



Pilares Learning Review Report

PILARES PROJECT Monitoring and Evaluation Team

August 2021

Pilares funding is provided by the United States Department of Labor under cooperative agreement number IL-31477-1-75-K. The total costs of the project is financed with USG federal funds.

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Acronyms

ARM	Alliance for Responsible Mining
ASGM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining
ASOAGROMIVICCA	Association of Agricultural Producers and Miners of Victims' Families of the La Cabaña Vereda
CI	Collective Impact
CIETI	Inter-Institutional Committees for the Eradication of Child Labor
CL	Child Labor
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
ICBF	Colombia Institute for Family Welfare
IDI	In-depth interviews
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OUWC	Other unacceptable working conditions
R&M	Results and Measurement
SN	Solidarity Network
USDOL	United States Department of Labor

Introduction

Context

Pilares, funded by the United States Department of Labor (US-DOL), is a 4-year project aimed to improve the capacity of civil society, to better understand and address child labor (CL) and promote acceptable work conditions in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector in selected municipalities of the Antioquia and Bolivar departments in Colombia. The ASGM sector is complicated with a high level of ambiguity and complex supply chains. It is characterized by high economic need for child labor and low incentives for eliminating child labor and workplace violations. However, it is an essential source of livelihood in these municipalities, where child labor and other unacceptable working conditions (OUWC) are prevalent.

To build the capacity of civil society, the project is grounded in the collective impact approach (CI), a methodology which seeks to convene strategic civil society actors at local and departmental levels, so that their existing scopes, capacities, and inherent strategies align.

Pilares works through civil society networks, referred to as Solidarity Networks (SN), to improve network members' technical and organizational capacities to identify, report, and raise awareness of child labor and workplace violations in ASGM. The SNs are divided into three working subgroups, with the following strategic objectives: 1. Identify and document CL and OUWC; 2. Raise awareness about CL and OUWC; and 3. Carry out initiatives and advocacy on problems related to CL and OUWC.

Purpose and objectives of the review

The main purpose of the Learning Review was to conduct a critical internal reflection focusing on the CI methodology used by the project to improve the capacity of civil society, to better understand as well as address child labor and promote acceptable conditions of work in the ASGM sector in Colombia.

To attain this purpose, the main objectives of this review were to:

Identify the operability and efficiency of SNs.

Document the impact of COVID-19 on SNs operations and how they are working in this new pandemic scenario.

Determine key lessons learned regarding CI over the life of the project to be applied to future projects.

This report is separated into 6 sections: context, methodology, summary of findings, results by objective, limitations, and recommendations. Where applicable, the sections have been categorized by objective to facilitate understanding.

Methodology

To answer the learning objectives of this review, the Pilares team employed a qualitative design with in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) between January and June 2021. The team conducted 9 FGDs (6 with CSOs and 3 with Steering Groups) and 9 IDIs with members of CSOs. There were 2 FGDs conducted per SN (3) in the three regions of the project. The Steering Group represents all

SNs in one region of the project, thus 3 FGDs were conducted with each Steering Group in the three regions. Finally, 9 IDIs were conducted with a member of the CSOs from each working group.

Data was collected by Pilares staff using observations and recordings. All IDIs and FGDs were recorded and analyzed in Spanish. A semi-structured interview and FGD guide was developed by Pact/Colombia Pilares and Pact/DC R&M staff. The team employed comparative analysis to identify similarities and differences in the responses of the learning questions.

For each of the FGDs with CSOs the learning questions aimed to understand; 1) the achievements of the network, 2) achievements based on the collective impact (CI) approach, 3) challenges of the network and 4) positive/negative aspects of the network's work. The IDIs aimed to understand; 1) the advantages/disadvantages of working through groups, 2) effect of COVID-19 on operations, and 3) adaptations to COVID-19. Finally, the FGDs with Steering Group members aimed to understand; 1) results from the collective impact self-assessment, 2) aspects of the network to continue or discontinue, 3) sustainability of project and support, and 4) advantages/disadvantages of the structure of the network.

Results

Summary of Findings

Identify the operability and efficiency of Solidarity Networks (SNs)

Overall, participants noted that successful operation of SNs is dependent on working collectively. This was cited as one of the major hurdles surpassed by organizations when working with the project. CSOs had to shift from working on individual organizational goals to a more collective goal. Civil society actors that compose the SNs successfully made this mindset shift and were able to implement joint actions. The ability to work collectively contributed to the relevance of their work, enhanced recognition amongst public and private institutions, and increased their ability to achieve better results. The SN also noted the benefits of diversity among participating organizations, as distinct perspectives allow for better-informed programming.

