stipulated that the two parties would alternate in the presidency every four years and share equal membership in the legislative bodies. Essentially, it was a constitutional mechanism to monopolise all political and administrative power and divide it equally between the two traditional parties. The National Front governments were able to maintain relative social and political stability as well as enhance the domination of the two-party elite. However, this was achieved at the expense of closing the roads to genuine democratisation and inclusion, and allowing the poverty, social, gender, ethnic and regional gaps to continue to increase. The National Front governments met considerable popular opposition, discontent and mobilisation over the years, but the opportunities to pursue political opposition within the framework and rules of the prevailing system were restricted. As a consequence, some groups of the opposing popular forces resorted to armed struggle. Various guerrilla organisations were established during this period. The new Constitution of 1991 opened up some avenues for broader political participation. The traditional dominance of the conservative and liberal parties in Colombia was reduced and there was an increase in the number of parties.

A new political scenario has emerged, with the indisputable political and electoral strength Álvaro Uribe, elected President in 2002, and the response to this of the political parties and actors that want to stay in power or at least not disappear. This has led to a reconfiguration of the political scene and an increasing polarisation between the *Uribistas* on the one hand and the opposition on the other.

### Main current political parties

A political reform approved in 2003 to counteract the proliferation of political parties (which had reached 73) resulted in a considerable decrease of political parties with legal representation (*personería jurídica*). Only 16 parties qualified to participate in the 2006 elections and only 10 obtained representation in the Senate. The most important ones were:

- Partido Social de la Unidad Nacional, “Partido de la U”
- Partido Conservador Colombiano, PCC
- Partido Liberal Colombiano, PLC
- Partido Cambio Radical Colombiano, CR
- Partido Polo Democrático Alternativo, PDA

*Partido Social de la Unidad Nacional* or *Partido de la U* was born in 2005 out of a dissident movement among congressmen of the traditional parties (mainly the Liberal Party) that basically gathered together to support President Álvaro Uribe’s candidacy for re-election in the 2006 elections and, with the aid of the President’s image, obtain the parliamentary majorities. The party was headed by the former minister of defence Juan Manuel Santos, who aspires to become the next presidential candidate provided that the actual President does not run for a second re-election.<sup>17</sup>

After the 2006 election, *Partido de la U* became the majority party in Congress. Favoured by the “floor-crossing” of 2009 (*transfuguismo*)<sup>18</sup>, the party later augmented its number of seats (*curules*) in Congress from the 53 gained in 2006 to 73 seats. However, the party has experienced considerable problems in terms of party discipline. This is due to strong dissidences inherent in the way in which the party was founded and the pragmatic or transient links that keep it united in the first place. Furthermore, 13 leaders (including congressmen) of this party are being investigated and some have been found guilty of having links with paramilitary groups.

Programmatically *Partido de la U* defends the “democratic security” policy of the government and supports the second re-election of President Uribe through a re-election referendum project. This political position supports a strategy intended to preserve the spoil system (*quotas burocráticas*) of the party parliamentarians and to facilitate their campaigns by capitalising on the electoral strength of the President. The referendum, however, confronts legal processes because of alleged illegal financial contributions, violation of ceilings of financial support and an investigation of procedural fraud of the congressmen who voted in favour of the re-election project.

The *Partido Conservador Colombiano* (PCC) was founded in 1848. It was a political current that brought together many of the landlords and the clergy of the country, and that sought to preserve social and economic structures of the colonial times, such as the Church-State relationship and a system of tariffs that protected the local markets. For many years it confronted, in an exclusionary manner, the Liberal Party, shaping a bipartisan political system excluding third forces. Later, in the midst of the democratic debate, the party was losing political force and moved ideologically towards the centre. More recently the PCC has entered into a forceful process of modernisation, pioneering the implementation of internal democracy and introducing measures that have contributed to a regional party structure much more solid than that of its competitors.

<sup>17</sup> Please, note that this paper was written before President Uribe’s ambition to become re-elected a second time was declared unconstitutional.

<sup>18</sup> A political reform of June 2009 allowed members of Congress and elected officials to change parties during a specific transitory period. Between mid-July and mid-September 2009, they could become defectors without any punishment.

The party took advantage of the political reform of 2003 and benefited from the floor-crossing of parliamentarians, increasing its electorate by receiving dissidents that returned from smaller conservative parties wiped out by the reform. In this way the PCC was strengthened and it currently constitutes the second most important political force in Congress, having increased its number of seats from 46 in 2006 to 57 at present.

The party has the most disciplined and organised legislative bench (*bancada*) in Congress, making it important for establishment of majorities. Although the conservatives are members of the *Uribista* coalition, they are not unconditional supporters of the government. They support the re-election of the President, but based on a strategy to retrieve their *quotas burocraticas* and enlarge them, with a view to feed their regional political networks.<sup>19</sup> Internally the party is discussing the possibility of launching its proper conservative candidate, but may also be interested in joining Uribe with a conservative vice-presidential candidate in case the President decides to run for re-election. The PCC has been severely affected by paramilitary infiltration and 14 of its leaders have been investigated and found guilty of cooperation with paramilitary groups.

Ideologically the party is based on the belief in God as the centre of the universe, the existence of a natural order of mankind, the respect for human dignity, and on universal morality. Programmatically it bases its support of the “democratic security” policy of President Uribe on the view that it constitutes a historic purpose of conservatism and on the opinion that the President has manifested himself as consistent with these conservative ideas.

The *Colombian Liberal Party* (PLC) emerged in the epoch as the Conservative party and legally defined itself as a political organisation in 1912. In the bipartisan history of Colombia it fought with the conservatives over political power. With the introduction of a multiparty system, the weaknesses of the party became evident, manifested by increasing internal divisions, ideological ambiguity and disconnection with the citizens. This ended in internal splits and in a loss of its position as the biggest party in Congress.

With the lessons learned from the 2006 elections, ex-President César Gaviria assumed the leadership of the party and initiated a process of building internal cohesion. This, together with the pressure of the *Uribista* phenomenon and the political reform of 2003, has obliged the party to reconsider its ways and forms of political organisation and practice.

Presently, the PLC bench is becoming increasingly disciplined and organised. It now consists of 58 congressmen, counting the five parliamentarians that have recently switched to PLC. In respect to the presidential election, the party has attempted to promote, without success, an inter-party opposition alliance around its presidential candidate Rafael Pardo with a view to defeat the possible candidacy of President Uribe.

PLC has advanced quite a lot with regard to internal democratisation and capacity to reach new groups of voters. Its organisational structure is undergoing a strong proc-

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<sup>19</sup> According to Cristina Vélez Vieira, Political scientist at the *Universidad de los Andes*, Bogotá.

ess of modernisation and the party has a broad popular base. Its regional structure is very solid, but not altogether controlled. Ideologically the party constitutes a coalition of democratic left tendencies that converge in the defence of the principles of social democracy, diverge regarding economy, defend rule of law and recognise the reality of globalisation. Fourteen PLC leaders have been investigated and found guilty of involvement with paramilitary groups while one has been investigated for alleged links with the FARC.

The party *Cambio Radical Colombiano*, PCR, was founded in 1998, as a dissidence of the Liberal Party. In the beginning the party attracted incipient *Uribista* movements that were dissenting from the Liberal Party and sought to come together to compete in the elections of 2003 since the political reform forced them to increase their electorates in order to be able to remain in the political competition.<sup>20</sup>

Not without internal discrepancies, PCR supported President Uribe in the last elections, but regarding the forthcoming election it has held a distance, expressing unqualified support to the presidential candidacy of Germán Vargas Lleras, the founder of the party. As a result, the PCR legislative bench in Congress experienced some strong outbreaks of indiscipline and defections on the part of some of its members who were convinced supporters of the re-election of Uribe.

