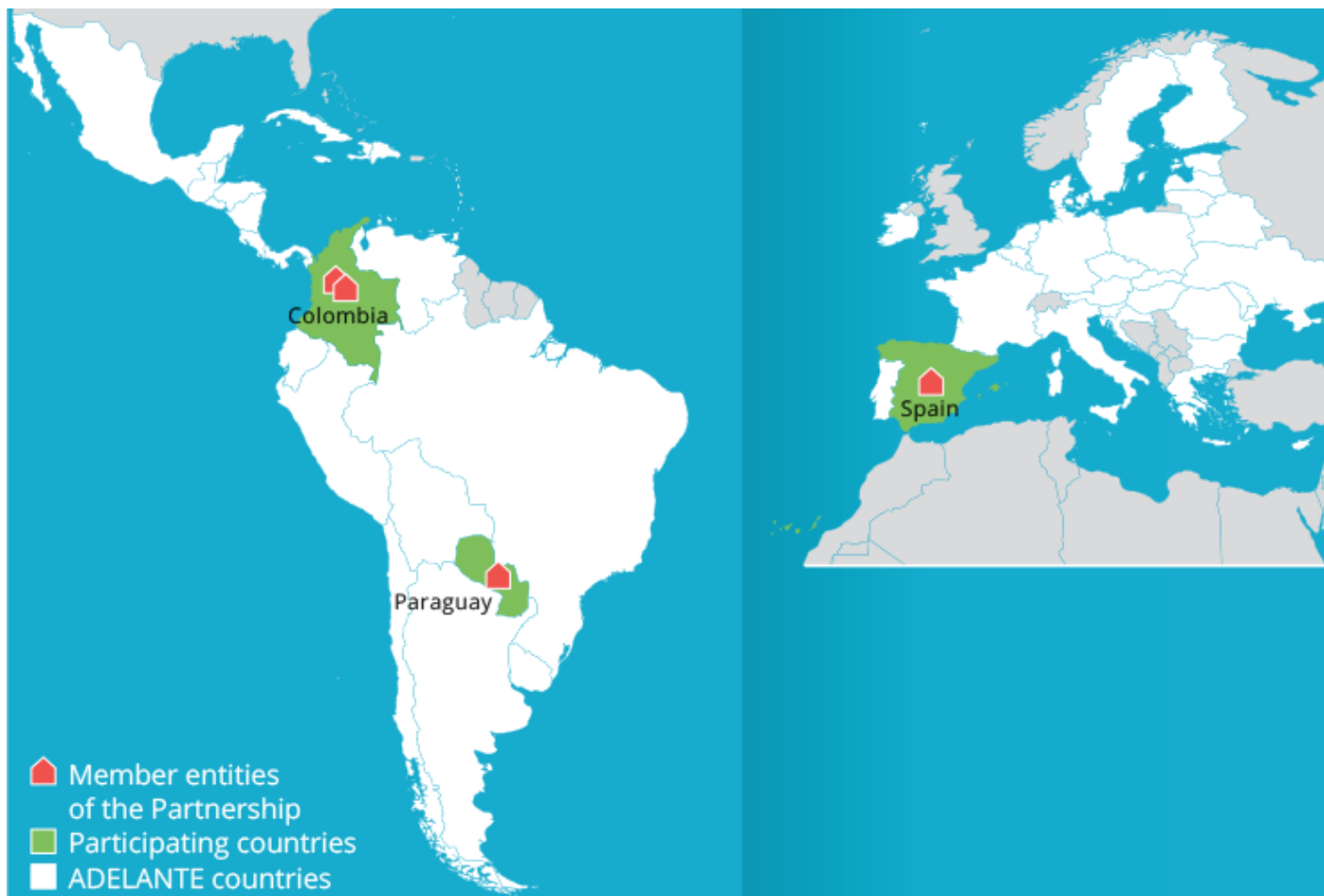


Contributing to the social inclusion of the deaf

PARTNERSHIP



Background

The ***Federación Nacional de Sordos de Colombia*** (National Federation of the Deaf of Colombia - FENASCOL) is one of the leading entities in the region for the promotion, protection and defence of the rights of deaf persons. In fulfilling its mission, it has developed a number of innovative accessible communication solutions to guarantee the right to information and communication for the deaf, which have been implemented on a national scale through its member organisations. The entity has also collaborated with national federations and networks in other Latin American countries, sharing their knowledge and experience.

