

Results Profile: Colombia Transport



FROM CHAOS TO ORDER

Implementing Urban Transport in Colombia

Overview

In the past, Colombia faced urban transport problems that significantly lowered the quality of life of urban Colombians. Starting in the late 1990s, the *Programa Nacional de Transporte Urbano* helped transform Colombia's urban transport system. The approaches under this program are now considered international best practice and have been replicated by cities around the world to address their transportation challenges.

Full Brief—7 Pages

[From Chaos to Order: Implementing High-Capacity Urban Transport Systems in Colombia](#)
—PDF, April 2010

Challenge

Public transportation in Colombia was traditionally perceived as inefficient, unsafe and polluting. The streets of Colombian cities were crowded with obsolete buses which operated with disregard for public safety and in near chaos, without organized bus stops. Furthermore, bus companies in Colombia were largely informal and operated on a cash-basis; they did not pay taxes or offer social security benefits to their employees.

MULTIMEDIA

Approach

In 1996, the government decided to create the *Programa Nacional de Transporte Urbano* supported by IBRD financing. The program centered its strategy on the development of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which achieves urban mobility at a fraction of the cost of rail systems. The most famous BRT system is Bogotá's Transmilenio, conceptualized in 1998. Transmilenio served as a model for the roll-out of BRTs throughout Colombia's largest cities, six of which were developed with the IBRD's assistance, including Bogotá, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Cartagena, Medellín and Pereira.

More Results

32%

average time saving per trip with Bogotá's new buses versus the old system.

Results

Each day close to 1.4 million passengers - approximately 27 percent of the city's public transport demand – benefit from the Transmilenio in Bogotá. According to data from 2009,

MORE INFORMATION

- » Ministerio de Transporte
- » Transmilenio

riding Transmilenio results in average time saving of 32 percent (20 minutes) per trip in comparison to the traditional bus system, more than 10 hours a month for the average rider.

Transmilenio has been able to abate 0.25 Metric tons of CO2 emissions a year. The program also has decreased accident rates by 90 percent in the corridors where the system operates, scrapped more than 2,100 old buses, and reduced noise levels by 3-10 decibels.

Riders of the two other complete BRT systems, Megabus-Pereira and Mio-Cali, have significantly improved their daily lives, benefiting from an organized, regulated, modern, and reliable public transportation system that utilizes a modern fleet and less polluting fuels. All without disrupting existing traffic.

MATERIALS

- » Bogotá Urban Transport Project
- » Bogotá Urban Services Project
- » Integrated Mass Transit Systems Project

PARTNERS

- » Inter-American Development Bank
- » Andean Development Corporation

Voices

As transport companies leave the informal sector to participate in the government's program, so do their workers. Drivers formalized their work contracts, working eight hours a day, instead of the typical 14 hours they had to work before the implementation of the BRT systems. They are now formal workers included in the social security network.

“ I was a bus driver for 13 years, but I've worked the last five months as a bus operator. Now, my life has changed 100%. I have goals set for myself: owning a house and having a well established family. ”

— *John Jairo Mina Vidal, Bus Operator*

Toward the Future

The government and the IBRD are expected continue their solid partnership in transportation policy until the *Programa Nacional de Transporte Urbano* concludes in 2016. Total government commitments from 2009 until completion in amount to approximately \$1.9 billion for nine of the ten participating cities, of which \$1.3 billion can be drawn from IBRD financing.

The *Programa Nacional de Transporte Urbano* is regarded as international best practice in collaboration between central government and municipal authorities to address the transportation ills endemic in many countries. Since its inception, delegations from more than 20 countries have visited Colombia to learn about the program. Similarly, multi-city transport programs are being developed in other countries such as Mexico and Argentina with direct IBRD involvement and there has been a significant collaboration and sharing of knowledge between Colombia and other developing countries.