A key challenge to the operability and efficiency of SNs is the inability to take quick actions or respond rapidly. The structure of decision-making within SNs is based on consensus, which necessitates the participation of most SN members. It can be difficult to reach consensus and there are also logistical challenges in bringing a large group of participants together, whether virtually or in-person. SNs did not note a way to overcome this challenge; rather, they simply are not structured for any rapid response activities. Future programming should attempt to facilitate communication among SNs through alternate communication channels and/or techniques.

One area highlighted to strengthen SNs over time is to incorporate new members and stakeholders in order to rejuvenate participation and commitment to the shared goals. SNs also noted expanding the goal of the network may be another way to maintain operations over time. For example, the SN of Zaragoza is considering working in areas such as agriculture and fishing.

The impact of COVID-19 on SNs operations (including adaptations)

SNs have been impacted not only by COVID-19 but also by ongoing safety conditions and changes in local

Government. The pandemic brought about common challenges such as delays in work plan implementation, inability to work in certain spaces such as educational institutions while they were shut down, and a decrease in motivation among some members. Despite challenges, SNs adapted operations in several ways including increasingly using digital platforms to perform remote field work. For example, the CL Risk Factor Identification process was converted to a digital platform and remote implementation through the use of communications technology, such as Google Suite. To mitigate safety concerns, the SNs developed an informal protocol to determine when it is safe to carry out activities in areas with security concerns. For example, when approaching communities for activity implementation, the SNs would contact the community leader to retrieve prior approval. Finally, changes in local government necessitated SNs engage in an ongoing process of education and advocacy so that issues related to CL and other unacceptable working conditions (OUWC) remain on the agenda.

Key lessons learnt on CI

One lesson learned is to consider a careful distribution of responsibilities and workloads among working groups/committees and the anchor organization. Based on the experience of SNs there was a tendency for work to fall on the same group of highly motivated individuals. To ameliorate this tendency, which also hinders the sustainability of the initiative as over-burdened members are more likely to resign, SNs highlighted the importance of gaining the commitment and motivation of members early in the process. Programmatically, this may entail mentorship sessions with SN members to ensure participation of various CSO members rather than one representative. Another important consideration to avoid this challenge is for prospective members of a collective impact initiative to evaluate whether they will have the time to dedicate to activities and to understand the responsibilities of a member. Many member responsibilities and network activities were supplementary to member's daily jobs thus rendering it difficult to prioritize SN efforts consistently.

Another lesson learned is the importance of the logistics surrounding regular SN convenings and communication. As ongoing communication and joint activities are central tenets of any collective impact initiative, it is important to consider how this will be accomplished and the baseline capabilities of members is a key consideration in planning. The SNs experienced significant challenges in terms of physical distance and internet connectivity and hence needed both trainings and equipment in support of ongoing communication. Along the same lines, the SNs emphasized the importance of any collective impact initiative's work plan to include a communication strategy as well as strategic stakeholder engagement.

Finally, it is important to support the autonomy of the network from the beginning to ensure sustainability. While the Pilaes project provided needed support for the launch and operationalization of the SNs, it has been intentional in ensuring ownership and early hand-over of responsibilities as well as sustainability planning.

Detailed results

Of the 9 individuals interviewed, 4 (44%) were female and 5 (55%) were male. All individuals were between the age of 29-59. Of those participating in the FGDs (31), 13 (42%) were female and 18 (58%) were male. The majority (22, 71%) were between the ages of 29-59, three (9%) were between 18-28 and

the remainder were above 59 years.

Advantages and Disadvantages of SNs: individual perspective

The most significant advantage of the SNs has been the joint work related to successfully carrying out activities. This in-turn has resulted in recognition at the local and community levels. To achieve this, the individuals noted that the main advantages to SNs were; communication, organization and division of labor. The communication between the CSOs via meetings and knowledge exchanges allows for different points of view about the situation, generating contextual and effective options to intervene in the communities. The organized way of interacting with the different public and private institutions has allowed the clear and precise dissemination of the network message. The effective division of labor between the working groups (1, 2 and 3), based on their geographic proximity, made it possible to carry out organized actions in more regions. Joining efforts in this way allowed the project to achieve more and better results.