Among these collaborations, it is worth noting the work carried out in 2013 with the **Secretaría Técnica de Planificación del Desarrollo Económico y Social del Paraguay** (Technical Secretariat for Economic and Social Development Planning of Paraguay - STP) in launching the Relay Centre; a communication service that allows the deaf to contact hearing persons and the entities or services they need, thanks to the work of a team of communication assistants or qualified interpreters. Its implementation in Paraguay, based on the Colombian model, was a historic achievement in guaranteeing the right to information and communication for the deaf.

Shortly after its establishment, the Relay Centre, which continues to be a priority for the STP and also has the particular support of the Office of the First Lady, now aims to take a step forward towards technological modernisation. Two major challenges have initially been identified for this process: two-way communication (deaf user to hearing user and vice versa, not just one way) and access through virtual applications. Both challenges have already been successfully taken on in Colombia, therefore the collaboration with FENASCOL has once again been re-established in order to maximise this recent experience.

The **Confederación Estatal de Personas Sordas de España** (Spanish Confederation of the Deaf - CNSE) has joined this modernisation process, as a leading organisation in the strategic use of new communication technologies to ensure that the deaf have the same access to basic services as the rest of the population. Worth highlighting among the different solutions is the pioneering model of video relay services in Spanish sign language, SVIsual, with the added value of its replication in Paraguay, thanks to the modernisation of the Relay Centre. This exercise in Paraguay will also help assess the opportunity for its application in Colombia.

The participation of FENASCOL and CNSE in the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) was a decisive factor in identifying these synergies in terms of the current challenge of the Relay Centre.

It is important to note that this collaboration between Colombia and Paraguay is part of the high-level cooperation agenda between the two countries, in which the participation of the **Agencia Presidencial de Cooperación Internacional de Colombia** (Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation - APC) guarantees the appropriate framework for dialogue with its counterpart, the Technical Secretariat for Economic and Social Development Planning of Paraguay.

Entities and roles

BENEFICIARY ENTITIES



Secretaría Técnica de Planificación para el Desarrollo del Paraguay

Paraguay

FIRST PROVIDER ENTITIES



Agencia Presidencial de Cooperación Internacional de Colombia

Colombia



Colombia

SECOND PROVIDER ENTITIES



Confederación Estatal de Personas Sordas

Spain

Development challenges

Through this Triangular Cooperation Initiative, the Technical Secretariat for Economic and Social Development Planning of Paraguay and its Relay Centre were able to harness all the knowledge, experience and relational capital in the search for innovative solutions, in order to guarantee the right to information and communication for the deaf persons of the National Federation of the Deaf of Colombia (FENASCOL) and the Spanish Confederation of the Deaf (CNSE), as well as to meet the challenge of modernisation (two-way communication and access through virtual applications) and increase the efficiency of the Relay Centre itself.

Maximising this knowledge in Paraguay has provided a significant benefit to the country on two levels. On the one hand, benefitting directly from the range of possibilities that the most advanced technologies can provide to ensure the rights of deaf persons, especially in terms of access to public services, with a direct impact on their well-being and the full exercise of their citizenship. On the other hand, by joining the other countries taking the lead in the permanent search for and implementation of innovative and high-impact solutions, the issue can be prioritised in their public policies. These solutions, in turn, can be made available to third parties.

At the same time, the experience in Paraguay was a valuable asset for all the participant entities, since it provided them with a wealth of insights to contribute to their own models. In particular, in the case of FENASCOL, it was especially useful for testing the CNSE's SVisual system with the aim of applying it in Colombia as well, which has given the Partnership a line of work that ensures continuity.

The participation of FENASCOL and CNSE in the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), along with the participation of CNSE in the European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and the high-level dialogue between the APC and governments of the region, provide an excellent platform for disseminating the insights from this Initiative far beyond the scope of the participating countries.