As a result of this the party's seats in Congress diminished from 35 to 23. Before the difficulties with the traditional political bosses (*caciques*), Vargas Lleras based his strategy for the party on handing over power to young politicians that shared his own political preferences, among them some sons of leaders sacrificed in the wave of violence linked to drug trafficking during the 1980s and heirs of the Luis Carlos Galán current of Colombian liberalism.

The PCR depends mainly on its parliamentary leaders and their electorates; it lacks a real party structure and its functioning revolves exclusively around the elections. Regionally, the party has gained ground through coalitions or own candidates who have managed to win public offices and positions at the regional level. PCR carried out its National Convention, which implied a timid step towards internal democratisation. Ideologically it is a centre-right party posed to give continuity to the "democratic security" policy. Eleven PCR leaders are under investigation for links with the paramilitaries among whom one has been found guilty.

The *Polo Democrático Alternativo*, PDA, party was created in 2005 by virtue of the political reform of 2003 under a political agreement of unity among different leftist movements (which had gathered force since 2002 at the presidential and congressional elections), and specifically involving the Polo Democrático Independiente (PDI) and Alternativa Democrática (AD) in which the Colombian Communist Party was included. In this sense, PDA is a result of the idea of empowering the democratic leftist and independent political currents to achieve the political power, or to play a more significant role in the political arena, where they had earlier failed as separate forces. For two consecutive periods, PDA has won the elections for the Mayoralty of Bogotá and gained more votes than the Liberal Party in the past presidential elections. Yet, profound internal divisions are restraining the possi-

<sup>20</sup> Vote Bien, [http://www.terra.com.co/elecciones\\_2006/partidos/12-01-2006/nota271290.html](http://www.terra.com.co/elecciones_2006/partidos/12-01-2006/nota271290.html)

bilities of consolidation and achievement of political power of the party. PDA has also failed to settle its internal disputes behind closed doors.

The PDA bench in Congress, suffering a minimal drop in the House of Representatives due to floor-crossing, at the moment has 17 congressmen.

In relation to the presidential elections, one of the PDA congressmen has brought a lawsuit for procedural fraud against the committee promoting the re-election initiative, which for the time being has put a deadlock on the work of this committee. Regarding PDA's forthcoming presidential campaign, an internal division has emerged to the extent that the Party Congress has decided not to make alliances with other parties during the presidential campaign. Despite this decision, the PDA candidate who won the popular consultation for the presidential elections and his supporters do not rule out inter-party alliances with the PLC and other opposition movements. A flexible (ambiguous according to critics) political programme discourse to generate less public resistance has been formulated.

This may leave PDA divided and in confusing positions, or stigmatized as being too radical, increasing the likelihood of defeat in the coming presidential elections and discrediting the party as a progressive leftist alternative among the voters. PDA thereby risks missing the opportunity to establish itself a third political force.

It should also be noted that the excessive weight of PDA's parliamentary bench in the internal power structure of the party impedes the structuring of PDA as an institution. The absence of social movements is obvious, and the loss of touch with public opinion has led the party to commit errors.

The PDA internal organisation is otherwise characterised by an inclusive approach with respect to the different groups of society. Decisions are taken by consensus in forums open to the leaders and, in certain cases, to the party activists, evidencing a strong practice of internal democracy. However, this also opens up the possibility for critical moments of internal disagreement and division. The PDA has a national-regional structure and a very incipient grassroots base. It is strongest in the large cities and the middle and higher socioeconomic strata. Three PDA leaders are under investigation for alleged ties to the FARC.

In addition to the above parties, there is the Green Party, *Partido Verde*, which in its early days had ties to the Citizens Convergence (*Convergencia Ciudadana*) a small party that has been involved in the "parapolítica"<sup>21</sup> investigations, although originally a leftist party. The Green Party is an umbrella organisation created for the upcoming elections. It is therefore undergoing a process of programmatic and leadership redefinition.

Three former Bogotá mayors, Luis Eduardo Garzón (former member of the PDA), Enrique Peñalosa (former member of the Liberal Party) and Antanas Mockus have "taken over" the party with the idea of getting hold of centre and independent voters and saving the party's legal representation (*personería jurídica*). This representation

<sup>21</sup> Throughout the year 2006 and on, a series of public debates have revealed extensive links between members of Congress and other political leaders with paramilitary groups in Colombia, constituting what has been called the "parapolítica" scandal. For more extensive and detailed documentation see Mauricio Romero (ed.) et al., 2007. *Parapolítica, La ruta de la expansión paramilitar y los acuerdos políticos. Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, Intermedio, Bogotá.*

allows them to participate in national elections and in this way they can elect its independent candidates in the regional elections, and subsequently project its presidential candidate before the 2014 presidential election.

These ex-mayors enjoy national recognition, but individually and separately they lack sufficient electoral strength to overcome the threshold of entry to Congress and the possibility of choosing different offices for the elections of 2010 and 2011. Programatically they are appropriating the green discourse, which is emblematically more associated with environmental non-partisan organisations.

## Factors with Influence on the Party System

Largely as a result of the political reforms since 1991 the party system has developed from closed bipartisanship, via a multiparty system based on factions and individualisms, towards a multiparty system in consolidation. This process has been wrought by a regulatory system designed to rationalise the political arena favouring party size and internal party cohesion. Furthermore, the events can be traced to several historically rooted factors.

### Poverty and Social Inequality

In 2008, 46 percent of the population of Colombia lived in poverty,<sup>22</sup> while 17.8 percent lived in extreme poverty,<sup>23</sup> meaning that 64 percent, i.e. approximately 28 million people found it difficult to afford, or simply could not afford, the basic food basket. The Gini coefficient of income inequality<sup>24</sup> is 0.59 in Colombia, indicating that income inequality is one of the highest in Latin America.<sup>25</sup> In recent years, there have been some improvements in respect to poverty but these are largely attributable to the recent decline in food prices and the *Familias en Acción* social safety net programme, which provides direct monetary support to poor families (more than 2.5 million families have received this support). This programme is not a financially sustainable solution nor does it generate sustainable impacts with respect to the living conditions of the families.

The serious poverty levels in Colombia, the wide income and wealth gap, and the lack of social, political and economic opportunities are used in campaign slogans and proposals which are then abandoned at the time of defining public policies to resolve the problems. This has created a process of severe rupture between the voters on the one hand and the political parties and their candidates on the other, ostensibly reducing the legitimacy of party politics, leading to, voter abstention and electoral crimes such as the buying and selling of votes.

### Exclusion of Political Forces

The socioeconomic inequalities, coupled with a political competition with exclusion, elimination or disqualification of the opponent and the resulting polarisation of ideas, have sustained the violent confrontation for political power that has been so constant

<sup>22</sup> Poverty: when a family of four persons has a monthly income of less than US\$560.

<sup>23</sup> Extreme poverty: when the monthly income of a four person family is lower than US\$200.

<sup>24</sup> According to the Gini coefficient of inequality there is complete equality when the indicator is zero.

<sup>25</sup> The 0.59 Gini coefficient was reported in *Resultados Fase 1 de la Misión para el Empalme de las Series de Empleo, Pobreza y Desigualdad (MESEP)*, Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadísticas (DANE), Departamento Nacional de Planeación (DNP), el Banco Mundial, CEPAL, Fedesarrollo, Universidad Nacional, Universidad del Rosario, November 2009, Bogotá.

in Colombian history. During the period called “*La Violencia*” in the mid-twentieth century there were confrontations between liberals and conservatives organised in self-defence groups especially in rural areas, resulting in torture, massacres and persecution. Subsequently, the National Front regime (1958-1974) was established through a pact between the Liberal and Conservative parties, institutionalising the “alternation of power” with respect to the Presidency of the Republic. For 16 years the two parties put an end to their mutual exclusion and achieved a truce, but the system simultaneously generated severe problems.

