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# Interventions for overcoming poverty: the case of Colombia (2010-2014)

Prosperidad Social

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# Interventions for overcoming poverty: the case of Colombia (2010-2014)



## **ABSTRACT**

This document presents the main interventions and programmes of *Prosperidad Social* (Social Prosperity) in Colombia, aimed at overcoming poverty, using income and multidimensional measures on the part of the poorest and most vulnerable populations, and also the achievements and major challenges that this entity faces as an institution. To such effect, the present document starts with a brief description of the institution and of the governmental Social Inclusion and Reconciliation sector, in order to subsequently carry out a diagnosis of the poverty situation in the country, focusing on territorial differences that occur in Colombia, followed by the description of the institution's main programmes and how these have helped to reduce poverty rates in the country, generating capabilities and skills to beneficiaries. Finally, this document depicts the challenges and commitments being made by the sector, to promote a minimum level of wellbeing for all citizens.

**Keywords:** Poverty, extreme poverty, territorial differences, vulnerable population, Colombia

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Prosperidad Social* (Social Prosperity), as head of the Social Inclusion and Reconciliation Sector, has the reduction of poverty and the social inclusion of Colombians among its functions. During the period 2010-2014 and through different mechanisms, 3.2 million persons overcame poverty in Colombia by income generation; 1.6 million overcame extreme poverty, equivalent to a reduction of the poverty index from 37.2% to 28.5%, and of extreme poverty from 12.3% to 8.1%, and the multidimensional poverty decline from 30.4% to 21.9%, equivalent to 3.4 million individuals.

However, there are still major challenges for the country in this field, considering that as of June 2015 there were 13.1 million people living in income poverty, and 10.3 million in multidimensional poverty by 2014, as well as 7.5 million victims of the armed conflict, 6.2 million of them displaced from their lands. Furthermore, differences within the territory are evident, where rural multidimensional poverty is 2.8 times higher than in urban areas, and income poverty can be 3.5 times higher. These figures indicate that despite the good results, the country has to continue making great efforts to reduce poverty and for the social inclusion of its citizens.

In view of the above, this document is aimed at presenting Colombia's policies, programmes and actions for poverty reduction and social inclusion of its citizens, focusing on the role that Social Prosperity plays in this objective, and the efforts being made to reduce urban-rural gaps. Therefore, the first part of this paper focuses on a brief description of the Department for Social Prosperity, its functions, organization and related entities. Subsequently, a diagnosis of the poverty situation in the country is made, together with the different ways to measure and analyse the causes of poverty reduction in Colombia. Once the poverty situation in the country is assessed, the entity's major programmes, such as "*Más Familias en Acción*" (A conditional cash transfer programme), "*Red de Seguridad Alimentaria*" (A food security programme), "*Produciendo por mi Futuro*" (A productive inclusion programme), and "*De Cero a Siempre*" (A Comprehensive care to early childhood programme) are explained, as well as their role in poverty reduction, so that subsequent emphasis is made on comprehensive interventions and how it has been possible to articulate the institution's offer through different population approaches. The entity's challenges and policy perspectives are presented in the following section, and how the organization sees its work and functions in the upcoming years.

## 2. SOCIAL PROSPERITY: FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION

In the year 2011, the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Co-operation known as "*Acción Social*" (Social Action) turned into the Administrative Department for Social Prosperity, with a view to ensuring the continuity of services for the poor and vulnerable and to avoid the duplication of functions. Social Prosperity is the National Government agency that seeks to "formulate, adopt, direct, co-ordinate and implement policies, general plans, programmes and projects for poverty reduction, social inclusion, reconciliation, recovery of territories, care and reparation for victims of violence, attention to vulnerable groups, disabled persons, and social and economic reintegration" (Decree 4155 of 2011: nd). Its main challenge is to make progress in overcoming poverty, the inclusion of vulnerable population and the victims of violence, and the consolidation of territories, by ensuring the presence of the State, on a path of prosperity and reconciliation.

This Administrative Department is at the forefront of the Social Inclusion and Reconciliation Sector, to which the following five entities are attached, with population and territorial approaches depending on their competences:

1. The "Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas" (Unit for Assistance and Comprehensive Reparations for Victims - UARIV for its acronym in Spanish), aimed at leading the actions of the State and the society to deal with and repair in full for the victims of the conflict.

2. The “*Unidad Administrativa para la Consolidación Territorial*” (Administrative Unit for Territorial Consolidation - UACT for its acronym in Spanish), “aimed at the implementation, execution and follow-up of the National Policy for Territorial Consolidation, and at the direction, articulation and co-ordination of differentiated institutional interventions in targeted regions and in areas affected by illicit crops” (Decree Law 4161 of 2011:2).
3. The “*Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar*” (Colombian Family Welfare Institute - ICBF for its acronym in Spanish), which works for the comprehensive protection of infancy, childhood, adolescence and the wellbeing of families in Colombia.
4. The “*Centro Nacional de Memoria Historica*” (National Center for Historical Memory), whose mission is: “To contribute to the comprehensive reparation and to the right to the truth for the victims of the Colombian armed conflict, as well as for the society in general, and to act as the State’s memory concerning the serious human rights violations that have occurred in the framework of the Colombian conflict, searching for the construction of a sustainable and lasting peace, democratization and reconciliation” (CNMH 2014: nd).
5. The “*Agencia Nacional para la Superación de la Pobreza Extrema*” (National Agency for Overcoming Extreme Poverty - ANSPE for its acronym in Spanish), entity in charge of the strategy for the social promotion of the country’s poorest and most vulnerable population, from the alignment of family and community support with services provided by public institutions, the optimization of private social investment and social innovation initiatives.

