

«Salud rural para la paz en Colombia»

Summary visit
Colombia 1. – 9. October 2019



Table of content

<i>Background</i>	2
<i>Objectives of the trip</i>	4
<i>Meeting with the Norwegian Red Cross representative – 2. October 2019</i>	4
<i>Workshop & meetings at Universidad de La Sabana – 3rd October</i>	4
<i>Field visit to the district of Tolima 4th – 7th October</i>	5
Workshop at Universidad del Tolima – 4th October	5
Visit Ibague Hospital – 4th October	6
Meeting with the health secretary at the municipality of Chaparral – 5th October	6
Visit Hospital Chaparral - 5th October	7
Visit health centre in El Limon – 5th October	7
Visit Sumapaz Hospital in Icononzo – Sunday 6th October	8
Visit to the FARC community «La Fila» - 6th October	8
Visit to the El Triunfo – 6th October	9
<i>Meeting at the Ministry of Health and Social Service, Bogota – 7th October</i>	10
<i>Round Table «The role of GPs in different international contexts « Universidad de La Sabana – 7th October</i>	11
<i>Meeting at the Norwegian Embassy – 8th October</i>	11
<i>Conclusion</i>	12

Background

Norwegian Centre for Rural Medicine (NCRM) at UiT- The Arctic University of Norway is in charge of developing a health collaboration between Norway and Colombia. The collaboration is part of a Memorandum of Understanding on health cooperation between the Ministry of Health and Care Services in Norway and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in Colombia. Among the issues to be developed, are primary health and health in rural and remote areas. Through a health cooperation, Norway wish to contribute to improvements in the health system as an important part of the reconstruction of the country and to strengthen the bilateral relations between Norway and Colombia.

The collaboration is led by NCRM in Norway and Universidad de La Sabana and Universidad del Tolima in Colombia. Other important Colombian stakeholders are the Ministry of Health and Social Service, Sumapaz Hospital, Chaparall Hospital and local health authorities in Tolima.

Beginning of October 2019, a delegation of six people from NCRM travelled to Colombia to visit project partners and other stakeholders. The trip was the second visit to Colombia (the first was in February/March 2019).

Participants during the week in Colombia:

1. Dr. Helen Brandstorp, Director NCRM, UiT
2. Ingvill Konradsen, Senior Advisor, NCRM, UiT
3. Dr. Torsten Risor, Department of Community Medicine, UiT
4. Dr. Juan Carlos Aviles, General Medical Research Unit, UiT
5. Håvard Søndena, Medical Student and Ph. D student, UiT
6. Dr. Roger Strasser, Professor of rural health

Colombian project partners:

1. Dr. Francisco Lamus, Chief Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Public Health and Family Medicine, Universidad de La Sabana
2. Rosa Margarita Durán, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Public Health and Family Medicine, Universidad de La Sabana
3. Dr. Jaime Martínez, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Public Health and Family Medicine, Universidad de La Sabana
4. Dr. Juan Guillermo Luna, Faculty of Medicine, Universidad de La Sabana
5. Tabita Amaya, audiovisual communication student, School of Communication, Universidad de La Sabana
6. Carlos Martínez, Faculty of Communication, Universidad de La Sabana
7. Dr. Arnoldo Barbosa, Director of the Medicine program, Faculty of Health Sciences Universidad del Tolima
8. Dr. Martha Beatriz Díaz Lozano, Faculty of Health Sciences, Universidad del Tolima

Objectives of the trip

- Monitoring the process of preparation and situational analysis of the program Rural Health for Peace in the pilot municipalities of Icononzo and Chaparral and visit the communities El Triunfo and La Fila.
- Presentation of the Rural Health for Peace program and the experiences of the Making it Work framework at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Norwegian Embassy, Universidad de La Sabana and Universidad del Tolima.
- Structuring of the logical framework of the Rural Health for Peace program.
- Consolidate the framework agreements and memoranda of understanding of the interinstitutional collaboration between UiT, Universidad de la Sabana and Universidad del Tolima.

Meeting with the Norwegian Red Cross representative – 2. October 2019

On our first day, the team met with the new project manager of the Norwegian Red Cross, Miguel Remon, for information sharing. Miguel Remon has recently taken over the post from Patricia Escudero, and he is responsible for the training program for health technicians of ex-FARC combatants run by the Norwegian Red Cross. Francisco Lamus and Rosa Margareta Durán have participated in several of the activities including doing a workshop on early childhood development in Icononzo and were invited to the upcoming graduation ceremony in Bogota.



Graduation ceremony, Bogota 16.10.19

Workshop & meetings at Universidad de La Sabana – 3rd October

On the second day, we met with the manager of International Cooperation and Visibility from the department of International Relations at Universidad de La Sabana, Diana Penagos. Themes we discussed regarded student exchange/mobility. Universidad de La Sabana has a very good collaboration with, amongst others, Maastricht University and welcomes the idea of having students from UiT joining their programmes. There are opportunities for student exchange at every level; undergraduate and postgraduate.