Alternative political forces were excluded from the political system and the opposition largely lost its role. Some of the excluded political forces ended up claiming the necessity of armed struggle to gain power or to transform the political system, resulting in the emergence of insurgent movements, e.g. *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN, *Movimiento 19 de Abril*, M-19, *Ejército Popular de Liberación*, EPL, the indigenous *Movimiento Quintín Lame* and *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* and PRT.

### **The Constitution of 1991**

During the eighties, the wearing away of the traditional parties and their lack of legitimacy and incapacity to perform their duty of representation due to their outdated structure and self-oriented mode of operation, allowed new electoral forces to enter the political scene. In 1990 these social movements were able to promote a reform of the old Constitution from 1886. Thus, a National Constituent Assembly was established and a great transformation of the Colombian political system was initiated.

The process, resulting in the present Constitution, opened up for a diversity of political expressions and thereby for the abandonment of armed struggle by insurgent groups by letting such groups participate in the democratic process.

The Constitution of 1991 aimed to provide the legal framework needed to solve the existing political and social crisis and gave ample recognition of human rights and modernisation of the political institutions. It elevated the parties and political movements and the exercise of the opposition to a constitutional rank, and it established regulations to guarantee fair conditions between these political actors. It also developed the organisation of politics and the electoral process, and stipulated total legal liberties to carry out electoral activities.

The political scenario of a decaying bipartisan system was thus redefined in the direction of a multi-party system. New parties of diverse tendencies (political, ethnic, religious and others) were formally established and increased their representation in Congress considerably, even though it should be noted that many constituted dissidences of the traditional parties.

### **Clientelism**

Nevertheless, the still predominating clientelist mechanisms make the access to power very limited, as powerful minorities immersed in the parties capture the state and exclude the majority from the benefits of development. These practices, inherited from the National Front, constitute the ideal setting for the traditional parties, which



are leaving sectarianism behind and are instead supporting themselves through their control of the state bureaucracy, which is distributed equally among them in Congress as well as in government.

This practice has become deeply entrenched in the political system and entails a demoralisation of the political competition. The exercise of political representation and power becomes degraded into a struggle for booty, evidenced in the eagerness for the possession of political power based on its economic implications. It also protects the continuity of drug trafficking, smuggling, administrative corruption and paramilitary activity, and hence the existence of insurgent groups on the national stage.

Political clientelism has been one of the causes of the progressive weakening of the party structures and ideology, and the consequent de-politicisation of society. It allows political actors to create their individual power spheres, relatively independent from the parties and their ideological frameworks, thereby deepening the deinstitutionalisation crisis of political activity.

In connection with the practice of clientelism and the party explosion, caused by the opening provided by the 1991 Constitution, and the privileges political parties could obtain in terms of state funding and access to media, a worrisome political fragmentation occurred. The number of parties and movements with legal representation (*personería jurídica*) grew to 73, with different programmatic platforms usually responding to the desires of electoral “barons” to gain power.

Thus, the parties consolidated themselves as electoral machines to mobilise voters rather than to represent social groups or classes and facilitate their participation. Apart from the fragmentation of parties, the lists presented at elections multiplied by five the number of parties since there were no restrictions on the number of candidates that could be backed by a given party.

### **Election of President Uribe**

It was in this situation that President Álvaro Uribe was elected.<sup>26</sup> His political discourse was militaristic, reinforced by the failed peace process of the preceding government and the FARC. The discourse was against corruption and clientelism as well as marked by a profound undercurrent of disapproval of the political parties. This enjoyed broad popular acceptance.

This phenomenon was a warning sign for the traditional parties; they had to reform themselves or disappear overshadowed by a new protagonist offering solutions to many of the most important problems affecting the country. The presidential figure occupied the political spaces abandoned by the political parties, which had been more dedicated to controlling the bureaucracy than to representing their voters.

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<sup>26</sup> President Álvaro Uribe Vélez has governed with an ample margin of favouritism, parliamentary majorities and under a proposal of “democratic security”, which includes a strong military component maintained as a principle for regaining the state’s control over the Colombian territory and in this manner increase foreign investment.

### Electoral Reform of 2003

In response to this situation the electoral reform of 2003<sup>27</sup> was introduced, encouraging the grouping and strengthening of the parties and motivating them to function in a more disciplined and ideologically defined way.

Due to the establishment of a threshold (2%) for representation in Congress as well as for maintaining the legal status of a party, the number of political parties was reduced to 16. A single list for each party was introduced, helping to control the proliferation of lists and candidates, facilitating the process for voters and bringing order to the electoral competition. Furthermore, the implementation of the electoral quotient (D'Hont system) as a formula for translating votes into seats, favoured the parties that had obtained the most votes.

The reform also brought about progress with respect to the internal party organisation and the financing of campaigns. It insists on internal democratisation and encourages the exercise of political opposition. One tangible result of this reform was the creation of the leftist party *Polo Democrático Alternativo*.

### Paramilitarism and 'Parapolítica'

In 2004, however, the disclosure of the penetration of the public power by paramilitary groups, which not only controlled territories and appropriated the corresponding financial resources but also had become political power-holders, put the political institutions and representatives of the country in a severe new political crisis. *Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris* asserts that politicians dealing with Colombian paramilitary leaders are a phenomenon that had been going on even before the elections to the 2002 Congress. *Arco Iris* also claims that these alliances and deals were established at the level of the regional political bases (governors, mayors, legislators and councillors).<sup>28</sup> So far, 22 ex-congressmen and 83 congressmen have been investigated for ties to the paramilitaries ("*parapolítica*"), 10 of which have already been sentenced. Most of the involved politicians are members of the parties of the government coalition.<sup>29</sup> In turn, four other congressmen are under investigation for alleged ties to guerrilla movements ("*Farcpolítica*").<sup>30</sup>

These events have challenged the legitimacy and institutionalisation of the Colombian political system and democracy. To confront the situation, the Constitution has been strengthened by the introduction of the Legislative Act 1 of 2009 to protect institutions, such as parties and Congress, from the influence and pressure of illegal organisations.

### Lack of respect for democratic practices

In a recent *Barómetro de las Américas* survey,<sup>31</sup> the findings on Colombia show troubling attitudes with regard to the principles of liberal democracy. Colombia is one of the

<sup>27</sup> Legislative Act No. 1 of 2003.

<sup>28</sup> *Observatorio del Conflicto, Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, Análisis y Documentos*, [www.nuevoarcoiris.org.co/sac/?q=taxonomy/term/26](http://www.nuevoarcoiris.org.co/sac/?q=taxonomy/term/26)

<sup>29</sup> The legal processes have been clearly affected by the demobilisation process that has been conducted with the paramilitaries, in which, protected by the "Law of Justice and Peace" an individual (not a collective) demobilisation is carried out, delivering clear judicial benefits to paramilitaries, based on their confessions of "the truth."

<sup>30</sup> Two of the congressmen and one councillor represent the Partido Comunista through Polo Democrático Alternativo.

<sup>31</sup> Americas Barometer is based at the Vanderbilt University, Nashville. The Barometer has, together with partner institutions in the Americas and students, since the 1970s systematically surveyed the citizens of Latin America on their political views, specifically on democratic values and their behaviours related to democracy.

countries in Latin America with the highest proportion of people who would support measures that clearly infringe upon the civil liberties and the political rights of the citizens, e.g. approval of censorship, support of closure of Congress and courts by the President, and ignoring of the decisions of Congress and the courts.<sup>32</sup>

Almost 50 percent of the survey respondents believed that the people should rule directly, bypassing the normal channels of political representation.