Aimed at reaching the different Colombian territories, Social Prosperity has 35 regional offices and one national office, in order to promote alignment and co-ordination throughout the country, to provide technical assistance to territorial entities, to promote participation and social control, and to implement policies, programmes and strategies in the sector.

### **3. HOW HAS POVERTY EVOLVED IN THE REGIONS OF COLOMBIA?**

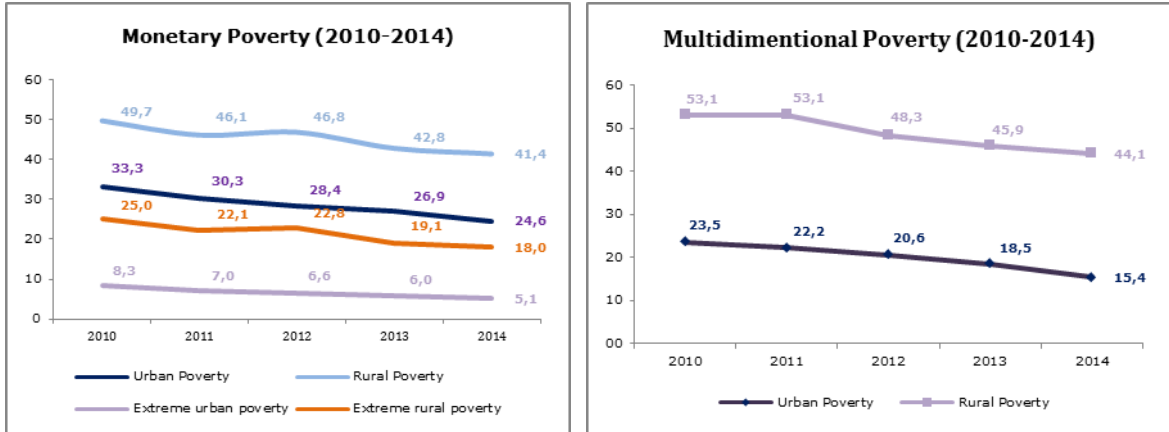
When we speak of Colombia as a whole, we can undoubtedly say that the progress attained by the country in the reduction of poverty has been of great importance. During the period 2010-2014, more than 3.2 million individuals were able to receive income that helped them overcome poverty; more than 1.6 million exceeded the income poverty threshold, to ensure at least their food, overcoming an extreme poverty situation; and more than 3.4 million overcame deprivations in health, education, labour, child care and housing conditions in the same period.

Nowadays in Colombia only 28 individuals out of 100 lack the necessary income to meet all their needs; 8 out of 100 do not have enough money to cover their nutrition needs, and 22 out of 100 suffer from multidimensional deprivations.

Notwithstanding the above, Colombia is a country with deep regional differences. Diversity has characterized the territory and its population, as well as its political organization (CINEP, 1998), which has resulted that the achievements with respect to poverty alleviation are highly variable and, in some cases, insufficient for some regions.

For example, there are still huge disparities regarding development and income generation in rural and urban areas, in spite of the fact that poverty has decreased in both domains (Figure 1). For instance, a person born in a rural area in Colombia has a 1.7 times higher probability of being income poor and is 2.9 times more likely to suffer from multiple deprivations.

Figure 1: Evolution of urban and rural poverty in Colombia



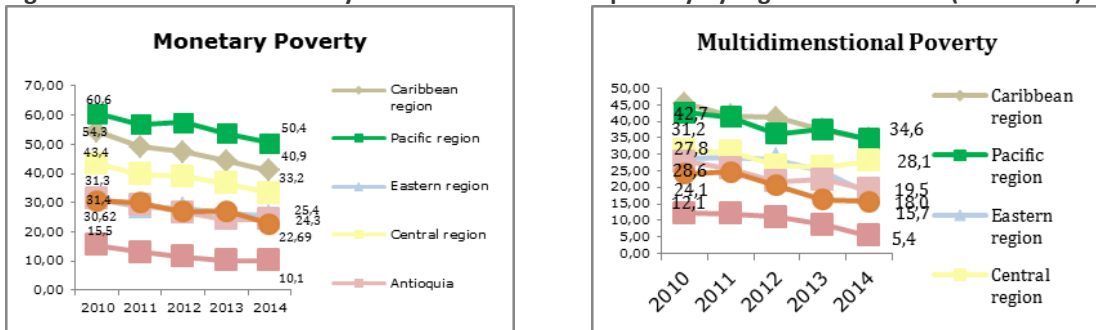
Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE for its acronym in Spanish).

In spite of the fact that the rural unemployment rate has traditionally been significantly lower than the urban unemployment rate (5.5% rural vs 9.4% urban, 2015) and that income poverty levels have shown important reductions (from 47.5% in June 2011 to 40.1% in June 2015), rural households have serious difficulties with the generation of income and improvement of their living conditions. Their average income is increasingly far from urban incomes. In 2015, the average salary for worker in a rural zone was Col\$ 439,622 (approximately US\$ 146) while an urban worker received Col\$1,009,568 (approximately US\$ 367). If all household incomes are included (e.g. interests, rentals, pensions, etc.), the gap is larger: the per capita income in a rural household is Col\$218,757 (approximately US \$ 73) whereas the urban is \$634,808 (approximately US\$ 211). That is, the urban per capita income is three times the rural income.

This gap has been maintained since the 1950s. "In the 50's the urban per capita income was three times the rural income; in the 70's it was 1.7 times and in the 90's it was 3.5 times" (Lora and Herrera, 1994). The gap and the absence of significant economic growth in rural areas, have resulted in "an aging countryside", as a result of the mass migration of women and youth to the urban areas, where they often find better paid formal jobs, and better living conditions (Leibovich et al., 2006).

