

# Somos Tesoro Advances

The Somos Tesoro project is achieving its goals: 12,000 children living in mining areas have access to educational opportunities; 3,500 households receive Livelihood services; technical assistance on formalization provided to more than 80 artisanal and small-scale mines; and more than 200 public officials are better equipped to reduce child labor.

Somos Tesoro has strengthened the prevention and reduction of child labor efforts in the mining communities of the departments of Antioquia and Boyaca. Somos Tesoro has observed an increase in the number of: adolescents that understand the negative impacts of working from an early age; adults who do not allow their children to accompany them to work; teachers trained as agents for the prevention of child labor; public officials who contribute to ensuring the rights of out-of-school and working children; and small-scale miners that know the path towards formalization and the restriction of employing children. In view of the results achieved by Somos Tesoro, the United States Department of Labor has extended its support to this project.

## Livelihoods



The training and support provided by Pact to increase the employability, entrepreneurship, and family economies of the target households have become increasingly consolidated and organized, and have begun to generate income. Fish farming projects with barequera families in El Bagre and Zaragoza, and production of corn arepas in Segovia by women who work as chatarreras, with the support of the municipal administration, have helped to strengthen

household economies and allowed adults – especially women – to give their children a dignified life.

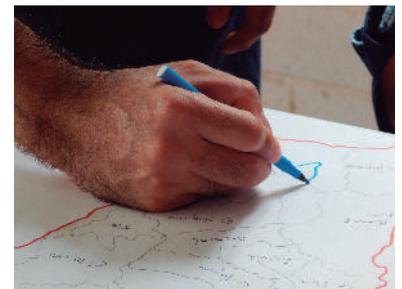
In the past six months, Somos Tesoro, through Pact, has conducted 233 training sessions on topics such as associative practices, marketing, and conflict resolution, among others. As a result, 41 pilot productive projects continue to advance and are helping more than 353 people in the two departments.

At this stage of consolidation, Pact's method of work is based on a three-pronged strategy: Management, co-management, and self-management, to increase ownership by families and local institutions of these endeavors. In addition, the three fairs and local markets established by Somos Tesoro have become an important showcase for their products.

This work is complemented with training on topics such as family economies, savings strategies, and vocational orientation for youth, which has reached more than 18,000 people, and with measures to ensure that these households are a protective environment for children and adolescents.

## Public policies

The support from Fondo Acción to the Inter-Institutional Committees for the Eradication of Child Labor (Spanish acronym, CIETI) and the development of tools for public officials in charge of reducing child labor have begun to show results. The members of the CIETI have improved coordination and empowerment for the diagnosis of child labor in their municipalities and are taking relevant action when cases of child labor arise.



To complement this work, Fondo Acción produced the technical document on child labor in mining that will be annexed to the new national policy on the eradication of child labor. Different pilot projects implemented over the past six months, in the eight Somos Tesoro target municipalities, apply the recommendations contained in this document.

These projects were implemented by non-governmental and grassroots organizations and in some cases, received co-funding from the municipal administrations.

Through Fondo Acción, Somos Tesoro is working with the Ministry of Labor, the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), and the ILO on the design and implementation of a program to strengthen the capacity of public officials in the regions, as well as the coordination with ICBF. This will serve to promote reporting, prevention, and protection of children involved in child labor in mining.

Different events were conducted at the municipal, departmental and national levels, including the International Forum on Best Practices in the Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker in Rural Areas, in partnership with the ILO and the Ministry of Labor.

## Mining formalization process

The support provided by the Alliance for Responsible Mining (Spanish acronym, ARM) to 80 mining units in Boyaca and Antioquia, to improve the Occupational Safety and Health, conditions and advance towards formalization, has had a significant impact on the workers and their households. This impact has also reached the barequero communities in Bajo Cauca, who pan for small bits of gold in the rivers. In the framework of the Somos Tesoro project, ARM has trained approximately 600 miners in recognizing adverse health conditions, such as sun exposure and the manipulation of mercury. ARM also carried out a study where miners identified the level of impact of their contact with mercury and offered training in the villages of El Bagre and Zaragoza, with a representative of Oro Verde, an initiative from Choco that uses natural plants instead of mercury to separate the gold from the sand.



Applying the Somos Tesoro comprehensive strategy, ARM works not only with miners but also engages their households, as a protective environment. In addition, the self-care campaign promotes awareness by children, women and men of the

protective equipment that should be used by the members of the family that work in mining.

Through training and reflection on child labor, the miners and their households learn about the laws that protect minors and about the risks of child labor. In the barequero communities, the adults have stopped taking their children with them to work.

Finally, ARM offers training to the mining units on productivity, gender, and decent work, and to public officials on occupational safety and health in small-scale mining. ARM also recently published a practical Guide on formalization of small-scaling mining in Colombia.

## Participation in educational opportunities

The training provided by Fundación Mi Sangre to teachers, to improve their educational practices through art and games and thus reduce the number of children dropping out of school, has transformed teaching in more than 50 educational institutions. Using the PAZalobien method, which fosters creativity and participation, teachers have strengthened coexistence and social responsibility.

Through the Fundación Mi Sangre, Somos Tesoro has also built the capacity of teachers to prevent child labor. The publication of a guidebook and training sessions have contributed to greater understanding by teachers about the realities of child labor, the ways to address the phenomenon, and the role that they play in its prevention. The results of the project show that teachers have become increasingly secure as key agents in the detection of child labor and the activation of pathways to guarantee the child rights. In addition, the parents in the educational community play a part in the protective environments and contribute to raising awareness about child labor.



Agricultural Cultural and Mining Fair . Remedios, Antioquia.

The Somos Tesoro project has also advanced in the work with young people, who play a leading role in the reduction of child labor: 464 agents of change, from 18 youth initiatives, have received training in the PAZalobien method and have replicated this learning within their communities.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