The department of International Relations can offer support to write proposals for financial support for exchange from external sources. One idea is to make a common application including Universidad del Tolima, Universidad de La Sabana and UiT.

We will follow up these ideas, including developing an agreement of collaboration between the universities.



From left: Diana Penagos (Manager of Int. Cooperation), Torstein Risør, Håvard Søndena, Juan Carlos Aviles, Ingvill Konradsen & Helen Brandstorp.

Internal workshop

During a joint workshop at the end of the day, we agreed on the objectives of the week ahead. We shared ideas and suggestions to develop and strengthen the program rural health for peace. Francisco Lamus presented the primary health care system in Colombia and its challenges with regards to obtaining better health coverage in rural and remote areas.

Field visit to the district of Tolima 4th – 7th October

Workshop at Universidad del Tolima – 4th October

The team travelled to the district of Tolima to visit several sites from Friday to Monday. Our first stop was at the Universidad del Tolima in Ibaguè where we met with several staff members at the Medical Faculty. Universidad del Tolima is an important project partner in our program rural health for peace, with Dr. Arnoldo Barbosa representing the university.

Universidad del Tolima, establ. 1954.

The university is a public university and offer an education in a range of sciences incl. agriculture, teachers training, social sciences and medical education. Approximately 7000 students are enrolled on campus and between 18 000 – 20 0000 students are enrolled in distance learning courses. Approx. 60 % of the students are from the district of Tolima.



From left at the table: Roger Strasser, Torstein Risør, Håvard Søndena, Dean Marco Avila Rodriguez, Arnoldo Barbosa, Helen Brandstorp. The other participants are staff members at the Medical Faculty.

Themes for the workshop:

Presentation of the «Making it work» framework by Francisco Lamus and Roger Strasser.

Round table discussion on a range of key issues such as:

- How to adapt the «Making it work» framework to a workable local version?
- What are the health needs of the local community and how may we best meet those?
- How can Universidad del Tolima as the most important local academic institution respond better to local health needs?
- How can Universidad del Tolima make rural placements for students more attractive?
- Development of a true partnership between the university and local community, jointly owned by both parties.
- Development of action research projects in the pilot areas and making a model for the rest of the country.
- Identify available sources for financing and co-create grant proposals in Norway and Colombia.
- Formalization of the collaboration between UiT, Universidad del Tolima and Universidad de La Sabana.
- Develop good relationships with local health authorities, create local ownership and formalize collaboration.
- Taking into account the extra added challenge of a post-conflict setting when the program is being developed.

Visit Ibagu  Hospital – 4th October



The team visited the local hospital in Ibagu  where Universidad del Tolima send many of their students for training.

Photo: A group of young medical doctors doing their social service at the hospital, with Francisco.

Meeting with the health secretary at the municipality of Chaparral – 5th October

The team met with Dr. Gilberto Caycelo who is the health secretary for the municipality of Chaparral. We had a good meeting where we were able to inform him about the program Rural Health for Peace and agreed to formalize a collaboration between Universidad del Tolima and the municipality. Dr. Caycelo confirmed that the municipality is very interested in the program and are happy to collaborate and help;

«The rural health for peace program and an alliance with Universidad del Tolima can contribute and support our efforts to comply with new policies from the government with regards to decentralization and rural health service» Dr. Caycelo.



From left: Tabita Amaya, Håvard Søndena, Rosa Duran, Gilberto Caycelo, Juan Carlos Aviles.

Visit Hospital Chaparral - 5th October

The team was given a tour and presentation of the different departments of the hospital in Chaparral. The hospital provides brigades to smaller rural health centres on a weekly basis. Chaparral is the largest municipality in Colombia, with 5 sub-divisions and 25 «veredas» (villages/communities).

Visit health centre in El Limon – 5th October

The health centre provide a weekly service to the population of the small community of El Limon, provided by the brigade from the hospital in Chaparral. Our guide was one of the brigade workers trained at Universidad del Tolima.



Rosa Margareta Durán & brigade worker

Visit Sumapaz Hospital in Icononzo – Sunday 6th October

The team visited Sumapaz Hospital where currently our team member Dr. Juan Guillermo Luna is doing his 6 months of social service.



From left: Dr Barbosa with a young doctor specializing in family medicine (trained at Universidad del Tolima) and Dr. Juan Guillermo Luna.

Visit to the FARC community «La Fila» - 6th October

We travelled to the small community La Fila, one of 26 re-integration zones in the country designated by the Colombian State as part of the peace process. The population of La Fila is currently 300 people, including 73 children (53 children are under the age of 2). The community is trying to create jobs such as a beer brewery, production of cosmetics and clothes, agricultural products and tourism. However, most of the adults still have to travel outside to find paid work. It is a closed knit community, proud of their history and their former leaders, illustrated on several of the walls of different buildings.