INITIATIVE

This Triangular Cooperation Initiative has begun to establish a model of 'accessible communication centres,' based on maximising the use of new technologies and highly qualified teams, in order to effectively guarantee the right to information and communication for the deaf as a pillar for the 'social, economic and political inclusion of all people, regardless of their disability'.

Triangular approach

There is strong consensus that one of the keys to true sustainable development that 'leaves no one behind' is through models that take into account people with disabilities. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, discussions and developments on the relationship between disability, rights and poverty have intensified, highlighting the increased risk of vulnerability and social exclusion faced by persons with disabilities, but also emphasising their contributions to society. These exercises have highlighted the importance of adapting and making use of new technologies as tools to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities, and to leverage their potential as key players in development processes.

At the same time, the accelerated digitalisation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic led to an even greater digital divide and worsened several existing gaps in terms of the dependence on technologies for access to basic services, which are not always adapted to persons with disabilities, and particularly the deaf.

The Initiative was able to tap into the existing knowledge, experience, networks and models of public and social entities in Europe and Latin America that are working to guarantee the right to information and communication for the deaf. Through its Relay Centre, this expertise was made available to the Technical Secretariat for Economic and Social Development Planning of Paraguay, in order to contribute to its modernisation and increase the efficiency of its services.

The exercise as a whole has strengthened all of the participating entities, resulting in a successful model that can be replicated and used in other countries in the region.