For example; three three teams have participated and promoted inter-institutional spaces, such as the Inter-Institutional Committees for the Eradication of Child Labor (CIETI, Spanish acronym) and the Childhood and Adolescence Roundtables, to raise awareness about CL, and have joined efforts to carry out activities in the communities together with the mayors' offices, primarily in El Bagre, Barranco de Loba, and San Martín de Loba.

Nevertheless, individuals also noted disadvantages such as: lack of participation of members, physical distance thus lack of communication, longer time to action. Certain members of the group had limited participation thus negating the main goal of promoting partnership within the SN. The physical distance between the different organizations sometimes made communication ineffective, given the existing limitations in the regions, such as bad or inexistent roads and lack of internet access or other telecommunication problems. The project proposed using different forms of communication within each network (calling at a specific time or communicating via WhatsApp, for those with a mobile phone connection). Rapid action was not possible as issues/concerns must first be discussed and approved by all participants. Although this causes delays in some activities, the organizations prefer making decisions together to achieve better results.

Adaptations to COVID-19

Participants noted that there were delays in the work plans due to the restrictions on gatherings of more than five people. These group meetings were necessary to complete the planned activities in the communities, such as focus groups to identify the risk factors for CL and OUWC (groups 1), or film forums to raise awareness about CL and OUWC (group 2). In the case of the film forums, the representatives of the CSOS tell us that the activity had been well accepted by the communities and they are requesting that they be reactivated. Further, some network members and their families were infected by COVID-19, which has affected their work and the capacity of the participants to fulfill their responsibilities. Similarly, personal loss led to certain processes being suspended for a period of time. In-person work in educational institutions was completely suspended, preventing the project from sharing information with children and adolescents, parents, teachers, and principals. The alternative is virtual schooling, which is difficult in the regions due to lack of connectivity, technological equipment, and limited knowledge about the use of the devices and/or platforms. Further, the lack of internet

connectivity demotivated individuals from being involved in the SNs, leading to attrition.

Despite the difficulties mentioned above, the processes have been adapted to the present conditions, including a partial shift to remote field work. The CSOs recognize the importance of digital or alternative means of communication due to the limited interactions forced by pandemic safety precautions. This has motivated them to acquire or increase their knowledge of technology, the available platforms, and of how to use them. Thus, social media, radio, mobile phones, and WhatsApp are being used to communicate and carry out different virtual activities.

The CL Risk Factor Identification process was also adapted due to COVID-19 restrictions. For example the paper survey was converted to a Google Form, with fewer questions, and applied to the social leader of the *vereda*,¹ *corregimiento*² or neighborhood. This information collection process was carried out through telephone calls, WhatsApp, or during in-person visits to the leader who was being interviewed. This method was quite successful, as more than 30 territories were diagnosed. For other working groups, messages were disseminated through popular social media and radio outlets, which reach most of the veredas and corregimientos. The working groups produced a radio soap opera and other types of messages to encourage fulfillment of the action plan objectives.

Although the infection rate has been lower than the national average or than other regions, some roads were blocked, which limited mobility in the territory and the possibility of carrying out some activities, such as the film forums. Therefore, most activities were carried out by virtual methods. All in-person activities were conducted in observance of the stipulated protective measures, such as mandatory facemask use, hand washing, body temperature monitoring, and social distancing.

Deteriorating safety conditions

It was not possible to conduct activities in some towns that were experiencing violence or public disturbances, such as Sur de Bolívar. For example, the interviewees stated that it had not been possible to carry out a planned film forum and focus group in the *corregimiento* of Pueblo Mejía.

The project developed a “protocol” that has proven effective for implementing actions and allowing it to be present in different regions. The protocol consists of establishing prior contact with community leaders to inform the date, time and place of the activity and thus ensure local support or activity approval. The networks also share information about the security situation with other networks and with the project, for the purpose of learning more about the territory where they are thinking of working.

The pandemic and mobility restrictions increased security risks in the four municipalities where Pílares operates. Armed actors have adapted and remain active in some areas and new strategies to control the territories have been developed to reduce the spread of the virus, making it more difficult to travel in the regions.

Changes in Local Governments

Regarding the changes in local governments, the project held meetings to propose building partnerships with local community media, such as radio stations. This process was successful in Bajo Cauca through

¹ *Veredas* are an administrative subdivision of a municipality in Colombia and are primarily rural areas.