The country's high heterogeneity causes that concerning the regions one can tell their differences, not only because of the rurality criterion, but also because of their culture, dedication to production and socio-economic status. In Colombia there are at least five distinct regions, namely: (1) The Caribbean region, (2) the Pacific region, (3) the Central region (4) the Eastern region, and (5) the Amazon region; and the three major cities are in Bogota, Antioquia and Valle del Cauca.

Figure 2: Evolution of monetary and multidimensional poverty by region in Colombia (2010-2014)



Source: Social Prosperity, based on DANE's poverty indices.

Despite the immense heterogeneity, in recent years, poverty has decreased in all regions of the country. However, there continues to be a large regional gap, as can be observed in Figure 2.

The country's poorest region is the Pacific region, where today half of its population is poor; in 2010 the figure was 60%. This region has always been known for its difficult poverty and rurality conditions, as well as for the strong presence of ethnic minorities (Indigenous and Afro-Colombian).

The income generation problems that affect this region have had multiple causes: bad weather due to its location in a tropical jungle, with a very humid climate; having low fertility lands and weak institutions that have always favoured inequality. Additionally, they have an extreme concentration of the economy in the exploitation of gold and platinum, forestry and the so-called "backpacker" tourism.

The Pacific region is the one with more multidimensional poverty across the country. Its levels of deprivation are evidenced by its low educational achievements, illiteracy, school lag, informal employment, obstacles to access health services, lack of water and sewage, which are more than 7 percentage points above the national average.

The poorest department in the Pacific region is Chocó, where 66% of its population is poor due to, among other causes, a chronic de-industrialization process and the growth of illegal mining. The second poorest department is Cauca (with a poverty rate of 54.2%). The main cause of poverty in the department of Cauca is the strong inequality in land tenure and low soil fertility. The rest of the Pacific region is comprised of the department of Nariño, where 42.9% of its population is poor due to their high levels of rurality, geographic isolation and specialization in low value-added tourism (Viloria De la Hoz, 2008).

On the other hand, the Caribbean region is second with the highest poverty in the country; 41% of its population is poor by income and 34.6% are multidimensionally poor, particularly by deprivation due to illiteracy, school lag, informal employment, lack of water and sewage, inadequate flooring in households and overcrowding.

The Caribbean region located at the north of Colombia is comprised by seven departments in the mainland (Atlántico, Bolívar, Cesar, Córdoba, La Guajira, Magdalena and Sucre) and one island department (San Andrés and Providencia).

This region has a strategic geographical position, which facilitates foreign trade through the Caribbean Sea (Aguilera et al., 2013). The region's production is quite diversified, with agriculture, livestock, mining, industry, tourism and sea transportation standing out. However, agricultural and industrial activities have become less important, while mining and services have registered a significant growth, unfortunately accompanied by high levels of labour informality. The industry is concentrated in Barranquilla, capital of the department of Atlántico, and Cartagena, capital of the department of Bolívar; therefore, income levels are very uneven within departments in the region.

Furthermore, the Caribbean region is characterized by having the highest teenage pregnancy rates and the highest average number of family members of the country. Thus, high intra-regional inequality, de-industrialization, high informality and population growth have made this region very vulnerable to poverty.

The Central and Eastern regions have always been the most prosperous in the country; less than 25% of their population is income poor and multidimensionally poor. The only deprivation that keeps these regions away from the national average is the low educational attainment. The good results are due to the economic activity being based on the manufacturing industry, construction, the generation and distribution of electricity, trade, public administration, livestock production and oil and gas extraction - sectors that generate higher value-added. Consequently, these are the regions where the country's consolidated middle class has been more strengthened.

The lowest poverty levels are found in the country's capital city, Bogotá, where less than 10% of the population is poor and 53% belongs to the consolidated middle class. This is due to the fact that the capital city is where the public administration is concentrated and is the country's financial center, besides being the industrial center (with the neighboring municipalities) of Colombia's major industries.



Metal products, machinery, equipment, printing, chemicals, food, drinks, tobacco, textiles and wood stand out.

Finally, as a consequence of the profound disparities among the regions, there are no poverty statistics available for the Amazon region, due to the difficult access and to the high operating costs involved in the statistical work for the departments that compose this region (Departments of Vichada, Guainía, Guaviare, Putumayo, Amazonas, Arauca, Casanare and Vaupés).

#### **4. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PROSPERITY IN THE REDUCTION OF POVERTY**

Social Prosperity, as leader of the Social Inclusion and Reconciliation sector, has designed a programmatic offer aimed at overcoming the poverty and vulnerability of the Colombian population. This section describes the entity's programmes that have differentiated elements to contribute to close territorial gaps regarding living conditions.

##### **4.1 Conditional Cash Transfer Programme – “*Más Familias en Acción*”**

The main conditional cash transfer programme in Social Prosperity is “*Más Familias en Acción*” (MFA) that provides bimonthly cash incentives to poor and vulnerable families with children under 18, to ensure school attendance, adequate nutrition levels and health care for children under 18 years old.

The programme was designed and launched in the year 2000, as a response to the effects of the economic crisis of the late nineties. Subsequently, due to the positive impacts found in the programme's assessment and the success of its operation, its expansion to urban centers with more than 100,000 inhabitants took place in 2007. Since then it has become one of the flagship programmes of the National Government, in its fight against poverty (Prosperidad Social, 2013: 5), having today around 2.6 million beneficiary families.