The excessive concentration of power to the Presidency, the President's current popularity and the resulting polarisation can partially explain why Colombia, compared to other American countries, is the most favourable to the idea that the President can and should restrict the exercise of political opposition, and also the most strongly opposed to the expression of the ideas of minorities. In addition, Colombia ranks high with respect to the belief that those who are not with the majority are a threat to the country.

The survey also shows that the people least likely to respect democratic principles have a low level of education. Furthermore, it reveals that the supporters of the President tend to have a low level of respect for democratic principles. PDA followers are among the most respectful of the principles of liberal democracy (e.g. separation of power and protection of minority rights), while those who feel close to the Partido de la U and PCC tend to express a significantly higher degree of attitudes that infringe upon these principles.

The purchasing of votes by candidates and their campaign teams (mainly pertaining to the government parties which have more resources) is considered a crime against suffrage, but no legal tools exist to take such crimes to court. In the midst of a political culture that reproduces clientelist practices, there is a need to reform the electoral code to effectively bring this and other crimes that undermine the free and conscious democratic practice to court. In addition, there is a need to educate citizens with regard to electoral processes, citizens' participation and political ethics.

### **Concentration of political power to the presidency**

Deinstitutionalisation of the party system reaches its peak due to the disproportionate power accumulated by the executive headed by President Álvaro Uribe, who has led the concentration of executive power to higher levels. Uribe could, owing to his popularity, benefit from the clientelist political forces needing the support of his political capital to be able to maintain their power positions. At the same time, this enabled Uribe to control the clientelist practices through his management of public financial resources (programmes such as *Familias en Acción*, state contracts and the management at will of the resources of the territorial bodies).

The executive power and style of the governance of Uribe has also entered into conflict with the judicial power. Uribe has attempted to discredit and undermine the legitimacy of the Supreme Court, associating the Court with the interests of the guerrillas. Critics consider that these attempts are intended to weaken the Court in its capacity as judge in the processing the *parapolítica* investigations, since virtually all the

<sup>32</sup> Rodríguez Raga, Juan Carlos and Seligson, Mitchell A., 2008. *Cultura política de la democracia en Colombia, El impacto de la gobernabilidad*. October 2008. p. 206.

politicians affected by this process also are the President's political allies. One of the arrested congressmen is the political mentor and a close relative of the President.

Considering the excesses of the current presidential system and its *caudillist* aspect, a new draft amendment to the Constitution should be mentioned, which aims to allow Álvaro Uribe to run immediately for a third presidential term. The promoters of the referendum,<sup>33</sup> i.e. those who advocate the continuation of the current "democratic security" policy but under the leadership of President Uribe, reportedly face legal difficulties for violation of upper limits of campaign financing, and the legality of the origin of the resources that financed the collection of signatures to support an eventual re-election and referendum are also called into question. In addition, the lawmakers supporting this initiative in Congress have been denounced and prosecuted for fraud in the legislative process.

A previous amendment to the Constitution authorised the first re-election of President Uribe in the 2006 elections. At the moment, this amendment and re-election are subject to an open judicial process for bribery, allegedly committed by the government, of some of the congressmen that voted for the first amendment and re-election. The second consecutive re-election would complete the picture of an already weak Colombian political system, since it undermines the rule of law and upsets the checks and balances envisaged in the Constitution.

The infringements of the original intentions of the Constitution aggravate the deinstitutionalisation of the country, restrict the circulation of power and cut new leadership short. Through his massive presence in media, reinforced through permanent interviews in regional or local media all across the country in connection with his weekly "community councils", President Uribe has remained in uninterrupted electoral campaign. This exaggerated political presence, institutionally and in the media, accompanied by huge budget resources, undermines the exercise of opposition and fair competition as the opposition parties have no exposure or comparable resources.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, the opposition parties are in a process of slow recovery, forced by the reforms of the political and electoral system, and the audacity and high levels of popularity of the current President. These parties are now confronting the government, trying not only to position themselves in the public opinion but also to exercise control over the acts of the President, which, as a consequence of the excessive concentration of power, have contributed to events such as the so-called "false positives",<sup>35</sup> for which responsibility has been accepted by the government.

At the same time, the paramilitary continues to operate, using selective assassinations to avoid clear evidence of their prolonged presence as an armed force. It acts under the disguise provided by the demobilisation process and with the backing of the

<sup>33</sup> A referendum is required in order to modify the 1991 Constitution in a way that allows a second immediate re-election of the Colombian President.

<sup>34</sup> Bustamante Roldán, Jorge, 2009. *Colombia, una democracia amenazada*. *Revista Razón Pública*, July 13, 2009, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> "False positives" are extrajudicial killings of hundreds of young, poor and often unemployed civilians, committed by members of the military forces to show as "results" of anti-insurgency operations, and whose effectiveness is measured by number of deaths. According to Amnesty International, a strategy has also existed to eliminate civil society activists, trade unionists and peasants who have been falsely accused of being guerrillas or guerrilla supporters.

government. A sign of this was a famous meeting of spokespersons of drug traffickers, paramilitaries and government officials at the presidential palace.<sup>36</sup>

A recent investigation of the governmental Administrative Department of Security (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad*) discovered that this agency, which is directly subordinated to the Presidency, had infiltrated electronic and telephone communications of the opposition, the High Courts and several journalists. Furthermore, various directors of DAS have been prosecuted for cooperation with paramilitary groups.

Moreover, the delivery of agricultural subsidies and grants to both families that are important economic contributors to the election campaigns of the current President and to drug traffickers and their families is evidence of perverse alliances.

### **The Parties as Organisations**

Current parties range from “machines” that depend on certain personalities, to parties in consolidation that are aware of the need to strengthen their structures and become more representative, more transparent and ideologically clearer.

#### **Membership and participation**

Except for the PDA, the parties formally establish classes of membership. Generally a distinction is made between sympathisers (*simpatizantes*) and activists (*militantes*). In all cases, membership implies compliance with the party statutes and acceptance of the party ideology and programme. In contrast with this formality, however, most of the parties lack a base of institutionalised activists, except for some left-wing parties that belong to the PDA and some smaller remnants in the traditional Conservative and Liberal parties.

This can be explained by the fact that party membership has developed in isolation from the ideological or programmatic reflections generally expected. Since the beginning of the Republic, party activism was firmly associated with family tradition; people inherited being conservative or liberal. The parties, which actually responded to groups of notables interested in obtaining the political power in elections, deftly proceeded to generate an imagery of loyalty and faithfulness. The result was that the activism at grassroots level could never play a politically deciding role. Participation was reduced to electoral spaces or, unfortunately, sectarian and violent disputes in the regions.

During the National Front period, ideological boundaries became indistinct and, with this, the sectarianism promoted earlier lost ground. The strategy adopted to reproduce party ideology became exhausted, but the institutional framework of the National Front and the bureaucratic repartition included in the agreement offered a mechanism to establish a new binding link with the electorate, namely clientelism.

The result has been the continuing de-politicisation of society, inflicting a progressive rupture of relations between the society and the state and leading the national parties to fragmentation and to an inability to stay coherent and unified. Instead, the parties were reduced to dependence on the swings of personal powers (mostly of regional

<sup>36</sup> *Verdad Abierta, Revista Semana. Capturado el ex gobernador de Cauca Juan José Cháaux, 18 May de 2009.*

leaders) and they sought protection in, but were almost dependent on, small-scale negotiations with minor groups of voters.