² *Corregimiento* is an administrative subdivision of a municipality that encompasses various *veredas*.

the army's battalion radio station, but it was difficult to get support from the local radio station in San Martín de Loba. In spite of the partnership established with the mayor's office to disseminate Pilares' messages, the radio station has refused to broadcast them.

The changes in local governments' plans are always a challenge and requires a adapting and lobbying to continue to carry out the project activities. Since each local administration plan varies, it is necessary to participate in the spaces available to raise awareness on the importance of working on issues related to CL and OUWC.

Participating in a project such as Pilares has increased recognition of the work of CSOs in the territories and the opportunity to participate in consensus-building spaces, like in Zaragoza during the development of the municipal development plan, during which the organizations presented the objective of the Pilares Network. Although work with government institutions has been limited and collaboration and participation has been minimal in some cases, the work has been strengthened. Thanks to private institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in Sur de Bolívar there is coordination with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) as well as some partnerships with the Universidad de Cartagena. Despite the difficulties, thanks to the awareness raising efforts of the Pilares Networks there has been increasingly greater interest in working to mitigate and eradicate CL. As a result, CL is no longer normalized and there is greater awareness about this issue as a problem that should be addressed. This awareness raising work was carried out in institutional spaces as well as at the community level, where children, adolescents, and families learn about the importance of education for individual and collective development in society. This fulfills one of the project objectives related to raising awareness in the community.

Experience of working groups:

They have raised awareness about CL in the territories, through workshops, social events and work with government institutions, prioritizing CL as an issue to be addressed in Barranco de Loba

Achievements and Challenges of SNs: Group perspective

Achieving planned objectives

Participation in the Inter-Institutional Committees for the Eradication of Child Labor (CIETIs) has become a relevant part of working as a network. The particularities of the regions determine the type of participation, which includes assisting in their implementation, suggesting topics to work on, issuing recommendations, or helping to establish a CIETI in the municipality. This work is complemented with the agreements reached on activities such as the film forums in San Martín de Loba and the use of social media and radio spots in El Bagre and Zaragoza to raise awareness about CL as a problem that must be addressed. The CIETI in El Bagre is in the process of formalization by government institutions, who have already issued the regulatory decree, but are still in the process of forming the committee.

Access to and knowledge of different technological tools and equipment has been another achievement, beginning with the use of social media and the internet more generally, complemented by the knowledge acquired and ongoing learning about the use of camaras, computers, tablets, and other tools, obtained thanks to the Pilares project. These tools have served to disseminate the information and solidify the

project's presence in more territories. The project has been working on topics such as Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), CL, the importance of education for children and adolescents, and the implementation of a tool to assess risk in the workplace and the risk of CL in the communities.

In San Martín de Loba, the project has participated in local events with the municipal institution Family Commissary, as well as provided training on the use of photographs in social actions to raise awareness about child rights. In Zaragoza, the project has reached different veredas to raise awareness in the community about issues related to CL. Finally, radio stations and social media have been used to increase the information and disseminate messages about the importance of education in child and adolescent development.

These processes have achieved a change in mentality in the regions where Pilares works, transforming the idea of the type of work that children should do and of a life plan that does not prioritize working at an early age. The exercises to raise awareness of child rights and duties have not only had an impact on the children and their parents but also on the communities more generally. The project proposes alternative uses of free time with groups of parents, the elderly, and young people, where CL cannot continue to be a part of the life plans in the regions.

One specific challenge identified was the significant reduction of activities with public institutions in Sur de Bolívar during the December holiday season, when the public officials were on vacation. However, the project was able to resume working and carry out activities in the subsequent months. The pandemic delayed the activities in the communities due to the restrictions ordered by the municipal authorities.

Leadership and participation in their communities

The leadership and participation of the SNs was manifested primarily in two spaces, which subsequently created different opportunities for joint action. One was the participation of CSOs in the municipal CIETIs. The other was the meeting of the Pilares Network in Bogotá, where national, departmental, and municipal government institutions participated to discuss different topics and reach agreements to work in favor of child rights. Thanks to participation in institutional spaces, the networks and public institutions have carried out activities, including sporting events and news murals, which have empowered the network as spokespersons for prevention of CL and OUWC in their territories.