In 2012 the programme was submitted to a redesign process, in which territorial differentiation elements were incorporated, in order to determine the amount of the incentives to be granted. From this process, a third phase of the programme was considered, in which the virtuous effects thereof were enhanced to close territorial gaps, reaching different populations in a differential manner.

This differentiated scheme considers two criteria for the amount of transfers: i) in the case of education transfers, a differentiation by intervention groups (geographical criteria) operates; and ii), the education transfer is incremental in high school, according to the school grade that the beneficiary is attending.

The geography criterion defined four categories of municipalities. Category 1 refers to Bogotá; Category 2 refers to the next 21 capital cities, with a lower incidence of monetary poverty; Category 3 refers to those municipalities with multidimensional poverty lower than 70%; and Category 4 refers to those municipalities that have multidimensional poverty over 70%.

The programme “*Más Familias en Acción*” grants two incentives in two components:

- 1) A health incentive, by which all households with children under 7 are entitled to a transfer, with only one stimulus per family, regardless of the number of children who are in this age group. The condition of this component is to have regular growth and development check-ups for all the children between 0 and 7 years of age that the family has enrolled in the programme, according to the health protocol defined by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (Ibid. 45).

**Table 1. Health Incentives for the Programme “*Más Familias en Acción*”**

Category of Municipalities	Amount of Transfer
1, 2, 3	Col\$ 63,525 (Approx. U\$20)
4 <sup>1</sup>	Col\$ 74,100 (Approx. U\$25)

Source: Social Prosperity

- 2) In the education component, all families with children over 5 and under 18 years who are registered in the school system from pre-school to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade are entitled to the incentive. Families are granted one incentive per child, with a limit of 3 schooling incentives per family. The pre-school level is not taken into account for the top limit, and is delivered only in the municipalities where the programme has been set for implementation, according to availability. The condition of this component is to attend at least 80% of the monthly classes and to repeat two grades at the most throughout the whole school period.

**Table 2. Education incentive of the Programme “*Más Familias en Acción*”**

Grade/Category	Pre-school	1 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 10	11
1	Col\$ 0	Col\$ 0	Col\$ 26.475	Col\$ 31.775	Col\$ 47.650
2	Col\$ 21.175	Col\$ 10.600	Col\$ 26.475	Col\$ 31.775	Col\$ 47.650
3	Col\$ 21.175	Col\$ 15.900	Col\$ 31.775	Col\$ 37.050	Col\$ 52.950
4	Col\$ 21.175	Col\$ 15.900	Col\$ 37.050	Col\$ 42.350	Col\$ 52.950

Source: Social Prosperity

With regards to its coverage, today the programme “*Más Familias en Acción*” attends 2,554,090 families, of which 42.7% correspond to rural families and 57.3% to urban families, with a goal of having 2.7 million beneficiary families by 2018, reaching a coverage wide enough to have an impact on poverty indicators.

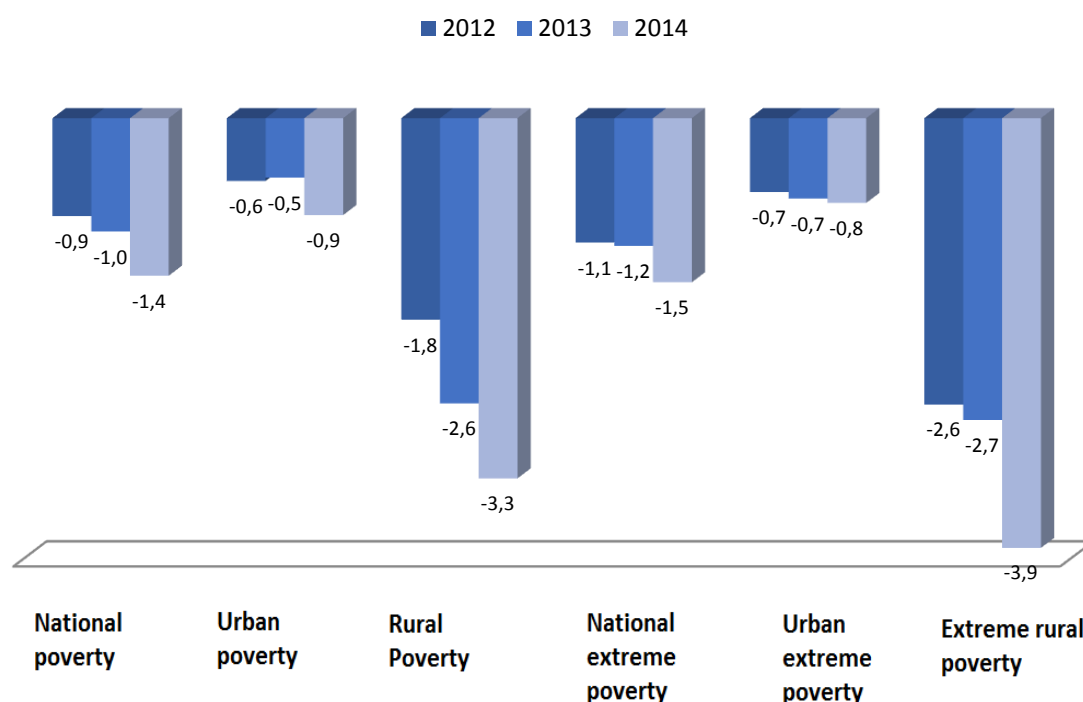
Meanwhile, the benefits of the programme can be distributed in two fronts. In the first front, the resulting benefits are grouped into improvements in human capital and are more associated with the reduction of multidimensional poverty. In the second front, there are immediate benefits from monetary transfers that have an impact on the income poverty indicator.

