



AMERICA/COLOMBIA - Violence and Conflicts: Women suffer the most

Medellín (Agenzia Fides) - In Colombia, about 70 % of women suffer all kinds of violence due to ongoing armed conflict, homicides, sexual abuse, torture and rape. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Spanish Catholic NGO Manos Unidas collected various testimonies of the victims that managed to escape from the FARC and the paramilitary forces and moved to Medellín, a city known for the violence of drug traffickers and juvenile criminal gangs, the so-called 'combos'. Some of the women who are victims of this endless conflict, thanks to the Franciscan Sisters have become part of the foundation of the project "Hope and Life". The Project, which Manos Unidas joined, was born in 2002 to support displaced families from rural and marginalized areas. These depend largely on sporadic income that female-headed households receive from the textile industries. Others live selling products of various kinds on the streets of the city, although this kind of 'work' usually affects very young children, thus being forced to abandon their studies. The Franciscan Sisters of Medellín thought that, in an environment where the textile sector is so predominant, a laboratory would be the best solution to alleviate the poverty of many women of the most marginalized villages. From this idea the first laboratory was born and others have sprung up over the years. "Hope and Life" as well as providing training for the proper functioning of laboratories, provides psychosocial support, an indispensable element so that women are able to overcome the trauma they suffer from violence and conflict. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 25/11/2013)