«We want to stay here in La Fila and build our lives here. To do that we need to create jobs for ourselves and to build a good school and a good health centre», Martha, 52



La Fila has a small health centre open 3 days a month. The nearest hospital is Sumapaz Hospital in Icononzo, a couple of hours drive from La Fila. Dr. Juan Guillermo Luna is currently in charge of the health centre 3 days a month as part of his social service at Sumapaz Hospital. Juan Guillermo has two local assistants, Janet and Diana, both have experience working as health workers during the conflict as FARC combatants. Janet and Diana have recently graduated from the training program for health technicians run by the Norwegian Red Cross.



Janet & Juan Guillermo in the health centre



La Fila

Visit to the El Triunfo – 6th October

The next stop on our trip was a 2 hour drive from La Fila to El Triunfo, another small community in the municipality. El Triunfo consist of 120 families and does not have a functioning health centre available for its population. Dr. Juan Guillermo and Dr. Jaime Martinez have been available for patients in El Triunfo on a more irregular basis. Jaime is part of our project team and is currently doing his Master of Public Health (Universidad de La Sabana). The nearest hospital is Sumapaz Hospital 2 hours drive from El Triunfo. The objective of the visit was to meet with the local community and community leaders and organize a public meeting to discuss their situation regarding health and access to health service. Further, to inform about the rural health for peace program, including an introduction of Håvard Søndena and his Ph.D project «Family Health Work in Rural Colombia». Håvard is planning to gather data for his project in El Triunfo, and plan to stay there for approximately two months in 2020.

Håvard Søndena's Ph.D project: Family Health Work in Rural Colombia

Some parents in the community of El Triunfo and Håvard will assess what families in the community do regarding their childrens health. Through qualitative interviews and participation, the plan is to gather knowledge about how parents deal with challenges linked to promoting children's health, preventing illness and using health services. With conscience about what the "family health work" in El Triunfo consists of, we hope that parents come up

with innovative solutions to shorten the distance between the community and local health service or strengthen the work that they already do.



From the community meeting in El Triunfo 6th October

Meeting at the Ministry of Health and Social Service, Bogota – 7th October

The team travelled from Melgar back to Bogota on Monday morning, to meet with the Ministry of Health and Social Service. Participating from the Ministry was Jorge Velez Vargas, Camilo Sanchez and Dr. Louis Gabriel Bernard and from the Norwegian Embassy, Kirsti Andersen.



From left; Roger Strasser, Juan Carlos Aviles, Arnoldo Barbosa, Jamie Martinez, Jorge Velez Vargas, Camilo Sanchez, Louis Gabriel Bernard, Kirsti Andersen, Rosa Duran, Helen Brandstorp, Torstein Risør, Ingwill Konradsen.

Camilo Sanchez informed about the status of the new national plan for rural health. The final draft has been sent to the planning department for approval. After approval, it will go through the legal process for adaptation. There are other universities and organizations working on issues of health as part of the peace process; the National University, Andes University with York University in the UK, Medecins sans Frontiers and more.

The Colombian Government has run a large project where communities have been invited to suggest initiatives and come up with suggestions for solutions regarding access to health service. 170 municipalities took part in the mapping project, and a total of 3000 initiatives

have been gathered and accepted. Many of these initiatives are focusing on building infrastructure, and unfortunately not all are financially realistic. Any project proposal must comply with one or several of these 3000 initiatives to be eligible for funding in Colombia. According to The Ministry, it will be important for the municipalities to develop their own action plans on health, and they must be pragmatic and realistic in the current setting.

«Key is to allow the local community to identify their own model, and not to force a model from central hold», Roger Strasser

Dr. Louis Gabriel Bernard is concerned about the large gap between urban and rural health indicators and is looking to find better models for recruitment and retainment to rural areas struggling with high turnover of health personnel. One suggestion is to get back to a former model of training health promoters locally (people with minimum 9 years of basic education). Other ideas are to look at using e-health and other innovative solutions, potentially a tool to provide more equity in the population.

Round Table «The role of GPs in different international contexts « Universidad de La Sabana – 7th October

Francisco Lamus and his team organized a round table at Universidad de La Sabana for medical students where each team member did a short presentation of the role of general medical practitioners in Norway, Denmark, Mexico, Haiti, Canada, Australia and Colombia. We had a very interesting session of questions and answers with the students.

Meeting at the Norwegian Embassy – 8th October

Our final meeting of the week was the Norwegian Embassy with Ambassador John Petter Opdahl and Advisor Kirsti Andersen. We had a good meeting with relevant and interesting questions and feedback from the embassy. Important issues are the current political setting, local municipal elections happening late October, corruption and the overall security situation in the country. The embassy supports our program and ideas and confirm that they are available for advice, contacts and networks when needed.



From left: Ambassador John Petter Opdahl, Advisor Kirsti Andersen, Rosa Margareta Duran

Conclusion

The team agrees that we have had a very productive week together and recognize the importance of meeting each other on a regular basis. A common thread throughout our many discussions, formal and informal, during the week, is that we need to secure good relationships with the communities where we are working, that the model we are developing must have local input and local ownership. The fact that the team has been able to visit the pilot communities on a regular basis this last year has been key to keep up the momentum and create trust.

We are now planning for our Colombian counterparts to visit Norway early 2020 and look forward to present the Norwegian primary care model.