The main benefits brought by the programme’s assessments in the first front are the increase in the average height of 1 cm and 1.1 cm for boys and girls aged 9 and 12 years, respectively; the reduction of 6 percentage points in stunted growth or chronic malnutrition, both in the group of 9-15 years, as in the one of 9-12 years in rural areas; a reduction of 23% in food insecurity for the beneficiary households; a significant impact on attendance and enrollment in secondary education, being higher in urban areas than in rural areas; and an increase of 6.4 percentage points in the probability of finishing high school in rural areas for young beneficiaries between 18-26 years (Ibid. 35).

As for the programme’s impact on income poverty, the effect of incorporating differential criteria in the redesign is evidenced since institutional support, of which “*Más Familias en Acción*” represents a large proportion, contributing to a reduction of 3.3 percentage points in rural poverty, compared to 0.9 in urban areas, showing the programme’s drive to narrow gaps.

<sup>1</sup> Special populations such as Indigenous and displaced persons classify within this group.

**Figure 3. Poverty reduction resulting from institutional support, 2012 – 2014**



Source: Estimates of Social Prosperity based on DANE's figures.

#### 4.2 Productive Inclusion – “*Produciendo por mi Futuro*”

The aim of this programme is to increase the productive, financial, human and social assets of rural households in an extreme poverty situation, so that they are socioeconomically stabilized, increase their resilience, and keep themselves on a path of development. The target population are extremely poor families in rural areas, where one can find the great challenge of overcoming extreme poverty in Colombia, and which currently serves 10,000 households in 15 municipalities with a rough budget of Col\$ 5,000 million (approximately US\$ 1.6 million).

The design for “*Produciendo por mi Futuro*” was inspired by BRAC’s programme “Targeting the Ultra Poor” in projects implemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in the Andean region, and by the financial education project “Colombia LISTA”. The programme began through a pilot implemented by Social Prosperity in the years 2013 and 2014, in which 1,000 households participated in two municipalities with encouraging results.

The assessment of this pilot enabled to identify that households’ income increased by 49% in average, that the money used in food consumption moved from 50% to 25%, which means that there has been a reduction in income poverty, and that there has been an improvement of the household conditions and improved savings capacity. Likewise, the need to complement the model with other measures towards improving household conditions and food security is evident, in order to increase the programme's impact.

Among the programme’s components the following stand out:

- There are two disbursements made to each participant for a total value of Col\$ 1,000,000 (approximately US\$340), for the development of productive activities, including technical assistance, if required. These payments are subject to the compliance of the joint responsibilities set out to beneficiaries. The first disbursement is subject to the signing of a commitment agreement, the business profile and the participation in the first four trainings, while the second disbursement is made

after the participation in the three following trainings and with the certification by the manager that the investment of the first disbursement was carried out.

- Participation in workshops towards the development of a life plan, entrepreneurship, training on human development issues, partnership and the strengthening of share capital. Workshops and technical assistance are provided by the “*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje*” (National Apprenticeship Service - SENA for its acronym in Spanish), and/or by private technical assistants.
- The design of a business profile with the support of a business manager, which includes simple forms to maintain the business’ accounts and manage a production unit.
- Presentation of the business profile before a Local Committee for Project Support.
- Support in the banking process and a savings promotion strategy.
- A monitoring process through home visits to entrepreneurs by business managers once every 10 days, to review the progress of their activity and stimulate the training programme. Each co-manager will be in charge of 100 to 110 families, and there is a zonal co-ordinator in charge for approximately 10 co-managers.
- There is a training programme through tablets, which has 17 modules, intended to build and strengthen the skills of entrepreneurs in the areas of entrepreneurship, financial education and human development.
- Savings culture is promoted by means of the opening of savings accounts for participants and through the promotion for the formation of savings groups.

Currently the programme is part of the Integrated Rural Interventions (see section 4.4), through which it complements other programmes in the Social Inclusion and Reconciliation sector.

#### **4.3 Food Security – “*Red de Seguridad Alimentaria*”**

The situation of food insecurity and malnutrition in Colombia is quite disturbing. According to the National Nutritional Situation Survey, 42.7% of the country's households are exposed to food insecurity, being this condition higher in rural areas (57.5%) than in urban areas (38.4%). In order to help overcome this situation and promote food security in the country, Social Prosperity counts on the “*Red de Seguridad Alimentaria*” (ReSA for its acronym in Spanish), which aims to improve food access and consumption through the production of food for personal consumption, the promotion of healthy eating habits, and the use of local foods and products, to contribute to the reduction of hunger and improvement of food security in the country.

To achieve this objective, ReSA integrates three basic components: a) The motivational component, which through accompaniment visits and other activities, is aimed at motivating a change of attitude of households; b) a dissemination component that consists of internal or external activities and dissemination strategies; and c) the inputs component, in which elements/tools that support the application of knowledge generated from the different meetings are delivered, and where these inputs take into account the region’s uses, customs and traditions.

The programme was created in 2003 as a public policy instrument to reduce the risks of extreme poverty and to support the socio-economic stabilization process of families under displacement conditions. Between 2003 and 2014, ReSA handled more than 1.1 million families in 962 municipalities of the country, of which approximately 78% in rural areas and 22% in urban areas. In 2015, 83,000 households with Food Security programmes benefited through the following five modalities:

- ReSA® Rural: Promotes the rooting for land, food production in a permanent manner, the rescue of native products and the procurement of healthy eating habits, in families settled in the country’s rural areas, as a way to contribute to food and nutritional security of households of the Social Inclusion and Reconciliation sector.
- ReSA® Urban: Stimulates food security and nutrition of the poverty stricken and vulnerable population living in vulnerable settlements in urban centers, from a change in attitude that allows the

consideration of food production for self-supply, regardless of the size of the land available, as well as the promotion of healthy eating habits and the use of garden produce to feed the family.