Clientelism has appeared in different ways, first as a mechanism to attach or capture voters and constituencies and later through governments use of the state bureaucracy and institutions for the delivery of resources, with the main objective of obtaining political support from the Congress through the now abolished so-called “parliamentary support” (*auxilios parlamentarios*), until today’s different modalities of economic aid delivery by the government to regional and local levels to achieve political support.

In this situation, when the parties can no longer apply the binding strategy of clientelism (particularly the opposition parties that cannot benefit from any participation quota in the bureaucracy) they have turned to more modern forms of connecting with voters and expanding their membership base. The parties thus attempt to institutionalise spaces for member participation in internal party organs, in relation to the selection of authorities and candidates, through training and by allowing participation in party decisions and programmatic definitions through the party congresses.

Likewise, groups and permanent internal structures are established to encourage participation and representation of different social categories, e.g. women, youth, ethnic minorities, trade unions, pensioners, peasants, and social and grassroots organisations. In general and formally almost all the parties analysed here have taken some small steps to establish mechanisms to promote internal democracy and pluralism. Yet, those who participate in the government, except for the PCC, feel less of a need to resort to such mechanisms. PCC is a pioneer with respect to some of these forms of inclusion and participation, although these were mainly used as a strategy to change the party image, which had earlier contributed to the party being slowly pushed away from power.

### **Internal unity**

Among the more cohesive parties are the traditional ones that have learned the advantages of acting in a unified way and projecting an image of internal unity towards the public. These parties have learned through historical experiences and have adapted to the risks of losing space on the political scene. For example, the legislative bench of the PCC, in spite of its hierarchical and ideological structure, finds it easier to maintain internal unity than some other parties. The unification of leadership, the internal negotiation of leaders resulting in the election of an alternate leadership with deputy functions, quieted the visible internal fragmentation among its leaders. It also gained the party credibility and prominence on the political scene.

The *Partido de la U* and PCR in contrast, have shown their weak bonds of unity. Both parties are competing for the position as the leading Uribista party, but suffer from conflicting personal interests and the absence of convergence around a programmatic political identity.

Meanwhile, the PDA is composed of a range of organisations that have agreed to form a “party of tendencies”. However, the political weakness and instability of the alliance of tendencies, along with the uncertainty that this situation tends to generate,

have delayed the dissolution of these organisations within the PDA, complicating the process of building a coherent party that is credible in the eyes of the public opinion. The discussion has reached such critical points of disagreement on key issues that it has caused the departure of one of its main opinion builders, as well as the disagreement between one of party's main wings (and its losing presidential pre-candidate), with the winning pre-candidate.

On the whole, there is a lack of progress among all the parties mentioned regarding advances towards a better understanding and joint work under ideological (or at least programmatic) coherence. This shortcoming is particularly noticeable at the local level. Furthermore, the great weight of "personalities" in politics results in parties having difficulties consolidating themselves.

### **Internal democracy**

The Colombian parties do not have a tradition of internal democracy. It was observed that they are generally not "bottom-up" constructions and most of them are internally dominated by regional electoral "barons", which limits their outreach to the regional and personal levels and constitutes a strongly deinstitutionalising factor. Furthermore, the widespread clientelism discussed earlier counteracts the building of internally democratic parties.

Still, many parties have in recent years made considerable progress in respect in respect to internal democracy, even prior to the Legislative Act 1 of 2009, making it a constitutional requirement.

Among other things, the Constitution require party congresses to be held at least every second year. *Partido de la U*, PCC, PLC, and the PDA have complied with this. This "National Assembly," "National Conference" or "National Convention," (according to the specific terminology of the respective parties) is the supreme party authority. It generally defines ideological and programmatic issues, approves and amends the regulations of the parties, chooses the national board of directors (*Dirección Nacional*) and takes any other important decisions. The problem is that is often dominated by strong figures in the party, giving limited influence to party members.

Regarding the selection of candidates for elected office, the Constitution confers legal validity to the results of popular or internal consultations (*consultas populares, consultas internas*). However, it is mainly the national leadership and congressmen who have the faculty to define the lists of candidates for plurinominal<sup>37</sup> public offices. Also, it is only in the case of uninominal positions, and when there are more candidates enrolled than placed on a list, that most parties utilise the possibility to implement mechanisms such as popular consultation, internal consultation and favourability poll.

PCC and the PDA are the most open ones in this regard, followed by the PLC and the *Partido de la U*, while PCR is more restricted concerning mechanisms of internal democracy. Although the PCR statutes refer to a democratic and pluralistic internal organisation, there is no specification as to the mechanisms of implementation, nor evidence that internal democracy procedures have ever been put into practice.

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<sup>37</sup> Plurinominal and uninominal correspond to multi-member and single-member lists or districts.

The internal structure of the parties is based on national ramifications called directories, in most cases institutionalised through member voting (except for the PCR because its bodies incorporate elected leaders according to their level) or as members of the party's highest executive body. The President of PCR, for example, is elected by the Central Committee. Nonetheless, in the end the weight of the decisions congressmen make in their regions reduces the directories to merely administrative apparatuses, executing or deciding only on minor issues.

### **Ideology and party programmes**

As seen in earlier sections, the Colombian parties have largely developed on other grounds than ideological. In particular during the National Front period, ideologies and party programmes were blurred. However, recent years' reforms and political development have forced the parties to define themselves ideologically. In the current scenario it is mainly the opposition forces that have been able to recover the political content of their programmes and arrive at clearer ideological definitions. The government parties generally have weak structures, without differentiating programmes, and their strength depends on the political figure of Uribe and his high popularity ratings. The political orientation of these parties is largely defined by their affinity and support to the government which, in turn, represents a right wing position. Differences within parties are sometimes just as big as differences between them.

Nevertheless, the analysed parties do set out their ideological principles and programmatic platforms in their statutes and develop parts of these in specific documents. To promote party identity, the statutes of all parties require party member respect and commitment and advocacy of party ideology and programme. Moreover, some of the parties require that party candidates apply the party ideology and programme, in their campaigns as well as if elected, in legislative practice and on the part of the respective legislative bench.

The highest authority of the parties, whether referred to as National Congress, Convention or Assembly, is the democratic forum defining the ideological and programmatic position of the respective party. Nevertheless, no control mechanisms exist to enable follow-up on how the programmes and development plans of the elected candidates express the party ideology and programme, and whether they as legislators have acted in accordance with them.

The *Partido de la U* and the PCC have established communication strategies with the public, the legislative benches and the activists, to promote the programmatic and ideological base of the parties. The PLC and the *Partido de la U* conduct formalised training of leaders in their respective ideologies.

The above mentioned developments of the internal regulations of the parties are important for the strengthening of internal democracy since identity and unity are not really reflected in actual political practice. Lack of identity and unity is aggravated by weaknesses in communication at all levels of the parties and by the influence of powerful political personalities that represent disparate political tendencies within the parties. These factors make it difficult and costly to promote unity and to articulate single and coherent party messages. In the end, ideology and programmes tends to remain



on paper, as a requirement, while parties actually respond to conjunctural or clientist interests and bonds.

### **Campaigning capacity**

The ability of a party to conduct campaigns is mediated by financial, technical and legal conditions. In financial terms, the Colombian state provides funding for operations and elections to the parties with legal representation. Still, there is also illegal money in campaigns implying that campaign costs have become excessively high. It is very difficult to confront or control this phenomenon.

The situation varies according to the office that is to be elected. Concerning presidential elections, the outlook for the opposition parties will be complicated if the re-election of the actual President is approved because there will not be enough resources to compensate for the resources and potential of a candidate who is already president, including government contracting, free exposure in mass media, political tours through the country in connection with the “community councils”, and the current President’s high level of popularity.