The Sur de Bolívar Network participated in meetings with miners in the municipality of Barranco de Loba, to work on occupational health and security, in coordination with the Secretariat of Mining and the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM). The SNs in the three regions also work at the household level, carrying out activities with parents to raise awareness about the importance of complying with existing regulations related to the enrolment of children and adolescents in schools and thus increase school enrolment in these regions. One successful example is the awareness raising activities with a family in Zaragoza, vereda of Río Viejo, where one of the children had always prioritized work over education. After the intervention, they changed their minds and the child returned to school. These actions have been supplemented with the use of social media, such as the network's Facebook account.

The work conducted by Pilares has allowed the CSOs to reach more people and gain access to the urban and rural areas of the municipalities. In El Bagre, the organizations highlight the importance of the knowledge acquired on child labor, occupational health and security, public speaking, among others, to raise awareness in the community, and the fact that this information is replicated by different civil

society actors. Participation in spaces with miners in El Bagre has been possible thanks to the trust communities have in the CSOs who are part of the Pilares project. In Sur de Bolívar, the project has worked with the Colombia Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) and other institutions to learn about their pathways for attention and reporting cases of child right violations.

Challenges

The network is looking to incorporate new legally constituted CSOs and Community Action Boards (JAC, Spanish acronym) in order to gain access to different regions and communities where they have not yet worked and thus advance towards fulfillment of the objectives related to CL. This will ensure their sustainability and allow them to continue to apply the different tools and raise awareness of the achievements in the different spaces for participation in the community.

The leadership work in communities has been complicated, given that the awareness raising activities aim to contribute to changes in attitudes that are deeply entrenched in these mining regions, where mining is part of the local culture. For this reason, the organizations emphasize the importance of directing these activities to the younger generations. For example, in Zaragoza, the project is seeking to break from traditional thinking about the responsibilities and tasks placed on children and adolescents. While there have been difficulties, the project has been able to carry out this work.

Structure and management of the network

The networks formed working subgroups and began operating the Steering group, which has empowered the leaders to direct their processes and make concerted decisions in a way that is transparent to all members of the different groups, thereby developing and strengthening their capacities. Coordination between the groups was achieved by modernizing the forms of communication and implementing technological tools, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, something they have told us is completely new in the region. The importance of the three working groups is highlighted in the three regions, as well as the way in which they complement each other. The responsibilities and tasks are clearly distributed and contribute to achieving the proposed objectives, guided by the leaderships that have been strengthened through the actions of the Pilares project.

Challenges

- Poor connectivity and intermittent access to virtual means of communications, public order problems, and the presence of illegal armed groups have limited the day-to-day work of organizations such as the JAC of Pueblito Mejía and the Association of Agricultural Producers and Miners of Victims' Families of the La Cabaña Vereda (ASOAGROMIVICCA in Spanish) in Sur de Bolívar. These two organizations are currently inactive.
- Responsibilities must be better distributed to balance the workloads between the working groups and the Steering group, to ensure that responsibility for mobilizing and carrying out actions does not fall on the same people.

Reinforce the autonomy of the network, strengthening the teams with the participation of different CSOs to expand the scope of their work, and consider the idea of forming a corporation, in the future, in the case of the Sur de Bolívar Network.

Impact of Collective Impact Initiative on SNs: Group perspective

Benefits

The benefits of CI include the collaboration between the different CSOs and their members. Their joint work strengthens the alliance and brings people working to fulfill the proposed objectives of the Pilares network closer together. This successful collaboration has resulted in recognition of the network at the local level, thus strengthening the relationships between public and private institutions.

Negative aspects include the particularities of the regions and the difficulty of using digital communications due to the lack of connectivity. This situation was exacerbated by difficulties in access to some territories caused by public order issues and the COVID-19 pandemic that has had to be overcome to fulfill the proposed objectives.

A few members of the CSO's are obviously overloaded with responsibilities, participating in training and carrying out many activities and tasks. This is due to the lack of commitment of some members of the CSOs and has impeded sustainability over time. For this reason, the networks are seeking to incorporate new CSOs and empower the members of the existing Pilares CSOs, especially youth, given their affinity and interest in the use of technology and social media.

Importance of CI

The focus groups participants are clear about the importance of working as a network to achieve a collective impact, stating that the training provided during the implementation of the project changed their points of view and provided resources to become sustainable over time. According to the focus group, if the organizations had worked independently, the results would not have been as good. Working together as a group towards the same goal, rather than pursuing separate actions and objectives in each territory, made their work more relevant. The work method employed as well as the support from organizations such as Pact and ARM, have guaranteed the resources to ensure the sustainability of the actions, provide clear objectives to strive for, and specific actions that generate individual responsibility and commitment to achieve the stated goals.