- ReSA® CuNa®: Promotes healthy eating habits by the recognition, measurement and identification of flavours, traditional foods and culinary practices that favour food and nutritional security of the social inclusion sector population and the improvement of their quality of life.
- ReSA® Differential Approach to Ethnic Groups: Contributes to food autonomy for the country's different ethnic groups from a territorial development approach, with cultural diversity that favours the appreciation of food and agriculture heritage, flavours and feeding practices, as a way to ensure the permanence over time of the different ethnic groups in Colombia.
- ReSA® Family Agriculture: Pretends to provide technical tools to participants in the framework of family farming, such as: Associative practices, good agricultural practices and marketing strategies that promote hunger eradication, poverty alleviation and improvement of the quality of life for families.

Within these five categories, meetings, technical and social accompaniment visits and demonstrative practices are carried out, according to the modality. For example, among these modalities ReSA Rural stands out, which in 2015 served 42,780 families and 11 meetings were held for the programme's public awareness, management of vegetable gardens, food preparation, and disease and animal management, among others. Likewise, six accompanying visits were carried out and focused on the building, maintenance and sustainability of the vegetable garden, as well as to strengthen the household's social skills; and at least 7 demonstration practices that seek to effectively promote active education and create ongoing training through the exchange of knowledge.

Consequently, this programme encourages keeping the population at risk of displacement in the countryside and/or enables the return of displaced people to their lands, and as well improves the food of the population living in vulnerable settlements in urban centers, the latter being large recipients of the displaced population. Therefore, the programme's goal by 2018 is to assist 260,000 families, ensuring that at least 60% of these families are rural.

#### **4.4 Integrated Interventions**

The purpose of Integrated Interventions is to co-ordinate the programmes offered by Social Prosperity with those of the industry, in order to reach the territories with a number of minimum components that are the complement to the family income, food and nutrition, promote income generation, housing improvements, financial education and accumulation of productive assets. These interventions last between 18 and 24 months and during the process a social and community accompaniment is expected, as well as support for early childhood and victims of the armed conflict. The institution has three types of population interventions, namely:

##### *Familias en su Tierra*

The programme "Families in their Land" (FeST for its acronym in Spanish) is a special temporary accompaniment scheme for returnees or relocated homes that were victims of forced displacement, aimed at contributing to their socio-economic stabilization, the effective enjoyment of rights and the collective and symbolic reparation thereof. Since the programme's inception until 2015, it has served 43,613 families and the goal is to assist 44,000 new families by 2018.

This programme has three main components:

1. Community psychosocial and social support, which is aimed at providing social, technical and environmental training to returnees or relocated households, in order to contribute to the generation and capacity building for a decent life and successful community integration. These trainings aim to generate participation, empowerment and leadership, taking into account the different identities and sense of belonging of the victims, through measures of satisfaction, memory recall and symbolic reparation.

2. Conditioned economic incentives, which are intended to contribute to the household's socio-economic stabilization and have special support or accompaniment schemes. There are four different incentives: a) Incentive to return, or for resettlement, oriented towards the solution of urgent response to basic needs; b) Economic Incentive for the Reduction of Basic Housing Shortages, which is granted prior preparation of the Investment Plan per Household; c) Economic Incentive of Food Security, for a timely and stable access to food; and d) Economic Incentive of Productive Ideas, for the promotion or strengthening of productive initiatives that are viable and sustainable.

3. Community Integration actions that are intended to accompany community integration processes between returnees and/or relocated households and the recipient population, towards the reconstruction and strengthening of the social fabric.

#### IRACA

This comprehensive intervention with a differential approach is aimed at Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in collective territories that are in an extremely vulnerable situation, due to the armed conflict and extreme poverty. This intervention aims at households of vulnerable ethnic communities having access to the State's social protection system through differentiated policies for social inclusion, acknowledging the cultural, political, and territorial peculiarities of the participating communities and families. Up to the year 2015, the programme had served 30,726 families and aims to serve 35,000 new families by 2018.

This programme has 4 main components:

1. The food safety component, aimed at the communities having food in a permanent and sufficient manner, taking into account their cultural tradition and customs. To this effect, seeds, breeding stock, tools and technical and social support are provided.

2. Promotion of traditional production practices or income generation for self-sustainability and self-development of communities. Within this component, inputs and tools are provided, as well as technical and social support, and co-ordination routes with other institutions and other strategic partners are created.

3. Organizational and social empowerment through the strengthening of social and community networks and the rescue of their culture, creating share capital for the recovery of the social fabric. Within this component, the realization of social, territorial and temporary mappings, the building and systematization of traditional construction schedules, and the joint construction of the organizational strengthening plan, stand out.

4. Management for sustainability, which consists of a series of strategies and instruments to establish the organizational, productive, economic, social and environmental bases for communities, to gradually achieve an integrated development in their specificities, their distinctive cultural features and worldview. Joint projects for the collection, processing and marketing are created in this component, as well as the promotion of partnerships between the public and private sectors, in order to achieve sustainability in the actions started by the programme, from a viewpoint of the communities themselves.

It is worth mentioning that the technical and social support and accompaniment stand out as a cross-cutting axis, in which the team is 80% constituted by staff from the region and the participating communities, and that they are guided by, and follow the principle of learning by doing.