Before the political reform of 2009 permitted the funding of campaigns for election to Congress through “advances”, it was only possible to receive a replacement of campaign costs after elections (*reposición de votos*), according to the number of votes obtained. This procedure facilitated the entry of illicit funds and the reform may counteract this problem. However, the 2009 reform has still not been legally approved.

Regarding the utilisation of campaign techniques and strategies, the parties have slowly ventured into implementing more modern campaigns at the presidential level. At all other levels, election campaigns are generally conducted in a very traditional, unorganised and clientelist manner, owing to on the one hand the great ignorance about new techniques and their benefits in terms of costs and access to the voter, and on the other hand a strong resistance to change, the high costs of training and access to new techniques and, above all, the great number of candidates.

The parties need to be acknowledged legally through acquisition of legal representation (*personería jurídica*) to be able to present their leaders as candidates. The PC lacks this status and, consequently, needs its alliance with the PDA to be able to present the PC party candidates.

### **Non-discrimination and equal opportunities for advancement**

Formally, all parties subscribe to democratic principles, meaning one can infer their egalitarian vocation and respect for differences in terms of internal coexistence of diverse tendencies, participation and representation.

For example, the *Partido de la U* and PCC incorporate within their structures the promotion of the participation of youth, women and minorities, the PLC does so more specifically with respect to ethnic minorities, while the PDA encourages the active participation of people of varying sexual and religious preferences. The PCR affirms more timidly, that it has a democratic and pluralist internal organisation, and rejects all forms of discrimination.

Most parties do not have quotas that ensure representation of certain groups. The women's caucus of the Congress unsuccessfully tried to push a bill in favour of gender equity in political party lists. However, some parties have introduced “affirmative action” in the form of quotas that increases the opportunities of different groups to access leadership positions of their parties, at the national, departmental or local level.

However, women, youth and minority groups still generally encounter difficulties in terms of inclusion and their participation is sometimes reduced to attendance without voice or vote. The financial resources of such groups are generally limited and, occasionally, these groups do not have access to structures or mechanisms within the party that can incorporate their political agendas.

For more information regarding the level of participation of women within parties, see the ranking carried out as part of the project *Campaña Más Mujeres Más Política* in 2008.

### **Transparency**

The Constitution (Article 107, paragraph 3) states that the political parties and movements should adhere to the principles of transparency, objectivity and morality as well as be publicly accountable for the volume, origin and destination of their incomes.<sup>38</sup> Also the parties in their regulatory principles advocate transparency concerning the management of resources. Yet the application of good practices is still far from ideal.

By law, parties are financially accountable to the National Electoral Council (*Consejo Nacional Electoral*), CNE, and must submit annual public reports on: a) the annual incomes and expenditures, b) the destination and execution of the public money allocated to them, and c) the incomes received and expenditures made during the campaigns. These reports should be published in a national newspaper.

Despite this, accountability is very weak. The resources of the campaigns are received by the political candidates and their management teams, and the parties are only responsible for collecting such reports once the campaigns are concluded and then submit them to the CNE.

There are no control mechanisms or follow-up of this information in order to guarantee transparency of the origin, volume and destination of all the resources through which political organisations and campaigns are financed. In addition, there are no penalties for the parties beyond those for neglecting to submit reports.

Furthermore, the CNE has no budgetary tools, logistics or techniques to uncover illegal donations, informal financing and financing in kind nor the use of public resources by campaigns or parties.

By law, the parties must have internal bodies and formally established mechanisms to monitor, control, investigate and sanction irregular behaviour in the management of internal economic resources. Yet, the weight of the leaders and their access to the

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<sup>38</sup> It is expected with regard to financing and accountability that, during the current term of office, the National Government or the Members of Congress present a legislative project of statutory law intended to develop these regulatory principles.

electorate and the votes, along with the fact that the control entities are generally led by party officials affiliated with the leaders, implies that their actions normally lack independence, liberty and legitimacy. Additionally, the technical capacity of parties is generally limited.

In sum, a lot remains to establish of a culture of transparency and ensure access to information of party members and the general public.

### **Respect for democracy and human rights**

All the parties, in their internal regulations and policies, formally express their respect for and defence of the principles of democracy and human rights. However, the acts of many parties rather reflect a lack of respect for democracy and human rights.

Especially the parties of the President's coalition, have been questioned due to various political scandals, e.g. the investigations of congressmen for illegal financing during the 2006 elections to Congress that sought to co-opt political power by putting it at the service of paramilitary groups and drug traffickers, the common buying of citizens' votes at elections, the altering of the election results in some cases, the alleged vote-buying in Congress by the government in order to approve the first re-election (which has already resulted in three congressmen under formal arrest) and the intimidation suffered by some candidates on the part of armed groups forcing them to abandon their political aspirations. These, among other things, demonstrate the parties' lack of commitment to democracy and respect for human rights.

Another example of the moral of parties was the constitutional reform in 2009, which introduced a series of penalties for crimes such as drug trafficking and joining of illegal armed groups, crimes against democratic participation and crimes against humanity, but without retroactivity. This has left unpunished the crimes committed during the 2006 elections, which, through other legal investigations and actions, have resulted in a sizeable number of congressmen being investigated and jailed for links with the paramilitaries. This "negligence" also rescues the government's majorities in Congress.

The opposition parties have shown more real progress in respect to democracy and human rights. For example, PDA explicitly rejects the use of armed struggle as a means of conflict resolution, arguing that it contradicts the methods and purposes advocated by the party. This declaration is important considering that the Colombian left has been associated with, rightly or wrongly, the use of armed struggle to gain power. It is also noteworthy that the PLC has established Secretariats for Human Rights within the party organisation from the national to the local level.

### **International networks**

Colombian political parties are authorised by Act 30 of 1994 to join or integrate themselves with other international parties. PCC has been one of the most advanced parties with respect to such partnerships. Affiliation with international democratic political organisations is not only institutionalised through the party statutes, but PCC has also established a secretary in charge of international relations.

PCC is a member of the Union of Latin American Parties (UPLA), the International Democrat Union (IDU) and several other regional and international bodies. Additionally, it is supported in Colombia by the Hans Seidel and Konrad Adenauer foundations of Germany.

PCL is a member of the Socialist International and also has a Secretariat of International Relations.

PDA is an observer party in the Socialist International and has organised committees at the grassroots level in several countries, incorporating Colombian activists living in various foreign countries.

The international party contacts of Partido de la U and CR are less developed.

## **The parties in the citizenry**

### **Polarisation**

It is not unusual in Colombian political life to use polarisation as a strategy to impose political discourses and policies. During the political history of the country, this kind of sectarian attitude aimed to eliminate opponents has several times led to violent conflicts, leaving very disturbing and still-vivid memories. Presently, the dilemma of the opposition is defined by the antagonism between the parties of the coalition supporting the President and the political opposition, sharpened by the President's interest in prolonging his mandate despite the deinstitutionalising consequences of such prolongation.