Sectoral approach - Contribution to the 2030 Agenda

PRIMARY SDG



Goal 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

SECONDARY SDG



Goal 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

Goal 5.B Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

ADELANTE SDG

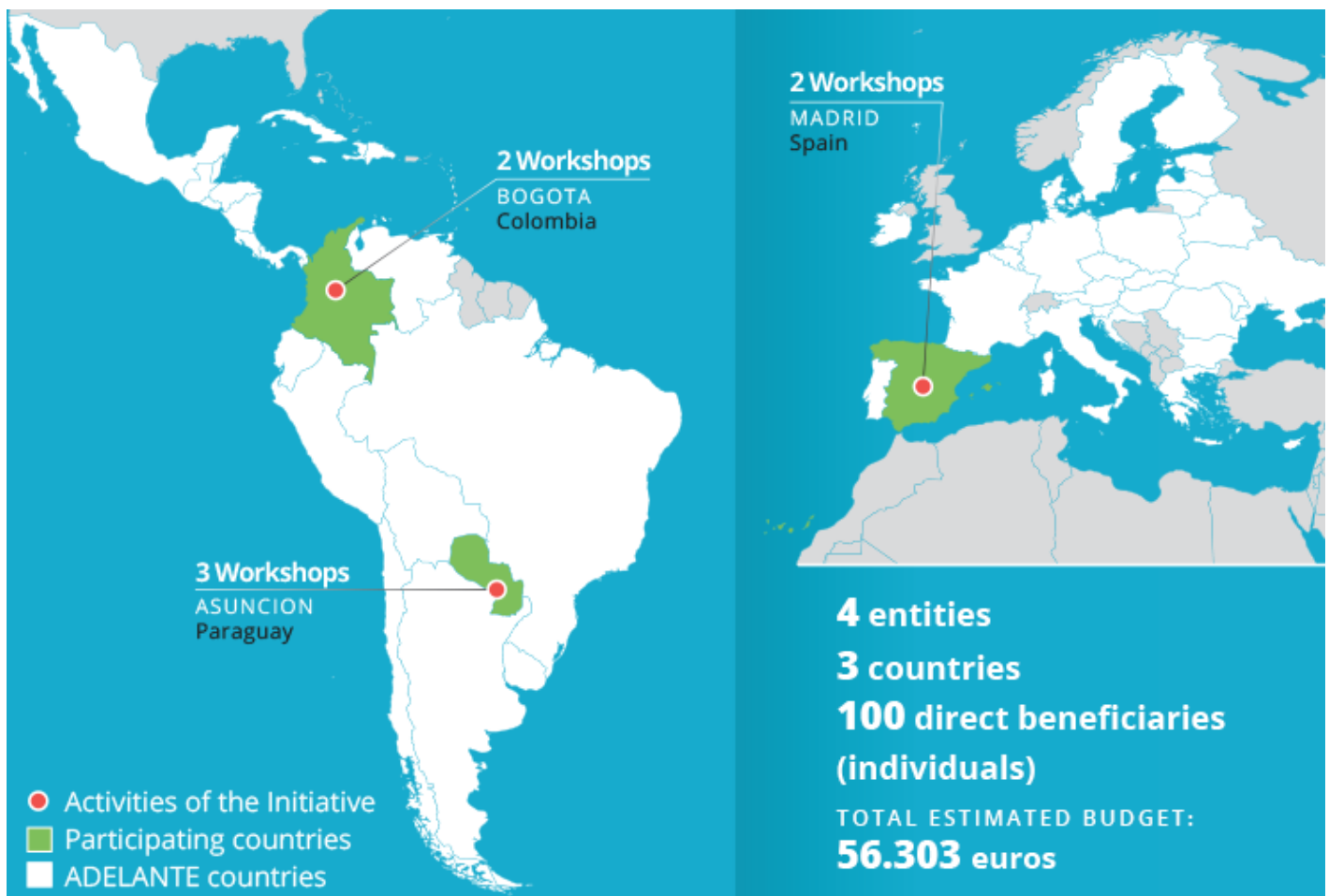


Goal 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status



Goal 17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed

Territorial approach



Intervention methodology

This Triangular Cooperation Initiative was structured around five **workshops**, divided into 15 training sessions and the exchange of experiences between communication service managers and interpreters from Colombia, Spain and Paraguay. The workshops took place once the new technological platform was up and running for the provision of interpretation and communication services, which is already effectively addressing the challenges of the Paraguay Relay Centre.

Conceptually, work has been carried out in two areas or levels: technical training to make better use of the new technological platform, and training in skills for the care of deaf persons.

Among all the workshops, one that stands out for its sophistication and innovative nature was the workshop oriented towards training in cybersecurity, information protection and data protection, with the aim of preventing and avoiding the risks derived from the use of such advanced technologies. The training was led by the team of Colombian engineers tasked with developing the application, along with the team from the National Federation of the Deaf of Colombia (FENASCOL) and the Spanish Confederation of the Deaf (CNSE).

The other workshops focused on the exchange of experiences among all the Partnership entities, led in each case by the entity with the most knowledge and experience in each topic. Particularly sensitive issues in relation to interpreter performance were addressed, such as stress management for two-way

communication situations and handling sensitive situations during interpreter services (reports of gender-based violence, reports of other crimes, specialised legal needs, psychological support for interpreters, etc.), among others.

Experiences were also shared regarding the challenges of digital literacy for the deaf, specifically aimed at ensuring the correct use and optimisation of the platform. To this end, at certain points in the workshops, the participation of associations for the deaf was promoted in order to gather their feedback and to involve them in the process.

Work was also carried out with officials from all of the administrations of the participating countries, with the majority from Paraguay, in order to ascertain their needs in terms of compliance with the relevant legislation on communication and interpretation services, to be guaranteed by each administrative unit.

Upon completion of the workshops, the entire training and experience-sharing cycle was documented and didactic material was produced, with the aim of developing a blueprint for the process of implementation and modernisation of accessible communication services. To this end, the model will be made available to all organisations in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean that are committed to the right to information and communication for the deaf.

Direct beneficiaries (individuals)

According to Rule 9 of the Guidelines for Applicants: all persons participating in the activities of the Initiative.

This Initiative had **175 direct beneficiaries**, all of whom are professionals from the Partnership entities with different roles in communication services: directors, managers and interpreters. These professionals work in both the public sector (responsible for guaranteeing the service) and the social sector (responsible for providing the service in some cases).

At certain stages, work was also carried out in close collaboration with civil servants and public employees from the administrations of the participating countries, as well as with representatives of associations for the deaf, who were also direct beneficiaries of the Initiative.

Budget

EU contribution: 43,413.32 €

Co-financing - Triangular Cooperation Partnership: 14,227.00 €

Total budget: 57,640.32 €