#### Intervenciones Rurales Integrales<sup>2</sup>

The Integrated Rural Interventions (temporary name for the programme) are aimed at accelerating the reduction of rural poverty, as from the social and productive inclusion of rural households under extreme poverty conditions. This programme seeks to take the social inclusion sector's social offer in a co-

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<sup>2</sup> This intervention is currently undergoing a conceptual and methodological redesign, and therefore some of its components may change during a future phase. Some of these changes are explained in the next section.

ordinated manner, in order to comprehensively attend to the needs of the families and provide social and productive inclusion programmes.

This programme includes seven components that gather the range of goals of institutional programmes: i) Conditional Cash Transfers, through the programme “*Más Familias en Acción*”; ii) Food security with the ReSA programme; iii) Income generation, capacity building and accumulation of assets, a component that comes with the “*Produciendo por Mi Futuro*” programme; iv) Housing and small infrastructure from the “*Mejoramientos Condicionados de Vivienda*” programme; v) Financial Inclusion and Education; vi) Access to water; vii) Micro-enterprise capitalization. These components come in a sequentially co-ordinated manner, according to the needs of participating families, with a total duration of 24 months.

Within the programme, the participatory building process of the territory diagnosis and needs of the population stand out, using the tool of the speaking maps. Likewise, an accompaniment through social co-managers and technical assistants for income generation is performed, thus achieving a joint management of the families throughout the process.

#### **4.5 Comprehensive Care to Early Childhood – “*De Cero a Siempre*”**

In the past four years, the good dynamics in overcoming income poverty has been reflected in all age groups, achieving the greatest reduction in the children from 0-5 years, where the result went from 51% in 2010 to 41% in 2014, which meant that 503,000 children were out of poverty. However, in 2014 a high proportion of children from 0-5 years (41%) remain poor and this is the age group with the second highest level of poverty after the children from 6-12 years, which is very relevant to make sustainable efforts that prioritize the development of human capital, especially children in early childhood.

“*De Cero a Siempre*” constitutes the highest bet of the group of sectors of the Colombian society to generate equity and equality of opportunities from the beginning of life; this objective has been achieved through intersectoral work that ensures the comprehensive care for children under 6 years in pre-school education, nutrition, health, participation, culture and recreation, as the best route to enhance child development and improve levels of wellbeing in families.

Equity is understood from a population, territorial and community dimension, like the provision of quality care throughout early childhood, childhood and adolescence, in the framework of the social protection system. Particularly the actions aimed at the comprehensive development of early childhood accumulate human capital, social capital and reduce population and territorial gaps in the access to basic public goods for the formation of citizens and peace building.

In Colombia there are more than 5 million children under 6 years, more than 2.4 million of them living in poverty. While the country has seen significant progress in recent years in terms of global indicators, there is a need to extend coverage to the rural areas, making intersectorality sustainable and taking on the challenge of peace in the integrity of comprehensive care to early childhood.

The “*De Cero a Siempre*” strategy changed the paradigm of a single agency responsible for early childhood and moved to an operation with a group structure and an inter-sectoral mechanism that in turn links the three Government levels (national, departmental and municipal). Likewise, this strategy was framed in the comprehensive protection principles and defined as ultimate goal the integrated development of children of less than 6 years.

The policy has been able to make progress from a fragmented view of development to a comprehensive approach, to the realization of rights, in order to regard the children as part of their family and their community. This comprehensive perspective of the development and the formulation of integrated care are viable when a child is guaranteed that:

- His/her family is prepared to conceive him/her and raise him/her in an appropriate way
- He/she is in good health

- He/she will be recognized as an individual, respected, cared and loved by all the people around him/her
- He/she will have access to Early Education programmes.
- He/she will have his/her rights restored in a comprehensive and permanent manner.

Currently, more than one million boys and girls are cared for in integrated modalities of attention and one million more are cared for in community modalities undergoing a qualification process, participating in early education programmes under quality parameters, assisted by trained and qualified human talent, with nutritional contribution and follow-up, with cultural appropriateness, and accompaniment or support processes for their families.

Consequently, scaling a comprehensive care to early childhood is one of the highest commitments in closing gaps towards social equity. Having “*De Cero a Siempre*” as a State policy enables capitalization on the experience of the Intersectoral Commission for Early Childhood, which has allowed the organization of the relevant entities of the National Government, thus improving the coherence and efficiency of public administration.

The country currently spends around Col\$ 2.8 million (approximately US\$ 933) per year for each child attended to in a Child Development Centre, and around Col\$ 2.1 million (approximately US\$700) per year for each child assisted in family mode. By 2015 an investment of Col\$ 3.5 billion is estimated for the attention of children in early childhood. Investments during the four-year period 2014 - 2018 will allow attending to 1.5 million children fully. This investment will allow that each cared child is guaranteed civil registry, complete vaccination schedule, ensuring registration in the social protection system, initial education, access to cultural goods and services and having monitoring and nutritional assessment.

## 5. POLICY CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

As evidenced in previous sections, despite great progress in poverty reduction over the last decade, Colombia still has wide territorial gaps that tarnish the achievements and the closing of which constitutes one of its major public policy challenges. At present, extreme rural poverty is 3.5 times higher than urban poverty and the rural multidimensional poverty is 2.9 times higher; these gaps have increased in recent years.

Additionally, as observed in the poverty analysis by regions, there are great differences in the incidence of income poverty, the situation of the Atlantic and Pacific regions stands out; despite being the ones that had the highest poverty reduction in recent years, they still have incidents above 40%, quite far from the national average (28.5%).

This scenario has made Social Prosperity to set out several strategies that are in the process of design and/or implementation, leading to further reduction of poverty in the most disadvantaged areas, and which are described throughout this section.