In a democracy, controversy and the debate of ideas are necessary and healthy, yet on the basis of mutual respect and within the framework of the Constitution, especially in a country where the use of violence to resolve domestic conflicts has occurred over and over again throughout the national history. This is why the strategy of stigmatisation of the opposition employed by the government and the coalition parties is regrettable and dangerous. The political actors are thus defined as “friends” or “enemies” of the country in accordance with their positive or negative stance with respect to the government. This has gone to the extremes, such as labelling representatives of the opposition as “guerrillas” or “guerrillas in disguise.” This strategy has been successful if measured in terms of the favourable perception of the government. However, the disastrous effect of the polarisation in the country is evidenced by the fact that, regardless of party affiliation and ideological position, those who approve most of the President also express the strongest opinions against the separation of powers and respecting the rights of the opposition and minorities.<sup>39</sup>

### **Fragmentation**

As pointed out earlier, Colombia went via a closed two-party system (described by some as a de-facto one party state), to an excessively fragmented party system enabled by the constitutional reform of 1991, to a more functional number of parties as a result of the reform of 2003. The thresholds for access to legal representation of parties and access to seats in public corporations, together with the distribution of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 227.

seats by the D'Hont system (electoral quotient), reduced the number of political parties from 73 to 16.

However, at the same time as the problem of party system fragmentation was successfully dealt with, the current legislation restricts the entry of new parties into the system and has made it difficult for certain interest groups to achieve political representation. Even though the reform was not impelled by the President, it has played in the hand of the government.

Also mentioned earlier, there is a considerable problem of fragmentation *within* certain parties.

### **Ideological variability**

Long ago, there were clear differences between liberals and conservatives. However, these largely disappeared under the National Front period and also excluded other political orientations, as mentioned earlier.

The 1991 reform opened up for ideological variability. There is now a broad range of ideological variation expressed in the ample array of parties that now constitutes the political scene. The Presidency of Álvaro Uribe and the newly approved political reforms are now forcefully bringing about a re-ideologisation process of the parties and of society at large. For example, the *Barómetro de las Américas* survey found that Colombians are returning to thinking in ideological terms, usually rightist, and that such preferences are correlated with their party sympathies. Ideologically, party supporters who identify with the PDA clearly belong to the left wing of the ideological scale, while supporters of other parties are on the right, especially those who identify with the *Cambio Radical* party.<sup>40</sup>

However, there is still a problem of ideological amorphousness of many parties and sometimes a lack of clarity whose interests the parties are really representing.

### **Volatility**

Volatility refers to changes in electoral support between elections. There has been an obvious political volatility driven by mergers and realignments, encouraged by the political reform of 2003, but also by movements appearing and disappearing from one election to the next. This volatility is also driven by the existence of single election movements and the existence of other movements that do not consolidate their identity separately from that emanated from the figure of President Uribe. Regarding election to the Senate, the 63 parties represented in the 2002 elections were reduced to 10 in 2006. Five of these 10 were new parties that had regrouped as a result of the reform, and two were parties that achieved this status as a result of acting as political movements in the 2002 elections.

By the 2010 elections, volatility will be less pronounced because of the disappearance of small *Uribista* parties due to the desertion of some of their congressmen, or as a result of the investigations of “*parapolítica*.” Given the above interpretation, it seems that the stability of inter-party competition has tended to improve. However, this

<sup>40</sup> Rodríguez Raga, Juan Carlos y Seligson, Mitchell A., 2008. *Cultura política de la democracia en Colombia, El impacto de la gobernabilidad*. October 2008, p. 250.

conclusion could be invalidated by the fact that we are dealing with a party system in transition. The intention of the reform was to increase the degree of institutionalisation of the system. At the same time, the reform has also resulted in increased instability due to changed rules.

A calculation based on a volatility index is quite risky as the political organisations of the two elections were quite different. Nevertheless, it deserves noting that PLC was among the parties hardest hit by the transformation of the electoral system, not only due to its archaic mode of functioning at the time, but also because of its refusal to support Uribe, which implied losing the support of important electoral “barons” and the many voters controlled by them.

In quantitative terms, the party went from being the largest party in Congress to being the third party, surpassed by PCC and suffering a 43% reduction in votes and a reduction of seats from 29 to 18 (- 38%), while the Conservative Party increased by 66 percent, and from 13 to 18 seats, and the new MIRA movement advanced from 1 to 2 seats.

### **Citizen participation in party politics**

The extent of citizen participation in party politics is partly reflected in the internal consultations conducted by political parties. For instance, in the 2007 consultation for selection of candidates to the various local political institutions (2008-2011), almost 6 percent of the electoral potential voted. In 2008, the figure was 8 percent. In the latter case only three main political parties carried out internal consultations.

There is a high correlation between these figures and the level of party affiliation,<sup>41</sup> also being low. Only 9 percent say that they have joined a party at some point and 12 percent declare that they have participated in an internal party consultation.

The low interest in these elections indicates that Colombians do not engage very deeply in the life of the parties. A reason for not participating in the consultations may be that these elections are not ultimately defining. Another, more perverse, reason is that because clientelist practices do not operate so decidedly in these elections, few material incentives and returns for the prospective voter can be expected.

Besides, generally the parties do not systematically cultivate and encourage their militants and sympathisers. Their elitist structures make such interaction difficult. Thus, the internal consultations and the party conventions are the only opportunities for militants and sympathisers to be called by the party. The social organisations, in contrast, have better captured the attention of citizens.

### **Public confidence in political parties**

The lack of transparency in resource management, the links with paramilitary groups, the floor-crossing of politicians, the absence of clear policies and programmes, and the weakness of the opposition when it comes to carrying out a strongly argued and forceful political control have damaged confidence in the political parties, in Congress, and in the elections as institutions in Colombia.

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<sup>41</sup> Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE), 2008. Encuesta de Cultura Política en Colombia, 2007.

In a DANE survey of Colombian's confidence in political parties,<sup>42</sup> 35 percent of the respondents stated that they have "little" confidence in political parties, and 29 percent that they have "none". Only 7 percent had "a lot". Still, the *Barómetro de las Américas* indicates a steady growth every year in trust in the CNE and the political parties, which to a certain extent may counterbalance the DANE findings. According to the *Barómetro* data, the citizens also qualified the political representation offered by the parties and their willingness to listen to people as satisfactory viewed in the context of the American continent.

### **Relations between parties and civil society**

In Colombia, there is a distance between the work realised by the parties and that performed by the social organisations, due to their negative perceptions of each other. While the representative function of parties has deteriorated, the social organisations have increasingly become an effective promoter of diverse social and interest groups. There is a need for social organisations and parties to overcome their mutual fears, to identify similar interests and to get to know the benefits of working together.

The opposition parties are strengthening their ties with social organisations, perhaps forced by the disillusionment caused by the absence of sustainable social policies in the current government and as a result of being the victims of 'demonisation' and questionable ethics. Yet, more important is the restricted access to, and control of, the public bureaucracy and financial resources of these parties. Since they are unable to resort to clientelism, they have had to adjust ideologies and programmes in a way that makes them converge with the organisations of civil society.

### **The political parties and media**

The television is by far the most important source of information in Colombia, followed by radio and newspapers. Even though the country formally enjoys freedom of press, its media is largely in the hands of economic groups and the political elite. In some cases they are even part of the national government payroll, as is the case of RCN TV, RCN Radio. The major newspaper *El Tiempo* is owned by the Santos family to which the former defence minister and leader of the *Partido de la U*, Juan Manuel Santos, and Vice President Francisco Santos, belong.

Freedom of expression is controlled by media e.g. by orienting and setting public agendas rather than channelling social demands and by promoting or imposing certain political personalities such as President Uribe as media figures, thus shaping public opinion and exerting control. In this sense, rather than providing a space for serious discussions among the parties, the media largely restrict the visibility of those belonging to the opposition, making political control and presentation of viewpoints different from the official ones more difficult.

The right to reply is protected during the presidential campaign period but is not extended to inter-electoral periods. This implies that political parties or movements are exposed to media assertions that are detrimental to their good name and dignity without the possibility to respond or rectify.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, DANE, 2008.