Finally, the group feels that they fulfilled their proposed objectives and that although many aspects could be improved, strengthened, and further developed, working as a network has allowed their actions to have greater impact and brought them closer to the public and private institutions. It has also raised awareness about the importance of addressing CL and OUWC in the regions.

Sustainability and recommendations

While implementation and use of virtual platforms was required to adapt to COVID-19, these measures may not be sustainable in the future. Now that many of the restrictions have been lifted, the SNs are considering the possibility of resuming in-person meetings to discuss their achievements and upcoming challenges and opportunities. The participants stressed the importance of developing an action plan for the network, that includes a communications strategy to raise awareness about their work in the community and identify relevant public and private stakeholders for possible future partnerships. The participants also stated the need to increase their knowledge on how to develop a shared strategic vision and on conflict resolution. Finally, the participants highlighted the importance of strengthening the

current teams of consultants with experts on different topics such as child labor, mining, projects, and others, to ensure the sustainability of the network.

In general, the participants of the three networks stated that both the institutions and the community recognize that their actions promote child rights and prevention of CL, which is why they expressed the desire to continue working as a network.

For example; A team of consultants is supporting the project in Zaragoza. The team will expand after the project establishes partnerships with institutions such as the National Learning Service (SENA), the Central Pipeline company (OCENSA), ICBF, and academia. To this end, the network in Zaragoza is planning to send a letter explaining its activities and the specific proposal that the network will be working on. The goal is also to expand the portfolio of services provided by the network and incorporate other organizations, based on a strategic stakeholder mapping exercise. The network should continue to contact the different institutions, given that no agreements have yet been reached.

Looking towards the future, the participants expressed an interest in learning about fundraising and other topics related to communications, technology, and state bidding processes, to enable them to participate in the calls for bids in other municipalities in which they could begin to work. The SENA is a stakeholder that could be useful for this purpose. These efforts would be complemented with coordination at the national or departmental level.

There are some ideas about how to strengthen the network by incorporating other stakeholders, such as women's organizations and youth groups in Sur de Bolívar, or considering the possibility of working in other areas, such as agriculture and fishing in Zaragoza. Only the network in Sur de Bolívar is interested in forming a corporation, to become a stronger player in the region and jointly apply for calls for proposals. They are currently making inquiries about the requirements in order to make a decision about the viability of this process.

Support from Pilaes project: Group perspective

The CSOs indicated that the most important form of support received from Pact in the context of this project was the knowledge acquired through the learning processes. This knowledge has increased empowerment and individual and collective confidence, reflected in the increasingly valuable contributions by the networks in the spaces for participation, where the increase in confidence is evident. Another area where valuable support was provided is the use of technology. Despite the abovementioned difficulties, technology has strengthened the networks' work and provided them with alternative ways to make themselves known. In material terms, the funds for transportation and food provided have been very helpful and allowed them carry out the activities.

Regarding sustainability, raising financial resources is a priority, as it would allow them to purchase computers, tablets, microphones, and the other equipment they may need to conduct activities in the future and form strategic partnerships to ensure the sustainability of the networks. For example, in Sur de Bolívar, the Steering Group is thinking about legalizing the network by registering with the Chamber of Commerce and financial institutions, thus fulfilling the basic requirements to participate in calls for bids in the municipalities.

The biggest common advantage mentioned by the three Steering groups is the participation and joint

work with the different CSOs, who have gotten to know each other and their different work methods. This diversity of organizations means different way of thinking, which has led to a more effective implementation of the activities. This work method has generated greater impact, increased influence in the communities, and improved contact with public and private institutions.

“Alone we move faster, but united we go further.”

[Steering Group member, Male, Association of Agricultural Producers United for the Progress of Barranco de Loba (ASOPAUB)].

The disadvantages most frequently mentioned were the geographical distances between network members and lack of internet and mobile phone connectivity, as well as the many tasks and competing priorities of each member of the CSOs, which limits their capacity to participate in the network activities and meetings to make decisions in a timely manner. Reaching a consensus is difficult and requires that all the CSOs travel to the municipal capital, which is very costly both financially and in terms of time.