### 5.1 Integrated Rural Interventions

Currently the Integrated Rural Interventions are undergoing a redesign process, supported by FEDESARROLLO<sup>3</sup> to build the conceptual framework and operational guidelines, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) is in charge of the methodological design of the new programme. This new strategy seeks to accelerate the reduction of rural poverty from the community productive and social inclusion of households.

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<sup>3</sup> The Foundation for Higher Education and Development (FEDESARROLLO for its acronym in Spanish) is a Colombian private non-for-profit entity established in 1970, dedicated to research on economic and social policy issues.



These interventions shall be the first step in a comprehensive route of intervention for income generation and training, capacity building, promotion of productive practices, organizational and social strengthening, monitoring sustainability through social and technical support and accompaniment, in order to enable empowerment of communities in their own development.

The comprehensiveness in the strategy seeks that the positive effects of social inclusion programmes are supplemented by the productive inclusion component, combining immediate poverty relief in terms of income for the rural population of working age and creating synergies between short-term and long-term objectives. If there is no progress in terms of production, that is, an increase in the possibilities of employment for the beneficiaries, the rooting expectations from the provision of human capital are insufficient and will hardly materialize.

## 5.2 Multidimensional Intersectoral Management

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) has improved monitoring and follow-up of public policies, allowing the creation of alarms for decision-making purposes. Also, the MPI has helped in the analysis of interventions from different Government sectors, in a co-ordinated and comprehensive manner, in order to achieve the figure of 1.5 million more Colombians overcoming multidimensional poverty.

In this exercise, Social Prosperity has to resolve in an articulated manner which interventions of the Ministries of Education, Health, Labour, Agriculture, Commerce and Housing reach the neediest households, thus making social spending more efficient.

According to our estimates, there are 1.6 million households that are between 1 and 3 deprivations away from overcoming multidimensional poverty, that is, the co-ordinated interventions on labour, education and health issues would allow them to overcome this situation (see Table 3), thus contributing to the fulfillment of the goal established by the Government for this four-year period.

**Table 3. Overcoming multidimensional poverty by households close to the cut-off point**

Variable	Households	Households that overcome MP	Persons who overcome (A) MP
Informal employment	1,669,893	1,669,893	6,812,859
Low school performance	1,601,356	1,601,356	6,461,060
Illiteracy	658,108	658,108	2,483,576
School lag	886,243	500,284	2,434,487
Without health assurance	438,966	438,966	1,853,227
Access to health barriers	239,418	239,418	993,382
Long term unemployment	320,774	320,774	811,459
Overcrowding	329,284	135,851	693,711
Water (aqueduct)	502,091	196,707	690,089
Integrated care	254,384	124,048	666,704
Sewage	431,516	145,894	531,179
Child labour	151,498	86,281	401,342

Non-attendance to school	144,713	76,227	378,710
Floors	251,430	75,531	292,975
Walls	70,067	25,711	87,986

Source: Estimates of Social Prosperity based on DANE's figures

### 5.3 Redesign and integration of "Red UNIDOS"

In order to strengthen "Red UNIDOS", the National Government will integrate the ANSPE with Social Prosperity. This integration will create a more effective strategy for overcoming extreme poverty, given that it will reach households, not only by means of family and community support and accompaniment of the more than 7000 co-managers throughout the National Territory, but also via the Social Prosperity programmes.

In line with these changes, "Red UNIDOS" is strengthened and its operating model is being developed in a new way, adapting it to the specificities of the new times and in harmony with the multidimensional poverty reduction. Therefore, more than 1 million households of "Red UNIDOS" will move from having a single model of support, to four different models: the Urban model, the Urban Model 100 thousand homes, the Rural model and the Rural Ethnic model. This implies recognition of the urban-rural gaps that the country is experiencing and a greater coverage in ethnic communities. The goal is to have a more effective and sustainable strategy.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Although Colombia has made significant progress in reducing income and multidimensional poverty, it still faces major challenges in this area. Social Prosperity has been, and will be, a key actor in overcoming these challenges, as it has the institutional capacity and expertise to do so. This institutional support helped to reduce national poverty by 1.4 % in 2014, with more pronounced effects in rural areas (3.3 %) than in urban areas (0.9 %). Likewise, programme assessments have shown that they have generated positive effects on beneficiaries forging capabilities and skills, so that they are agents of their own development.

Likewise, it is evident that territorial gaps persist, both at intradepartmental and interdepartmental levels, and that is why Social Prosperity has directed its programmes primarily towards the departments most in need, and particularly, towards rural areas within these departments. Integrated Interventions are designed to help reduce these gaps and generate greater rural capacities that create synergies and territorial dynamics. Likewise, the entity in this endeavor is giving priority to rural areas in the targeting of programmes and conducting pilot tests of programmes that have not yet reached these areas, such as the "Jovenes en Acción" programme that supports young people to continue their technical or university studies.

Furthermore, Social Prosperity is aware of the need to reach the territory in an articulated and co-ordinated manner, not only with internal programmes, but with every Government proposal, for which currently it seeks to generate routes and bridges between the different State's institutional offers, in order to, firstly, have a wide information system with all the supply and all the beneficiaries, so as not to duplicate efforts; and secondly, to improve efficiency in the use of resources and, obviously, the effectiveness of these to be translated into lower poverty levels.

Therefore, Social Prosperity is institutionally committed with the goals proposed in the current National Development Plan. Such goals are overcoming multidimensional poverty of 1.5 million persons and income poverty of 1.1 million persons by 2018. This is why the institution will continue its efforts to guarantee minimum conditions that would help achieve the wellbeing of all Colombians.

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<sup>4</sup> Translation of bibliographic titles and names is for reference purposes only