The submission of the public agenda to the interests of certain economic and political groups, as well as the disinformation caused by the media and the focus on certain political leaders has resulted in a journalism where information is sparse and biased while the propaganda component is extensive and aggressive,<sup>43</sup> where the opponent is stigmatised, and where the pluralism necessary for the quality of public debate is constrained.

In conclusion, the media have contributed to echoing polarising messages and this, as a consequence, has aggravated the institutional crisis. Although there are also some very government-critical newspapers and the Colombian media at times perform a critical and informative role, the current situation does not contribute to the balance of powers or of democracy in general.

### **Public debate**

Public debate on substantive issues is limited by the lack of space for such debates as well as the weaknesses of the parties to structure their respective positions and defend them unanimously. There have indeed been some good debates in Congress and there are many good and critical chronicles in newspapers (which are often subject to strong pressure and threats), but this becomes somewhat of 'a drop in the ocean' in relation to what is projected in media.

The opposition has largely had to resort to the same tactic as the government, i.e. to build their image through their media exposure of certain figures. This is a practice that has been utilised by the PLC, which used the image of former President César Gaviria to achieve greater media exposure, political control, and to project an image of unity and strength in order to compete with the strong media image of President Álvaro Uribe.

The international organisations and the social organisations have opened up alternative forums for public debate to discuss the crucial issues facing the country.

## **Parties in the Government**

### **Functioning of the political parties in legislative benches**

As from the introduction of the Law of Legislative Benches of 2005 and the political reform of 2009, political parties are obliged to work in parliamentary legislative groups, meaning that the elected representatives of the elected public bodies must converge in their deliberations with positions based on previously agreed decisions made within the respective party, and that their behaviour must respond to party policy.

Generally, the congressmen tend to act individually in their legislative work, at the expense of the bench discipline. When it comes to questions of national importance, however, the unity of the legislative bench tends to take over as a determining factor. In particular, the new legal requirements have resulted in a more coherent discourse as well as a more disciplined and cohesive behaviour on the part of the PCC and the opposition lawmakers in Congress.

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<sup>43</sup> Brunner, José Joaquín, 1996. *Comunicación y política en la sociedad democrática. In Contribuciones de Fundación Konrad Adenauer. Buenos Aires*, pp. 12-13.



It is the legislative group of the PCC that has best understood the advantages brought by discipline and internal unity. By acting in a more disciplined and united way, it has recovered both its capacity to bargain political decisions, and its presence in various government bodies.

The PLC has managed to establish a legislative bench in Congress that includes an increasingly strong discipline based on the use of spokespersons and the building of consensus prior to legislative sessions. Yet, more important is its ideological coherence in the debates. This, though with somewhat less success, also applies to the PDA.

The other parties of the governing coalition have shown difficulties in adapting. Their legislative activity has highlighted the challenges confronting the Colombian party system, normally accustomed to individual negotiations and expectations for hand-outs and bureaucratic offices rather than oriented by the interests of the represented. The *Partido de la U* has one of the most undisciplined legislative benches and lacks a programmatic identity as a party, which is inherent in its origin and the interests that coexist within the party and is also manifested in the high volatility of party members. The PCR decided not to support a third term of President Uribe and to present its own presidential candidate in the 2010 elections, a decision that was taken at a difficult moment of low internal cohesion and decline in the number of members of PCR's legislative bench. Presently the party enjoys a situation of good internal governance although not much popularity and, in addition, its bargaining power is decimated after having left the government coalition.

Regarding the procedures of the Law of Legislative Benches, a lot still remains to be done. As discussed above, there are difficulties on the part of party representatives to comply with the regulations, and the parties are weak in applying sanctions for disorder or disrespect for decisions taken democratically.

#### **Floor-crossing (*transfuguismo*): evidence of the de-institutionalisation of parties**

In recent years a process of re-organisation of party forces has occurred, caused mainly by the political reform of 2003 that prompted emergence of new political forces and regrouping of established parties in order to maintain the required legal representation in the 2006 elections. Party switching by leaders and representatives in elected offices was in a certain way acceptable since the rules of the electoral system had been changed and small parties would become integrated into larger ones.

However, what is unacceptable is that in 2009, in anticipation of the 2010 elections and through a reform of the Constitution, a transitional article was introduced allowing for switching of parties, so-called *transfuguismo*. New political alliances were formed, based on Uribe's re-election project rather than on programmatic or ideological affinity, and that are encouraged by the interest of the *Uribista* government coalition to strengthen its impact and upset the opposition. Unfortunately, the biggest losers in this process are the Constitution and the political parties, which become victims of the short-term fluctuation of interests of short-term political majorities.

Consequently, the convinced and many undecided concerning the presidential re-election headed to the *Partido de la U*, which grew by 38 percent in Congress. The

introduction of the transitional article was also a masterstroke to weaken the *Cambio Radical* party, one of the strongest opponents of the current President.

Allowing party switching was also a response to the higher threshold for entry to Congress and the discredited condition of the small *Uribista* parties which were heavily decimated by the prosecution of their representatives in Congress for links with the paramilitaries, as well as because the deputies of these representatives did not want to be associated with the prosecuted representatives. One of these parties was affected to the point that it now has no representation in the Senate. The PCC, however, increased its legislative bench by 24 percent thanks to the return of former dissidents.

The opposition did not experience major changes. The PLC grew by 9 percent, and the legislative bench of PDA was reduced by just 6 percent, which is a sign of its strengthening in terms of coherence and institutionalisation. These parties were the only ones that, in the context of the phenomenon of floor-crossing, were most faithful to the will expressed by citizens at the polls.

### **Linkage between parties and the Executive**

Though of liberal origin, President Uribe does not belong to any party. He has registered all his political candidatures through organisations created by way of signature collection, and then the organisations are dissolved after completion of the election process. He is convinced that there is no need for political parties and this opinion is confirmed by his style of “communitarian” government, which establishes direct contact with the citizens and rejects the demand for other forms of representation.

The National Front’s legacy of clientelism and abandonment of ideological convictions has been taken advantage of by the present government, which distributes its support to the parties by means of bureaucratic, contractual negotiations and in accordance with the benefits that attracting popularity may bring. Therefore, the top leadership positions of the government are distributed among the parties of the government coalition in a way that responds to the President’s purely pragmatic need to control majorities in Congress. This in turn expedites the processing of government policies.

### **International Cooperation**

The principal international actors providing technical assistance for the strengthening of parties are the American party foundations, i.e. the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI). They work across the party spectrum on issues such as internal democracy, transparency, inclusion and policy formulation. The German party foundations Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Hans Seidel Stiftung are also active in Colombia, supporting ideologically likeminded parties. Broadly speaking this support aims at strengthening democracy and the rule of law through training, technical assistance, open discussions and analyses.

In addition, various international organisations have components, programmes and projects focused on the strengthening of political parties in Colombia. These include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International IDEA.

Their joint programme largely focuses on the broader framework for the political parties, and has among other things resulted in a number of analyses of the effects of the electoral reforms. UNDP and IDEA have also headed a project, supported by several international donors, regarding women's participation in parties (*Campaña más Mujeres Más Política*), which included a ranking of the political parties and political movements with respect to gender equality.

Other actors include the Spanish Agency for International cooperation (AECID), the Organisation of American States (OAS), United States Agency for International Cooperation (USAID), *Parlamento Andino*, and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). In addition, a few Embassies are engaged work related to parties.

The activities of the above mentioned organisations often extend beyond that of political party development. For example FES Colombia has three main lines of work: Conflict and Peace, International Politics and Democracy and Society, within which support to parties is one component.

Among the above-mentioned actors, there is a high degree of coordination in relation to current events such as elections and reforms.